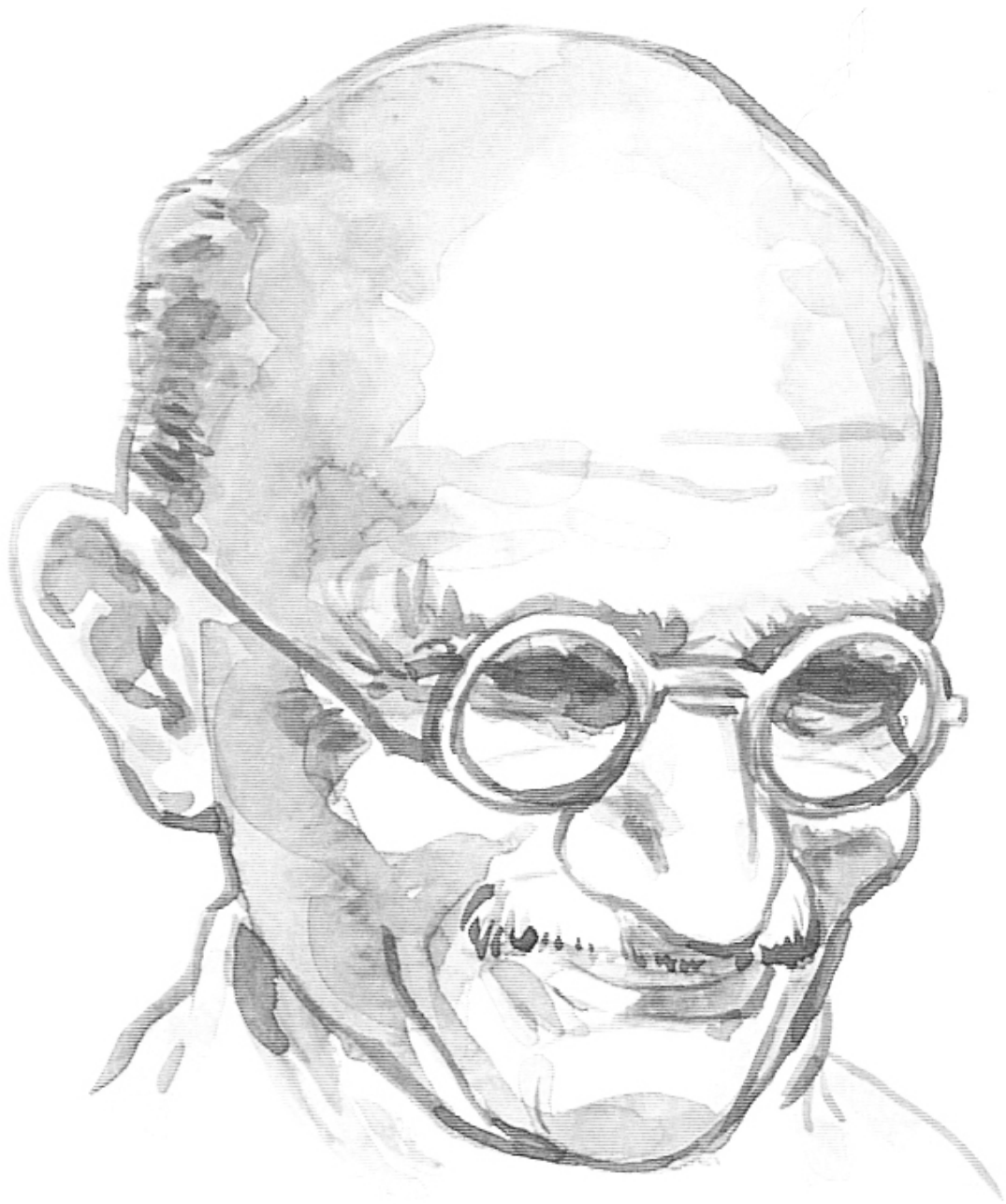


The Gandhi Way



Newsletter of the Gandhi Foundation

No.150 Winter 2021-22

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You are invited to
Exhibition of Natural Fibres
at Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, Bromley-By-Bow, London E3 3HJ
Sat 4 Dec and Sun 5 Dec 2021 at 10:00 - 16.00

Included in the above will be the virtual launch of
The Gandhi Foundation's New Website at 1pm on Saturday
The creator, Alastair Burns of Comma, will give a guide to the site.
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/exhibition-of-natural-fibres-at-kingsley-hall-tickets-201500341947>
ID 849 9997 5759
Passcode: 601977

Gandhi Foundation Multifaith Celebration 2022
Saturday, 29th January 2022, 3 pm - 5 pm (time to be confirmed)
Golders Green Unitarian Church
31 1/2 Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS
A blend of music, interfaith prayers and readings to commemorate the
anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination on 30th January 1948.
All are welcome. Free entry. Light refreshments will be offered.
Further details from our website nearer the time.

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Gandhi – the Natural Environmentalist

George Paxton

In Gandhi's time environmentalism was of limited interest and concern. John Muir, the Scottish-born American pioneer of environmentalism, was born 30 years before Gandhi and his influence was as one who has a great respect for nature and the desire to preserve it in its natural state. Today we are only too aware of the damage we have been inflicting on the Earth. A rapidly growing world population and a natural desire for a decent standard of living is having an enormous impact on natural processes and resources.

Gandhi's philosophy, and even more his way of life, can be a guide for today. The traditional Indian outlook exemplified by Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism embraces the unity of all existence and respect for all beings. Respect for the earth and its amazing interactive processes should follow. Exploitation is excluded from this outlook yet this is what we have had in abundance since at least the start of the Industrial Revolution.

There is much, I believe, that is positive stemming from the Age of Enlightenment – the scientific explanations of existence, the growth of tolerance, the gradual – but too gradual – spread of the idea of equality. Science and its applications in technology, however, were by no means always good. In addition to increasingly destructive warfare, the development of industrial machinery enabled the employment of large numbers of children, women and men in factories owned by a single individual who could grow rich on their labour. The development of trade through colonies created and held by military force allowed a similar inequality to flourish.

Nevertheless, modern technology combined with free market economy (even if the 'free' is exaggerated) has led to great improvements in raising populations above bare subsistent level. But it has been accompanied by at least two serious disadvantages – continuing inequality with absurdly rich billionaires multiplying, and increasing deterioration of the environment due to manufacture and transport of non-essential goods and an increasing desire for travel.

In his student days Gandhi adopted the lifestyle of the British middle class – even starting violin and dancing classes. But he quickly realised that he could not maintain that standard (his family were not wealthy by British standards) and he began to simplify his lifestyle, eg walking large distances rather than using public transport, moving to cheaper accommodation. When he settled in South Africa and began to earn as an advocate he moved with his family to a spacious house. And dressed in the manner expected. However in time he began to simplify such things and gave his surplus to further the causes he considered important. Back in India he cut down even more in diet, clothes and shelter until he could reduce no further.

Gandhi's motivation by this time was based on a belief that one had no right to have access to more than necessities when others did not even have that. Gandhi detested poverty that was not voluntarily borne.

He was famous for reusing envelopes and cards sent to him and would use a pencil till it could no longer be held. Food he regarded as something to keep one alive not for enjoyment. Nothing should be wasted, including use of one's time. Admittedly this is rather extreme but waste has become an integral part of modern culture thus contributing to global warming among other things. Much unused food ends up in landfill sites where it produces methane, a more powerful global warming gas than carbon dioxide. Relatively cheap manufactured goods are not made to be repaired because replacement produces larger profits for manufacturers. We are enticed by advertising to buy goods of new design or with new features although they may add little of importance. Hence increasing consumption of raw materials, increasing energy use in mining, manufacture and transport.

And what of our computers, mobile phones, robots of increasing sophistication? Undoubtedly they can be useful but there is no constraint about traditional economics – there is a race to develop them because profits can be made by the controllers of corporations who already have more than enough but are addicted to increasing their wealth. One of the latest amusements of billionaires is space tourism – well, they have to do something with their money. Another expression of their addiction is that although the super rich have more than they know what to do with many of them do their utmost to avoid paying taxes. This means inequality and waste on a grand scale.

But what of the majority of the population in the developed countries? Apparently people of average income and wealth are living beyond what the earth can provide. It is reasonable and just that everyone on the Earth should have enough food, basic clothes, a modest house, access to education and to health services. I suggest this can be done, although a smaller and stable world population would help (that could come in time). It cannot be done with an ever rising desire for more and more of everything – and that still appears to be the shared belief of economists and politicians in power.

I doubt if we can reduce consumption and waste sufficiently to avoid really serious global warming without the adoption of a different economic system on the basis of a humane philosophy.

True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard just as all true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time be also good economics. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It smells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life.

M K Gandhi Harijan 9/10/37

Festival of Natural Fibres

Fashion can be a force for good and a vehicle for change

The Festival, held from 21-29 August 2021 and co-hosted by the Gandhi Foundation, consisted of three main components: an exhibition showcasing an array of work which explored the possibilities of reconnection between fashion to farming, the Who Grew-your-clothes movement, unpicking fast fashion and shifting consumer values.

Panel discussions this year explored ways to support local level clean and green manufacturing in the UK and ways to create ethical and sustainable global supply chains.

Craft Workshops and demonstrations provided opportunities to learn crafts, from spinning to sewing.

Visitors came from as far as Devon, Shropshire, Bristol and Denmark. The aim of the Festival was to bring together fashion and textile designers and sustainability experts as well as students who are learning to create and source natural fibres and fabrics for themselves and their businesses.

An exhibition showcasing British and Indian fibres reconnected farming to fashion. The distinctive nature of Indian fibres such as cotton, jute, forest silk and wool and British fibres such as wool, hemp, nettle and flax was explained to the viewers.

The venue was Craft Central, a magnificent Grade 2 listed building, which is part of 19th century ship and girder bridge building history. It now contains an architect-designed freestanding birchwood construction which houses studios, workshop spaces, meeting rooms and large exhibition space.

The collaborating organisations were:

Khadi London – a social enterprise (Community Interest Company) set up to support ethical fashion designers and small and medium scale enterprises that produce ethical fashion and homewares.

Free weaver Saori Studio is a London registered Saori weaving studio. Workshops were led by Erna Jenine from her studio at the Craft Central.

ONE is led by Paula Wolton and began as a touring exhibition, OneHutFull, to campaign for sustainable wool production in hill farming context. It evolved into a project which supports sustainable, ethical and responsible practices in textile and fashion.

Community Quilting:

Creating a quilt using left over pieces of Khadi samples was also part of the events. The aim was to create a bond between the community by sharing their views and ideas on matters affecting the lives of women, art and craft and social justice.

The interactive panel discussion began with the students and recent graduates who have worked with Khadi. They inaugurated the festival by shaking the embroidered forest silk banner with a quote from Gandhi: **“In a gentle way you can shake the earth.”**



The winners of a competition at the Chelsea College of Arts and other students shared and exchanged the experiences they had and challenges they faced while working with the Khadi material and remote interaction with the artisans from India. Their final product of newly designed fabric formed an important part of the exhibition.

The second session was focused on climate change action and what the campaign can learn from Gandhi and his constructive work programme. The panelists imparted their knowledge and experiences. The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Global Warming suggests that we are on the brink of dangerous climate change, so, immediate action is required for the fashion sector too, to be aligned with the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement and move towards net-zero emissions by 2050. UN Climate Change work programme aims to connect all stakeholders in the textile and fashion industry, including raw material

producers, textile producers, apparel manufacturers and brands, to make this industry fully environmentally friendly.

The panelists and participants of the interactive session all agreed that the environmental crisis is real. The fashion industry has to take a lead to fight on several fronts by deploying measures such as initiating community action, organising nonviolent actions and taking an active part in lobbying for legislations regarding ethical textile production. Above all, taking personal responsibility as socially responsible consumers, educating customers, changing lifestyle and mindset and bringing brand names, fast fashion industries and retailers on board was also seen as a way forward in tackling this multifaceted issue.



Winning designs by Chelsea College of Art students – Khadi competition winners

Sunday morning was devoted to the Indian fibres. Various strands of regenerative, organic, sustainable and ethical fabrics were woven together in exploring the relationship of producers from cotton to cloth, fashion designers, brands and market.

Technological advancement and automation has created mass unemployment creating a huge gap between haves and have nots. There was lively discussion on whether it is possible to retain the human touch while embracing new technology. A technology specialist, Soma, assured that there is work in progress on designing a type of weaving loom which may allow the weaver to remain a craft person without becoming an industrial worker.

Since the inception of the Fibrefest four years ago, British fibres have come a long way. The passion and hard work of producers of fabrics from wool, hemp, flax, leather and nettle requires infrastructure and support for artisans and traceability.

Enthusiasm was palpable among the organisers, panelists and visitors who recognised the need and scope to widen the audience and grow the movement for natural fibres.



Community quilting

An exhibition cum roundtable meeting was held on Friday 22nd October at the Indian High Commission. The meeting was chaired by the Economic Attach Rohit Vadhvana. A brief on Khadi London's educational programme was presented by Kishor Shah, followed by an overview on Chelsea Khadi project by Caryn Simonson and an academic input on relevance of Khadi to the younger generation presented by Asha Buch.

Open discussion on the future activities of the Khadi London, how to involve other colleges, design a curriculum, work with other mainstream organisations and ideas for going forward were shared. An idea of organising a global Khadi or handmade fabrics in London was put forward.

The deputy high commissioner Shri Charanjeet Singh awarded the certificates to the winners of the Chelsea Khadi Competition and made some concluding remarks with a promise of more positive inputs from the IHC in the Khadi London's future endeavours. The guests visited the exhibition and they were given insight into how each item of the exhibits was made and the concept behind it.

The Festival of Natural Fibres 2021 was a success. The seeds of more involvement from the colleges and other related organisations were sown. We hope that this collaborative work will help towards resolving the economic and climatical crisis.

Asha Buch



Opposition to redevelopment of Gandhi Ashram

The Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad was founded by Gandhi in 1917 and was his centre of activity until 1933. It continues to exist as an active Gandhi centre with a museum, an important library and a research centre. In March this year the BJP Government announced their intention to redevelop the Ashram and greatly expand the site to include new museums, an amphitheatre, VIP lounge, a food court.



This has led to an open letter of objection from over 100 prominent individuals including Gandhi's grandson, Rajmohan Gandhi, and historian Ramchandra Guha. The letter states: "The proposed plan at best envisions a 'Gandhi theme park' and at worst 'a second assassination' as "the most authentic monument to Gandhi and our freedom struggle will be lost forever to vanity and commercialisation". The objectors fear that this is an

attempt to control Gandhi institutions.

The Gujarat government is encouraging ashram residents who are descendants of people who settled there over a century ago to move by paying them a lump sum.

Tushar Gandhi, who is a great grandson of Mohandas Gandhi, has filed a public interest litigation before the High Court of Gujarat opposing the proposed development of the Gandhi Ashram Memorial.

Speaking with *The Leaflet*, Tushar Gandhi remarked: "None of Mahatma Gandhi's ashrams were ever under government control, and that is how it should continue to be. They have been kept in a good condition by the managing trusts for over 70 years, so there is no reason why anybody should desire that the government should take over."

He further stated: "When the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi [an organisation established in 1955 to promote Gandhi's ideas – Ed.] was founded, it was clearly stated by the founders that the government would not be allowed any role in it. The initial corpus was collected by industrialists and other private persons, and the government was kept out. Later on, by way of an amendment, it was made permissible to accept government grants and funding for various projects, but even then, the government has never had any control in the management or other functions."

Gandhi on Trees



Photo by Jane Thomas

And what is the physical form after all ? As I was whizzing through the air yesterday and looking at the trees, I saw that beneath all the change that these mighty trees daily underwent, there was something that persisted. Every leaf has its own separate life. It drops and withers. But the tree lives on. Every tree falls in the process of time, on under the cruel axe, but the forest of which the tree is but a part lives on and so with us leaves of the human race. We may wither, but the eternal in us lives on, changeless and endless.

Letter to Hermann Kallenbach 21 December 1917

Trees are living beings just like ourselves. They live and breathe, they feed and drink as we do, and like us they need sleep. It is a wretched thing to go and tear the leaves off a tree at night when it is resting ! And why have you brought such a large quantity ? Only a few leaves were necessary. Surely you heard what I said at the meeting yesterday about the poor flowers, and how deeply it pains me that people should pluck those masses of delicate blossoms to fling in my face and hang round my neck. Was not it thoughtless to send someone out like that to worry and pain a tree at such a late hour when it had folded its leaves ? We should feel a more living bond between ourselves and the rest of animate creation.

Young India 5/12/29 Our Brethren the Trees

I find in the practice of tree worship a thing instinct with deep pathos and poetic beauty. It symbolises true reverence for the entire vegetable kingdom which, with its endless panorama of beautiful shapes and forms, declare to us, as it were with a million tongues the greatness and glory of God.

Young India 26/9/29

At COP26



Before the march 6 November 2021 – a few of the 100,000

Among the huge number of non-governmental organisations present in Glasgow for COP26 was **The Movement for the Abolition of War (MAW)**. Several members came from southern Britain for a varying number of days and were very active in their campaigning. They chose to focus particularly on the interaction of war and climate change.

Around 6% of global greenhouse gas emissions result from military related activity yet there is no obligation on nations to include them in reduction targets.

Climate change itself makes war more likely due to soil degradation, competition for scarce resources, mass migration and instability, and war contributes significantly to climate change through manufacture of weapons, military exercises with massive fuel use, and the use of explosives and fuel in war itself, among other consequences.

At earlier climate conferences it was decided that there would be no obligation on countries to declare them. Although our Ministry of Defence accepts that it should reduce its carbon footprint it is looking to efficiencies in its systems rather than looking to reducing warfare.

Beyond declaring their size of carbon footprint and reduction targets of armed forces, MAW considers that a more fundamental consideration of security is needed. Proper control of the arms trade, addressing underlying causes of conflict, funding for non-military security are among alternatives to lethal weapons.

www.abolishwar.org.uk

Photos by Jane Thomas



Geranium Rozanne



Sempervivum-montanum

GANDHIJI IN VILLENEUVE

NAMUMYOHORENGEKYO

Gandhiji once said: ‘... hold a good dream, hold a noble dream’.

In 1931, on his way back from the Round Table Conference in London, Gandhiji visited Switzerland together with an entourage that included Mirabehn. The group spent five days as Romain Rolland’s guests in Villa Lionette, a cottage rented by Rolland’s sister in Villeneuve.

Commemorating that visit, the Indian President Shri Ram Nath Kovind unveiled Gandhiji's statue at Gandhi Square, Villeneuve, on 14 September 2019, as part of the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of Gandhiji’s birth.

On 6–10 September 2019, I was invited by the Bible and Orient Museum of Fribourg University, Switzerland. At the time, I planned to undertake a short, humble prayer pilgrimage from Henri Frédéric Amiel’s grave in Clarens-Montreux to Villeneuve.

Unfortunately, due to the pilots’ strikes of 2019, I had to cut short my visit to Switzerland, doing a day-return on 6 September 2019. As a result, my plans for the prayer pilgrimage did not come to pass in 2019.

In 2020, too, I was unable to undertake the prayer pilgrimage in Switzerland due to the pandemic, which continues to disrupt travel plans to this day.

However, given Gandhiji’s counsel that we ‘... hold a good dream ... a noble dream’, I believe that my continuing to hold a vision for such a prayer pilgrimage is – in some small way – a timely tribute both for Amiel's bicentenary (which falls on 27 September 2021) and also for the 90th anniversary of Gandhiji’s historic encounter with Romain Rolland in Villeneuve (6–11 December 1931).

I share with you here below my vision for that Prayer Pilgrimage.



VISION
Swiss Pilgrimage
from Clarens-Montreux to Villeneuve

NAMUMYOHORENGEKYO

In the Beginning there was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness;

and the darkness comprehended it not.

From the first chapter of The Gospel according to John

Innocence and childhood are sacred. The sower who casts in the seed, the father or mother casting in the fruitful word are accomplishing a pontifical act and ought to perform it with religious awe, with prayer and gravity, for they are labouring at the Kingdom of God.

All seed-sowing is a mysterious thing, whether the seed fall into the earth or into souls.

Man is a husbandman: his whole work rightly understood is to develop life, to sow it everywhere. Such is the mission of humanity, and of this divine mission the great instrument is the word. We forget too often that a word is both a seed-sowing and a revelation. The influence of a word in season, is it not incalculable? What a mystery is the word! But we are blind to it, because we are carnal and earthy. We see the stones and trees by the road, the furniture of our houses, all that is palpable and material. We have no eyes for the invisible phalanxes of ideas which people the air and hover incessantly around each one of us.

Henri Frédéric Amiel

From *A Calendar of Wisdom: Wise Thoughts for Every Day*, compiled by Leo Tolstoy (Quote from *Amiel's Journal*, 2 May 1852. Translator Mrs. Humphry Ward, also known as Mary Augusta Ward)

This prayer pilgrimage will be from Amiel's grave to Romain Rolland's Villa Lionette, Villeneuve (c.10-15 kms).

Portrait of Rolland by Bhikkhu Nagase

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

HENRI FRÉDÉRIC AMIEL (1821–1881)

Grave Memorial # 154872217
Cimetière de Clarens-Montreux,
Montreux, District de la Riviera-Pays-
d'Enhaut, Vaud, Switzerland

ROMAIN ROLLAND (1866–1944)
Villa Lionette, Villeneuve, Switzerland
(visited by Mahatma Gandhi, from 6–11
Dec. 1931)

Reviews

Voices of Dissent by Romila Thapar, An Essay, www.seagullbooks.org, ISBN: 978 0 8574 2 862 2, 2020

The author, Emeritus Professor of History at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and former General President of the Indian History Congress, has received numerous academic awards from the universities of Oxford, SOAS, Chicago and Calcutta during her distinguished career. This deceptively slim volume contains the results of a lifetime of research and inquiry, offering a nuanced and detailed overview of the history of dissent in India, from earliest times placed within a wider, worldwide context. A timely book at a moment in history when populist regimes around the world have harnessed the power of popular media and rewritten a simplistic historical narrative while at the same time seeking to disenfranchise and to silence open dialogue and dissent. This has been particularly true in India in recent years.



Professor Thapar challenges the myth of a utopian golden age in India's distant past and also the simplistic division of religions into a few main streams. Instead, she clearly shows how there has always been a divergence of opinions and cultures which cannot be divided in terms of faith and ethnicity, and which includes many small, regional groupings based on local, indigenous peoples in tribal areas and which have been excluded in the simplistic historical overview set out during the times of the British Raj. The presence of the 'Other' has always been present, although that 'Other' was defined in different ways during the course of time: from the division of the local ruler and his people, to the

development of national identities when the 'Other' was related to geographical boundaries, down to the present day when 'Other' may be seen in terms of political, economic and caste differences. The false dichotomy of dividing the Indian people into two main religious belief systems, each being pitted against the other, ie Hinduism and Islam, is strongly critiqued. Professor Thapar shows how such watertight divisions never existed, even historically, with labels been given to those arriving from abroad such as the Middle East, relating to their ethnicity rather than their religion while the Bhakti or devotional movements led to an overlap of interest from peoples of differing faiths, many being firmly based in a local area.

The book continues with an examination of the role of dissent in helping to achieve independence through such nonviolent means as Satyagraha and the Civil Disobedience movement with a section highlighting Gandhi's use of methods such as noncooperation and taking on the role of a traditional 'Sant' whose authority lay in his moral standing, the result of strict discipline and practices such as self control and fasting. Professor Thapar remembers having met Gandhi in 1940 when she was at school in Pune. She recalls being asked by Gandhi why she was wearing mill-made cloth rather than khadi which raised the question for her whether 'wearing khadi was a form of satyagraha'. Rather than being defined by religion or ethnicity, the vision of independence "saw India as a nation of citizens who, irrespective of origins and with a substantially similar identity, were all of equal status."

In contrast, "Nationalism, if defined by a single identity ... ceases to be nationalism and takes the form of majoritarianism, a form that is opposed to secular democracy and [which] brings with it the threat of fascism. This seeks success by identifying a scapegoat, preferably a minority community, differentiated by religion or language, and which can be projected as the enemy within ... Scapegoats are also required as a diversion when there is a failure of government. We should keep in mind, however, that civilised societies do not treat any community as a scapegoat". Prescient and timely words indeed.

Jane Sill

A number of excellent U Tube videos featuring Professor Thapar, including an on line lecture and discussion about 'Dissent' may be found free of access. An example link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45Fuly7IWjs>

The Collapse of the Transcendent in the West

The Plight of Western Religion: The Eclipse of the Other-Worldly
by Paul Gifford, Hurst Publishing £25 ISBN: 978-1-78738-133-9

The decline of organised Christianity in the West - from Victorian mass middle-class churchgoing to post-1900 steady decline and its marginalised role today - is generally attributed to the impact of many factors. Evolutionary theory and scientific education, affluence and consumerism, changing role of women, mass media entertainment, two world wars, the 1960s' Cultural Revolution, the Church's failure to adapt to modernity, above all the emergence of a dominant secular individualistic culture, taken together greatly diminished both churchgoing and the socio-political influence of the Christian Church.

Paul Gifford, professor at London University School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) an authority on African Christianity, does not disregard these factors but sets them within his overarching thesis of a profound 'cognitive shift' in the Western mind originating with the 17th-century Scientific Revolution, and consequent development of a civilisation based on science, technology and rational planning. His book's sub-title – *The Eclipse of the Other-Worldly* – sums it up. Mediaeval Christendom, its piety focused on saints, miracles and pilgrimages, and society sharing an 'enchanted religious imagination' with belief in the supernatural, he sees as the apogee of Western Christianity – lost forever. Experiencing reality in terms of spiritual forces [which he asserts still obtains in many cultures, especially Africa] has not been disproved by the pervasive techno-scientific mentality, but rendered irrelevant. 'Ultimate questions' posed from a religious awareness, are but rarely asked now because science only asks "questions which can be fruitfully addressed". For the vast majority in the West, the dimension of the transcendent (a term he does not use) has simply evaporated.

Gifford's thesis prompts objections: the Scientific Revolution's pioneers were all Christian, as were most scientists until mid-20th century; mediaeval people created soaring Gothic cathedrals to the glory of God, but deployed logic and calculation to build them; post-1945 Britain's religious revival saw mass churchgoing and the inauguration of rebuilt Coventry Cathedral (1962) as a great national event. Furthermore, the thesis may help explain Christianity's decline, but seems at variance with Britain's vibrant Islam with its proliferation of mosques.

The massive reality of American Christianity, embracing half the US population and especially strong in its Evangelical and Pentecostal expressions, is usually seen as negating any simplistic "secularisation marginalises religion" thesis. Yet Gifford downgrades this distinctive US religious experience as essentially cultural-political, a church-based expression of the success-driven American Dream. 'Prosperity gospel' beliefs certainly contradict the teachings of Jesus, but downplaying the sincere faith of millions is both unacademic and churlish. (As the role of non-Christian faiths in the contemporary West is not discussed, 'The Plight of Western Christianity' would be a more accurate title.)

The author fascinatingly contrasts the West with African cultures where he reveals the 'enchanted religious imagination' and spirit world remain powerful alongside the drive for techno-scientific modernity. Their expression is often malignly superstitious – from killing of albinos in Tanzania for the 'spiritual potency' of their body parts against evil spirits and ritual human sacrifice in Senegal to influence elections, to the financially exploitative role of *marabout* who claim power over 'sacred forces'. It is odd the author sets such crimes in the same spiritual framework as mediaeval Christians' veneration of saints!

Despite such serious caveats, this richly-researched, original and insightful book, contributes valuably to the debate about Christianity's role in the West. The author's frequent and generous citation of contrary authorities makes for a lively debate throughout its pages.

Rev Brian Cooper, Inter-faith Secretary, Uniting for Peace

Does Gandhi Matter?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWHaLZssgwo>

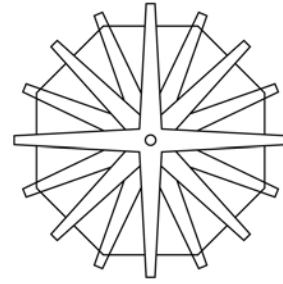
An excellent round table discussion organised jointly by LSESU India Society and the National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK. Speakers include Faisal Devji, Professor of Indian History, University of Oxford, Mridula Mukherjee, a historian of modern India and retired Professor at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Akash Banerjee (@TheDeshBhakt), journalist and Founder and Host of The Deshbhakt, a social media platform which uses satire to disseminate news.

The debate focussed on the contemporary relevance of Gandhi and whether the younger generation saw Gandhi as merely an icon rooted in history whose portrait can be seen on currency and postage stamps. The discussion was wide ranging. Consensus was that Gandhi's message of nonviolence and non-cooperation was as relevant today as ever and in fact the methods he employed could be widely seen in modern day protest movements such as the on going farmers' disputes and the mass protests concerning citizenship. In fact, banners depicting Gandhi could be seen on many protest marches and demonstrations. However, it was suggested that Gandhi, the icon, had been hijacked in recent years to support demonstrably divisive and inflammatory positions fuelling fake news, a phenomenon which could be seen world wide.

As Akash Banerjee pointed out, many young people no longer access traditional ways of gleaning facts but instead rely on social media which so often is manipulated. Akash was using his virtual platforms to redress the balance and to encourage open dialogue and critical questioning, while bringing accredited factual statements into the picture. The struggle for a secular, pluralistic India is very much at play, to which Gandhi was wholeheartedly committed. As he once declared, "I swear by my religion but it is my personal affair – the state has nothing to do with it. Hinduism belongs to all who are born here. Free India will be no Hindu Raj ... For me, Hindu Swaraj [promotes] the rule of all people and the rule of justice". The free to listen U Tube video of the discussion is available on the above link.

Jane Sill

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.

Founder President: Richard Attenborough

President: Bhikhu Parekh

Patrons: Godric Bader, Navnit Dholakia, Denis Halliday, Eirwen Harbottle,
Martin Polden, Diana Schumacher, Mark Tully, Sandip Verma

Members of Executive Committee: Mark Hoda (Chair), Graham Davey,
Omar Hayat, Trevor Lewis, George Paxton, William Rhind, Jane Sill,
Shaheen Choudhury-Westcombe

You can become a Friend of the Gandhi Foundation for a minimum subscription of £20, or a concession rate of £10, or be a Life Friend for a donation of £200. As a Friend you will receive the quarterly newsletter The Gandhi Way and notices of events organised by the Foundation.

Subscriptions to the Editor (address at bottom).

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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.

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