



The Gandhi Way

Newsletter of the Gandhi Foundation

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FibreFest21

The Festival of Natural Fibres

Saturday 21 August to Sunday 22 August 2021

At Craft Central The Forge, 397-411 Westferry Road, London E14 3AF

10.30am - 5.30pm Tickets £7.50

Exhibition, fibre market, panel discussions, food and drink

[Here](#) is a link to Eventbrite for tickets for the weekend

<https://eventbrite.co.uk/e/fibrefest-2021-the-festival-of-natural-fibres-tickets-164491555671>

Further details on pages 21-22

The implications of the Covid pandemic for India and the world

Gandhi Foundation and Action Village India Panel Discussion on Zoom

Saturday 4 September 2021, 11.30am-1.00pm

Panel: Lord Bhikhu Parekh, President GF; Anindita Majumdar, Founder of EquiDiversity; Ramesh Sharma, National Coordinator of Ekta Parishad; Chaired by Esther Trienekens, Executive Director of Action Village India.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81900565078?pwd=MTZ1djBiaitRS0tEVFMrTzdiNnl4QT09>

Meeting ID: 819 0056 5078

Passcode: 331335

Further details on Page 23

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The Conference of the Parties – COP26

Graham Davey

The planet Venus is similar to earth in that it is roughly the same size and a similar distance from the sun. While the earth is teeming with life, there is believed to be none on Venus. The reason is that Venus has a much denser atmosphere consisting almost entirely of carbon dioxide. This acts as a blanket, trapping solar radiation and as a result, the average surface temperature is 462 °C.

This property of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was understood towards the end of the 19th Century but there seemed then to be no need for action. The last 50 years have shown that the earth is warming up because of increased amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and that this is causing more extreme weather conditions – hurricanes are more frequent and intense, drought and wildfires are more devastating and floods more widespread. The melting of the polar ice caps is expected to cause sea levels to rise by several metres. All this actual and potential devastation exacerbates the problem of mass migration of people to areas where they hope for a better chance of survival.

The last 50 years have also made scientists aware of a number of positive feedback loops that are speeding up the process of climate change. Negative feedback describes a mechanism that counters a change in inputs to a process and thereby maintains equilibrium. An example is the fact that when we get too hot, the body sweats and has a cooling effect. Positive feedback amplifies the effect of a change in inputs making the situation worse. For example, the melting of the Arctic permafrost caused by global warming releases methane which is 25 times more damaging than carbon dioxide and therefore increases global warming. The reduction in size of the polar ice caps means that less solar radiation is reflected back into space and more is absorbed causing further temperature rise. The warming of the oceans decreases their capacity to store carbon dioxide so more is released to the atmosphere. There are also positive feedback loops caused by human behaviour. For example, rising temperatures cause more people to use air conditioning systems and to use them for longer periods thereby increasing demand for electricity and causing increased greenhouse gas emissions. These and many other positive feedback loops mean that the climate is changing much faster than was originally predicted in reports in the 1970s.

Scenes on our television screens of wildfires, floods and devastation caused by hurricanes have prompted some people to make a personal response by reducing their consumption of non-renewable resources and particularly their use of fossil fuels. Their use of private cars and flying has been reduced or eliminated. Some have moved to smaller accommodation to reduce their energy consumption or chosen to eat less meat and dairy products. The declining birth rate in the UK and most developed countries means that there will be fewer gross consumers than would otherwise be the case. It is clear, however, that personal lifestyle changes by a fraction of the population is having a negligible effect on the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. These have gone down a little over the last 20 years but that is very largely due to more efficient use of natural gas for electricity production and the increasing contribution of solar panels and wind turbines.

Unless we are very dedicated Gandhians, most of us recognise the inertia that inhibits any inclination to live more simply in order to counter global warming. There is the reluctance to give up freedoms and luxuries that we have come to accept as part of a normal life and change to something that seems more primitive and inconvenient. We want to buy cheaply and turn a blind eye to the environmental cost of production and transport. There is the temptation to ask what the point is of an individual reducing their carbon footprint when it is already much less than that of the average American and we have friends who are also wildly extravagant. It's difficult to face the trauma of moving from an unnecessarily large house to more appropriate accommodation. There are those who believe that scientists will come up with a hugely successful technical fix to deal with climate change and that we shall eventually muddle through.

For all these reasons, it is clear that voluntary lifestyle change is not going to be an adequate response and that government action is needed. Private industry is making changes and has the potential for further progress. Examples include the production of closed circuit gas turbine units for electricity production and the development of electric cars and batteries. Further progress can be expected in fields such as the use of hydrogen as a power source and the development of other ways of producing and storing electricity.

There is need for action by the UK government to support appropriate investment by private firms and to discourage the more damaging aspects of our way of life. Here again, politicians are inhibited from taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a range of long-held attitudes. Our electoral system makes any action for long-term benefit difficult to argue for.

Few ministers of any political party can look beyond the next election because if that is lost, they will be back on the opposition benches. The measures needed such as restricting flying and the consumption of meat are seen as vote losers. Governments are locked in to a policy of ‘predict and provide’ rather than seeking fair actions to curb demand. There is also the obsession with economic growth without recognising that endless growth cannot be sustained on a planet with finite resources and limited capacity to absorb pollution.

The Conference of the Parties (COP 26) will be taking place in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November. It will be the latest of a series of annual conferences attended by leaders of the ‘parties’ – those countries which signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a treaty that came into force in 1994. The Convention now has a near universal membership having been signed by 197 countries. For COP 26, the UK and Italy are sharing the presidency so we have a special responsibility for making the conference a success and setting an example to other countries. Each major economy is required to produce Nationally Determined Contributions which state the level of emission cuts and adaptation measures they are committing to. The UK at present is aiming to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 68% by 2030 and 78% by 2025 compared with 1990 levels. The overall aim is to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 while including the UK share of emissions caused by aviation and shipping. These targets are ambitious but it is easier to express intentions than to enforce the changes that would be needed to fulfil them.

Sir David Attenborough has been appointed People’s Advocate and will address world leaders and the public before and during the conference. The conference programme is:

3rd November – Finance

4th – Energy

5th – Youth and public empowerment

6th – Nature

8th – Adaptation, loss and damage

9th – (a) Gender & (b) Science and innovation

10th – Transport

11th – Cities, regions and the built environment

The subject on Monday 8th November is ‘Adaptation, loss and damage’ which refers to climate justice – the recognition that the industrialised countries, led by Britain, started the process of adding carbon dioxide to the earth’s atmosphere and have continued to cause climate change which has caused

much more suffering (70% of deaths) in developing countries than we have experienced. The Copenhagen Accord of 2009 included a commitment to scale up public and private climate finance for developing countries to \$100 billion (£72 billion) by 2020 and maintain support at that level to 2025. This has not been achieved, the best total reached so far being \$79 billion in 2019 and some three quarters of money committed by governments for climate action in developing countries is in the form of loans, not grants.

All the indications are that the COP 26 conference will attract a great deal of attention from the media and will generate much discussion. There may be opportunities for friends of the Gandhi Foundation to contribute to the debates locally or nationally. Climate change was not an issue during Gandhi's life time but the question arises: 'What would he say if he were alive today?' Firstly, having devoted his life to working for social justice, he would insist on the major economies at COP 26 reaching agreement on substantial transfers of resources to developing countries from 2025 onwards in order to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. Secondly, he would remind us that we should not think only of the needs of the human population. This is God's world and the lives of all living creatures should be valued. Thirdly, Gandhi would remind us that there cannot be an end to violence between human factions until all humankind is united in recognition of the fact that we are totally dependent on the finite resources of the planet we share.

Graham Davey is a Trustee and the Treasurer of the Gandhi Foundation

GOKHALE WALK

NAMUMYOHORENGEKYO

On 15 January 1978, I was ordained within the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist order by the Most Ven. Nichidatsu Fujii at Sri Pada *Dojo* in Sri Lanka.

On 21 September of that same year, I came to England.

Several years ago, around 15 January, an artist friend in Twickenham and her husband invited me for lunch. She has her own art studio on Eel Pie Island, and they used to invite me every year. On that particular visit, they took me to York House Gardens close to Eel Pie Island.

Within the abundance of York House Gardens flourishes a Japanese Garden. It possesses a most meditative, inspirational, almost magical beauty.

Intriguingly, the Garden has a passage named 'Gokhale Walk'. [Gopal Krishna Gokhale was a leading political moderate prior to the First World War and a close friend of Gandhi – Ed]

Today, York House is the Town Hall of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. It was once the home of the Indian industrialist, Sir Ratan Tata (1871–1918).

Sir Ratan had financially supported Gandhi-ji's *satyagraha* movement in South Africa.

York House,
Twickenham
18th November 1910.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

I desire to contribute a second sum of Rs. 25,000/- in aid of the Indian struggle in the Transvaal.

About this time last year I was happy to give a similar sum, and since then nearly a lakh of Rupees have been subscribed by our countrymen in different parts of India, towards the heavy expense of maintaining this most unequal struggle. This is no doubt satisfactory as far as it goes, but it is not enough. Indeed when I think of the vast importance of this question, and the magnificent stand which a handful of our countrymen in the Transvaal have made and are making for the honour of our Motherland, I feel constrained to say that the support which India has so far lent to her brave sons and daughters in their heroic and most righteous struggle in a distant land, has not been adequate.

Not only for their sakes therefore, but for the honour and well-being of Indians in all parts of the world, I say that a great duty rests upon us at the present time. We must recognise the significance of the issues involved, and see to it that the great sacrifices made, and the sufferings so willingly endured by the Indian Community in South Africa are not rendered useless by our [supineness] or neglect. We in India must not forget that you and your fellow-workers in the Transvaal have suffered much and have sacrificed much to maintain our country's [illegible] in the Transvaal, and that though your spirit might be steadfast, your resources would be considerably diminished in so prolonged a struggle. Unless I feel therefore [illegible] you receive renewed support, it would be difficult for you to carry on so unequal a fight. Should you however be obliged to give up this struggle for want of due appreciation and support from us, in India, I fear it will be considered tantamount to an acknowledgement by us of our inferiority

to the white races. What effect this would have in future in the treatment of our countrymen by the whites in various parts of the world, could easily be imagined.

I am confident the mass of the British public would not for one moment countenance the injustice which is done to our people if only they were aware of it, and we must therefore persist in our efforts of rousing general public attention not only in India but in England also, to the wrong inflicted on our people.

It is my earnest and devout hope that the new Parliament in South Africa will let one of its first acts be a satisfactory settlement of this vexed question, honourable to all, and compatible with our status as citizens of the British Empire.

But it is not enough to hope. We must also show that we are determined. Therefore I think it is the clear duty of all in India at this juncture to do what lies in their power – to give those who are engaged in this supremely important struggle the confident feeling that the vigorous and sustained support both material and moral of their countrymen in India is behind them. If the cheque which I enclose herein will in any degree be instrumental in giving you and your fellow-workers this feeling, my object in sending it will have been accomplished.

Yours sincerely,
Ratan Tata

In 1914, in London, Gandhiji and Mr. Herman Kallenbach often visited the National Liberal Club to meet with Dr Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915). There appears to be no known record of the three meeting up at York House, but one imagines they did.

The Japanese Gardens and the ‘Gokhale Walk’ passage, in York House Gardens, inspire one.

... that you will ever draw nearer to the time when the great change shall pass upon the iron of the earth; – when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; neither shall they learn war any more.

John Ruskin, *The Two Paths: Being Lectures on Art, and its Application to Decoration and Manufacture*

With palms together in prayer,
Nipponzan Myohoji, London Peace Pagoda
Bhikkhu G. Nagase



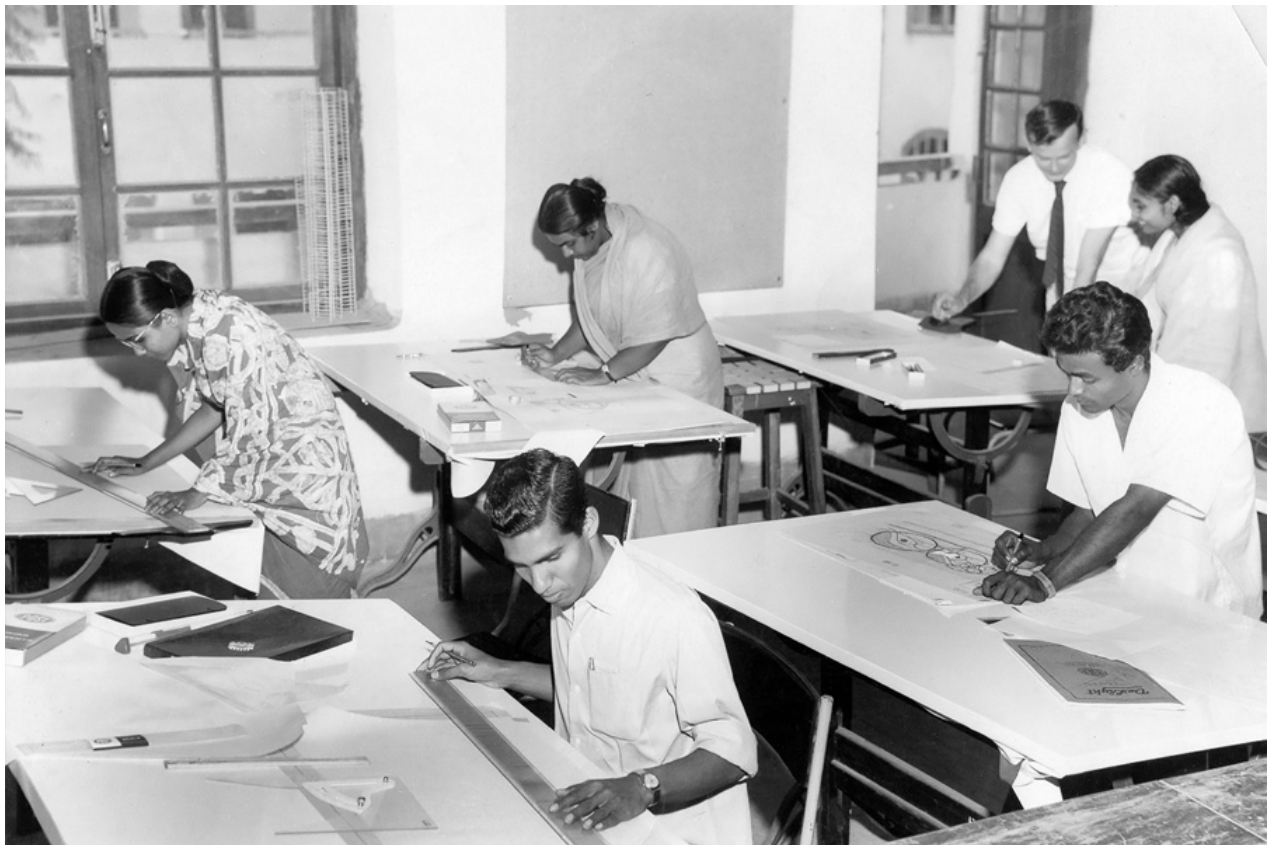


Architectural Pioneer and Women's Empowerment : Shaheen Choudhury Westcombe

Shaheen Westcombe, a member of the Gandhi Foundation's Executive Committee, has had a varied and interesting career. It began at what was then the East Pakistan University of Engineering and Technology in Dhaka when she started architectural studies, being among the first batch of female students in the country. Shaheen Choudhury began the five year course which had a very wide curriculum including apart from design – history, art, music, accounting, public speaking, and engineering.

Shaheen continues her story as based on an interview given to the architectural journal 'Context'.

The architectural department had been set up by Americans, Professor Richard Vrooman and Jim Walden from Texas A & M University. Another architect, Daniel Dunham, joined soon after and the Dunhams became family friends. Various well known artists like Hamidur Rahman and Rashid Choudhury taught us art and sculpture. They had both returned from Europe and talked about their artistic ventures there. We had a great time with them, Rahman, who had designed the Shahid Minor, took us there one day and explained his design concept.



Student Shaheen Choudhury in centre

I was one of only three female students at the university and people thought we were freaks. There were no facilities for female students. A little corridor was screened off and turned into a private space for the three of us. It had some chairs, a table and a locker in which we kept packets of biscuits and drinks. One morning, we found that the snacks had disappeared. We were mad. The next day we found that there were some vitamin tablets in the locker in their place. We had to laugh. To this day I wonder how our fellow students opened the locker. The training often required us to stay at the university all night to finish our drawings. We graduated in 1967. It was really great that all three of us, the female students, secured a first class. Soon after, I joined the faculty as a lecturer. I taught for 18 months and then left for Japan for higher studies on a scholarship offered by the Japanese Ministry of Education. By then more female students started joining the University in both Architecture and Engineering. Years later a former student was made the first woman Vice-Chancellor of the University.

Life in Japan

I cherish the memories of the time I spent in Japan. The Land of Cherry Blossoms is a beautiful country with a rich culture. As soon as I landed I realised that hardly anyone spoke English. The early days were difficult. It was a relief that most of the foreign students could at least speak English. There was only one Bengali student – that helped greatly. Communication with family back home was time consuming.

I joined Kyoto University for my Masters in Architecture. There were only two female students in my class, both from South America and spoke little English. The lectures were all in Japanese. It was tough. I was very lucky to be under Professor Atsushi Ueda, who was both a top architect and an academic with numerous publications. He was involved in the design of Expo 70. He spoke little English. *Sensei* (teacher) as we called him, was very gentle and extremely caring. His students all loved him. Whilst in Japan, the 1971 war in Bangladesh broke out. I was completely cut off from home. There was no news. Prof Ueda and his wife were always there to comfort me. I completed my Masters dissertation on Housing in Japan in 1972.

Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, is a city of gardens, shrines, temples and palaces. It is also famous for its geishas and is a traditional city, rich in beauty and culture. I fell in love with the place. I planned to leave for London to gain some work experience and although Prof Ueda offered a PhD course the thought of five years seemed ages and I declined. I left Japan sadly with tears and many fond memories.

To England

I had been to England before but did not have any contact with people from the architectural profession. I replied to an advert but lack of experience in an architect's office did not look promising. However I was given the opportunity and worked there for 2 years when I decided to move on. Most of the work from then on was in hospital planning and design. This included a medical complex in Bagdad for the Government of Iraq. I met many Iraqi architects both male and female and realised that Iraq was quite a liberal country.

I met my husband there; he was English and also an architect. After some years, I had my son. I decided to look for a part-time job but although I had full-time offers nobody wanted to employ me part-time. It was very sad. I decided to work for woman's equality; equal opportunities existed only on paper.

I started to do voluntary work for the Bangladesh Women's Association in Britain, the first Bangladesh women's organisation formed in this country during the 1970 freedom movement. I developed many new projects for women including a training centre with childcare facilities to promote employment. We secured a grant from the EU to build a new centre and I had input in the design.

We campaigned for the introduction of Bangla in mainstream schools. We had some teachers in our organisation who wrote books that were tailor-made to teach Bangla to children in this country. Working in the community helped me to promote new ideas and I worked with women from a wide range of backgrounds. Empowering women was one of my major objectives.

After a few years, I joined a local authority as a Community Development Officer. What a coincidence that my boss, Graham Garbutt, was an architect. He often lectured at the AA School of Architecture and took me with him. AA is a well-known school and architects like Muzharul Islam, Richard Rogers and Zara Hadid trained there. Graham Garbutt appreciated the multiple skills that I had acquired during my architectural training enabling me to handle a wide range of projects.

Then I changed my job and moved to another local authority where I joined social services. I held various positions including Head of Equalities, Head of Community Partnerships and Assistant Director of Social Services among others. My job involved lot of policy work, and I always made sure that my reports reflected equalities, community cohesion, fairness and social justice. I was the lead officer for a domestic violence project involving Sweden and Germany. Domestic violence has no race, religion or class boundaries. Our recommendations were adopted as Government policy in these three countries. The project was called 'Adhikar, My Right'.

In the same borough, which is multicultural, I did a project titled 'All Faiths'. The aim was to create understanding and harmony between the different religious groups. The religious leaders and the Mayor provided every support and the project was very successful.

My Reflections

In my personal capacity, I have been involved with projects in a wide variety of organisations. I was the Secretary General of the European Union Migrants Forum UK Support Group. It has been over eleven years since I retired but my involvement with the voluntary sector continues. Currently I am Chair of MIND – a mental health charity in Bexley and East Kent, a board member of St Mary's Community Complex, and Chair of *Mahila Sangha*, a Bangladeshi Woman's group. Through the *Bishwo Shahetto Kendra*, London, I have a link with my heritage, culture and language.

Community involvement is in my blood. I inherited this from my aunt Shamsunnahar Mahmood and my mother Anwara Bahar Choudhury. They were both followers of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. Rokeya has always inspired me. I produced a play, *Rokeya's Dream*, based on her story on women's empowerment. The project was in partnership with Rose Bruford College of Drama, Mukul Ahmed of Tara Arts and *Mahila Sangha*. The play was very successful and we were invited to take some members of the team to Sakhawat Memorial Schooling Kolkata, Rabindra Bharati University and Bishwo Bharati.

In 2001 I was awarded an MBE for contributions to community relations. My life has been full of challenges. I tried new ideas and wanted to be creative. I have been very lucky that I have had an opportunity to meet and work with people from many different backgrounds, cultures, classes and professions. I have learnt something from everyone and that has enriched me.

My husband was always very supportive. He excelled in art and was also a creative person who had a positive influence on me. We had many similar interests; he liked gardening whilst I enjoyed ikebana, the art of flower arrangement that I learnt in Japan.

I have been away from home for more than five decades. I am proud of my heritage country and often miss home. I value and treasure what I have learnt from my parents. These values and my life experiences have moulded me into the person I am. Determination and hard work has always driven me forward.

Let There be Peace

By Shaheen Westcombe

Charred, disfigured corpses
Scattered everywhere
Few in this world
Seem to care

Bomb them, kill them
What audacity they say
Firing rockets and missiles
Towards Israel's way

The victims innocent
All feel trapped
In misery and terror
Their life is wrapped

Their land occupied
Their livelihood gone
They cannot understand
What they have done

Does violence ever
Any problem solve
With increasing pain
Grows more resolve

Tanks marching, Apaches hovering
Artillery everywhere flying
With a war so violent
Life's supplies are drying

In a country small
With population dense
Killing the helpless
Does not make sense

The militants and ordinary people
Live back to back
By hounding everyone
Israel compassion lack

They are determined
To wipe out all
Not responding
To anyone's call

Why can't they stop
For humanities sake
Sit and talk
A treaty make

The super powers
Have said nothing new
For the Palestinians
Have sympathies few

Israel says it is their promised land
Their God given right
They are determined
Till eternity to fight

The Palestinians stateless
Many generations sadly lost
Will continue to struggle on
Whatever the human cost

Sorrow engulfs us
We wonder and weep
As the crisis grows
More and more deep

January 7, 2009

‘Waiting for the Nut Lady’



Photo by Jane Thomas

Book Review

The Faiths of Others: A History of Interreligious Dialogue Thomas Albert Howard, pub. Yale University Press, hardback £25

ISBN: 9780-300-2499897

20th-century Christian leaders deemed their inter-church Ecumenical Movement “the great new fact of our time”; today, world religious leaders could describe the Inter-Faith Movement in similar terms. Evolving from imperial-era Western devotees’ encounter with the great religions of the East, through wider interest in inter-religious dialogue prompted by post-1945 colonial immigration into Europe, and dramatic acceleration post 9/11, inter-faith is now manifest in a vast array of specialist centres, programmes, events, and cooperative actions in many countries across the globe. This remarkable phenomenon, now taken for granted but unprecedented in light of centuries of mutual isolation, indifference and even hostility, is surveyed in depth in a landmark study by Thomas A Howard, Professor of Christian Ethics at Valparaiso University, USA.

His survey has three foci: 1893 World Parliament of Religions; 1924 London Conference of Living Religions within the (British) Empire; and the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), its 1965 document Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions [*Nostra aetate*], and Pope John Paul II’s 1986 Assisi gathering of world religious leaders for The World Day of Prayer for Peace.

Howard sees the dialogues of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Jews and Christians, convened by Akbar, Muslim Mughal Emperor of India (1542-1605), as remarkable ‘harbinger’ of modern developments. He also cites mediaeval Christian engagements with Islam – notably Francis of Assisi’s faith encounter with Sultan al-Kamil of Egypt during the Fifth Crusade (c.1218) – and the eirenic endeavours of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1461).

The chapter on the World Parliament is most illuminating. Its inspirations ranged from recall of Akbar, American Liberal Protestantism, and literature on world religions from 17th-century onwards, to visions of world harmony through religious unity. Key themes were: progress towards a new ‘universal religion’, world peace, Christian unity, ‘light from the East’, religious liberty. From seventeen countries, sixty leaders of eleven faiths expounded them in dozens of lectures over sixteen days to thousands who attended. A truly phenomenal event, it seemed to portend a new era of global cooperation of

faiths helping build world peace. (Since then, several further such parliaments have been held).

Post-1918 Britain saw expansion of its empire, symbolised by the huge-scale 1924 British Empire Exhibition. Famous adventurer and spiritual writer Sir Francis Younghusband and others, convened within it the 'Conference on Some Living Religions within the Empire', primarily to inform the British public about religions "under its tolerant flag". Major faiths and new movements such as Ahmadiyya Muslims and Brahmo Samaj expounded their beliefs, in a unique forum extolling 'universal harmony' and giving inter-faith major impetus with the 1936 founding of World Congress of Faiths.

In Britain, post-1945 Commonwealth immigration led to significant Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities in major cities: some Christians pioneered 'welcome' events often leading to more formal meetings (I recall holding a fascinating 'Christian-Sikh dialogue' in Coventry in late 1960s). These evolved into today's pluralist encounters and variegated inter-faith structures – yet sadly usually lacking erstwhile visions of 'universal harmony'.

The Second Vatican Council revolutionised Catholic attitudes to non-Christian faiths. Setting aside centuries of hostility, *Nostra aetate (Our Age)* urged Catholics to engage in "dialogue and collaboration" with members of the "great world religions", explicitly specifying Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. While foreshadowed by debate about 'virtuous pagans' and Karl Rahner's 'anonymous Christians' theology, this essentially unprecedented change under Pope John XXIII's leadership stunned the world – and made possible full Catholic participation in inter-faith, to its great enrichment. Despite accusations of syncretism, Pope John Paul II's work for interreligious dialogue stands without equal among Vatican endeavours.

The Inter-Faith Movement is not a coherent body, but a multi-layered reality of global, national and local bodies, NGOs, academic centres, state actors and leading personalities. Amid much religion-related violence especially in Africa and Middle East, inter-faith offers hope for a peaceful way forward. This richly researched and insightful study is an essential reference for all engaged in the dialogue and cooperation of faiths.

Rev. Brian Cooper, Inter-Faith Secretary, Uniting for Peace

NOTE ***Mahatma Gandhi in Cinema*** In the previous issue announcing the above book by Narendra Kaushik I added a note that it is expensive. In fact the book recently released is the paperback version and is a good deal cheaper being available at around £20. Ed.

Venkataram Kalyanam

Gandhi's last personal secretary dies at 98

Less well known than Gandhi's principal secretaries, Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal Nayar, Kalyanam was only a few steps from Gandhi when he was shot on 30 January 1948.

Kalyanam was born in Simla in 1922 on what later became Independence Day, 15 August. In his youth he had little awareness of politics but in his teens doing a favour for a friend by giving out Quit India leaflets he was arrested and sentenced to prison for nine months. On release from prison in Lahore he got a job with an insurance firm in Delhi. But he also spent evenings helping untouchables (Dalits) and this came to the notice of Devadas, Gandhi's youngest son, who invited him to come to Gandhi's ashram at Sevagram in September 1942. Here living conditions were much more basic than he was used to but he stayed on.



Kalyanam with Gandhi

When Gandhi was released from detention in 1944 Kalyanam, along with other ashramites, went to Bombay to meet him. Many of Gandhi's colleagues were still imprisoned so Kalyanam, being fluent in English, was asked to be private secretary which meant dealing with 30-40 letters each day.

When Gandhi was assassinated Kalyanam informed Nehru and Patel, the leaders of Congress, of the tragedy. Some hours later he gathered up all Gandhi's papers such as drafts of letters and speeches, many mere scraps of paper, and placed them in a trunk. So economical was Gandhi that Kalyanam said: "I never bought any fresh white paper all the time I was there".

After Gandhi's death Kalyanam stayed in London for a period as Edwina Mountbatten's secretary and back in India was secretary to the leading political figures, Rajagopalachari and Jayaprakash Narayan. He married and had two daughters and at one time worked as a social worker. In the 1980s he published a few of the documents he had put in the trunk, gave some away and lent others for small exhibitions. He invited the Indian National Archives to inspect the papers but somehow nothing came of this. Eventually Kalyanam donated the papers to the Saiva Siddhanta foundation which tried to sell the papers in 1996 through Phillips in London to fund the building of a temple in Hawaii. Kalyanam did not want any financial benefit. The documents covered the last six months of Gandhi's life and they amounted to more than 450 pages. The saved documents were of significant historical value and contained drafts of letters to Mountbatten, last Viceroy of India. There was also an original draft for a speech defending the newly independent India from attacks by Winston Churchill over the violence, which Churchill had compared to the "ferocity of cannibals". Churchill was a great man, Gandhi wrote, but he had "rendered a disservice to the nation of which he was a great servant. If he knew the fate that would befall India after she became free from the British yoke, did he for a moment stop to think that the blame belonged to the builders of the Empire rather than to the 'races' in his opinion 'gifted with capabilities for the highest culture'?" Before the sale could take place objections from the Indian Government and others established that the Navajivan Trust, founded by Gandhi in 1929, had claim to all Gandhi's writings.

Kalyanam was critical of the independent government which he believed did not follow Gandhi's way of a governance based primarily on the village. He also saw the growth of corruption in the Congress as elsewhere. In 2014 he joined the Aam Aadmi Party. In his nineties he was still tending 1,000 plants in his garden in Chennai and claimed his home was always open because he did not "possess anything expensive".

Compiled by the editor from obituaries appearing in *The Times* (14/5/21) and *Telegraph* (1/6/21)] Kalyanam died 4 May 2021.

Festival of Natural Fibre

Festival of Natural Fibre, now in our fourth year, represents all sectors involved in the growing movement of sustainable fibre production and manufacture from soil to soil, locally and globally. We reconnect fashion to farming, explore who grew-your-clothes and unpick fast fashion-slow fashion and, most importantly, look at changing consumer value.

The festival also acts as an incubator and innovation space where new ideas are explored and brought to fruition collaboratively.

It's hugely exciting as momentum around sustainable fibre production and manufacture, soil to soil economy and regenerative, holistic agriculture gathers speed at an ever increasing pace with interest from both ends of the spectrum – roots up to international corporations. Transparency, sustainability, collaboration alongside an ever increasing urgency to address climate crisis and carbon lockup.

The festival will take place in the aptly industrial backdrop of The Forge, Westferry Road, London, home to the Craft Central artisan workspace. This stunning venue provides a perfect reminder of the context of this gathering, asking questions about how we can meet the needs of our global population without exhausting our finite resources and without destroying life.

The festival structure has evolved over the past few years – panel discussions, craft workshops, an exhibition and pop-up stalls. Exhibition of student work and community quilting will be important additions this year. In a nutshell, the festival creates an inclusive learning and networking space.

ORGANISERS

[Khadi London](#), a social enterprise whose clientele includes ethical fashion designers who value craft and provenance while challenging the unsustainable practices of fast fashion and the throwaway culture. Khadi London works closely with partners in India to build capacity, and improve standards and design.

[Freeweaver SAORI Studio](#), London's registered Japanese SAORI weaving studio with workshops and more being led by Erna Janine from her studio at Craft Central. Erna Janine regularly travels to India for textile based residencies.

[ONE](#), an initiative led by Paula Wolton which began as a touring installation, One Hutfull, to campaign for the preservation of hill farming. Over time it has evolved into a collaboration for bringing together stakeholders supporting the cause of ethical, sustainable and responsible practices for textiles and fashion.

THE VENUE is sponsored by [Craft Central](#) at their magnificent Grade 2 listed building – part of 19th Century ship and girder bridge building history – now

containing architect-designed free-standing birch wood construction housing studios, workspaces, meeting rooms and a large exhibition space.

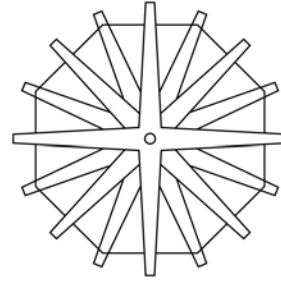


The implications of the Covid pandemic for India and the world

Some background statistics and information for panel discussion on
Saturday 4 September 11am:

- Some 4 million Indians had died of Covid-19 by end of June, according to The Economist magazine's estimate – this is ten times what official figures show.
- Indian government spending is not expanding, but shrinking during the pandemic e.g. in the first quarter in June, state investment in new projects fell by 42% compared with first three months of the year. Total expenditure this year will amount to 16.3% of GDP, compared to 17.8% last year.
- The Delta variant of Covid-19, first spotted in India, is two to three times more infectious than the original Alpha version of the virus.
- The Economist, 19-25 June – *"India's economy, which had been slowing even before the pandemic...has now stalled instead of restarting. Yet even as ordinary folk are squeezed by rising inflation, unemployment, malnutrition and poverty – all made harder by the anxieties of widespread death and disease – the country's richest are getting ostentatiously richer"*.
- The Economist, 19-25 June – *"Covid-19 has forced city authorities to acknowledge slums, both for the sake of their inhabitants and their neighbours. The disease spreads fast when people live at close quarters. One study in Mumbai between June and July last year, before India's second wave hit, found 54% of the city's slum-dwellers had Covid-19 antibodies, compared with 16% of those in formal settlements"*.
- [In the two-decades since 1999, the number of people living in extreme poverty worldwide has fallen by more than 1 billion people. Part of this success in reducing poverty is set to be reversed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.](#) World Bank's estimate for 2020 is that there were between 119 and 124 million additional poor globally with around 60% living in South Asia. In 2021 the estimate is for Covid induced poor to rise to between 143 and 163 million (<https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/updated-estimates-impact-covid-19-global-poverty-looking-back-2020-and-outlook-2021>)

The Gandhi Foundation



The Foundation exists to spread knowledge and understanding of the life and work of Mohandas K Gandhi (1869-1948). Our most important aim is to demonstrate the continuing relevance of his insights and actions for all of us.

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Registered office: Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, Bromley-By-Bow, London E3 3HJ
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The Gandhi Way

Articles, book reviews and letters of a specifically or broadly Gandhian nature will gladly be received by the Editor. Maximum length 2000 words.

George Paxton, 2/1, 87 Barrington Drive, Glasgow G4 9ES

Tel: 0141 339 6917; email: gpaxton@phonecoop.coop

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