

The Gandhi Foundation
SUMMER GATHERING 2008

The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4AF
from Sat 26 July to Sat 2 August 2008

Faith and Action

This will be the 26th annual gathering of friends of the Gandhi Foundation.

We live together for a week to recreate something of
the experience of living in a Gandhian ashram.

The theme for this year is 'Faith and Action'. Religious beliefs tend to
draw out the best and worst in human behaviour.

We shall look at the extent to which Gandhi's principles of non-violence,
social justice, simple lifestyle etc are reflected in the literature
and teaching of the main world religions and how far they are practised.

Gandhi remained a Hindu all his life but learned from other religions.

He respected those who put their religious principles into practice.

The Summer Gathering is open to people of any faith or none who are
prepared to share their experience and listen to others with respect.

Charges range from £140 to £250 depending on accommodation
required and ability to pay. Children and full-time students pay half rate.

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Media Lens Cogitation: Nonviolence and the Self-Cherishing Mind

David Edwards and Matthew Bain

On 2nd December 2007 Media Lens were presented with the Gandhi International Peace Award by Denis Halliday, former UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Iraq and himself a recipient of the award in 2003. Here Matthew Bain, a Friend of the Gandhi Foundation, asks David Edwards about the relationship between Media Lens' work and the Gandhian principle of satyagraha.

Bain: In his struggles against oppression, Gandhi sought to break down the barriers between oppressors and oppressed, seeing them all as victims. Whereas the oppressed often suffered from physical or economic degradation, the oppressors suffered from moral degradation. Is this theory relevant to Media Lens' work ?

Edwards: The great Buddhist sage Shantideva said the "ancient enemies" of living beings, the real enemies, are greed, hatred and ignorance. These are the three causes and effects of the self-cherishing mind. It is greed, hatred and ignorance that lead people to believe their own suffering and happiness matter more than everyone else's. This leads us to put ourselves first and to ignore the consequences for others. Many of the miseries of the world are rooted in this fundamental willingness to subordinate the interests of others to our own.

It's tempting to see particular groups of people as the cause of all problems. But actually we're all afflicted by the "ancient enemies". So, for example, people are outraged if someone expresses racist or sexist prejudice – these are rightly seen as sources of immense suffering. But there is a far more deep-rooted prejudice – the bias whereby we see ourselves as far more important than all other people. Geshe Lhundub Sopa does a good job of explaining what we know but don't really recognise in ourselves:

"We think everything should focus upon us – all services and good things should be for *me*. Then of course we try to gain enjoyment, fame, wealth, and everything else that we feel is necessary for this *me*. We become angry if we see that something might prevent us getting those things or if anyone else gets something better. These feelings make us think, act, and speak in negative ways. Everyone is subject to this problem: we all act from selfishness." (Geshe Lhundub Sopa, *Steps on the Path to Enlightenment*, Volume 3, Wisdom Books, 2008, p.111)

We are almost always massively prejudiced in our own favour. We feel virtuous when we have one or two compassionate impulses, but it's

actually shocking how many of our thoughts are concerned with squeezing just a little more pleasure into our lives. Not into other people's lives, into our own. We want the best for ourselves; we're the centre of the universe. The human universe never was heliocentric, it has always been egocentric. Racial and sexual prejudices are sub-divisions of this ultimate bias.

Shantideva delivered his amazing "J'accuse!" to his own selfish mind as far back as the eighth century:

"O my mind, what countless ages
Have you spent in working for yourself?
And what great weariness it was,
While your reward was only misery!

"The truth, therefore, is this:
That you must wholly give yourself and take the other's place.
The Buddha did not lie in what he said –
You'll see the benefits that come from it." (Shantideva, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, Shambhala Publications, 1997, p.132)

He added:

"And so it is that if I want contentment,
I should never seek to please myself.
And likewise, if I wish to save myself,
I'll always be the guardian of others." (p.134)

Shantideva was here doing nothing less than rejecting his own favouritism towards himself ! And this was not some kind of gesture or stunt – his work, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, is a precise, step-by-step guide to actually achieving this result. When he advises that we "take the other's place," he means that we should work for the benefit of others as though it were our own, rather than working for our own benefit.

That this aspiration can emerge in a product of nature "red in tooth and claw" is astonishing. In my opinion, Shantideva's words constitute the ultimate revolutionary statement – the complete rejection of self-interest out of concern for the welfare of others.

Shantideva was not advocating this as a matter of righteous, hair-shirted stoicism. His point is that we need to replace the inevitable misery of the self-cherishing mind, of the "ancient enemies", with the almost unimagined happiness of the compassionate mind liberated from greed, hatred and ignorance. Of course the self-cherishing that Shantideva rejected is at the heart of all individual exploitation and of all exploitative systems of power. It is self-cherishing that causes us to build

and participate in these systems.

The claim is that thoughts pretty much obey the laws of Newtonian physics – they build psychological momentum in the absence of an opponent force. The more we are angry, the stronger our anger becomes. On the other hand, the more we are compassionate, the more anger dissipates. There is a marvellous quote that sums up the logic of self-restraint in a discussion on training the mind to become more patient: "It is not productive to one's practice to become impatient with those who are impatient." (Sopa, op. cit., p.284)

What we're trying to do is to increase compassion in the world, to decrease self-cherishing. This is achievable when we perceive greed, hatred and ignorance as the enemy. When we perceive particular individuals as the enemy, we tend to achieve the opposite result.

Bain: Gandhi named his active method to combat oppression 'satyagraha', meaning struggle for truth. Satyagraha looks for the moral levers in the oppressor's own psychology or mythology, and then discovers a way to pull them. Gandhi was successful in pulling the levers in the British psychology. As rulers of India we considered ourselves to be upholders of righteous constitutional rule, so when Gandhi allowed himself to be imprisoned by us he forced us to look in the mirror and see that we were not acting in accordance with our own self-image. Do you believe that there are elements of satyagraha in Media Lens' work?

Edwards: In his book, *Web Of Deceit*, the historian Mark Curtis showed how the mainstream media promote one key concept above all others: "Britain's basic benevolence."

(http://www.medialens.org/alerts/03/030603_Basic_Benevolence.ht) This provides an obvious lever for challenging exploitative power – the challenge to live up to the hype.

For example, in 2002, journalists like David Aaronovitch and Johann Hari claimed their real concern was for the welfare of the Iraqi people. So we investigated how this compassion has manifested itself during the subsequent catastrophic occupation. We examined to what extent they have drawn attention to the suffering of Iraqi refugees, to the patients dying in hospitals for the lack of the most basic equipment, to the small children dying from a lack of basic sanitation, and so on.

(See: http://www.medialens.org/alerts/08/080110_david_aaronovitch_a.php and http://www.medialens.org/alerts/04/041029_Siding_with_Iraq.HTM)

The claim of humanitarian intent is a very powerful propaganda weapon for systems of concentrated power, but it does allow dissidents to offer a challenge in that moral arena. And power is under pressure to provide credible answers, to be seen to live up to its own claims. The fact

is that people in our society *do* need to be persuaded to support violent interventions on humanitarian grounds. If these claims are shown to be bogus, then powerful interests have much greater difficulty in waging war – they can't railroad the population completely; they can't afford for democracy to be exposed as a total sham.

Government support for the Iraq war went ahead against overwhelming public opposition in several countries in 2003, but at a very high political cost to the likes of Blair, Aznar and Bush. It's fair to say that Blair's career was ruined by his mendacious campaign to manipulate Britain into war – his reputation has been demolished. It's hard now to remember just what a source of optimism he was for many people (liberal journalists in particular) before 2003.

Bain: Media Lens can only do so much. What other 'moral levers' are out there, that you would like other people to pull?

Edwards: Especially on the left, I think people need to look to the moral levers in themselves. It's so easy to place all our trust in facts and rational argument to win the battle of ideas, to convince everyone of the need for progressive change. But as discussed, the self-cherishing mind is highly adept at simply deflecting these facts and arguments from awareness. We should also be seeking to strengthen the capacity for kindness, compassion, love, patience and generosity in ourselves and others. We need a compassionate revolution, as opposed to a bomb-throwing revolution. Basically the left needs to start meditating on these subjects.

People often think this means sitting cross-legged on a cushion and emptying the mind of thoughts. But fully one-half of Buddhist meditation is called 'analytical meditation'. This type of meditation involves simply reflecting on these issues exactly as we've been doing here. What *are* the disadvantages of the self-cherishing mind ? Have I ever felt self-obsessed, really greedy for pleasure ? What was the impact of indulging these thoughts on my sense of well-being ? Where did they lead ? Have I ever felt coldly indifferent to everyone else who just seemed to be a damned nuisance ? How did I feel in those moments ? Have I ever been really generous ? Have I given something to someone solely out of an intention to make them happy with no thought of reward ? How did I feel in those situations ? How did other people react ?

A good place to start in this internal analysis is Matthieu Ricard's book *Happiness* (Atlantic Books, 2006). Geshe Lhundub Sopa gives an idea of how the mind can be trained:

"The way to meditate on love is similar to the manner of meditating on compassion. Where compassion is wanting sentient beings to be free from misery, love is wanting them to possess happiness, enjoyment, and

bliss. So here we look at sentient beings, beginning with our relatives, and see that they do not even have worldly happiness ... Go back and forth, first thinking that sentient beings lack a specific thing and therefore they suffer this or that type of misery, and then wishing that they have the cause of happiness. Think this way again and again and you will come to feel like a mother whose dear child is in need of many things. A mother wants her child to have the things that will make him or her happy; she sincerely desires to help her child obtain these things." (Sopa, op. cit., p.89)

This kind of repetitive practice gradually moves the momentum of the mind away from ruthless, unrestrained self-cherishing, towards kindness. We can sensitise our minds to the suffering of others, to compassion.

Many of us think we're prevented from trying harder to help others because of indifference. But this couldn't be more wrong. The problem is not indifference; it's our passionate dedication to serving ourselves. Our problem is not laziness but that we're working so hard to satisfy our desires, to indulge our egos, to get everything we want.

But the response to the self-cherishing habit is not to somehow just try harder, to whip ourselves into being more committed people. Our self-cherishing minds will certainly not tolerate this for very long – it's far too much like hard work. We might manage for a while but pretty soon we'll decide all this suffering is deeply unfair – 'It's not my fault the world's full of suffering, and anyway what can one person really achieve?' – at which point we'll likely disappear off to have some fun.

The solution is to challenge the false claims of the self-cherishing mind and to investigate the liberatory potential of the other-cherishing, compassionate, mind.

And there are real surprises here. The principal one being that focusing primarily on our own happiness guarantees suffering for ourselves and others. Curiously, happiness lies in exactly the opposite direction.

www.medialens.org

23rd Anniversary Celebration of The London Peace Pagoda

14 June 2008 at 2pm in Battersea Park, London

followed by tea and refreshments and ending at 5pm

Interfaith prayers for peace, speeches, devotional music and dance

This is the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Park

so there will be other celebrations in the Park

Gandhi and Peace Studies

David Maxwell

What are Peace Studies ? They describe a new academic discipline first introduced in the second half of the 20thC. Peace Studies draw on subjects like anthropology, psychology, political science and ethics, but differ from them in stating a required outcome, Peace. In 1985 the idea of such a discipline drew flak from commentators like Roger Scruton who wrote in *The Times* newspaper : “When the tide of drivel has swollen to such proportions that the University of Bradford can offer a first degree in a subject, peace studies, that does not even exist, it is surely time to ask whether there might be a better use of taxpayer’s money”. Bradford replied: “For the record there are university departments and research centres in the USA, West Germany, Canada, Holland, Finland, Sweden and many other countries.”

The first thirty years of Bradford’s Department of Peace Studies was a time of remarkable growth. When it opened in 1974 there were 5 staff and 20 students who believed that peace could be studied, violent conflict prevented or resolved, and, in the long run, war as an institution abolished. The first Professor, Adam Curle, successfully mediated to end the war in Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War. His last work before he died was helping the war-traumatised in former Yugoslavia. By 2002, 20 Peace Studies students had grown to 200 a year. Many were post-graduates. The number of PhD students is currently about 100. The external examiners recently gave the Department top grades in everything they assessed.

Students come from all over the world. They go on to jobs with NGOs, as diplomats, journalists, and consultants. Others move to other universities and teach similar courses, sometimes with different names eg Conflict Resolution or Transforming Conflict. Andrew Rigby teaches Reconciliation and Forgiveness at Coventry University. Gandhi would have approved of that ! There are frequent attempts to get new courses going, and the number of books on peace studies listed on Google demonstrates the potential – 4,000 books, with 3,500 of them best sellers. However, finding the funding for academics to set up and students to attend new courses requires more money and effort than buying a few popular books. Those tempted to give up, can find inspiration in Gandhi’s life story. Note the decades of strenuous preparation that preceded each major breakthrough.

Why the current explosion of interest in Peace Studies ? Consider this change. When Gandhi was born, wars were fought with footsoldiers and cavalry and no weapon more destructive than a cannon. Remember Tennyson’s Poem of that period ? The Charge of the Light Brigade. By

the end of Gandhi's life one atom bomb dropped from one plane could wipe out a whole city. Gandhi, horrified by the atom bomb, wrote that it convinced him even more strongly that the way forward had to be a nonviolent one, not a military one. Gandhi's greatness lay in a lifetime of actual experiments in nonviolence. He challenged us all in his dictum: "Be the change you want to see."

It is no accident that Peace Studies was first introduced as an academic discipline in its own right in 1950 in the Universities of Michigan and Oslo. Both Kenneth Boulding in Michigan and Johan Galtung in Oslo were admirers of Gandhi. After two atom bombs had abruptly ended World War II, far-sighted people could see the danger later so narrowly averted in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Studying International Relations as if war and peace were equally valid ways of conducting diplomacy had begun to seem questionable when large scale nuclear war could destroy life on earth. The new discipline of Peace Studies was about conducting international relations without resorting to war.

In the 50s the Rev Martin Luther King Junior studied Gandhi and took his nonviolent experiment further. His success showed that Gandhi's method did not depend solely on the charisma of Gandhi himself or the Indian context of nationalism versus imperialism. Successful resistance to segregation by the black churches in the Southern States of the USA still had in common with Gandhi's satyagrahas three major factors: disciplined nonviolence, religious conviction by those who made major personal sacrifices, and sympathetic support from wider public opinion fed by media reporting. The effect of the Civil Rights Movement was to add an ethnic relations dimension to Peace Studies.

I would like to talk briefly about the current job of one graduate who wrote his PhD at Bradford on Gandhi, Timmon Wallis. After working abroad as a peacemaker he currently trains and assesses peaceworkers for International Alert. Gandhi would have been delighted at the concept of training peace workers. His name for what he called a 'peace army' was 'shanti sena'. Gandhi insisted that peace requires the same courage and trained discipline as war. Peaceworkers need training in courage and discipline. Gandhi tried in his Ashrams and through his Constructive Work to provide some training so that people could go into nonviolent action fully prepared and supported. Peaceworkers UK currently provides five levels of competence in peace work and assesses responses of students by simulations of real situations.

A current development in the Peace Studies course at Tuft University, USA is that students are being asked to commit themselves to the equivalent of the Hippocratic Oath which doctors make. They are required to promise to follow their studies by going into an ethical job

and to make ethical choices in their future lives. Gandhi, who made solemn vows at key moments in his life including the vow to resist Indian Registration in Africa, would have approved of that. But reading of Tufts' requirements does raise the question of how few ethical demands are made by academia generally of students. Gandhi vowed vegetarianism when he studied in London. He persuaded 3,000 to vow nonviolence in 1906. When he read Ruskin's *Unto This Last* on a train journey in South Africa, it led to a dramatic personal change in lifestyle. It would be interesting to know whether some military sponsored students currently at Bradford University will complete the course able to feel that peace studies and military strategies can be mixed or tried in turn, or whether there is a whole religious or moral ethic behind peace studies, dependent on trust, dependent on consistency over time. The concept of mixing peace studies and war studies seem as dubious as trying to mix oil and water. Peace Studies ultimately respects life, whereas the bottom line in War Studies would appear to be the death of the less powerful.

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## Ancient Wisdom

*Negeen Zinovieff*

The truth is as old as the hills, Gandhi points out. In discovering the educational theories of the great master of Chinese philosophy, Confucius (born 551BCE), we find they are often similar to that of Gandhi who insisted that teachers should be role models for their pupils. How far this idealism can be practised is anyone's guess.

By comparing Confucius to Gandhi I'm not in the least bit suggesting that Gandhi knew of Confucius' writings. For Gandhi as for Confucius learning did not usually mean the accumulation of facts for their own sake, it meant the gathering of knowledge for the sake of guiding one's conduct. The constant learning to which Gandhi and Confucius were devoted was the pre-requisite to achieving improvements in others. People must be impeccably moral.

Gandhi writes, "The condition has been growing upon me that whatever is possible for me is possible even for a child". (*Trust in God*, p13)

The relationship with the subconscious is important. The subconscious is the heart and knows more than the mind in certain cases. For instance, the subconscious of everyone knows it has a godhead but that she does not have a past life. So Mr X is a healthy being with a soul who has past lives and has not forgotten them all. It is outrageous to tell a person that in his or her past life he or she was illiterate and that is why

he or she must suffer. The heart and mind are likened to a coin: on one side is reason, the other side the heart.

Why teach a people that their sorrows come from a previous life ? The poor psyche has enough problems consuming inadequate facts in his or her own culture without teachers insisting that the psyche has previous lives.

Confucius writes, "The principle that education should be readily available to all who seek it follows naturally from the idea that all men are born equal in the sense that every man has the innate capacity to develop into a sage". Gandhi too believes that literacy in itself is no education. He writes that a child's mind should not be cluttered with facts and figures. "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man – body, mind and spirit". (*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p.379)

Both Masters attached importance to culture, which enriches the whole person. Again Gandhi writes, "I attach far more importance to the cultural aspect of education than to literacy". For Confucius too literacy was of no importance except in so far as it served the purpose of moral training.

Gandhi says by spiritual training he means education of the heart. "A proper and all round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child." (Ibid p.378) He continues to say that one is not mere intellect not the gross animal body, nor the heart and soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all three is required in the true making of the whole human person and constitutes the true recovery of education.

I studied philosophy of education at the Institute of Education (University of London) and they had no clue what the heart and soul implied and considered a human being as mere moral intellect. By culture one means the way of life and both Gandhi and Confucius knew how attractive morals are. Confucius thought that "it was equally true that history's purpose was to serve as a moral guide to present conduct". (*Confucius*, Raymond Dawson, p.15)

Both Masters thought that the teaching of morals (by a strictly moral person) was the foundation of education. Therefore a person, says Confucius, who had shown himself to have learnt certain lessons could be described as "fond of learning".

Gandhi emphasises that a child should learn a handicraft so he uses his faculties from an early age. Using the imagination is essential in educating people. Another common feature is that Confucius and Gandhi are against any violence and give different terms to a nonviolent way of life. Confucius says that ideally the enemy should be won over by a display of China's superiority rather than being conquered militarily.

(Ibid, p.15)

Gandhi believed the truth had been uncovered many times for humanity by saints and sages. Carl Gustav Jung believed in the collective subconscious. It is not really surprising that Confucius who is a Master should have approached the theme of education in the same way as Gandhi.

Negeen was educated in various universities in Russia, USA and Iran and is a writer.

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Historic Visit to our Office and Cell

The Secretary warmly welcomed Jackie Nicolle, her sister Pat Osborne – their mother, Stella Salmon, and husbands, on a cold pre-Spring day, 22 February 2008.

They were special visitors because Stella had been a small girl when Gandhi and Charlie Chaplin met, just a few streets away ! We hadn't known that their place of meeting was in a local home, rather than a hotel, which had been believed until Jackie enlightened us. David Baker showed them the short video clip of the meeting, and it then became obvious where the meeting had taken place. Below is an extract of Jackie's own account.



L to R: John Nicolle, Jackie Nicolle, Stella Salmon, Pat Osborne, Lawrence Osborne
outside Gandhi's cell at Kingsley Hall

My mother was born in the East End, the youngest child of Dr Keith Jamsett and his wife, in 1923. Dr Keith Jamsett was a Parsee, born in Bombay in about 1873. He was a doctor and worked near where he lived in Canning Town. He died aged 56 years at his home, 45 Beckton Road, Canning Town, in December 1929. My grandmother (Ada Jamsett), who was originally from York, subsequently sold the house to another Indian (a Dr Katial) but I believe that this is the house in which Gandhi had his famous meeting with Charlie Chaplin and at which my grandmother was present (I think she was there as the recent owner of the house – I am not entirely sure how well she knew the doctor who had bought the house). My mother (who was only 6 years old when her father died) still has the autographs of Gandhi and Charlie Chaplin that her mother had asked for at this meeting.

Jackie Nicolle



Dr Jamsett outside his surgery 57 Beckton Road and the view of the building from the road

JOHN LINTON: a Gandhian memory

John Linton, MA (Oxon), is 97 years young and lives in Oxford. He is weaving a rich tapestry through his life with a varying career, prose & poetry writings, travels, marriages – and much else besides. He has lived in India and has a great love of the country. As a young man he abandoned an Anglican theological training when he could no longer accept the Creed, and much later in life found a spiritual home with the Quakers. He went on to found the Quaker Universalist Movement, embracing Quakers from a non-Christian background.

I went to meet him in Oxford and admired his lively mind and keen intellect. When he started to talk about Gandhi I said “please stop! let me find paper and pencil.....”

“In August 1942, when I was an officer in the Indian Army and attending a course at the Intelligence School, Karachi, I learnt that Sir Stafford Cripps, a leading member of the British war-time Government, had been sent to India with what was called the “Cripps Offer”. In a nutshell, the Offer asked India to co-operate with Britain in the war effort, and in return Britain would grant India independence on the cessation of hostilities.

“Gandhi was asked if he agreed with this Offer and said “No – it was an offer on a post-dated cheque”. The Cripps Offer was turned down. Gandhi then started the ‘Quit India’ Movement – a serious threat as it meant that all services were disrupted. The Army had to take suitable action and my Unit was posted to Bengal, where dissidents wanted to interfere with our activities, and our journey there from Karachi was badly held up and delayed.

“In my view, Gandhi’s Quit India movement was unfortunate because by turning down the Cripps Offer, it meant that instead of India becoming independent after the War, there was a 2-year gap during which time the demand for Partition took place. There were others in India too who felt it was a mistake and that the tragedy of Partition between India and Pakistan could have been avoided.

“My wife Erica and I served as Quaker International Affairs Representatives in Delhi from 1961-3 and 1971-5. We had an interesting time, organising meetings between all the international representatives, and became known to eminent foreign visitors who could talk about the Indian situation from an English viewpoint. Among those were Archbishop Coggan, Barbara Ward, Vera Brittain, etc. Also, Kingsley Martin, who as its Editor made *The New Statesman* essential reading for Labour Party members. Although I never met Gandhi, a Major friend of mine had the job of looking after him in jail and grew to admire him greatly. I did meet his son, Devadas, his wife and 2 children, and learned about his remarkable father.”

My thanks to John for editing this piece and for a most enjoyable visit.
His book: *Athwart the Storm*, Prose & Poems compiled by Eleanor Nesbitt.
(William Sessions Ltd, York – ISBN 1 85072 153 X)

Denise Moll

Martin Luther King Jnr, The Civil Rights Movement and Gandhian Philosophy

Michael Lewin

Gandhi's long standing commitment to, and promotion of passive resistance eventually paved the way for full Indian independence in 1948. The long and arduous struggle that he had engaged with, for over fifty years, finally culminated in the end of British imperialistic rule that had gripped Indian life for centuries. At this historical point Gandhi's political and spiritual standing in the international community reached an all time high; totally unprecedented in the era of modern politics. His life, his struggle, his achievements were powerfully unique – inspiring and enriching so many others, not only in his own country but throughout the wider world. His legacy – based on deeply nourishing, spiritual values – came to inspire and influence a young, black student who was studying at a theological college in America and helped to support and guide a black population in their quest for greater equality. ***“His message was so profound and electrifying that I left the meeting and bought a half-dozen books on Gandhi's life and works.”***

Martin Luther King in his formative student years

Only a few weeks after Gandhi was assassinated at a prayer meeting in the grounds of Birla House, New Delhi, Martin Luther King Jnr was being ordained at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. King had graduated from Morehouse College the year before, and was set on furthering his studies and pursuing the life of a minister like his father and grandfather before him. Whilst at Crozer Theological Seminary, King was exposed to the teachings of Gandhi. They made an immediate and marked impact on him influencing deeply, his work in the Civil Rights Movement.

On a Montgomery bus, in 1955, a black woman by the name of Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger. The driver of the bus, which operated under segregated laws, brought the vehicle to a stop. The police were called and Rosa Parks was arrested. This one, simple act of protest, carried out by one, single woman later grew into a campaign – the Montgomery Bus Boycott which prepared the ground for Martin Luther King Jnr to become a civil rights leader. All over the southern states at this time, segregation was a way of life that effectively created social, political and economic disadvantage for black people, and although there had been an history of protests before, this was the start of something qualitatively and quantitatively different. The campaign received widespread attention and eventually the Supreme Court declared that segregation on Montgomery buses was unconstitutional and therefore had to end. A decisive victory had been secured by King

and his followers but this was not just a legal victory but a moral victory as well that involved an entire black community in enforcing the boycott.

The nonviolent approach of King's activism, which was proving to be highly successful and sincerely regarded, was directly based on his study and understanding of Gandhi's experience in South Africa and India. King was bringing a deep awareness of Gandhi's spiritually pragmatic doctrine to the Southern States of America and beyond.

Because of King's interest in, and promotion of Gandhian ideals he was invited by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to visit India in 1959. The trip went well, with King later stating that it made a profound and lasting effect upon him. On his return to America he recommenced his efforts in the civil rights struggle with renewed determination and vigour.

King worked tirelessly for the cause of justice over the years but increasingly became disenchanted with the criticism levelled at him, especially from predominantly white religious leaders who thought his actions were too radical and unsettling. Arrested for his participation in the Birmingham campaign (1963) King wrote his famous 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'. This was an attempt to rebuke all the conservative clergymen who criticised his stand. He wrote: *"When you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in a airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society... when you are humiliated day in day out by nagging signs reading 'white' and 'coloured', when your first name becomes 'nigger', your middle name becomes 'boy' (however old you are) and your last name becomes 'John' and your wife and mother are never given the respected title 'Mrs' then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait..."*

The campaign for civil rights, under King's leadership, did continue, had to continue.

In 1963 King led the March on Washington and delivered his rousing speech: "I have a dream..." A year later he visited Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize – the youngest ever recipient of the award.

In the Selma Protest of 1965, along with over seven hundred other marchers, King was arrested. Being a Nobel Prize winner this news made headlines around the world and brought to the attention of a mass audience what was really happening in America. Segregation was now fully under the spotlight as never before and despite the bombing of his home, the physical attacks on his life, the jail sentences and the death threats, King, with committed persistence and tenacity, carried on his work to pursue greater equality for the black community.

In Memphis, on 3 April 1968, on the eve of a planned march, King made one of his most stirring speeches: *"Well, I don't know what will happen now; we've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountain top. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life – longevity has its*

place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And so I'm happy tonight; I'm not worried about anything; I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

The very next day King was shot dead.

The Forging of the Civil Rights Movement: The Gandhian Influence

"I firmly believe that the Gandhian philosophy of nonviolent resistance is the only logical and moral approach to the solution of the race problems in the United States." Martin Luther King

Through his engagement with the civil rights movement King remained faithful to Gandhian ideals. He believed, from a Christian perspective, that justice would eventually prevail for the black community if people were prepared to stand up and unite in the noble cause of nonviolent resistance. His fundamental belief in this moral stance was unshakeable and informed all his work, but there were others, even among blacks, who questioned this approach.

Malcolm X, the Black Power leader, vehemently opposed King for adopting a conciliatory position with the white leadership of America. He believed that black people should stand up and fight for their rights in whatever way it was felt to be necessary – and this included meeting violence with violence. King's spiritual values dictated the opposite – that you can only meet violence with nonviolence. King had realised, along with Gandhi, the spiritual truth expressed in many of the world's religions that hate can only ever really be overcome and eliminated by the practice of love, and by no other means. But despite their differences, King did have a deep respect and regard for Malcolm X. He realised that the Black Power Movement, similar to the Civil Rights Movement, was only trying to challenge a system that for too long, had effectively created and recreated inequality and injustice for black people. Both Movements, at their core, wanted to advance the well being of black people and leave behind the repressive, growth denying forces of an unfair society. King clearly recognised this, his only criticism was on the methodological approach for dealing with this inequality and injustice. In his student days King thought differently: *"Prior to reading Gandhi,"* he said, *"I had about concluded that the ethics of Jesus were only effective in individual relationships. The 'turn the other cheek' philosophy and the 'love your enemies' philosophy were only valid, I felt, when individuals were in conflict with other individuals; when racial groups and nations were in conflict a more realistic approach seemed necessary. But after reading*

Gandhi, I saw how utterly mistaken I was.” This was a decisive growth point for King, one which was to remain with him for the rest of his days.

At the heart of Gandhi's teachings, which King fully adopted, lay the sacrosanct notion that all life is sacred, a gift of God, and therefore had to be respected and protected at all costs – even that of the opposing 'enemy'. King realised that it was only through adopting Gandhi's policy of Satyagraha (truth force) that lasting, positive change could be implemented and so this was his journey, one of showing respect and dignity for ALL and it cost him dearly – the loss of his own life.

Conclusion

Even in today's world there are still gross inequalities with unacceptable levels of poverty that plague our sense of decency and fair play. It's a position that has been allowed to continue for too long. The challenge for us all, individually and collectively is to reach out and give of our best so that others may be allowed to flourish in a world that was created for all – every last one of us. This invitation to bring out the very best in others, and ourselves – to grow beyond the restrictive and limiting mindset that perpetuates a 'them and us' mentality – is an invitation to participate fully in the spiritual gift of life and who amongst us wants to withdraw from that gift, wants to ignore the sacrifice of lives given for others ?

12th International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns

Friday 5th to Sunday 7th September, 2008

University of Manchester Fallowfield Campus

Professor Paul Rogers, University of Bradford Peace Studies
Department, is the keynote speaker on

'Towards Sustainable Security: looking ahead to how
we can construct a sustainable system of security in the 21st century'.
This conference comes at a time when our international movement is
gaining momentum. High profile legal cases, increasing world wide
resistance to war, a growing international community of conscientious
objectors to war tax and a gathering energy are leading to a more
coherent international approach.

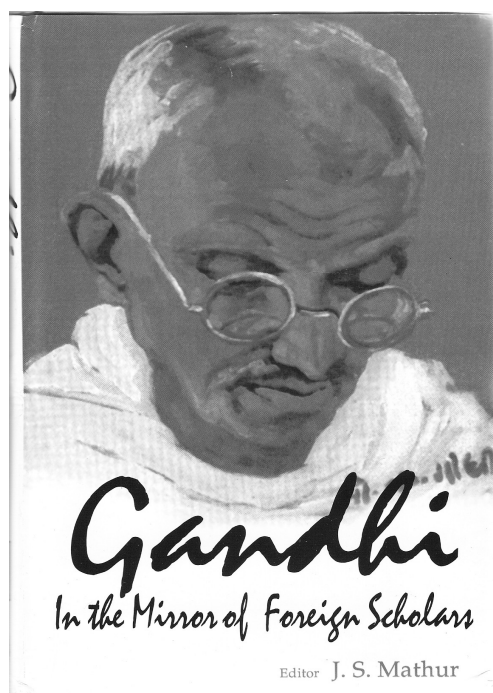
The proposed theme for the conference is how to co-ordinate our
campaigns towards a shared international platform, which will include
initiating a complaint to the UN.

For further information: Conscience, the Peace Tax Campaign,
1b Waterlow Road, London N19 5NJ
Tel: 0207561 1061, www.conscienceonline.org.uk

Book Review

Gandhi in the Mirror of Foreign Scholars Edited by J S Mathur
National Gandhi Museum and Gyan Publishing House 2007
ISBN 81-212-0961-7 HB pp383 Rs 720

This substantial volume contains 49 essays, written over a period of 35 years, which first appeared in either *The Journal of Gandhian Studies* (the older ones) or *Gandhi Prasang*, a journal in Hindi and English, both edited by Prof J S Mathur.



The authors come from Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Britain, United States, Australia, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, Germany, Guyana, Hungary, Ghana, Japan, and Finland and so the collection is an international one. Some of the authors are well known to readers of Gandhi literature such as Johan Galtung, Gene Sharp, E F Schumacher, Stanley Wolpert. The book contains several essays by the Nobel Prize winning economists Jan Tinbergen and Gunnar Myrdal.

The essays seem to cover two main issues: economics and development on the one hand, and peace, satyagraha and nonviolence on the other; a smaller number deal with more philosophical and multifaceted issues. Gandhi is identified as an egalitarian but opinions differ on whether a core concept of his, namely trusteeship, can deliver this. Myrdal praises his 'integrated' approach to economics, ie bringing in sanitation and health, nutrition, education, land ownership and so on. One of the essays I liked most is by William Stuart Nelson, a name I did not recognise. His essay is one of the most attractive expositions of Gandhian nonviolence I have come across. He was an African-American academic who visited India a number of times and was with Gandhi on his tour of Noakhali in Bengal during the communal disturbances of 1947. He later gave strong support to Martin Luther King.

It is almost inevitable in a collection of essays that the quality will vary, and some disappoint with errors, but overall it presents a rich source of material by mainly non-Indian writers with expositions of many of Gandhi's most important ideas.

George Paxton

Denise Moll

Denise Moll will retire as Secretary at the end of the year, having completed six years in the role. She is a life GF Friend, so will not be disappearing entirely! Denise says:

“I've had a wonderful and deeply challenging time as Secretary. Getting to know some of you GF Friends personally, and working with the Executive Committee has been an immense privilege and pleasure. It was quite impossible to 'follow the act' of such a man as Surur Hoda, without whom the GF would not exist so I came in knowing there needed to be a team working together to take the impulse forward – and I believe we are truly on the way to achieving this. Gandhi provokes a variety of ways of how one sees his life impacting on today's world, but it seems to me his ethos of

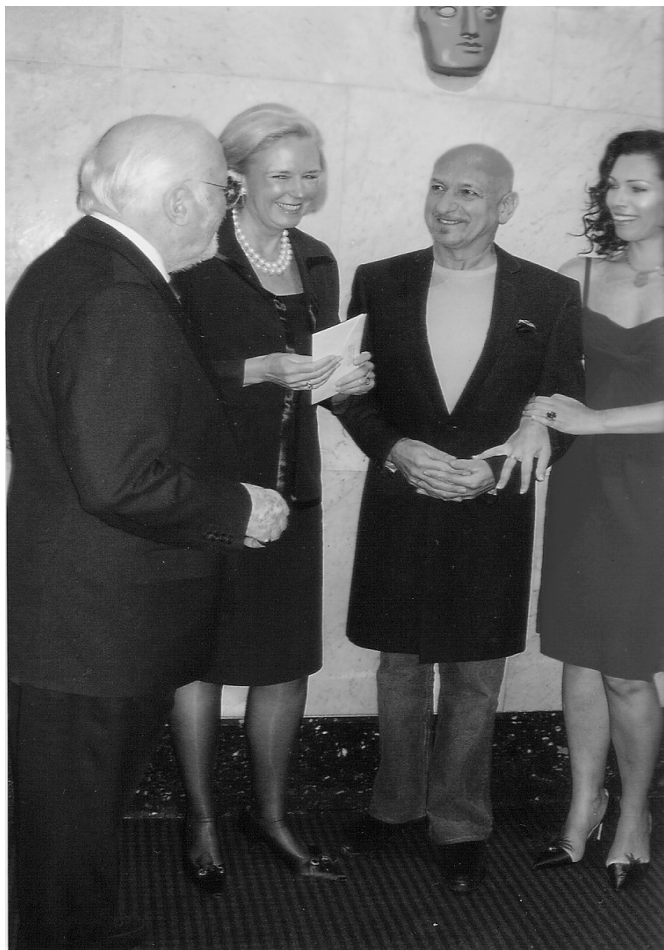


nonviolence coming through his search for truth, is needed more than ever. I know the Foundation will go from strength to strength, and there will be much to do in 2008 to ensure the future looks good !”

From the Secretary – Gandhi Foundation news

Courtesy of our Founder & Patron, Lord Attenborough, a major fund-raising event, specifically for a key worker for the GF, was held on 1st December 2007 at BAFTA. This was to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the release of the film *Gandhi*. The film was followed by a reception and dinner. Lord Bhikhu Parekh introduced Lord Richard Attenborough and actor Sir Ben Kingsley who gave moving speeches on the role of nonviolence in society (these will shortly be available on our web site). Tickets were £250, and helping us find the 150 or so people who attended was The Prem Rawat Foundation. This organisation also donated £10,000 to be given to our overseas humanitarian projects. The

GF distributed £7,500 to the Patna Collective (see website), £2,000 to the Sacred New Era School in Ladakh, and £500 to Village India Aid. (Further information will be available in the Annual Report). After expenses, the GF was in receipt of around £15,000 towards the new post of a GF Development Worker, soon to be advertised.



The Executive Committee decided that in view of *The Festival of Nonviolence* held in the Spring, there would be no Annual Gathering this year – but instead a copy of the Annual Report will be circulated to all GF Friends with the next issue of *The Gandhi Way*.

We have been informed that a long time Friend of the GF has left a substantial legacy to the organisation. She was retired psychiatrist Dr Nancy Heron Smith.

The GF is appealing for donations (see enclosed leaflet) to complete the mobile exhibition panels to accompany the Gandhi material to be used in the *educational project* based at Kingsley Hall.

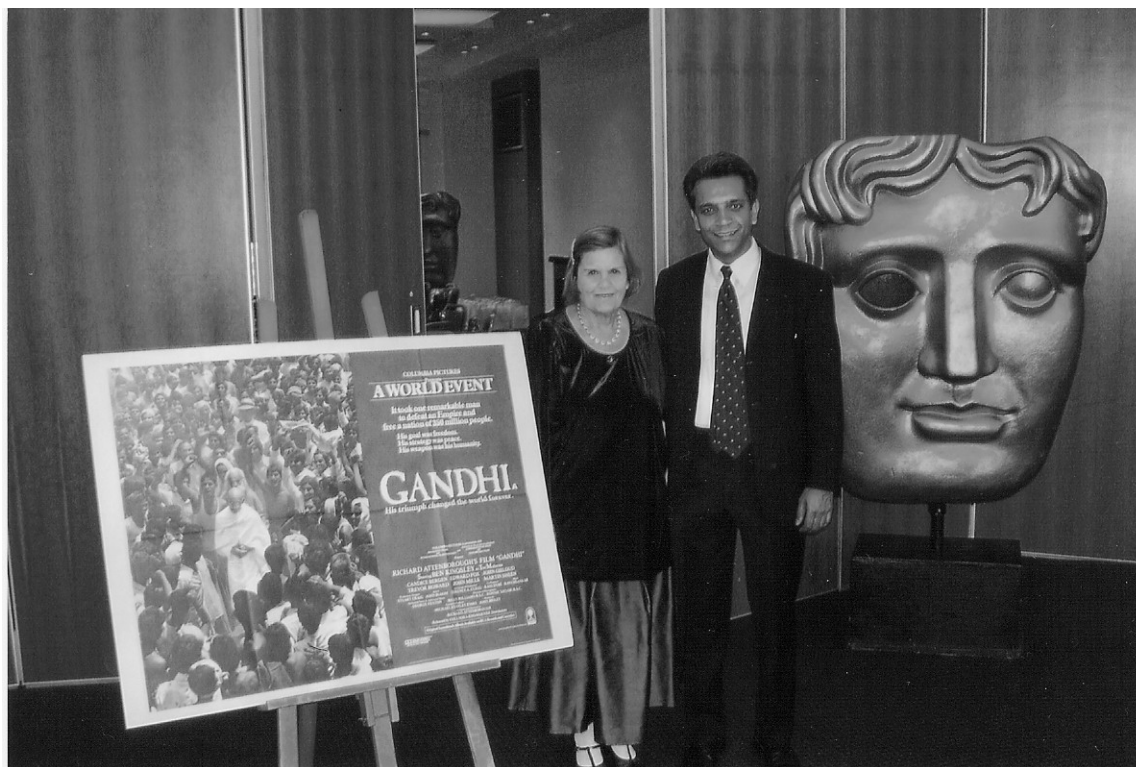
Piet Dijkstra of the Netherlands has generously offered his collection of

audio-visual material on Gandhi to the GF. They will be very useful for the educational project.

The *Executive Committee* of the GF is at present unbalanced in gender and age (see website for members) and efforts are being made to recruit more women and younger people. If you fall into these categories and are interested in knowing more please contact the GF Secretary.

A new *International Journal of Gandhi Studies*, based in the USA at James Morrison University, is being planned. Antony Copley of the GF has been asked to join the Editorial Board.

A 3 week *Festival of Nonviolence* was launched at the British Library on 25 March when a touring exhibition 'The Life of Gandhi' devised by the BL was displayed. During the following few weeks many organisations put on events relating to Gandhi and nonviolence at different venues around London. A Golden Indian Bean tree was also planted in the grounds of Kingsley Hall in the presence of a Minister from the Indian High Commission and the Director of the Nehru Centre. The Festival concluded on 12 April with a World Music Day concert at Kingsley Hall. The idea and most of the organising energy was John Rowley's. The exhibition itself is moving around the country in the coming months so keep a look out for it in your area.



Denise Moll and Omar Hayat at BAFTA event

Gandhi in the News

Mahatma Gandhi's fight with his ego and subsequent victory represents the qualities of what can be termed as true Jihad, according to an eminent Islamic spiritual leader from Turkey. "Gandhi is the martyr who has performed the real Jihad. As he taught us to first fight with one's ego and win, but never with guns," said Sheika Cemalnur Sargut, who heads the Istanbul branch of TURKKAD, the Turkish Women's Cultural Association.

Baba Amte, one of India's greatest Gandhians, died at the age of 93 on 9 February 2008. He began his career as a well-to-do lawyer but began to change in outlook after staying at Gandhi's ashram. After encountering someone suffering from leprosy he radically changed and set up an ashram which he called Anadwan or Grove of Joy. At the time of his death about 3,000 disabled people and those with leprosy lived there and worked the farm and ran schools, hospitals and workshops. In his later years, in spite of a degeneration of the spine, he turned to the position of tribal people and in particular the effect of building large dams which displaced them. In 1990 he went to live near the Narmada river where the largest of all dam projects was planned. He organised protests and direct action against the project and recommended micro-dams as an alternative.

In recent elections in Pakistan there was a large drop in the support for 'religious' parties. Out of 272 seats the drop was from 56 to only five. Of particular interest to Gandhians was the revival of the secular Awami National Party which grew out of the Khudai Khidmatgar or Red Shirt movement of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Khan was an ardent believer in nonviolence and became a staunch supporter of Gandhi. Imprisoned by the British, he was later imprisoned by the Pakistan authorities for many years. He died in 1988. Now his grandson, Asfandiyar Wali Khan leads the ANP which defeated the Islamist party in the North-West Frontier Province. Khan said: "There is a very clear polarisation taking place ... on one side those striving for peace, nonviolence, and a future of co-operation with the international community, and on the other those who stand for confrontation and hatred. They are men of violence, but we refuse to be cowed".

[Thanks to the Friends who my attention to these news items.]

Peace Chain Around Faslane Saturday 14 June 2008

Protest against the Government's plan to build a
new nuclear weapon system which would be at Faslane until 2055
More details: Scottish CND, 15 Barrland Street, Glasgow G41 1QH
Tel: 0141 423 1222; www.banthebomb.org