

**The Gandhi Foundation Annual Lecture
and the International Peace Award 2008**

Rev Harold Good OBE & Father Alex Reid CSSR

will receive the Award for their work in Northern Ireland
as independent witnesses to the disarmament
conducted under General John de Chastelain

Rev Harold Good will also deliver the Annual Lecture

Thursday 30 October at 6.15pm

in Committee room 4A, the House of Lords, Westminster

Chair: Professor Lord Bhikhu Parekh

Centennial Professor, Centre for the Study of Global Governance, LSE
and Patron of the Gandhi Foundation

Invitations available from

Omar Hayat, 28 Bronwen Court, Grove End Road, London NW8 9HH
enclosing £5 per person (max.2) made out to *The Gandhi Foundation*

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Contents

Nonviolence and Peace	Manas Roy
Schumacher and Trusteeship	Godric Bader
The Patna Collective	Omar Hayat
Albert Schweitzer and Indian Thought	Rasoul Sorkhabi
Further Gandhian Memories	John Linton
Book Review: <i>The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence and India's Future</i> (Martha C Nussbaum)	Piet Dijkstra
Nicholas Gillett 1915-2008	Graham Davey
Gandhi Foundation News	Denise Moll

Nonviolence and Peace

Manas Roy

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi did not claim to be a prophet or even a philosopher. “There is no such thing as Gandhism, “he warned”, and I do not want to leave any sect after me.” There was only one Gandhian, he said, an imperfect one at that: himself. The real significance of the Indian freedom movement in Gandhi’s eyes was that it was waged nonviolently. He would have had no interest in it if the Indian National Congress had not adopted satyagraha and subscribed to nonviolence. He objected to violence not only because an unarmed people had little chance of success in an armed rebellion, but because he considered violence a clumsy weapon which created more problems than it solved, and left a trail of hatred and bitterness in which genuine reconciliation was almost impossible.

This emphasis on nonviolence jarred alike on Gandhi’s British and Indian critics, though for different reasons. To the former, nonviolence was a camouflage; to the latter, it was sheer sentimentalism. To the British who tended to see the Indian struggle through the prism of European history, the professions of nonviolence rather than on the remarkably peaceful nature of Gandhi’s campaigns. To the radical Indian politicians, who had browsed on the history of the French and Russian revolutions or the Italian and Irish nationalist struggles, it was patent that force would only yield to force, and that it was foolish to miss opportunities and sacrifice tactical gains for reasons more relevant to ethics than to politics. Gandhi’s total allegiance to nonviolence created a gulf between him and the educated elite in India which was temporarily bridged only during periods of intense political excitement. Even among his closest colleagues there were few who were prepared to follow his doctrine of nonviolence to its logical conclusion: the adoption of unilateral disarmament in a world armed to the teeth, the scrapping of the police and the armed forces, and the decentralisation of administration to the point where the state would “wither away”.

Nehru, Patel and others on whom fell the task of organising the administration of independent India did not question the superiority of the principle of nonviolence as enunciated by their leader, but they did not consider it practical politics. The Indian Constituent Assembly included a majority of members owing allegiance to Gandhi or at least holding him in high esteem, but the constitution which emerged from their labours in 1949 was based more on the Western parliamentary system than on the Gandhian model. The development of the Indian economy during the last four decades cannot be said to have conformed to Gandhi’s conception of “self-reliant village republics”. On the other hand, it bears the marks of a conscious effort to launch an Indian industrial revolution. The manner in which Gandhi’s techniques have sometimes been invoked even in the land of his birth in

recent years would appear to be a travesty of his principles. And the world has been in the grip of a series of crises in Korea, the Congo, Vietnam, the Middle East, and South Africa with a never-ending trail of blood and bitterness. The shadow of a nuclear war with its incalculable hazards continues to hang over humankind.

From this predicament, Gandhi's ideas and techniques may suggest a way out. He advocated nonviolence not because it offered an easy way out, but because he considered violence a crude and in the long run, an ineffective weapon. His rejection of violence stemmed from choice, not from necessity. Horace Alexander, who knew Gandhi and saw him in action, graphically describes the attitude of the nonviolent resister to his opponent: "On your side you have all the mighty forces of the modern State, arms, money, a controlled press, and all the rest. On my side, I have nothing but my conviction of right and truth, the unquenchable spirit of man, who is prepared to die for his convictions than submit to your brute force. I have my comrades in armlessness. Here we stand; and here if need be, we fall." Far from being a craven retreat from difficulty and danger, nonviolent resistance demands courage of a high order, the courage to resist injustice without rancour, to unite the utmost firmness with the utmost gentleness, to invite suffering but not to inflict it, to die but not to kill. Gandhi did not make the facile division of mankind into "good" and "bad". He was convinced that every human being — even the "enemy" — had a kernel of decency: there were only evil acts, no wholly evil men. His technique of satyagraha was designed not to coerce the opponent, but to set into motion forces which could lead to his conversion. Relying as it did on persuasion and compromise, Gandhi's method was not always quick in producing results, but the results were likely to be the more durable for having been brought about peacefully. "It is my firm conviction", Gandhi affirmed, "that nothing enduring can be built upon violence". The rate of social change through the nonviolent technique was not in fact likely to be much slower than that achieved by violent methods; it was definitely faster than that expected from the normal functioning of institutions which tended to fossilise and preserve the status quo. Gandhi did not think it possible to bring about radical changes in the structure of society overnight. Nor did he succumb to the illusion that the road to a new order could be paved merely with pious wishes and fine words. It was not enough to blame the opponent or bewail the times in which one's lot was cast. However heavy the odds, it was the satyagrahi's duty never to feel helpless. The least he could do was to make a beginning with himself. If he was crusading for a new deal for peasantry, he could go to a village and live there; if he wanted to bring peace to a disturbed district, he could walk through it, entering into the minds and hearts of those who were going through the ordeal. If an age-old evil like untouchability was to be fought, what could be a more effective symbol of defiance for a reformer than to adopt an untouchable child ? If the object was to challenge foreign rule, why not act on the

assumption that the country was already free, ignore the alien government and build alternative institutions to harness the spontaneous, constructive and cooperative effort of the people ? If the goal was world peace, why not begin today by acting peacefully towards the immediate neighbour, going more than half way to understand and win him over ? Though he may have appeared a starry-eyed idealist to so many, Gandhi's attitude to social and political problems was severely practical. There was a deep mystical streak in him, but even his mysticism seemed to have little of the ethereal about it. He did not dream heavenly dreams nor see things unutterable in trance; when "the still small voice" spoke to him, it was often to tell how he could fight a social evil or heal a rift between two warring communities. Far from distracting him from his role in public affairs, Gandhi's religious quest gave him the stamina to play it more effectively. To him true religion was not merely the reading of scriptures, the dissection of ancient texts, or even the practice of cloistered virtue: it had to be lived in the challenging context of political and social life.

Gandhi used his nonviolent technique on behalf of his fellow-countrymen in South Africa and India, but he did not conceive it only as a weapon in the armoury of Indian nationalism. Nonviolence, as Gandhi expounded it, has ceased to be a pious exhortation, and become a necessity. The advice he gave to the unfortunate Abyssinians and Czechs during the twilight years before the Second World War, may have seemed utopian thirty years ago. Today, it sounds common sense. Gandhi would have been the first to deny that his method offered an instant or universal panacea for world peace. His method is capable of almost infinite evolution to suit new situations in a changing world. It is possible that "applied nonviolence" is at present having the same value to maintain "global peace" for ever.

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Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options

This is the title of the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation's report which acknowledges the huge impact that livestock farming has on global warming and on land use. To quote:

Livestock now use 30% of the earth's entire land surface, mostly permanent pasture but also including 33% of the global arable land used to producing feed for livestock ... As forests are cleared to create new pastures, it is a major driver of deforestation, especially in Latin America where, for example, some 70% of former forest in the Amazon have been turned over to grazing.

Schumacher and Trusteeship

Godric Bader

We need a nobler economics that is not afraid to discuss spirit and conscience, moral purpose and the meaning of life, an economics that aims to educate and elevate people. E F Schumacher

The words Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) which Fritz Schumacher chose to describe his commitment to helping the 'third' world came from his deeply intellectual, but radical and practical, mind. Its essence is now seen to be better understood as Practical Action (ITDG's recent name change) as these two simple words accurately describe what purpose he wanted the organisation to have. I recall what he said about appropriate technology and “economics as if people mattered” in his last talk, called *Caring, for Real* which he gave at Caux in Switzerland in 1966 just before he died – all his words were at bottom calling for Practical Action, directly with the people wherever they were on the earth.

So I now understand why he travelled to the small village of Wallaston in Northamptonshire, where the Scott Bader company (producing polyester resins) had evacuated in 1940, when he was in great demand as an adviser by many world governments. Scott Bader was an attempt at putting good ideas into practical action in the world of industry. Ernest Bader, an immigrant Swiss national, had founded a company in London in 1920 but normal ownership had been extinguished when the family company was given freely into a charitable holding company, the Scott Bader Commonwealth Ltd, in 1951. Fritz came to know my father at a Pacem in Terris Conference in Geneva, and Fritz wanted to encourage the company whose ethos he described in *Small is Beautiful* as “the development of the power over the responsibility for a bundle of assets – not ownership”.

That is why Fritz had given me much of his lunch times in London, where we usually met in a small Polish restaurant near the National Coal Board HQ where the waitresses, some from Auschwitz, could still show you their numbers on their arms. He understood the paradigm shift we at Scott Bader were struggling with and could spell it out better than we could. I would like to think that the 21st century description we are beginning to use to describe Scott Bader as a Democratic Trusteeship, with its “responsibility for a bundle of assets instead of ownership of them” has a direct parallel as to how we now urgently have to look at our earthly home. This is a neat description of how we all have to learn to live on our planet, being responsible for the “bundle of assets” – the air, sea and land – through which nature and our life evolved and is sustained; not to be selfishly fought over, bought, sold and pillaged. The understanding was that there was a way forward by which

we could say good-bye to the 150-year-old Company law, with its dominance of ownership, of shareholder money power. Instead there would be life beyond acquisitive capitalist motivation and we would hold the earth and its resources in trust for all its peoples.

Quite early in our discussions for Scott Bader, Fritz suggested that the company should appoint two or three imaginative biologists. We should put them in our research and development labs and leave them alone for at least five years. We would then have our new products and no longer be 'capital dependent', for he saw, as an economist, that the world was using up its capital: its fossil fuels and minerals – as income, and literally burning it away instead of using it to construct the means of recyclable and sustainable forms of production and lifestyles. He saw the direct parallel with nature's ability to run the planet, without piles of waste everywhere. However I was unable to persuade my fellow directors who were all in the tough competitive business world of using petrochemicals for synthesising useful polymers for paints, adhesives and resins for glass fibre boats, pipes, tanks and building products. For them biology was not even a science and was a pointless direction for the company to go. An opportunity was lost.

In business Fritz taught me that the conventional planning process and games with graphs and numbers were too rigid and lifeless. They did not reflect enough reality – if anything tangible at all. As the top Economic Adviser and Director of Statistics at the National Coal Board he learnt that planning the way forward was not a rigid process – one should “stir forward to sense what one would bump up against”, so one had to be widely read and know what was going on in the world, as well as in one's own sector. As the small poster on my office wall with his picture above reads: “Economic growth is a quantitative concept and quite meaningless until defined in qualitative terms”. And to illustrate Fritz's later ability to put things even more succinctly after he had travelled more widely, he said, when questioned about the importance of Buddhism to him, and its relevance to economics: “Economics without Buddhism is like sex without love”.

Fritz directed me also to the writings of R H Tawney and such words as: “It is a condition of freedom that men should not be ruled by an authority they cannot control”. Scott Bader was on its way to finding, as Tawney put it so well: “...a principle of justice upon which association for the production and distribution of wealth could be found”. Fritz however warned “.. this is only an enabling act ... though a necessary one but not yet sufficient condition for the attainment of higher aims ... yet everyone in Scott Bader has the opportunity to raise themselves to a higher level of humanity”. We could not go very much further than encouraging and educating people, for Tawney had said: “It is obvious, indeed, that no change of system or machinery can avert those causes of social malaise which consist in the egotism, greed, or quarrelsomeness of human nature. What it can do is to create an environment in which those are not qualities which are encouraged.”

In Davos at the European Management Conference, just before it became the World Economic Forum, I claimed that democratic common ownership, as we then called it, created an organisation in which “man's spirit can be freer so that he can become more creative, productive and responsible”. I believe Democratic Trusteeship is a way of releasing the talent, so often frustrated in the present day that many look for other work, or like the Quakers give up industry (eg Cadbury, Rowntree, Huntly and Palmer, Barclay's), leaving the less mobile workforces who can then only turn to unionism to speak for them.

Fritz would never have attained the recognition that he was one of the few people who had changed the direction of human thought had he not “combined scientific thinking at its most rigorous with spiritual commitment at its most compassionate”, to quote *The Times*. Sadly, this was said only after his death. I well remember his funeral in Westminster Cathedral where Yehudi Menuhin with his young violinists, and speakers from around the world, paid homage. Many people afterwards turned to me including Scott Bader's Technical Director, saying: “We did not know what we had in the Company”, or “We did not realise he was so widely known”, such was his influence, literally around the world.

Remembering him one cannot forget the highly infectious warmth of his personality. Here was someone who knew where he was in the world. His depth of assurance came from his basic grasp of what humankind's destiny should be in the world, and how to live out our evolutionary purpose on our planet.

It is difficult to pin down the unconscious influence Fritz had on Scott Bader; his depth of understanding and ability to analyse a situation was always apparent in Company meetings, and often a simple statement or question from him would clarify matters and show the way forward. From the point of view of the Company's efficiency, and a better life for its workers, one of the most practical things Fritz did was to bring about our transference from coal to gas with the construction of a new gas main from Wellingborough (our local town) to Wallaston.

I was looking forward to having his acceptance to follow me as Chairman in 1978 when he so tragically died in a train when returning from Caux. It was reported: “Dr Schumacher belongs to the intensely creative minority and his death is an incalculable loss to the whole international community”. It certainly was to Scott Bader, especially as he was also going to give our 1978 Commonwealth Lecture. In the event his son Christian took over.

Fritz was a true prophet and one the world should have listened to earlier and thus we may have been able to avoid the development of resource depletion and climate change. Fritz would have agreed with the recent slogan which appeared in Time magazine: “Don't blow it ! Good planets are hard to find !”

The Patna Collective

Omar Hayat

The Gandhi Foundation in 2006 had started to fund a group in Bihar, India to set up a social welfare work programme for the urban slum dweller community. The group calling itself The Patna Collective had ambitious aims in terms of bringing together all the communities that live in the urban slums to allow them to discover commonalities and thereby engage in productive work. The Gandhi Foundation volunteered to help the organisation as it considered their aims to be important Gandhian goals. Initially, the Gandhi Foundation sent a small sum of money to help start the work. In 2007 The Prem Rawat Foundation gave a generous donation of £10,000 to the Gandhi Foundation for humanitarian work and £7,500 of this was sent to the Patna Collective.



Before going in to details of the work of the Collective it may be helpful and insightful to understand the living conditions of the slum dwellers.

- **The average family income is Rs45-50, about US\$1/day.**
- **The average family size is about 7-8 people, which means they live on US\$0.15/day/person.**
- **So most families eat one meal a day including the children you see in the photographs.**
- **Most families also have to take out loans at extremely high interest rates from local money lenders and are then NEVER able to get out of the debt trap. No savings, ever. Loans are sometimes needed either for marriages, funerals or simply food. In some cases the people take loans to try to start new businesses but of course the business is hampered by the large amount of repayment required.**
- **The families cannot afford private education for their children and government schools don't function in the area and so most of the**

children that attend the Patna Collective school have no other form of education. Also by the time children reach a certain age (about 7-8 for boys and 6-7 for girls) they are pulled out of school, even if they do attend, and compelled to help with work (daily wage labour for boys and help with housework for girls).

- No hospitals exist in the area and no sanitation facilities which therefore increase the likelihood of childhood diseases.
- There is also limited arrangement for running/drinking water. The Patna Collective wants to help with this issue.
- Toilet and shower facilities are public and women find it difficult to use these as they cannot shower in public places and so usually need to wash/toilet very early in the morning or not at all for the day.
- The youth are mostly unemployed and completely alienated.



Public washing facility

The Collective has decided to utilise its resources for education and culture as entry points to its ultimate ambitions and the following programmes /interventions have been the starting point:

- Children's Informal Educational and Cultural Centre
- Adult Education Programme
- Public Library
- Workshops and Cultural Programmes

Children's Informal Educational and Cultural Centre

The basic idea is not to replace public schools but rather to *supplement* them. Education has to be a responsibility of the government and no private initiatives, however well intentioned, can be adequate in this regard. What we have tried to create is a context where we can initiate a process of dialogue with the parents and children around education and culture. This would, we hope, be helpful in deconstructing government policies and pedagogics employed and in nurturing *pressure groups* that would compel the school administration to be more efficient. Hence our centre works with children after school hours



and employs a pedagogy which is dialogic and enriching. The focus is not only on text-based instruction but on a learning process which is activity-oriented, engaging, creative and critical. The children are encouraged to learn through role playing, action games, craft work, theatre and storytelling. They are also instructed in hygiene and sanitation. For these purposes they are learning to make effective use of the centre's library which is rich in children's story books. In the coming months we also intend to introduce audio-visual media at the centre.



The school is run by a Programme Coordinator, *Uday Pratap Singh* and two Collective members, *Mohammed Nasir* and *Mohammad Tauheed* who work full time with the Collective. One has only to see the joy and confidence on the faces of children to gauge the wonders this centre is doing for them. Though reluctant in the beginning the parents have now begun to see our point

Outside the school, no shoes on anyone of view and are actively encouraging the programme wholeheartedly. The centre now instructs about *35 students* in the *age group of 5-14* from 3pm to 6pm daily excluding Sundays. One of the main themes that the school focuses on is personal hygiene and cleanliness and the teachers make a point to keep the centre very clean as well. They try to lead by example.

Adult Education Programme

This programme has been designed for *working adults* who have been denied an opportunity to be educated due to their socio-economic situation. The idea is to at least help them to achieve a literacy level where they could read newspapers, do elementary arithmetic and avail of government schemes. Since they work in the daytime their classes are held in the late evenings (7-10pm). At the moment this programme caters for *15 students*.

Public Library

We have also set up a library at the centre which has about 500 books at the moment covering a host of topics. The library also subscribes to a number of newspapers, journals and magazines. It has been a runaway success as a number of young students (both girls and boys) have started to visit the library regularly in the evenings. The library opens from 5 to 8pm.

Workshops and Cultural Programmes

As we mentioned earlier one of our key aspirations is to mobilise people to form pressure groups where they could effectively interact with government to sincerely implement the developmental programmes (education, health, housing, food, water, electricity, etc) intended to benefit them. However in this process the divisions of religion and caste have proved a steady obstacle. Before the people begin to mobilise on developmental issues they must at least start to dialogue with each other. However, that has proved a big challenge for us so far. In this context we organised a people's fair (Apna Mela) on the eve of Dr Ambedkar's birthday (13 April) in the 'dom tola' (the pocket inhabited by Dalit Hindus). In this fair we invited people from all four blocks. The fair was well attended and despite reservations from many a substantial number of young people turned up from all the blocks. This is an encouraging sign as the priorities of youth seem to be divergent from that of the older populations. The unique feature of the fair was its cultural programmes where cultural performers from all the religious and caste groups participated.



Library now full of books



Pupils from the school practising

Future Expansion Plans

In the last five months of relentless fieldwork the team has been able to break the ice between the various communities and they have shown of late a willingness to engage and dialogue with each other on issues that affect them all. In the coming months we would like to build on these strong signs of nascent solidarity just surfacing and try to mobilise them around some key development issues. We think it is the right time now to launch the *community wall paper* which would apart from creating awareness also be effective in community mobilisation. We also intend to organise a few workshops now concentrating on developmental issues (employment, education, health, public distribution system), people's issues (right to information, environment, etc) and on some burning issues (communalism, casteism, gender, etc). The issue of *livelihood* still remains paramount. Since

the existing skill-base of the community is largely traditional and dated we intend to design some programmes where the youth could be supported by the Collective to re-skill themselves in more marketable and job-oriented skills (computer hardware, AC/TV/refrigerator repair, motor mechanic, to name a few). We are in touch with some organisations that can support us in this process on a subsidised basis. We are following up and hopefully the first batch of beneficiaries would begin to join these courses the coming month.



The living conditions that these children have to endure is heart breaking but their resilience shines through and the small financial contribution of £7,500 has made a tremendous difference to the lives of these children. I have visited the school and the homes (one brick wall, two sides of straw and a plastic polythene sheet

covering as roof and front entrance) in which these children live and I am absolutely convinced that the teachers at the school and the Patna Collective members are doing the most valuable of services for this community. The Patna Collective members do not take any salaries from our contribution. The contribution is used only for paying running costs of the school and any social programmes.

If you would like to donate you can do so by sending your donation to The Treasurer of the Gandhi Foundation writing 'The Patna Collective' on the back of the cheque. The address is 29 Norton Road, Bristol BS4 2EZ.



Spirit undimmed

Albert Schweitzer and Indian Thought

Rasoul Sorkhabi

“He [Albert Schweitzer] is the only Westerner who has had a moral effect on this generation comparable to Gandhi’s. As in the case of Gandhi, the extent of this effect is overwhelmingly due to the example he gave by his own life’s work.”
Albert Einstein

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), the renowned Christian theologian, philosopher, musician, physician, author, and the winner of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize, was one of the great minds of humanity and one of the reputed activists of world peace in the twentieth century. When I was a young boy, Dr Schweitzer’s story of how he left a comfortable life in Europe to establish and work in a hospital in Africa and to help the needy people represented for my generation a role model of compassion and self-less service to humanity. However, as singers, actors, and entertainers are increasingly becoming heroes among the young generation, the Forest Doctor’s life story and philosophy is gradually fading away from the public memory. Nonetheless, I hope, his heritage will survive in history and will influence those who listen to their inner voices and are touched by the sufferings of humanity and the beauties of life on Earth. In my research on Dr. Schweitzer, I have noted his deep connections to Indian religious philosophy. This is a less investigated but an illuminating aspect of Schweitzer’s life with a message for our time and of significance for scholars who are interested in the history and philosophy of peace movements.

A Sketch of Schweitzer’s Life

Albert Schweitzer was born on 14 January 1875 in Kayserberg, Upper Alsace, Germany (now Haut-Rhin department in France). “Schweitzer” means Swiss, referring to Albert’s Swiss ancestors who went to Germany in the seventeenth century. His father and maternal grandfather were pastors who taught the young Albert the art of playing and building the organ – an interest he carried throughout this life. (Schweitzer was an authority on J S Bach’s music, and records of his playing Bach are available.) He studied theology and philosophy at the University of Strasbourg in France, obtaining his PhD in 1899. For a number of years, he taught at the Theological College (Seminary) of Saint Thomas at Strasbourg and later wrote books on the life and works of Jesus Christ and Saint Paul. In 1905, Schweitzer decided to study medicine at the University of Strasbourg in order to go to Africa as a physician missionary. He obtained his degree in medicine in 1912, and the same year he married Helene Bresslau, a girl friend from his student years.

Despite much opposition and worries from his parents, colleagues and friends, Albert and Helene left for the French Equatorial Africa (the present Republic of Gabon) in 1913, and set up a clinic near an already existing mission station in Lambaréné. Schweitzer treated and operated thousands of patients, including many victims of African sleeping sickness, and took care of hundreds of lepers. There were

several interruptions in their African life, especially during World War I (1914-18) when Albert and Helene were taken as prisoners of war to France. Nonetheless, they always returned to their hospital and a life full of service in Africa. (Schweitzer had fourteen trips between Africa and Europe.) Helene died in 1957 and Albert Schweitzer died on 4 September 1965 (aged ninety); both of them are buried on the hospital grounds in Lambaréné. They were survived by their only daughter Rhena Schweitzer Miller who administered the hospital for many years. The Lambaréné hospital still remains as an internationally supported health centre serving African patients, and as a symbol of human love in action.

Reverence for Life

Schweitzer described his life philosophy or “worldview” (Weltanschauung) as “ethical mysticism” or “the ethics of reverence for life.” He believed that all life forms possess “the will-to-live in the midst of will-to-live.” We know this from our own life as well as observing other living beings. Through our own experience and realization we appreciate the rights of all life forms and the sacredness of life itself.

Schweitzer remarked that he first articulated the term “reverence for life” in September 1915 at sunset when he was sailing on the Ogowe River, some 48 miles from Lambaréné. Later, Schweitzer expounded upon his philosophy of life in speeches, interviews, articles and books, especially in *The Philosophy of Civilization* (1923).

How did Schweitzer develop the idea of “reverence for life”? I suggest four sources.

First, from childhood, Schweitzer was lovingly sensitive to the life and suffering of animals. In his *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, Schweitzer wrote:

“Already before I started school it seemed quite incomprehensible to me that my evening prayers were supposed to be limited to human beings. Therefore, when my mother had prayed with me and kissed me goodnight, I secretly added another prayer which I had made up myself for all living beings: Dear God, protect and bless all beings that breathe, keep all evil from them, and let them sleep in peace.”

Second, Schweitzer (brought up in a Christian family and educated in Christianity) was deeply influenced by Jesus’ teaching of love (“Love Thy Neighbour”) and Moses’ commandment of “Thou Shall Not Kill.”

Third, Schweitzer was impressed by Arthur Schopenhauer’s philosophy, especially his book, *The World as Will and Idea* (1819), in which the German philosopher argues that there is an intuitive “Will” in the world of living beings. He calls it “the Will to Live” (Willen zum Leben).

Fourth, both Schopenhauer and Schweitzer were influenced by Indian religious thinking, particularly by the idea of ‘ahimsa’ (‘not-harming’ or ‘non-violence’). Schweitzer, in fact, wrote a (less-known) book on *Die Weltanschauung der Indischen Denken: Mystik und Ethik* (Munich, 1935) (“The World View of the Indian Thinkers: The Mystical and the Ethical”) which has been translated into English as *Indian Thought and Its Development* (translated by Mrs C E B Russell, published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1936; reprinted by Adam and Charles Black, London, 1956). In that book, Schweitzer remarks:

“The laying down of the commandment not to kill and not to damage [ahimsa] is one of the greatest events in the spiritual history of mankind. Starting from its principle, founded on world and life negation, of abstention from action, ancient Indian thought – and this in a period when in other respects ethics have not progressed very far – reaches the tremendous discovery that ethics know no bounds! So far as we know, this is for the first time clearly expressed by Jainism” (p. 83). “If Jainism requires that the monk should suppress all emotions of hatred and revenge, the Buddha lays on him the further command, that he shall meet all living things, yea, the whole Universe, with a feeling of kindness” (p. 104). “The Buddha is the first to express the fundamental law that ethical spirit quite simply in itself means energy which brings about what is ethical in the world” (p. 106).

Schweitzer and Indian Thought

How did Schweitzer become interested in Indian religious thought ?

In the preface to *Indian Thought and Its Development*, Schweitzer confesses: “Indian thought has greatly attracted me since in my youth I first became acquainted with it through reading the works of Arthur Schopenhauer.” He then acknowledges three persons: (1) Professor Moritz Winternitz of Prague (author of *A History of Indian Literature*, 1933) for “his great work on Indian literature” and for “giving me a fund of information in response to my questions”; (2) the British-Indian friend of Mahatma Gandhi, Charles F Andrews (author of *Mahatma Gandhi’s Ideas*, 1929) for discussions; and (4) Romain Rolland for his “penetrating studies on [Sri] Ramakrishna and [Swami] Vivekananda.”

In a letter dated 29 November 1964 to the then Indian prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, Schweitzer acknowledges his correspondence with several “Indian friends” including Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru through Charles Andrews, and states that his own ideas “are consistent with Indian ideas” and that the ethics of respect for all living beings “existed for Indian thought for more than two thousand years” and is “first clearly expressed by Jainism.” (Quoted from *Albert Schweitzer Letters, 1905-1965*, edited by Hans Walter Bahr, p. 348.)

In 1965, four months before he died, Schweitzer wrote to the Asiatic Society in Calcutta [Kolkata]:

“I studied Indian philosophy early on, when I was attending the University of Strasbourg, Alsace, even though no course was being given on that subject. But then, around 1900, Europe started getting acquainted with Indian thought. Rabindranath Tagore became known as the great living Indian thinker. When I grew conversant with his teachings, they made a deep impact on me. In Germany it was the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer who first recognized the significance of Indian thinking. A pupil of Schopenhauer was director of the Mulhouse Secondary School in Alsace, which prepared students for the university. [The school Schweitzer attended.] His name was [Wilhelm] Deecke. In this way I got to know Indian thinking at an early date. And by the time I completed my doctoral examination in philosophy, I was familiar with Indian thought. By then I was teaching at the University of Strasbourg. Focusing as I did on the problem of ethics, I reached the conclusion that Indian ethics is correct in demanding kindness and mercy not only toward human

beings but [also] toward all living creatures. Now the world is gradually realising that compassion for all living creatures is part of true ethics.” (*Albert Schweitzer Letters, 1905-1965*, p. 351)

Schweitzer’s *Indian Thought and Its Development* has 16 chapters: (I) Western and Indian thought; (II) The rise of world and life negation in Indian thought; (III) The teaching of the Upanishads; (IV) The Samkhya doctrine; (V) Jainism; (VI) The Buddha and his teaching; (VII) Later Buddhism in India; (VIII) Buddhism in China, Tibet and Mongolia; (IX) Buddhism in Japan; (X) The later Brahmanic doctrine; (XI) Brahmanic world-view in the laws of Manu; (XII) Hinduism and Bhakti mysticism; (XIII) The Bhagavad Gita; (XIV) From the Bhagavad Gita to modern times; (XV) Modern Indian thought; and (XVI) Looking backward and forward.

Schweitzer also wrote *Chinese Thought and Its Development*, which still remains unpublished.

In passing I should mention that Schweitzer’s attitude toward Indian religions was not always positive or factual. In *Indian Thought and Its Development*, Schweitzer emphasizes over and over that Indian religions have mainly adopted a nihilistic outlook of “world and life negation”, while Christianity is based on the idea of “world and life affirmation.” One should note that the Western knowledge of Indian religions in the early twentieth century was very limited. Schweitzer himself did not live and study in India and his knowledge and criticism of Indian religions were thus those of a Western-Christian outsider, albeit intellectual and spiritual, confined to his own time and place. In reference to Schweitzer’s analysis of Indian religions as nihilistic, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his book *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* comments: “To divide peoples into those who will not accept the world at all and those who will accept nothing else is hardly fair.”

Ahimsa is the Way

What I find very significance in Schweitzer’s life and philosophy is his reaffirmation of the idea of ahimsa (non-violence) developed over 2500 years ago in India. Schweitzer did not base his philosophy of “reverence for life” on any scientific finding or metaphysical debate; he regarded one’s own life experience and realisation as a basis for “ethical mysticism.” Perhaps the following poem by the thirteenth century Persian poet, Sa’di summarizes Schweitzer’s idea of “reverence for life”:

Do not harm that ant that carries a little grain;
It has life and life is sweet.

Rhena Schweitzer Miller once remarked: “One day I asked my father, “You have done so much for Africa. Has it given you anything in return?” He said, “Yes, nowhere else could I have found the idea of reverence for life than here.”

Our world is facing violent conflicts and brutality fuelled by religious extremism, dirty politics, personality cults, inhuman nationalism, and economies based on never-ending greed. The root causes of all this bloodshed, cruelty and suffering are the same old vices: Self-centred views, prejudices, hatred, limitless desires, and little appreciation of life and nature. Given this grave situation,

Schweitzer's philosophy of "reverence for life" as a way of loving and appreciating this sacred planet on which we are privileged to live, and the Indian idea of *ahimsa* as a humane way of resolving our conflicts peacefully and making a better world gains a new significance.

It is thus appropriate to close this essay with a quote from Albert Schweitzer himself:

"Ethics are complete, profound, and alive only when addressed to all living beings. Only then we are in spiritual connection with the world ... Profound love demands a deep conception and out of this develops reverence for the mystery of life. It brings us close to all beings. To the poorest and smallest, as well as all others. We reject the idea that man is 'master of other creatures,' 'lord' above all others. We bow to reality. We recognize that all existence is a mystery, like our own existence. The poor fly which we would like to kill with our hand has come into existence like ourselves. It knows anxiety, it knows hope for happiness, it knows fear of not existing any more. Has any man so far been able to create a fly? That is why our neighbor is not only man: my neighbor is a creature like myself, subject to the same joys, the same fears, and the idea of reverence for life gives us something more profound and mightier than the idea of humanism. It includes all living beings" (Quoted in *The Schweitzer Album*, edited by Erica Anderson, 1965, p. 174).

Rasoul Sorkhabi graduated from universities in India and Japan, doing his Ph.D. thesis on the geology of the Himalayas. He is currently a Research Professor at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City where he lives with his wife Setsuko. The couple published articles on Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, Rumi, and the Dalai Lama. This article was first published in the UK monthly *Yoga & Health*, April 2006, and has been slightly modified by the author for *The Gandhi Way*. He can be contacted at rsorkhabi@egi.utah.edu. Copyright: Rasoul Sorkhabi (2006, 2008).

The cover picture of Schweitzer is a water-colour painting by **Setsuko Yoshida**, 2006

Narayan Desai visits UK

Narayan Desai, son of Gandhi's principal secretary Mahadev Desai, and a Gandhian activist all his life, will be giving discourses in London and Leicester during September 2008. His itinerary is as follows.

Mon 15 September at 6.30pm Lecture at The Nehru Centre, 8 Audley St. London W1K 1HF

Wed-Fri 10-12 September at 7-10pm and Sat-Sun 13-14 Sept 6-9pm in Kingsbury High School, Stag Lane, London NW9 9AT

Wed-Fri 17-19 September at 7.30-10.30pm and Sat-Sun 20-21 September at 4-7pm in Lohana Mahajan Centre, Hildyard Road, Off Ross Walk, Leicester LE4 5GG

Contact : Vipoolbhai Kalyani, General Secretary, Gujarat Literary Academy Ltd, 'Kutir', 4 Rossecroft Walk, Off Crawford Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2JZ

Tel. : 020-8902 0993 email: vipoolkalyani.opinion@btinternet.com

Gandhian Memories (Part II)

John Linton

As an Indian Army officer I could not take part in politics. But I studied everything to do with Mahatma Gandhi with the greatest interest.

Following his launch of the Quit India movement in August 1942, Gandhi was immediately arrested by the British authorities and spent the rest of the war in jail. In the case of India, this meant till August 1945, with the surrender of the Japanese following the dropping of the atomic bombs on two Japanese cities.

In August 1947 India gained its independence, but with the loss of two Muslim majority areas to Pakistan. I have always regarded the partition of India as a most unfortunate decision. There are as many Muslims in India as there are in Pakistan, and they are all the same people.

When I was back in England, with a job in the old India Office, the news came on 30th January 1948, of the assassination of Gandhi by a Hindu fanatic. The only good thing that can be said about that is that many people became aware for the first time of his greatness. Pandit Nehru made a most moving speech to the nation, saying that "a great light has gone out of our lives".

In September 1948 I started my job as BBC Indian Programme Organiser, meaning that I was in charge of Indian language broadcasts. In my very first week in the job the news came of the death of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Though I was opposed to partition, I had a great respect for Mr Jinnah. In an early speech he had said that everyone in Pakistan would be treated as equal, whether they were Muslim or not. He had of course been a colleague of Gandhi.

When my wife Erica and I were appointed, by both British and American Friends, as Quaker International Representatives for South Asia, based in Delhi, we soon made contact with the Gandhi Peace Foundation, the equivalent in India of our Gandhi Foundation. We got to know well Gandhi's political heir, Jaya Prakash Narayan, JP as he was affectionately known, and visited him and his wife at their home in Patna, Bihar. My wife got to know Gandhi's spiritual heir, Vinoba Bhave, and thoroughly enjoyed her conversation with him, finding him likeable and amusing.

Quakers had always been popular in India, because they had supported the Indian independence movement. After the death of Charlie Andrews, Gandhi's best English friends were Horace Alexander and Agatha Harrison, both Quakers.

I myself never met Gandhi. It was not appropriate for an army officer to meet a jail-bird ! But I'm sure I would have fallen for him, as many British people did.

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# Book Review

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**The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence and India's Future** Martha C Nussbaum Belknap Press of Harvard University Press  
pp403 €29.95

Martha C Nussbaum is Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago. She worked for eight years (1985-93) with the Research Project of the UN World Institute for Development in Helsinki, focusing on the economic and cultural problems of India. She chose India when she wanted to write on human rights norms for women's development worldwide. She was a consultant with the UN Development Programme's New Delhi Office and in 2004 was a visiting Professor at the Centre for Political Science at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. She lectured in various parts of India and wrote extensively on India's legal and constitutional traditions. She travelled so many times to India that it now feels like her second home.

Her relationship with India is intensely political, focussed on issues of social justice, and she has had close contacts with Amartya Sen, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1988. Three personalities in particular feature, namely, Nehru, Tagore and Gandhi. In her Preface she states: "This is a book about India for an American and European audience". But it is not only about India but also about the present clash between Islam and the West. She writes: "... that the real clash is not a civilisational one between 'Islam and the West', but instead a clash within virtually all modern nations – between people who are prepared to live with others who are different, on terms of equal respect, and those who seek the protection of homogeneity, achieved through the domination of a single religious and ethnic tradition".

At a deeper level the thesis of this book is the Gandhian claim that the real struggle that democracy must wage is a struggle within the individual between the urge to dominate and defile the other, and to live respectfully on terms of compassion and equality, with all the vulnerability that such a life entails.

Nussbaum deals extensively with the ethnic/religious pogrom in Gujarat in February-March 2002 when approximately 2,000 Muslims were killed by Hindus. She analyses the Hindu nationalistic personality and finds sufficient hatred within to explain the Gujarat events.

Her conclusion – based to a great extent on Gandhi's thinking – is worth quoting:

"The ability to accept differences – differences of religion, of ethnicity, of race, of sexuality – requires first, the ability to accept something about oneself: that one is not lord of the world, that one is both adult and child, that no all-embracing collectivity will keep one safe from the vicissitudes of life, that others outside oneself have reality. This ability requires, in turn, the

cultivation of a moral imagination that sees reality in other human beings, that does not see other human beings as mere instruments of one's own power or threats to that power.”

She argues, in this highly passionate study, that ultimately the greatest threat comes not from a clash between civilisations, but from a clash within each of us.

*Piet Dijkstra*

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### **Nicholas Gillett 1915 to 2008**

Nicholas Gillett who died on 23 June was a worthy recipient of the International Gandhi Peace Award in 1999. In his acceptance speech he spoke about caterpillars, horse flies and bees to illustrate the need for fresh approaches to peace building. Had he been less self-effacing he might have spoken of his own background and achievements.

He was born into a Quaker family in 1915. His great grandfather on his mother's side was the radical, anti-war MP, John Bright. His mother went to South Africa in the aftermath of the Boer War to teach Boer women, confined in concentration camps set up by the British, to spin and weave wool and generate a small income. Later on in 1931 his mother was introduced to Gandhi but as it was Gandhi's day for not speaking, they communed in silence.

Nicholas's father owned and ran a private bank. His uncle was Joseph Rowntree, founder of the charities from which many peace organisations have benefited. Both parents were active supporters of the League of Nations, set up after the First World War.

Nicholas went to the Quaker school, Leighton Park, and then to Oxford where he studied philosophy, politics and economics. One of his first friends there, Chandra Mal, had worked for Gandhi as a secretary and was a committed devotee. During the vacations, Nicholas went to a variety of work camps in this country and overseas. He helped Corder Catchpool in Berlin in his work for reconciliation and was appalled as he watched Hitler address a youth rally in Innsbruck. At a work camp in Salford, Manchester, he met Ruth Cadbury and they were married in 1938. Ruth's grandfather was George Cadbury who had established the Bournville chocolate factory and estate for the workers. Her parents, Henry and Lucy Cadbury, were wardens of the Quaker Study Centre, Woodbrooke, where Gandhi stayed in 1931.

After initial training to be a teacher of physical education, Nicholas grew increasingly interested in educational psychology. He, Ruth and their growing family of six children managed two farms during the Second World War and from 1945 onwards Nicholas lectured at Teacher Training Colleges at Saltley, Cheltenham and Dudley while studying for an MA in education at Birmingham University in his spare time. He helped to found the first Parent-Teacher Associations in the country and served UNESCO in the Philippines, Thailand and Iran. The family moved to Bristol in 1965 where Nicholas lectured at the University and gave generously of his time and money to various peace and development groups and especially the UNA.

During this time, Nicholas withheld the part of his tax payment which would have gone to the Ministry of Defence and he and Ruth had their more valuable furniture and other possessions seized by bailiffs to make up the deficit. Some of the property was bought at auction by members of the family and returned to them but it showed their commitment to the pacifist cause.

From 1975 to 1977 Nicholas and Ruth represented Quaker Peace and Service in Northern Ireland where they supported the Peace People led by Mairead Corrigan, Betty Williams and Ciaran McKeown. Ruth took the lead in setting up the means by which disaffected paramilitary men from both sides could disengage from their units, adopt new identities and live peaceful and useful lives.

Three years after their return to Bristol from Belfast, Nicholas and Ruth went off to serve QPS again in the Quaker UN office in Geneva. Ruth died suddenly two months after she and Nicholas had celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in Bristol in 1988.

Nicholas practised farming in his early adult life and he spent his last years helping his second wife, Mehr Fardoonji, manage an organic market garden near Chester. Mehr is a Parsee and had walked with Vinoba Bhave in the Land-Gift Movement. Nicholas continued to write and speak about peace, development and education.

Nicholas's parents had been close friends with Jan Christian Smuts who had been responsible for imprisoning Gandhi in South Africa. Each man had considerable respect for the other and while in prison, Gandhi made a pair of sandals as a present for Smuts. Later, Smuts gave them to Nicholas's mother. Nicholas found them in a cupboard one day and continued to wear them until they were worn out. He, more than most people, walked in the footsteps of Gandhi.

*Graham Davey*



Nicholas Gillett, with Mehr Fardoonji,  
receiving the GF Peace Award 1999 from Richard Attenborough

## **Gandhi Foundation News**

The Executive Committee (EC) is delighted to welcome Sabera Choudhury and Shaheen Westcombe to explore with us their willingness to join the EC.

Since the last *Gandhi Way*, your EC met with an outside facilitator, Carol Morris, to review the current position of the GF and future directions. Carol is a highly trained facilitator and mediator, does valuable work in Pakistan, and is part of a Kingsley Hall User Group. We were fortunate to have her services. Everyone worked very hard on the day and the main issues and needs to emerge were:- (a) to revise our 1985 Trust Deed; (b) to draw up a 3-year Strategic Plan; and (c) to review the way our officers and members work together democratically. ('Members' consist of you, the GF Friends who subscribe).

An extra EC meeting was scheduled, including Sabera and Shaheen, that met on 12<sup>th</sup> July. Of course, not all was solved at once, but the following headings might give an idea of what was discussed:- Provisions for our Governing Body; the EC and AGMs; Officers; Employing a member or members of Staff; a Strategic Plan.

It was decided to invite Patron, Lord Bhikhu Parekh, to act as the official outside spokesperson for the GF. At present, the chairmanship of the EC rotates quarterly and most felt this system should continue. There is also discussion about electing an EC member to chair for a year at a time.

We shall continue to keep you informed of developments – this is simply to advise you of the kinds of discussion currently taking place,

*If thoughts/ideas occur to any of you reading this, please let us know – we don't have all the answers !*

### **Job to be advertised for Secretary to the Executive Committee**

The EC decided that possibly two new part-time posts are needed: one to replace the current Secretary's secretarial role to the EC, and another as a Development Worker for the GF. They agreed the ideal people to fill these posts might come from within the group of GF Friends, if that was possible !

Secretarial duties for the quarterly EC meetings include:-

Prepare Kingsley Hall office ready for the Saturday quarterly meetings, buying coffee provisions, etc.

In consultation with the chairperson, draw up an Agenda and circulate in advance, together with any relevant papers (to prepare and type); Take minutes at the meetings (shorthand an advantage), type them up, check with chairperson and circulate to EC members. Follow up between meetings on the Action points.

The post would be salaried, plus expenses, and based at the GF office in Kingsley Hall. Legally the post has to be advertised. For an initial discussion, contact either the present Secretary on 01932 343614 or Graham Davey, Treasurer, on 0117 909 3491.

*Denise Moll*





