

Gandhi Exhibition and Festival 2008

Tuesday 25 March – Saturday 12 April

The British Library will launch their exhibition *The Life of Gandhi* on Tuesday 25 March. It will mark the 60 years that have passed since Gandhi's death in January 1948 and it will travel around the UK until January 2009.

The Gandhi Festival, a variety of different events, is being organised by the Gandhi Foundation in co-operation with other organisations
See further details on page 22

Gandhi Foundation Summer Gathering

Saturday 26 July to Saturday 2 August 2008

The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire

Details: Graham Davey, 29 Norton Road, Bristol BS4 2EZ

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Contents

Village India Aid:

A Response to Farmers' Suicides

Jon Johansen-Berg

Gandhi in the 21st Century (Part III)

Bhikhu Parekh

Pingalwara

Chris Clarke

Reviews:

Gandhi's Diagnostic Approach Rethought

(Margaret Chatterjee)

Antony Copley

Gandhi Vs Terrorism (Mark Juergensmeyer)

Piet Dijkstra

Mahatma Gandhi:

Images and Ideas for Nonviolence (Vijay Rana)

Omar Hayat

Peter Cadogan 1921-2007

Ba: The Woman of Substance

Nisha Bala Tyagi

Village India Aid - a Response to Farmers' Suicides.

John Johansen-Berg

If you were driving along a country road in England and suddenly came on a notice saying, "Village for Sale" you would wonder what was going on. In India the sign is appearing more often year by year. In March 2006 I read an article by a noted scientist and journalist, Devinder Sharma who described how one village in Punjab put itself up for sale and others followed in various Districts. More tragically he reported how suicides amongst farmers, also beginning in Punjab because of debts, had gradually increased and spread to other areas. Dorli village in Maharashtra was the first village outside Punjab to put itself up for sale. It has 270 residents, 500 livestock and 600 acres of land. They faced a situation in which every villager, men, women and children, had a debt of R30,000 (£425). For agricultural workers this was an astronomical debt hence the sale. The debt elsewhere for individual farmers could be for as little as 8000 rupees (£110) or it could be for much greater sums but the effect was dramatic and tragic. First numbered in tens and then hundreds, now the record is of tens of thousands of farmers who have taken their own lives in despair.

How could this happen in India which for generations had a self-sustaining agriculture ? After each harvest self-seeding prepared for the next season. Fertilizer was collected around the farm. Each farmer was able to feed his own family and usually the extended family too. Some produced enough to sell some to the local community and even further away. It was a contented agricultural community though there could be difficult times if the seasons were not favourable. What brought about the change ?

The conclusion of a Report by Devinder Sharma states: "The World Bank and IMF under the structural adjustment policies had very clearly tied up credit with crop diversification. This continues to force developing countries to shift from staple foods to cash crops to meet the luxury requirements of the western countries."

He adds, "If the WTO has its way the world will soon have two kinds of agricultural systems – the rich countries will produce staple foods for the world's 6 billion plus people and developing countries will grow cash crops like tomatoes, cut flowers, peas, sunflowers, strawberries and vegetables."

So he identifies the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation as the culprits. The farmers were promised that their standard of living would increase and they were given government loans to start the new system. For a while it seemed that they might be better off but then the costs became apparent. They had to buy

patented genetically modified seeds at high prices. Local fertilizer was not good enough for the new crops; expensive special fertilizer had to be bought each season. Costs soon outweighed income so loans had to be taken out from banks and later from money lenders at high interest rates. Hence the growing crisis, resulting in farmers committing suicide or leaving agriculture for the overcrowded urban areas.

Andrew Rigby of Coventry University wrote a Paper entitled "Gram swaraj versus Globalisation". In it he comments: (p.19)

"Central to Gandhi's vision was swaraj – freedom, liberation, self-determination, empowerment. His goal was sarvodaya – the uplift and welfare of all. The master key was economic equality. This could never be achieved following the western model of development. For him development should be based on production for use rather than profit."

Modern politicians dismiss Gandhi as an idealist, a romantic, not suited to today's world. But Gandhi in 1940 wrote: "I do not exclude the industries. So long as they do not smother the villages and village life."

One of his disciples, Vinoba Bhave, became world famous by his long walks in which he challenged wealthy landowners to give some of their land for the landless poor. This resulted in Bhoodan (land gift) and later Gramdan (village gift) as forms of sharing the land so that rural communities could grow stronger.

Clearly India needs to develop its industries but this need not be by undermining its agriculture. The two can and should exist side by side. Globalisation may have a part to play but it should be alongside a continuing stress on localisation. In the current situation there are tensions. Andrew Rigby illustrates this from fishing when he describes the promised profit bonanza through the introduction of high-feed, high-growth prawns. This was to be the blue revolution but it proved disastrous.

Dr. Vandana Shiva, a world renowned academic, spoke at Birmingham University on this theme and I took the opportunity to hear her. She has co-authored a book entitled *Seeds of Suicide* (1998, revised 2006) dedicated to the farmers who have committed suicide. She underlines the need to turn away from costly production methods and move towards ecological organic farming. She writes: (p.24)

"Since the beginning of farming, farmers have sown seeds, harvested crops, saved part of the harvest for seeds, exchanged seeds with neighbours. Every ritual in India involves seeds, the very symbol of life's renewal. In 2004 two laws have been proposed – a Seed Act and a Patent Ordinance which could for ever destroy the biodiversity of our seeds and crops and rob farmers of all freedoms, establishing a seed dictatorship."

Who profits from this change in the system ? The western nations in general benefit from this change which limits the developing world to cash crops. Firms in the USA benefit from patents which allow them to dominate the market for GM seeds and fertiliser.

Can anything be done to help the Indian farmers caught in this spiral of debt and despair ?

A group of people with experience in India were gathered together in March 2006 at Barnes Close, the conference centre and base of the Community for Reconciliation. Each contributed from their area of expertise. Following the meeting I proposed to CFR's Council that we should add to our existing international work a new area by forming VIA (Village India Aid) which has two main aims:

First, to support projects which might give some encouragement to farmers and villages in situations of despair. This seeks to respond to the remark of a village official who said:

"The situation is alarming. But no one seems to take any notice of our cry for help."

Second, to work for systemic change by encouraging the restoration of self-sustaining agriculture in India. This will include the encouragement of organic farming, the production of food for local consumption, a fairer sharing of land, and a proper balance between agriculture and developing industries.

The first project undertaken is a partnership with CERE (Centre for Environmental Research and Education) based in Mumbai. It involves the recharging of borewells and augmentation of groundwater aquifers in the rural tribal villages of Dahanu Taluka.

Further work in water-harvesting is being considered. A Neem tree project has been given assistance. A micro-credit project is under consideration. A project for supporting farmers who wish to return to traditional farming is being researched.

The first steps in working for systemic change have included support given for two of the marchers in the non-violent action of the march from Gwalior to Delhi (350 km) involving 25,000 people. They arrived on 2 October 2007 (Gandhi's birthday) to demand land rights for all, an end to the displacement of tribal people and a just distribution of land, water and forests. This action was organized by Ekta Parishad.

Letters have been sent about the need for support to be given to Indian farmers and villages and for changes to take place in the policies of the World Bank, World Trade Organisation and International Monetary Fund. The recipients have included the UK Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Department for International Development and the Euro MP who chairs the Committee for relations with India.

Contact has been made with Groups and Organisations which share our concern for India and are potential allies in a sustained campaign to bring about the needed changes.

Letters have been written to the local and national press. Individual companies have been contacted where there are relevant questions to raise, eg. Corus in relation to the acquisition by Tata Steel; Tesco with regard to supermarket policies.

The link with the UK farming community is also relevant. At our initial meeting it was pointed out by an English farmer that, as a proportion of population, a similar number of farmers committing suicide had taken place in the UK.

Why is action so urgently needed?

Christian Aid has produced a Report on such issues in a number of countries, including India. It recounts some of the individual stories affecting families.

On the morning of 2 February 2005, 32 year old Lachi Reddy swallowed a bottle of pesticide. He went to tell his wife he could no longer care for his family; then he collapsed and died later in the local hospital.

This should not happen to any person – not in India, not in the UK, not anywhere. It will continue to happen unless ordinary people in sufficient numbers say to Governments,

"Enough; no more!"

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The Mahatma Gandhi Community Forum

This online forum of news & views on Gandhi, peace and nonviolence has recently been launched by Peter R  he.

Peter writes:

"To me this online forum has a great potential provided all relevant institutions, initiatives, individuals, activists, researchers, writers and media people register and post messages on a regular base. It can help to connect and prove that we're many working for a more humane world!"

It can be found at

http://www.gandhiserve.org/message_board/phpBB3/index.php

The News Digest has now been incorporated in this site.

Life Style Movement Summer Retreat

30 May - 1 June 2008 at Barnes Close House, near Birmingham

Further details from Keith Taplin, 78 Filton Grove, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0AL

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A sculptor with a fondness for Gandhi has produced heads of Gandhi for sale. They can be viewed at <http://cgi.ebay.co.uk/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&rd=1&item=200196453588&ssPageName=STRK:MESE:IT&ih=010>

Gandhi in the 21st Century – Part III

Bhikhu Parekh

This is the third and final part of the Second Fred Blum Memorial Lecture

My third question – ***does the Mahatma have an alternative to violence ?*** Of course he was totally opposed to violence in principle – although in practice he condoned acts of violence from time to time on the grounds that when human beings were desperate and pressed beyond a certain point, they might react, and that is understandable, although it might be unjustified. We must fight against injustice – of that there can be no compromise. So you can't be a pacifist in the sense that you are not bothered about the state of the world. Injustices address you, and you must do something about them. But is violence the answer ? Gandhi says no, because violence itself is a form of injustice. It also involves hatred and it can create nothing lasting because its legacy is always going to be of ill-will. Therefore, while violence is not the answer, justice must be fought for. The only answer is rational discussion. But Gandhi said there is one important lesson he learnt in life and that is that reason has its limits. Reason can take us up to a point, but as he kept saying, when the heart is hard and rigid, reason doesn't work. What you need is the unity of head and heart. Reason can only appeal to the head – you must find ways of activating somebody's heart, conscience, his moral universe, so that he is prepared to recognise you as a human being and then a rational discourse can begin to proceed. Reason has its limits and Gandhi says sometimes you can find a strong rationalist becoming a strong advocate for violence. For example: if I am unable to persuade someone then the rationalist would say: "these guys are morally obtuse, no use talking to them, they are not being reasonable, they are not human" – and therefore it is found rationally legitimate to engage in violence against them. And Gandhi's argument was that the relation between reason and violence is much closer than we realise. So – what are the alternatives ? You will know about satyagraha – the 'surgery of the soul', reason connected with the head and nonviolent resistance connected with the heart. In other words, in the moment, the perpetrator of injustice does not recognise the victim as a human being and the questions are "How can we activate his/her conscience ? How can we get him/her to recognise that both are human beings and therefore both have certain rights ?" Gandhi's answer is for you to take upon yourself the burden of other people's sins and nonviolent suffering. If you look at satyagraha, or the way of engaging in nonviolence, it consisted mainly of three methods or ways of acting, evolved over time:

- Non-cooperation. People would see an evil regime, realise their own complicity in keeping it in being, and refuse to cooperate with it.

- Boycott. For example, the boycott of British cloth in favour of Indian homespun.
- Civil disobedience, where you break the law because your conscience would not allow you to comply, and you would accept punishment but not give in.

It is amazing how this kind of civil disobedience and form of non-cooperation is coming back into the 21st century in a big way. I have been involved – not directly, but by passive participation – in many discussions when people have been asking about the Iraq War: over a million people protested in Britain, scores of millions protested all over the world, religious people were against it ... and yet the war went on. What could we have done to stop it ? And if something like this were to occur again, what should we be doing to stop it ? Increasingly people are beginning to say civil disobedience might be the answer: we will not pay our taxes; we will not co-operate with you. And if a million people, instead of marching, had done this, what would have happened ?

The same thing is beginning to happen in the States. A fine Gandhian scholar and friend of mine, Professor Douglas Allen, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Maine, a few months ago, together with academic colleagues and students, staged a peaceful demonstration outside the office of their Senator. They were arrested, tried and have been sentenced to community service. Douglas was telling me that many people in the US are beginning to feel increasingly that if something like Iraq were again to loom on the horizon, the level of practical action will have to be raised to the next gear – and that's the sort of thing Gandhi was doing. I think the question for us to ask is are these methods which Gandhi employed the only ones or are there other ways in which we can try to activate the conscience of the opponent, or put pressure on the Government when it is trying to do something which is unjust ? What other methods can be added to the Gandhian part of it ?

When I was in Israel not long ago I asked several Arab hosts of mine about the possibility of their using nonviolence against Israelis, because they will always react against violence. But what if, I suggested, you were to engage in nonviolent resistance of the Gandhian type – civil disobedience, non-cooperation – telling the Israelis you will not harm them but want injustices remedied: If you want to shoot us, do so. Do you think the Israeli Government would have shot down a thousand people or more ? If such a nonviolent movement had been mounted, with the world watching, I wonder what its success would have been ? The Gandhian method can be tried in complex intractable situations, which is not to say it would always succeed. For instance, against Stalin's Soviet Union or Hitler's Germany, nonviolence would probably not have worked because there were no witnesses capable of reporting to the world. But the point is, this is not the case in the 21st century. Given the fact of the internet

with access to almost any part of the world, I think the Gandhian method has a considerable chance of working.

Let's look at my fourth main question, ***Is there a place for personal integrity ?*** We have seen that our values are constantly being revised in the light of what we come across. But once they are revised and you are reasonably satisfied, then you say in the language of the theologian Martin Luther, "I can do nothing else. This is my life, the values on which my life is constructed, I want to live by it". And Gandhi's point was – and this I think is an unusual way of looking at it – that these values define you. They constitute your truth: the truth of my life is the truth of the values I want to live by. And therefore integrity for him basically means: How can I live by my truth ? By the truth as I see it, recognising that I will constantly be going 'from truth to truth'. Gandhi would say, for example, that both capitalism and communism are evil but there is no use in just campaigning against it – if it is evil does it show in your own life or not ? So, for example, he considered the evil of capitalism was the idea of possessiveness, buying property and so on. So he had no private property and when he died all he left behind were his sandals, spittoon and his three monkeys – no insurance policy, writings, royalty or copyright – nothing. Another example was untouchability in India. Gandhi complained about it, fought against it but then asked himself whether he was also living it ? So he went and lived among the untouchables and adopted an untouchable daughter.

Being a deeply religious person, Gandhi believed he must ultimately be able to trust God. And therefore he refused to have security of any kind, and no body-guards. And when there were several attacks on his life, and the Government of India insisted he had physical protection, Gandhi said, "The day I seek physical protection, I would rather not live". At a prayer meeting, when a bomb was thrown and the crowd began to disperse, Gandhi sat unmovingly and said to the crowd, "Frightened of a mere bomb?" and carried on with his prayer. This was the integrity of the man. It was such a profound integrity that when India became independent this man was to be seen nowhere near New Delhi. When the Prime Minister of India said that Gandhi should be the President of India in a position of power, he thought it was a joke ! He said: "My place is among the victims of Muslim/Hindu violence".

This, I think, is the lesson that can be learnt from his life: personal integrity and when he said, "My life is my message", I think his life ultimately was the message of absolute, uncompromising personal integrity: "This is where I stand. This is how I shall live. And unless I am convinced that it is wrong (and I could be convinced that it is wrong), then this is how I shall live".

I think the different ways I have tried to take you through these four questions, go to show that the Mahatma is not ready to disappear in the 21st century !

GF Annual Lecture and Peace Award 2008



Annual Lecturer Bhikhu Parekh (with John Rowley) at Kingsley Hall 2 December 2008



David Cromwell and David Edwards of Media Lens receiving the Award from Denis Halliday

Pingalwara

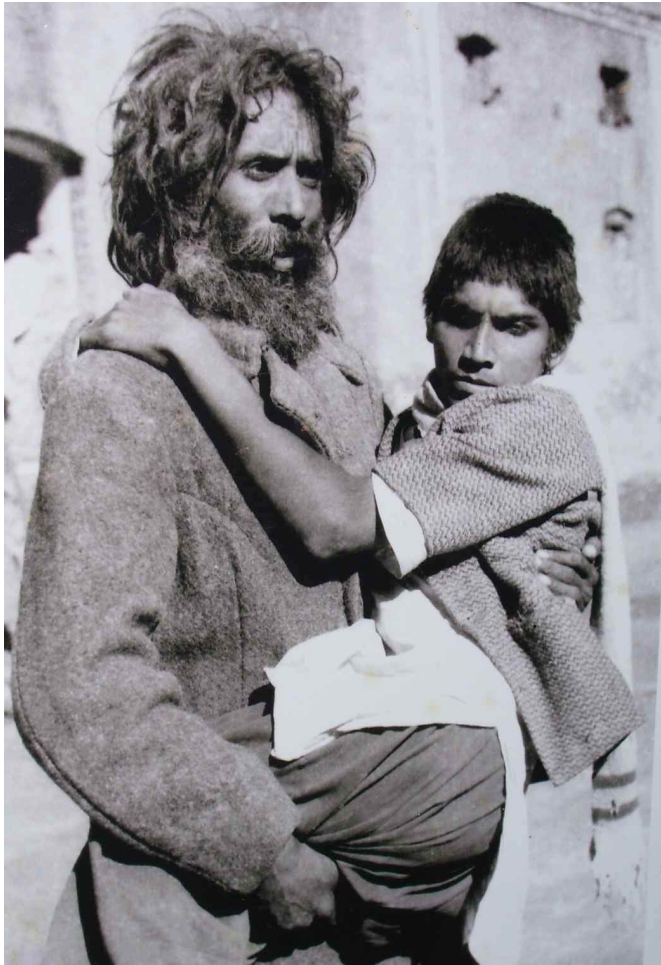
Chris Clarke

By anyone's standards, even the lofty ones of the Gandhi Foundation, Amritsar is a holy city. As well as the Golden Temple, there are dozens of gurdwaras, mosques, and mandirs, as many as there are pubs in an English city. But for me, one of the holiest places in the world is another building in Amritsar, one you will not have heard of. Just a short ginrickshaw ride from the Golden Temple, past Jallianwala Bagh, opposite the bus stand in a dusty bazaar selling tyres, bananas, and coca-cola (as all bazaars in India do), is Pingalwara, literally House of Cripples. As the name implies, the residents of Pingalwara are Amritsar's destitute – orphans, the elderly, homeless, physically and mentally disabled – and as the name also implies, they are neither shy nor embarrassed about what they do there. Pingalwara is an astonishing achievement. They house over 1200 residents in six cities. They run hospital services, dentistry, homes for those who need them, prosthetics centres, dispensaries, rehabilitation units, schools, a printing press, an animal sanctuary and a tree nursery, all through charitable contributions. But Pingalwara is all the more astonishing when you know the story of how it came about.

As good Gandhians, you will know that at the start of the twentieth century, India was still run by white men in shorts and pith helmets, who shot tigers and drank gin in the heat. Kipling was writing stirring tales of bravery on the North West frontier, and India had no thought of independence beyond a rumour of some lawyer disturbing the peace in South Africa. Into the Punjab, in 1904, was born Ramji Das, to a widow who was befriended by Ramji's father, a wealthy businessman who kept the boy at a distance for fear of disturbing the inheritance arrangements. Ramji was sent to boarding school first in Khanna and later in Lahore. In his spare time served in the Hindu temples, cleared litter and stones from the street, and was kind to animals. Unusual, for one of his years. Eventually the family finances dried up and the boy ended up homeless, a hundred miles from his family. Sadly, even the mandirs where he served refused him help.

Fortunately the Punjab is predominantly Sikh, and with the help of some local farmers he found his way to a Sikh temple. Everyone who comes to a Gurdwara, anyone at all, is welcomed, fed, offered shelter and the opportunity to hear from the Guru Granth Sahib. I shall never forget my first visit to a Gurdwara. It was a haven from the New Delhi taxi drivers who have replaced the "jungle, tigers, cobras, cholera, and sepoy" that beset the European travellers of Kipling's time and who, trust me, are far more frightening. And the kindness of the Sikhs was overwhelming.

The penniless, starving, and homeless boy of our story records that he too was conquered by their kindness. He converted to Sikhism, and changed his name to Puran Singh.



Christians and Sikhs both believe that we get to heaven only by God's Grace, not by our own efforts. But the more astute of us will have noticed how opportunities to show our appreciation often make themselves apparent. So it was that Puran Singh passed by a little boy at the entrance to Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, abandoned and clearly mentally and physically disabled. To be an orphan in India is bad enough, even today. To be so profoundly disabled is practically a death sentence. So Puran Singh did what had to be done. He picked up the boy, cleaned away the excrement from his body and clothes, fed him, and gave him a name – Piara, which means “beloved”.

Now Piara had no family, Puran Singh had no wheelchair and so took to carrying Piara who clung to Puran “like a garland around my neck”, he said. Piara had found a family, and Puran had found a way of serving God. For the next thirty years, Puran Singh worked full time in all sorts of charitable causes, until partition intervened. When hell finally broke loose on 13 August 1947, Puran Singh was out working, and had left Piara at the Gurdwara. By the time Puran Singh heard the riots and returned, rioters had surrounded the place, and Piara was alone and vulnerable in the middle of it. Somehow Piara was rescued and the pair managed to escape Lahore, and on the 18th August the pair reached the Indian side of the Punjab, where matters were not much better.

Partition displaced millions, the Punjab was rent open and Amritsar, its beating heart, was exposed to all the human sufferings it is possible to see. The well-appointed gardens of Khalsa College were turned over to the twenty-five thousand refugees flooding in along the Grand Trunk Road day by humid August day.

No human being runs a Sikh temple. God does. To be more precise, the spirit of the Sikh gurus resides in the holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, which is read aloud to provide guidance to those who would listen. Now, the practicalities of this arrangement are simple: it is down to everyone to get on and cook, clean, read and serve, so that no-one who visits guruji ever goes away hungry, thirsty, tired, or unloved. By this fine example are all Sikhs taught, and Puran Singh learned the lesson well. So with only the clothes he stood up in, he set about caring for the refugees at Khalsa College.

Months and years went by, and eventually the shanty towns disappeared. Only Puran Singh and his ragged collection of destitutes remained. By this time he was dressed as a tramp, hair unkempt and unturbaned, begging from door to door for the money to feed his family, living and dressing beneath the lowest dalit on the dirtiest city street in India. The arches at Amritsar railway station became home for a while, and the move to this better accommodation was accompanied by increasing donations. Eventually a plot of land became free and with a donation from the Golden Temple Committee, Pingalwara was finally completed on 6th March 1957.

As a young man, Puran Singh discovered Gandhiji, took to wearing khaddar and read all he could about Bapu. Puran shared Bapu's ideas about village life and sustainability and took a keen interest in the environment. Perhaps because Pingalwara is so close to a heavily polluted part of Amritsar, or because he saw so many people die of respiratory problems, in his later years he often berated dignitaries who turned up to Pingalwara in motorised transport. As far back as 1928, he was aware of the dangers of flooding caused by deforestation, and he had passing connections with Mirabeau and Sarlabehn (Katherine Heilemann, another of Gandhi's European followers). Sunder Lal Bahuguna- one of the founders of the Chipko movement and another Gandhian- is a patron of Pingalwara. Like Bapu, when Puran Singh died his possessions amounted to just a pile of clothes, a pair of spectacles, and the few tools needed in his daily routine. When Puran Singh died in 1992, Bibi Inderjit Kaur, a physician and disciple of Bhagatji, took over the running of Pingalwara, a post she still holds today.



Pingalwara is open to visitors. In fact they are welcomed. Puran Singh's original campus on the Grand Trunk Road is still a peaceful oasis amid the noise and squalor of India's first road. Most visitors to Amritsar only want to see the Golden Temple and the Wagah border closing ceremony before they move on to Dharamsala. But the Punjab is full of modest little gems, and Pingalwara is among the best of them.

I feel I ought to leave you with some of Bhagatji's favourite advice. These points are repeated in all of Pingalwara's publications. It has been said that Gandhi's standards are for most people impossibly high. If that is so, then Puran Singh's advice is a practical and gentle introduction that will not send you far wrong:

Preserve natural resources

Service of the poor and destitute is the service of God

Plant more and more trees to save the environment

Wear Khadi clothes to lessen unemployment

Simple living and high thinking is a bliss

Use less diesel and petrol

Exercise restraint in your living habits

Don't forget to plant trees. They are a sign of the prosperity of a nation.

The Pingalwara website is www.pingalwaraonline.org, where you can find details of how to visit, volunteer or donate to them.

Garland around my neck: The story of Puran Singh of Pingalwara by Patwant Singh, UBSPD, 2001, ISBN 978-8174763372, contains many good pictures.

His Sacred Burden: The Life of Bhagat Puran Singh by Reema Anand, Penguin Books, 2004 is a more detailed biography.

Chris Clarke is active in the interfaith movement in Newcastle. Brought up an Anglican he now serves at the local gurdwara and Hindu temple.

International Peace Walk 2008

Following last year's Interfaith Peace Walk through Ireland, Scotland and England, another through parts of Europe has been arranged for 26 April to 16 July 2008. Under the slogan *No more Chernobyl, Hiroshima, 3 Mile Island, Nagasaki* it leaves from Battersea Park going through France visiting nuclear facilities and ending in Geneva.

Further details at www.footprintsforpeace.net

Reviews

Gandhi's Diagnostic Approach Rethought: Exploring a Perspective on His Life and Work Margaret Chatterjee Promilla and Co/Bibliophile South Asia: New Delhi 2007 pp234 Rs495 ISBN 978-81-85002-81-1

Few scholars match Margaret Chatterjee's outstanding contribution to Gandhi studies. We are all in her debt, for example, for her *Gandhi's Religious Thought* (1983) so it more than a little sad to learn that this text will be the last of its kind. With her roots in both South Africa and India she was always ideally placed to be Gandhi's interpreter. She has brought so many skills to bear in the task, maybe most strikingly as a tantalising historian of ideas, together with an expertise in the comparative study of religions. She is a formidable moral and political philosopher. Not all will be able to keep up with her breathtaking if often allusive reference – in a kind of shorthand – to so many thinkers, those of the classical world, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, James Mill, Henry Sidgwick, William James, Max Nordau, Simone Weil, so many more, but surely it is an intellectual journey well worth undertaking.

The leitmotif of the text is of Gandhi as doctor manqué, his role as diagnostician of the sicknesses of India (and the world ?), diseases of oppression, racism, injustice, exploitation, and of its chief canker, violence. Gandhi had thought of training as a doctor and certainly took every opportunity to put his nursing skills to the test. It's an attractive way through the many expressions of Gandhi's mind though a disease metaphor has its tricky side. Might you risk infection if you borrowed ideas from outside ?

I think the big question she is raising is, just how morally intransigent was Gandhi ? Did he succumb to the Gregers Werle complex that Ibsen explored in *The Wild Duck*, that Truth must be revealed at whatever the human cost ? What did Gandhi intend by Truth when he identified it with God ? She writes of "reflection on Truth (as) almost an obsession with him", of Gandhi as an unmasker of the deceptions of 'civilisation' in the same mould as Darwin, Marx and Nietzsche. Yet her answer is just a little surprising. Gandhi emerges often on the side of moral compromise. Her constant theme is of Gandhi the pragmatist, "a relentless and sometimes ruthless sense of the priorities of the moment." (p113) Gandhi, she acknowledges, had "a soft corner for inconsistencies". (p133) Given that some of we Gandhi commentators have been uncomfortably aware of the very strict moral regime he imposed on his two elder sons and some of his closest followers, it is worth quoting her acerbic comment, "as often happens in saying anything

about Gandhi the man, exaggerations and one-sided assessments tend to cloud the view taken.” (p189)

Firstly the text addresses some of the non-Indian influences on Gandhi, with special reference to the Russian and in the shape of Mazzini, the Italian. The big idea he learnt from the Russians, and this embraced both Madame Blavatsky and Tolstoy, and one that he could not have learnt from his own culture, was brotherhood. One completely new name she introduces is that of Timofei Bondariev, a peasant who converted to Judaism during the pogroms of the 1880s and set up Jewish agrarian communities. Was this the origin of Gandhi’s idea of bread labour ? She also speculates that Gandhi may have taken the idea of the oceanic circle from Peter Kropotkin. Had Henry Salt taken him to hear the Russian anarchist lecture in London ? Of course Gandhi as a religious man differed from the Russian populists with their secular often atheist agenda, but there was much in common in the ways they addressed the needs of the Russian and Indian peasantry and there still remains a great book to be written on the comparative histories of those peasantries. But Mazzini as a man of God is far closer to Gandhi. The fascination of early Indian nationalism, above all in Bengal, with the Italian is of course well known – I traced it myself in an essay *Congress and the Risorgimento: A Comparative Study of Nationalism*, published in *The Indian National Congress: Centenary Hindsight* edited by D A Low (OUP1988) – but Chatterjee rightly reminds us that Mazzini looked beyond the nation to 'the good of all'. My concern is whether both Mazzini and Gandhi overprivileged the role of religion in politics. Chatterjee also wryly acknowledges that modern Indian admirers of Gramsci use just the same Gramscian critique of Mazzini’s failure to endorse a genuine social revolution in Italy to fault Gandhi’s to do the same in India.

Chatterjee now turns to the more metaphysical aspects of Gandhi’s thought and in highly original chapters explores his attitudes towards vows, deception and war. This is where his readiness to compromise comes under review. Gandhi clearly was wedded to the taking of vows – think of those to his mother, to brahmacharya or celibacy, to what was to prove to be the birth of satyagraha in the Empire theatre in Johannesburg in 1906. I detect some ambiguity here. Curiously Gandhi was very impressed by Charles Bradlaugh’s refusal to take a vow except on his own terms when elected an MP and even attended the funeral of this outspoken atheist. Yet he was less than sympathetic to Charles Andrews who rued the day he had taken a vow to believe in the 39 articles on becoming an Anglican priest. When it comes to Gandhi’s attitudes to war, she speculates that he may have come up with the idea of 'a moral equivalent to war' in non-violence from William James. Gandhi saw war as 'quite literally dehumanising' and against the law of our being, and yet on several occasions went along with war as a member of an ambulance brigade – “one must be ready to be killed but not to kill” – and still saw

India as bound to support the King Emperor in the First World War. Gandhi she sees as engaged in “a strenuous wrestling with the feasibility of nonviolence” (p120) and satyagraha as “a science in the making”, “a way of life which could find expression in day to day living.” (p144) Gandhi indeed had an acute understanding of just how difficult it would be to win mankind over to an alternative to violence.

The text ends with chapters on Gandhi’s larger vision, on the oceanic circle, on the tension between tradition and modernity, on resolving religious difference. The oceanic circle, which he wrote about at the end of his life in 1946, is seen as Gandhi’s mode of ‘gathering in’, an ever widening collective, one that transcended nation and became universal, yet still enhanced the individual. In one of her arresting associations in the history of ideas she points to affinities between Adam Smith’s ‘inner voice’ and his views on the affective power of sympathy and Gandhi’s outlook. She rejects any simplistic categorising Gandhi as traditionalist or modernist: “I do not think Gandhi can be classified under any of the usual rubrics”. (p175) Gandhi had a highly subversive interpretation of *dharma*, loathing as he did distinctions between purity and pollution, between clean and unclean labour. And he saw *moksha* in this-worldly terms, a realisation of “a transformed society”. (p188) For Gandhi tradition “was not a repository of inviolable norms but a place of considered criticism, change and development.” (p191) Up against the communal divide Gandhi met the seemingly insuperable. He himself “was unfazed by otherness and in fact he was often attracted to it”. (p217) He believed in multiple identities. Nonviolence was seen as common to all religions and religion as praxis should work towards a fair society. But he could not staunch the holocaust of partition.

She concludes by emphasising “the extraordinary range of his acts of healing”. “What he sets out”, she affirms, “not through exhortation but through action, is his ideal of what it is to be civilised.” (p227)

The Promilla/Bibliophile press list of books on Gandhi and related topics is impressive, and this clearly should be known to the Gandhi Foundation, but my worry is that the author’s searching epitaph of her Gandhi scholarship may not become as well known to a wider readership as it so richly deserves.

Antony Copley

Gandhi Vs Terrorism Mark Juergensmeyer in *Daedalus*, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Winter 2007

This issue of *Daedalus* features a number of articles on violence and nonviolence with one by Mark Juergensmeyer dealing in particular with Gandhi’s approach. The author wrote in 1984 an inspiring book,

Fighting with Gandhi: A Step-by-step Strategy for Resolving Everyday Conflicts, which was republished as a paperback in 2002. The book shows how one can redirect the focus of a fight from persons to principles, determine the truth of one's position in an argument, cope with a recalcitrant opponent, use the power of noncooperation, and know when a conflict is truly resolved.

In the article Juergensmeyer deals with the attack by an Indian student Madan Lal Dhingra on a British official in London in 1909. Gandhi blamed not so much the act as the “mad idea” that lay behind it. The strategy for confronting terrorism should consist of the following elements: a) stop an act of violence in its tracks, b) address the issues behind the terrorism, c) maintain the moral high ground.

The author then questions whether these principles do work and uses the case of Northern Ireland. The situation of the two parties were extreme and uncompromising yet ultimately they were able to break through this impasse by employing several basic nonviolent techniques. These were: 1. Seeing the other side's point of view, 2. Not responding to violence in kind, 3. Letting moderate voices surface, 4. Isolating radical voices, 5. Setting up channels of communication. He concludes that at least in one case in recent political history terrorism has come to an end through nonviolent means.

But he adds: is it reasonable to conclude that this approach could work in other situations ? Could it work in Kashmir, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which might be more complex, and what about jihadi war ? In the latter, positions have been magnified into a moral contest of such proportions that it has become a sacred struggle. Is a nonviolent approach to conflict resolution relevant to the global jihadi war ? Juergensmeyer returns to the three principles of Gandhi outlined in the second paragraph above. The idea of war suggests an absolutism of conflict where reason and negotiation have no place and where opponents are enemies. For Gandhi the means used to conduct a struggle must be consistent with the goals to be achieved.

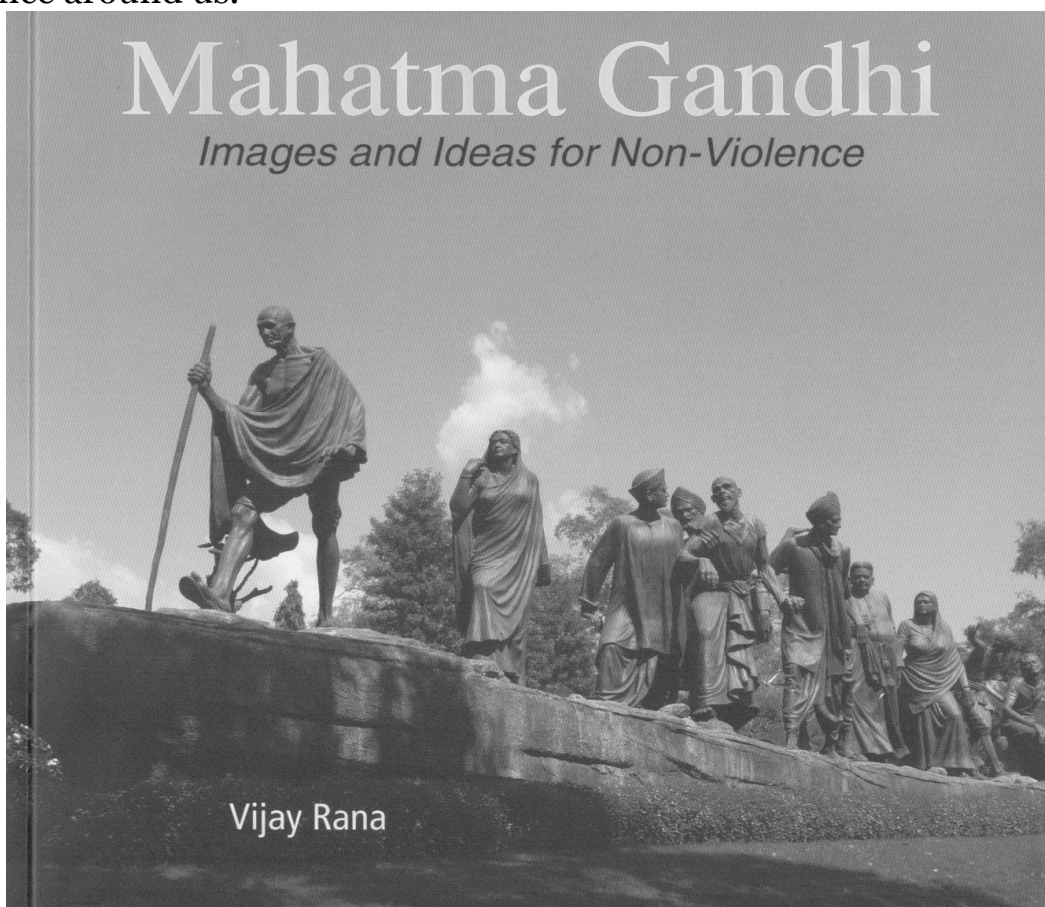
Piet Dijkstra

Mahatma Gandhi: Images and Ideas for Non violence

Vijay Rana Publisher: NRIfm ISBN: 978-0-9557026-0-0

This book is a well needed tonic for any one who believes in Gandhi's message but suffers from intermittent bouts of despair and melancholy due to some of the absurd directions that the political world has adopted. Vijay Rana's book should be on every 'chai' (tea) table as it is full of images which show how alive and vibrant Gandhi's message actually is. The book, which is a collection of images and quotes from Gandhi,

thankfully, does not churn out the old iconic images but has fresh, contemporary, relevant images from around the world showing Gandhi as part and parcel of popular culture even if his message is still not part of governmental political culture. The book contains images from Uruguay to Ireland, from Spain to Australia. It contains images of statues of Gandhi to wall murals and even popular graffiti. One of the most emotive pictures in the book is of a peaceful protester from the West Bank holding a placard showing the image of Gandhi and proclaiming 'nonviolence ends occupation and restores peace'. There is also a picture of a poster at the site where the Twin Towers stood showing a peaceful and saintly image of Gandhi amidst the hustle and bustle of every day New York life – a wonderful picture capturing the cruelty of the attack and the human need for progress and peace. There are also images of Gandhi quotes inscribed either professionally in stone or quotes scribbled on walls as part of popular culture. bFrom these images and poignant quotes we get a new insight into how Gandhi has been adopted by people from all walks of life and countries the world over. These seventy or so images are certainly images which most people would not have seen. They raise hope and give a feeling of global community despite the relentless images of violence around us.



The author Vijay Rana dedicated his time and his own money in publishing this book and throughout one can see the love and affection with which he pursued this cause.

Omar Hayat

Peter Cadogan 1921-2007

Peter Cadogan, who has died at 86, was once called ‘the most expelled socialist in England’. He campaigned effectively on many fronts for peace, justice and human rights in print, on the streets and through teams of like-minded thinkers. He moved from radical politics [Labour, Communist, Workers Revolutionary and Socialist Worker Parties] to radical spirituality as he came to the conclusion that William Blake, Gandhi and John MacMurray were his greatest mentors for living a compassionate life. He died a happy man.



Peter Cadogan was born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1921 where he witnessed the poverty and humiliation of workers during the Depression. The images of war veterans and unemployed miners begging on street corners stayed with him and drove him all his life. After working briefly as an insurance clerk, he went on to serve in the Air Sea Rescue Service from 1941 to 1946. This proved to be a profound experience. Desperate attempts to save lives, during which he found authentic friendship with the men under his command, were separated by long periods of inactivity in which he read Shaw, Wells, John MacMurray, Laski and, most importantly, Lenin's *State and Revolution*. He realised much later that this book “was a lethal confidence-trick”.

On demobilisation, he immediately joined the Communist Party to which he gave 10 devoted years, thrilling to the ideas buzzing around the Historian's Group of the CP with Christopher Hill, E P Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm and others. In the meantime, he studied history at Newcastle University, married, had a daughter and moved to Northampton and then Cambridge to teach history in Secondary Modern schools. He is still remembered in both as an inspiring teacher.

In 1956, Khrushchev's demolition of Stalin came as a blow and, when the USSR invaded Hungary, his sharp criticisms of the CP found their way into the national press. He was suspended and then quit, quickly joining the Labour Party. Two years later, he organised for them the first nuclear base demonstration against the American Thor missiles at Mepal, near Ely.

He became a founder member of the Socialist Labour League which later became the Workers Revolutionary Party and was expelled by the Cambridge Labour Party. Other joinings and expulsions of factions on the Left followed.

In 1960, Bertrand Russell proposed non-violent civil disobedience against nuclear weapons. Cadogan joined his Committee of 100 and their campaign climaxed in September 1961 with a vast but banned demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Russell was arrested along with 1300 others. Early in 1962, Russell sent him and others to the World Peace Council in Moscow where they “staged a free, unlicensed demonstration in Red Square against *all* Bombs including those of the Soviet Union. The police

moved in immediately. It was the first free demo in that Square since the 1920s and made world headlines”.

Within days of the Biafran War starting in May 1968, Cadogan had set up the Save Biafra Campaign and worked vigorously for 18 months getting a lot of national coverage. All to no avail as the Foreign Office “was stuck with the Lugard doctrine of 'one Nigeria' and the Wilson Government, as usual, did what it was told. London supplied Lagos with all its arms, ammunition and military advisers. Moscow provided its Air Force and trained its pilots - an unholy alliance to end all such alliances”. About a million innocent people died of starvation.

From 1970 to 1981, he was the General Secretary of the South Place Ethical Society at Conway Hall, known as London's ‘temple of dissent’. He saw his main task there as defending ‘the rational religious sentiment’, each individual’s ‘sense of the sacred’, and to this end conducted over 50 weddings and funerals. In 1975, he wrote “**Direct Democracy: An Appeal to the Professional Classes, to the Politically Disenchanted and to the Deprived. The Case for An England of Sovereign Regional Republics, Extra-Parliamentary Democracy and a New Active Non-Violence of the Centre**”, modelling his title on The Levellers and integrating his “revelatory discovery” of William Blake and Friedrich Nietzsche. In it, he pioneered the idea of the gift economy. This led to him co-founding the organisation and journal *Turning Point* with economist James Robertson which was published for over 25 years.

From 1981 until his retirement in 1993, Peter was Tutor in the History of Ideas in the Extra-Mural Department of London University and the Workers Education Association. By 1987 he had become disillusioned with all forms of protest and put his energies into what he called positive and practical solutions. From 1993, he worked for The Gandhi Foundation, leading their project in Northern Ireland and advocating Non-Violent Direct Action. He set up Values and Vision and Save London Alliance in his home on the base of his conviction that authentic national democracy can only emerge from local democracies. He became well-known in Kilburn for saving a local park, for Xmas lights on the High Road, his letters to the press and his garden. Local kids called him ‘Mr. Peter’.

During the 1990s he became the subject of great interest to historians, pre-eminent amongst them Professor Kevin Morgan, Professor of Politics and Contemporary History at Manchester University, who interviewed Peter in depth, placed the recordings in the National Sound Archives and anthologised his papers on the CP. Peter continued to e-mail and write articles and letters to the very end. Throughout 65 years of radical activism, he was never afraid to speak his mind, to challenge and question his own and other people’s thinking. This seemed at first to many as intolerance, even arrogance. In fact, all soon discovered that it was no more than his passion for accuracy and clear thinking in the overall pursuit of justice. Like Gandhi, he became and remained friends with all his temporary enemies. Over 70 people, old comrades and new friends, came to his bedside in St Mary’s Paddington or sent him messages of love and respect. Peter had co-founded The Blake Society in 1985, was its President for the first four years before becoming Life Vice-President. So it was appropriate that his last days fell during the month of Blake’s 250th anniversary. He quoted Blake’s poems to those around his bed and told us that Blake’s “Jerusalem” [Plate 99] ‘said it all’. His dying words were Blake’s moral imperative “Live differently”! Peter did just that, his integrity intact.

John Rowley

Instead of ending his copious and challenging notes, letters and writings "with all good wishes" or something, Peter would say "oxygen, peace, flowers". I loved that ending: oxygen for the life we breathe in and out; peace, we all yearn for whether secretly or openly; flowers, symbolising nature which surrounds and nourishes. Peter first introduced me to the Northern Ireland Working Group in London which he and I represented within the GF. In the 1980s, we joined a group to visit Dublin to discover more about "the Troubles" from across the border. He was indefatigable in his work and writings, giving great support to those he believed had "got it right" in Northern Ireland. He was a warrior of the right kind and he leaves a gap behind him. Go ye well, Peter. It was rich knowing you.

Denise Moll

Ba: The Woman of Substance

Nisha Bala Tyagi

Kasturba Gandhi (Ba) wife of Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi (Bapu) was simple, independent, **"unique, a class by herself"** and, in Bapu's own words, **"not a doll of clay"**.

Besides Bapu's commendable words for Ba, her strength of character was reflected in the extent to which she was devoted to her husband's Cause. Ba's concern for *swaraj* is clearly visible by the fact that in 1930, during the freedom struggle when Bapu was arrested, Ba continued his campaign and went about from village to village. She even served the wounded in hospitals and when she was advised rest by the doctors she remarked **"in Bapu's absence I must stand by the people."**

Ba defied all temptations of taste and luxuries to live a life of abstinence with Bapu. Ba went on a fruit diet whenever Bapu went on a fast.

Ba was an expert cook and loved to invite people to partake of her delicacies but had to forgo her art because of the vow of not to cultivate or have any special tastes in food. Ba cultivated the spirit of non-possession and non-attachment in things as an art.

Ba, humble in attitude yet defiant, made Bapu alert in sharing the ashram chores with her. Bapu knew that **'she would take him to task severely for being inefficient in doing his chores.'**

Ba and Bapu had 62 long years of companionship. Bapu, in describing his relationship with Ba, wrote **"I am constantly trying to win her love....." "if I had to choose a companion for myself life after life, I would choose only Ba Ours is a life of contentment, happiness and progress."**

'For you also am I a Mahatma?' was the question Bapu had put to Ba – to which she never replied.

Dr Tyagi is in the Philosophy Department, University of Delhi.

The Festival of Nonviolence

Tuesday 25th March to Saturday 12th April

The British Library will launch their exhibition ***The Life of Gandhi*** on Tuesday 25 March 2008. It will mark the 60 years that have passed since his death in January 1948 and it will travel around the UK until January 2009. The exhibition will be at Kingsley Hall from 29 March to 12 April.

The Gandhi Foundation will hold **The Festival of Nonviolence** in London from **25 March to 12 April** to complement the exhibition. The aim of The Festival is to bring to the attention of every Londoner the depth and power of Nonviolence and its ongoing critical relevance in solving many of the major problems of our day - from personal conflicts to the environment.

There are huge numbers of other people and groups in London whose work is also aimed at creating and maintaining social cohesion, communal harmony, authentic race and inter-faith relations, justice or environmental integrity using nonviolent means. They range from the Faiths, not-for-profit groups, most businesses, central and local governments to teachers, police, journalists, trades unionists, social and community workers, lawyers, managers, academics, artists, counsellors and politicians. A number of these are participating with their own events. The Festival will include cultural events such as music, poetry readings, films as well as talks.

To register individually or on behalf of a participating organisation contact
John Rowley, 73 Carysfort Road, London N16 9AD.

Tel: 0207-249-4471 or festival.of.nonviolence@gmail.com

When you register, we will send you an **Invitation to the Launch Party** of *The Life of Gandhi* at The British Library, 6:30pm on 25 March and email you weekly up-dates about who has joined and what they plan.

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- Former GF Peace Award recipient Denis Halliday (formerly United Nations) gave the 2007 Award to Media Lens on 2 December in Kingsley Hall. TV journalist John Pilger was also present.
 - Distinguished Gandhi scholar Bhihku Parekh delivered the GF Annual Lecture on the same day.
 - The Multifaith Event on 30 January 2008 was held in a synagogue (West London) for the first time and the resident choir sang during it. The collection is being given to Neve Shalom~Wahat al-Salam.
 - The Summer Gathering returns to the Abbey Sutton Courtenay in 2008. It is intended that other similar gatherings be encouraged to take place in different parts of the country from 2009.
 - It is the 80th anniversary of Kingsley Hall in 2008 as well as the 40th anniversary of founder Muriel Lester's death and a celebration will take place in September.

Although there are no Letters to the Editor in this issue he would be more than pleased to receive some for consideration for future issues.

