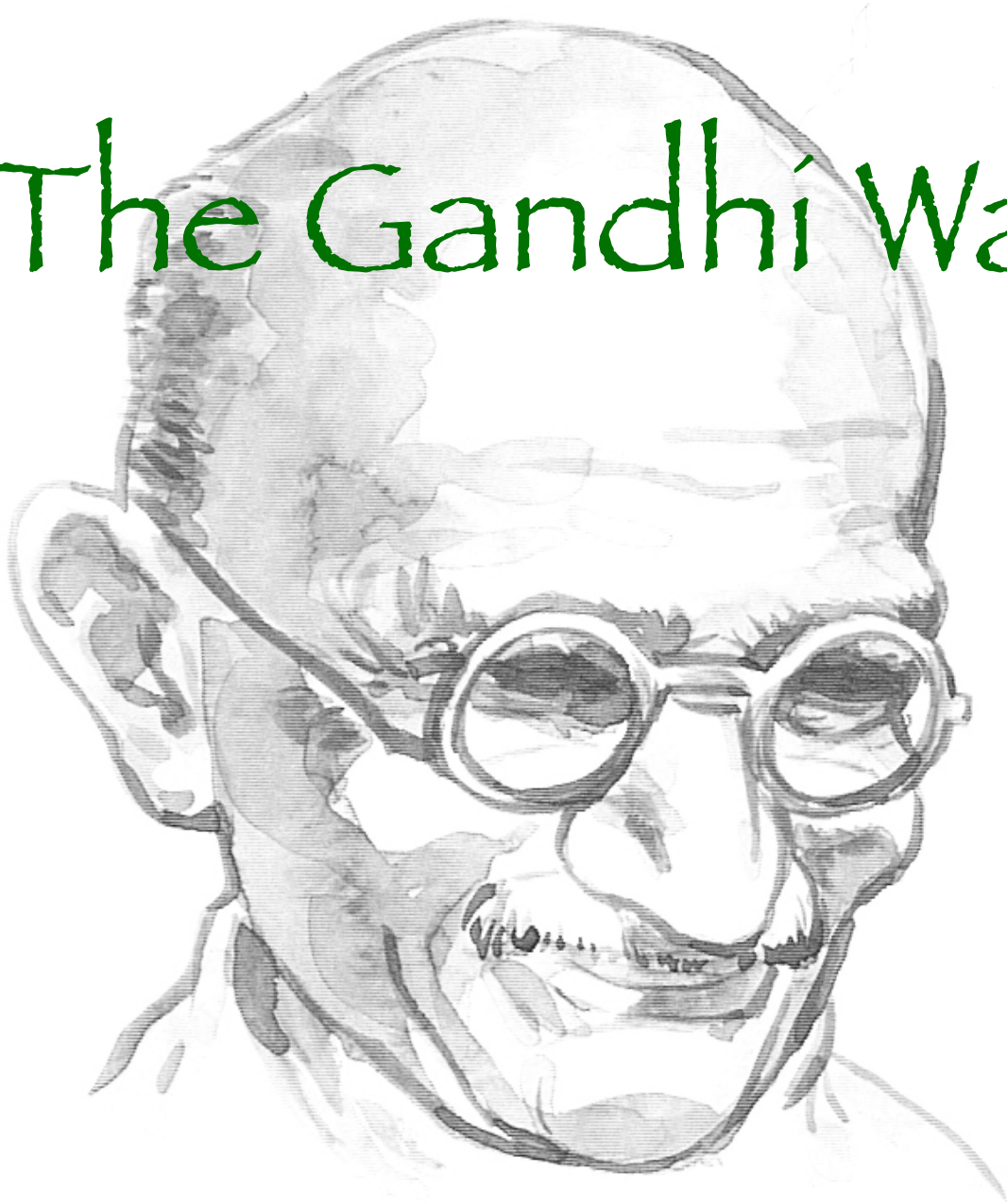


# The Gandhi Way



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### **New Gandhi Foundation website launched**

The Committee is pleased to announce that the new website is now online (with some small additions still to be made). It is accessible with the same address as before – [www.gandhifoundation.org](http://www.gandhifoundation.org) and is highly recommended.

With the easing of restrictions following the apparent diminishing of the Covid pandemic in Britain it is expected that the GF will be able to hold both an annual lecture and an exhibition of natural fibres later in the year.



Parakeets taken by Jane Thomas

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# **The Threat of a Large-Scale Famine**

***John Scales Avery***

Unless efforts are made to stabilize and ultimately reduce global population, there is a serious threat that climate change, population growth, and the end of the fossil fuel era could combine to produce a large-scale famine by the middle of the 21st century.

As glaciers melt in the Himalayas and the Andes, depriving India, China and South America of summer water supplies; as sea levels rise, drowning fertile rice-growing regions of Southeast Asia; as droughts reduce the food production of North America and Southern Europe; as groundwater levels fall in China, India, the Middle East and the United States; and as high-yield modern agriculture becomes less possible because fossil fuel inputs are lacking, the 800 million people who are currently undernourished may not survive at all.

## **Energy Inputs of Agriculture**

Modern agriculture has become highly dependent on fossil fuels, especially on petroleum and natural gas. This is especially true of production of the high-yield grain varieties introduced in the Green Revolution, since these require especially large inputs of fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation. Today, fertilizers are produced using oil and natural gas, while pesticides are synthesized from petroleum feedstocks, and irrigation is driven by fossil fuel energy. Thus agriculture in the developed countries has become a process where inputs of fossil fuel energy are converted into food calories.

## **Predictions of Drought in the Stern Review**

According to a report presented to the Oxford Institute of Economic Policy by Sir Nicholas Stern, areas likely to lose up to 30% of their rainfall by the 2050's because of climate change include much of the United States, Brazil, the Mediterranean region, Eastern Russia and Belarus, the Middle East, Southern Africa and Southern Australia. Meanwhile rainfall is predicted to increase up to 30% in Central Africa, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Siberia, and much of China.

Stern and his team point out that,

“We can... expect to see changes in the Indian monsoon, which could have a huge impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of people in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Most climate models suggest that the monsoon will change, although there is still uncertainty about exactly how. Nevertheless, small

changes in the monsoon could have a huge impact. Today, a fluctuation of just 10% in either direction from average monsoon rainfall is known to cause either severe flooding or drought. A weak summer monsoon, for example, can lead to poor harvests and food shortages among the rural population – two-thirds of India's almost 1.1 billion people. Heavier-than-usual monsoon downpours can also have devastating consequences..."

In some regions, melting of glaciers can be serious from the standpoint of dry-season water supplies. For example, melts from glaciers in the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas now supply much of Asia, including China and India, with a dry-season water supply. Complete melting of these glacial systems would cause an exaggerated runoff for a few decades, after which there would be a drying out of some of the most densely populated regions of the world.

### **Ocean Current Changes and Failure of Monsoons**

It is expected that climate change will affect ocean currents, and hence also affect monsoon rainfall. We are already experiencing a diversion of the Gulf Stream due to southward currents of cold water from melting ice in the Arctic. This has caused what is known as the North Atlantic Anomaly. While most regions of the world are experiencing rising temperatures, the North Atlantic and several northern European countries are exceptions to this rule, and have cooled. Complete failure of the Gulf Stream would lead to much colder temperatures in Europe.

Changes in ocean currents have already led to the failure of the West African Monsoon, and this has already produced severe food insecurity in West Africa.

In the future, climate-changed ocean currents may lead to failures of monsoons in South-east Asia, and thus damage the food supply of almost two billion people.

### **Falling Water Tables around the World**

Under many desert areas of the world are deeply buried water tables formed during glacial periods when the climate of these regions was wetter. These regions include the Middle East and large parts of Africa. Water can be withdrawn from such ancient reservoirs by deep wells and pumping, but only for a limited amount of time.

In oil-rich Saudi Arabia, petroenergy is used to drill wells for ancient water and to bring it to the surface. Much of this water is used to irrigate wheat fields, and this is done to such an extent that Saudi Arabia exports wheat. The country is, in effect, exporting its ancient heritage of water, a policy that it

may, in time, regret. A similarly short-sighted project is Muammar Qaddafi's enormous pipeline, which will bring water from ancient sub-desert reservoirs to coastal cities.

In the United States, the great Ogallala aquifer is being overdrawn. This aquifer is an enormous stratum of water-saturated sand and gravel underlying parts of northern Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming and South Dakota. The average thickness of the aquifer is about 70 meters. The rate of water withdrawal from the aquifer exceeds the rate of recharge by a factor of eight.

Thus we can see that in many regions, the earth's present population is living on its inheritance of water, rather than its income. This fact, coupled with rapidly increasing populations and climate change, may contribute to a very serious food crisis partway through the 21st century.

### **Limitations on Cropland**

In 1944 the Norwegian-American plant geneticist Norman Borlaug was sent to Mexico by the Rockefeller Foundation to try to produce new wheat varieties that might increase Mexico's agricultural output. Borlaug's dedicated work on this project was spectacularly successful. He remained with the project for 16 years, and his group made 6,000 individual crossings of wheat varieties to produce high-yield disease-resistant strains.

In 1963, Borlaug visited India, bringing with him 100 kg of seeds from each of his most promising wheat strains. After testing these strains in Asia, he imported 450 tons of the Lerma Rojo and Sonora 64 varieties – 250 tons for Pakistan and 200 for India. By 1968, the success of these varieties was so great that school buildings had to be commandeered to store the output. Borlaug's work began to be called a "Green Revolution". In India, the research on high-yield crops was continued and expanded by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan and his coworkers.

Despite these successes, Borlaug believes that the problem of population growth is still a serious one in "Africa and the former Soviet republics", Borlaug states, "and the Cerrado." "After they are in use, the world will have no additional sizable blocks of arable land left to put into production, unless you are willing to level whole forests, which you should not do. So, future food-production increases will have to come from higher yields. And though I have no doubt that yields will keep going up, whether they can go up enough to feed the population monster is another matter. Unless progress with agricultural yields remains very strong the next century will experience human misery that, on a sheer numerical scale, will exceed the worst of everything that has come before."

## **Populations Displaced by Drought and Famine**

Climate change could produce a refugee crisis that is “unprecedented in human history,” Barack Obama has warned as he stressed global warming was the most pressing issue of the age.

Speaking at an international food conference in Milan, the former US President said that rising temperatures were already making it more difficult to grow crops and rising food prices were leading to political instability.

If world leaders put aside parochial interests and took action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by enough to restrict the rise to one or two degrees Celsius, then humanity would probably be able to cope.

Failing to do this, Mr. Obama warned, increased the risk of catastrophic effects in the future, not only real threats to food security, but also increases in conflict as a consequence of scarcity and greater refugee and migration patterns.

## **Conclusions**

The subject of population stabilization is a highly sensitive and controversial one. Nevertheless it is an issue that must be confronted if a catastrophic global famine is to be avoided. The three terrible Malthusian forces – famine, disease and war – in the end will cut down any population that exceeds its means of support.

In the first edition of his book on population, Malthus wrote:

“That population cannot increase without the means of subsistence is a proposition so evident that it needs no illustration. That population does invariably increase, where there are means of subsistence, the history of every people who have ever existed will abundantly prove. And that the superior power cannot be checked without producing misery and vice, the ample portion of these two bitter ingredients in the cup of human life, and the continuance of the physical causes that seem to have produced them, bear too convincing a testimony.”

In later editions, he modified this opinion and made it less pessimistic by allowing for the effect of preventive checks such as late marriage. Malthus considered birth control to be a form of vice, but today it is accepted as the most humane method of avoiding the grim Malthusian forces, famine, disease and war.



If we examine them in the light of current history, we can see that famine, disease and war are interlinked. War produces famine, and indeed famine has been used as an instrument of war, as we see in the conflicts now taking place in Somalia. Another link is the almost unbelievable economic cost of war.

An estimated 2.0 trillion U.S. dollars were spent on armaments in 2021. Part of this colossal sum could instead have been used to provide primary health care to all the peoples of the world, and with it, access to the information and materials needed for family planning.

Let us work together to avoid the enormous suffering that would be involved if climate change and population growth combine to produce a catastrophic global famine.

*This article originally appeared on Transcend Media Service (TMS) on 20 Dec 2021.*

John Scales Avery, **who was part of a group that shared the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize** for their work in organizing the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, is a member of the **TRANSCEND Network** and Associate Professor Emeritus at the H.Ørsted Institute, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. He is chairman of both the Danish National Pugwash Group and the Danish Peace Academy and received his training in theoretical physics and theoretical chemistry at M.I.T., the University of Chicago and the University of London. He is the author of numerous books and articles both on scientific topics and on broader social questions. His most recent books are Information Theory and Evolution and **Civilization's Crisis in the 21st Century** (pdf). Website: <https://www.johnavery.info/>



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## A Global Peace Dividend

More than 50 Nobel laureates have signed an open letter calling for all countries to cut their military spending by 2% a year for the next five years, and to put half the saved money into a UN fund to combat pandemics, the climate crisis, and extreme poverty.

World military spending reached \$2 trillion in 2020 so an enormous sum could be raised thus increasing real security for humankind.

An online appeal has gathered tens of thousands of supporters. You can find it at [www.peace-dividend.org](http://www.peace-dividend.org)

## A Light in the Darkness – Remembering Those We have Lost

*Jane Sill*

This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gandhi Ji's assassination on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1947. The annual multifaith event to commemorate the occasion was able to take place both in person and on line using Zoom technology. The hybrid model allowed people both far and near to take part and the event was recorded to be uploaded on to the new Gandhi Foundation website.

Once again we met in the peaceful and very beautiful surroundings of Golders Green Unitarian Church which has hosted the event twice before. A frieze depicting a woodland scene complete with deer and dove of peace which had been commissioned to commemorate the loss of a son in World War One provided the fitting backdrop.

As Mark Hoda explained in his introduction, this year the event not only marked the passing of Gandhi Ji but also the passing of so many due to the Covid pandemic, including Gandhi Foundation Trustee, John Rowley, whose first anniversary took place the day before on 28<sup>th</sup> January. Included in the event was an opportunity for participants both in person and on line to light a candle in remembrance of loved ones they had lost and for all the many millions of grieving families worldwide. Also remembered were those who had passed away due to other causes, including Felix Padel's wife, Anu, who had sadly died in a road traffic accident 6 weeks earlier in India. The event allowed an opportunity for people to grieve together but also to celebrate the lives lost and to look forward to a future made brighter by their legacy.

The event began with the chanting of Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo by Reverend Nagase from the order of Nipponzan Myohoji whose teacher, the Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii had spent time with Gandhi Ji at his ashram in Wardha in the 1930s and whose own life had been greatly influenced by that meeting. He went on to found a number of Peace Pagodas throughout the world, including the Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park where Reverend Nagase is in charge. He was joined in his prayer by Sister Marutasan, a nun of the same order who is in charge of Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda.

There followed an address by Reverend Feargus O'Connor of Golders Green Unitarians who reflected on the inspiration of Gandhi Ji in dark times. He also spoke of Thich Nhat Hanh, another great peace maker, whose funeral had taken place that morning in Vietnam and who had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, another great advocate of resolving conflict through peaceful means. Included in this list of peacemakers was HH Dalai Lama whose influence worldwide has been phenomenal. The non sectarian approach of all these great spiritual leaders and their emphasis on universal human values was key.



There followed a selection of readings and recitals of music and song which included a beautiful Maronite Hymn from the Syrian Orthodox Church sung by Saara Majid who had helped organise the event and invited several of her musician friends. This was followed by atmospheric bansuri, (Indian flute) music by Riky Choudhuri. Judith Rowley, John's widow, read a poem celebrating St Brigid's day which is celebrated in Ireland on 1<sup>st</sup> February and is said to mark the first day of Spring. It also celebrated the important role of women in spiritual affairs, both past and present. A small posy of snowdrops, St Brigid's flowers, along with primroses and evergreen foliage was placed on the simple altar beside a portrait of Gandhi Ji and Thich Nhat Hanh, offering the hope of fresh beginnings after a long winter.

Felix Padel, a close friend of John Rowley who had played at John's memorial service in October, travelled all the way from Wales to take part. He played a very beautiful piece by Bach on viola. This was followed by a Jain prayer offered by Asha Buch on line, and a song based on the words of Jalal ad-Din Mohammad Rumi, sung by Saara along with her friend Kate. Felix returned to play a moving and mournful raga while participants were invited to light a candle of remembrance and hope, led by Reverend Feargus. The programme concluded with an uplifting Bosnian Sufi song by Saara and Kate, accompanied by Riky on bansuri.

Light refreshments, kindly supported by Judith, and a chance to chat with others concluded what everyone said was a very simple but poignant event. Stringent Covid restrictions had just been lifted the previous Thursday and so this was the first time that people were able to meet in this way with greater freedom although precautions were still taken.

Feargus O'Connor sent these words in thanks:

"It was a truly inspirational event and I'm so happy and grateful that you invited me to speak and that you decided to hold the event at Golders Green Unitarians again. It is a great honour and I very much value the link with the Gandhi Foundation Foundation.

I am delighted that, thanks to your very kind decision to give your blessing to the collection in honour of Gandhi and Thich Nhat Hanh for the British Red Cross Afghanistan Crisis Appeal, I was able to hand over cheques for a total of £380 in the name of the Gandhi Foundation and the Unitarian Peace Fellowship. £216 was donated at the GF interfaith commemoration itself and I made an additional donation of £150 in the name of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship. Reverend Michael Allured made an additional donation of £14 to bring the total up to £380. The charity expressed its warm thanks to all who generously donated to this emergency appeal".

If you would also like to make a donation, visit [www.donate.redcross.org.uk](http://www.donate.redcross.org.uk) – or one of their shops.







## Khadi – Not just fabric, but a lifestyle

Asha Buch

For the last year and half, tens and thousands of problems such as the unsustainability of migrant economy, unemployment, broken village economy, harm caused by increase in urbanisation, a problem of lack of self-reliance from individual to national level, socio-economic inequality and insufficient health provision etc have come to the fore.

Citizens of most countries are wondering what to do, where to go and how to survive while government officials are pursuing their wasted interest on the dead bodies of millions of helpless people.

At times like this we are tempted to cast our eyes on the list of Constructive Work Programme laid out by M K Gandhi almost a century ago. Particularly in context to the situation in India, Khadi and village industries' revival seems more imminent. In context to the western countries, the introduction of Khadi as an ethical fabric seems appropriate.

People who have faith in the model of modern development may challenge and ask, can such a small spinning wheel solve so many problems? Yes, this two-wheel machine has potential to avoid or solve many socio-economic problems, because it is not just a type of fabric it produces, but it supports a way of life.

Ramchandra Guha – a columnist and writer from India – in his book *Gandhi: The years that changed the world 1914-1948* explained Gandhi's views on spinning as follows:

“Gandhiji took sabbatical during the year 1926 and stayed at the Sabarmati Ashram. Spinning was his main preoccupation during this time. He presented a succinct description of all the activities involved in spinning in an article for his Gujarati weekly *Navjeevan*:

*Spinning does not mean drawing out bits of yarn of any sort as if we were merely playing at spinning. Spinning, in fact, means learning all the preliminary processes – sitting down properly, with a mind completely at rest, and spinning daily for a fixed number of hours good, uniform and well-twisted yarn, spraying it, measuring its length and taking its weight, rolling it neatly, and if it is to be sent out to some other place, packing it carefully and sticking a label to it with details of the variety of cotton seed, the count, the length and weight of the yarn, and a tag on it with particulars of the contributor's name and address in clear handwriting, when all this is done, one will have completed the spinning-yajna for the day.*

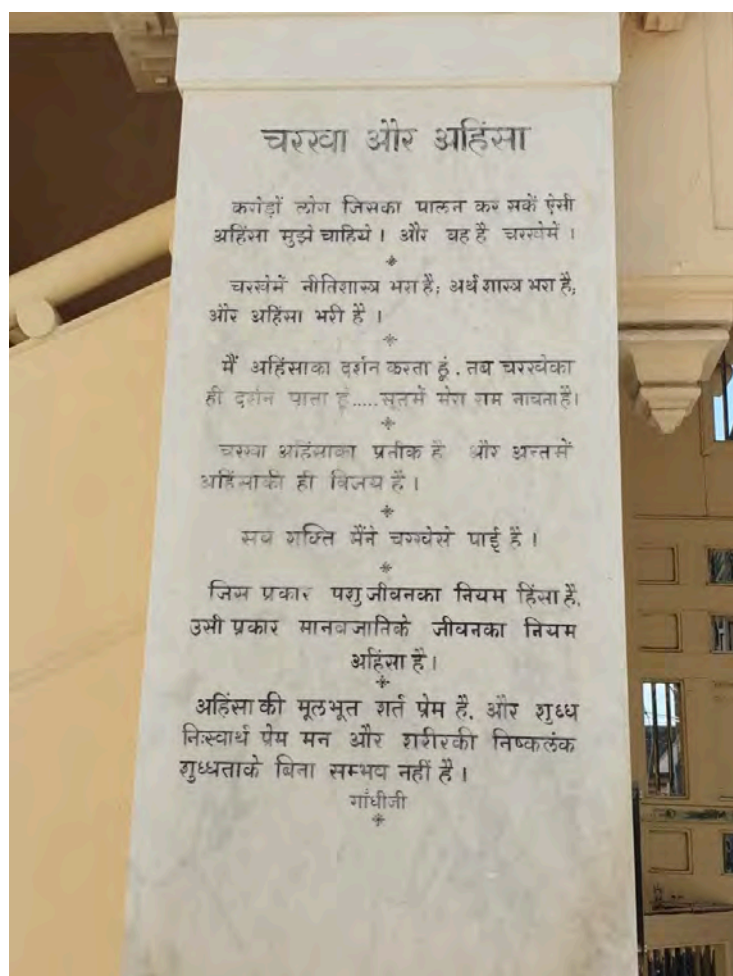
The younger generation can comment, what is the point in making such a fuss over the production of just a piece of fabric?

Bear this in mind that Khadi is not just a kind of cloth, it is a way of thinking and training our mind and body which requires cultivating all the virtues and skills mentioned above.

At the time of the independence movement, the people of India considered Khadi as a symbol of freedom, but could not understand its economic, social or environmental value because our thinking and understanding did not match that of Gandhi.

Spinning for Gandhiji served many objectives: breaking down the barriers (so integral to the caste system) between mental and manual labour was one of them. Khadi became a powerful tool. A demonstration of self-reliance at the most basic or individual level, a renewal of indigenous skills and techniques that had been destroyed under colonial rule, and revival of the cotton industry. Aims such as social reform, personal development, economic self-sufficiency on an individual as well as national basis, foster national pride and many more can be fulfilled through this modest industry. The making of Khadi symbolised and contributed to all of the above objectives.

At the Kirti Mandir (the birth place of Gandhi) in the town of Porbandar his thoughts on many aspects are beautifully depicted. One of them is about Khadi and non-violence.



Only Gandhi can connect Khadi to nonviolence. It reads: "I was looking for a type of non-violence which millions of people can follow. Charkha is one of them. There is science of ethics, economy and non-violence in it. When I try to visualise non-violence, I can see a Charkha. My Rama is dancing on it. Charkha is a symbol of non-violence and in the end only non-violence wins. All my strengths have derived from the Charkha. The nature of animal species is violence, similarly the rule of humans is non-violence. The basic condition of non-violence is Love, and without pure and selfless love there is no possible purity of body and mind."



This is an ideological aspect of Khadi. Let us try to understand the current situation from the perspective of the Khadi industry.

Can we find a solution to unemployment in the Khadi industry? Let us think. If we make a list of all skilled workers and artisans occupied in the whole of the Khadi industry, you will find that the farmers, the carders, artisans making slivers, spinners, weavers, dyers, printers, tailors and finally the traders and retailers of ready made clothes are all part of the supply chain. All these procedures are done by hands, so without a doubt, a way more people can be employed in this industry. Therefore those who have lost their livelihood during this pandemic crisis can be trained to transfer their skills to one of the many Khadi related industries. But let this not just be a solution for the present crisis, let us think about our long-term future. Self-reliance from individual to national level is inevitable. The quicker we realise and understand, the better it is for all of us.

Today, migrant workers' displacement, especially in developing countries, is a challenge for the governments and NGOs. It is a gift from the industrial revolution. The consumable items which used to be produced by masses in the villages are being mass produced by machines in the big cities. Smart cities are springing up to cater for this type of industrial model. Villagers are running towards cities in search of job opportunities. There they face unemployment, homelessness and even hunger. They have to bear this deprivation because it is a one way road. If Khadi and all other small scale industries were helped to develop where the natural and human resources were, then we would not have witnessed the march of millions of migrant workers. Still it is not too late. There are institutions and individuals who can deliver the art, skills and tools required for these industries.

Covid-19 has taken the lives of millions and made even more people ill and devastated their lives, so it must be completely defeated. One of its side effects has been useful to the human race. This disease has not discriminated against anyone on the basis of race, colour, religion, caste, class or gender. Without uttering a word the pandemic has made it clear that poor, uneducated, members of lower castes and class and all men and women have an equal right to earn a decent living and receive good health service. We knew it before, but now we have to accept it and we are bound to take action. We are realising that economic inequality is the root cause of all other inequalities. It has been proved that the corporate business models are the main source of economic inequality. For this very reason we need to be brave and think about building small scale businesses at the local level.

The problem of environmental protection seems just as urgent as the Covid-19 crisis. An experiment is worth trying. In a medium size city, let us produce some goods by importing raw materials from far away places, make them in big factories and sell them to four corners of the world. Make a note

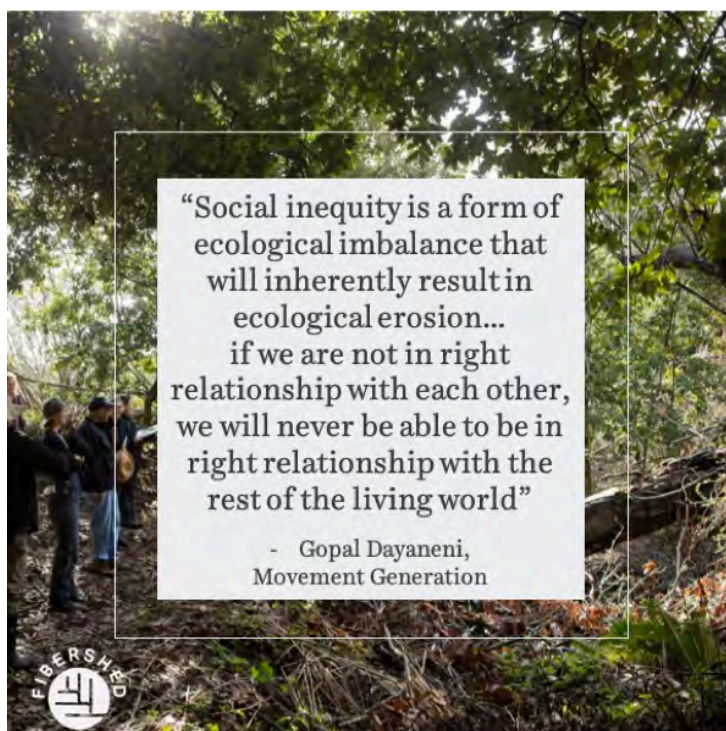


of its monetary gains and carbon footprint. On the other hand, in a small village nearby let us start an enterprise where the locally produced raw material is used by locally trained artisans or workers in the decentralised industrial units. The final products are sold locally and only the surplus is sold in nearby towns and cities. Make note of its monetary gains and carbon footprint. Which production and business model will win the competition of leaving the least amount of carbon footprint, I wonder.

I would like to come back to the point of Khadi as a way of life. Yes, those who embrace Khadi as their attire, will have to be satisfied with looking simple and they will have to wash their clothes regularly. Because they are handmade and just wages are paid to all workers in its supply chain, they will be dearer than what you can buy from a departmental store or a supermarket which sells clothes made in garment factories, so you may not be able to stack your wardrobes with dozens of pairs of clothes. That is why we need to understand, Khadi is not just a fabric, it is a style of clothing and an ideology.

Young fashion designers and ready made clothes outlets are beginning to opt for this ethical brand of fabric, this is an ominous sign, but there is a catch in following this ideology. Transparency and decentralised cooperative model which adheres to the not for profit principle can only claim its affiliation with the Khadi industry. It is a value based industry, not market based.

The international movement Fibershed ensures the soil is protected from the overuse of its nutrients and all species including humans are safe in production of clothing materials. I found Gopal Dayaneni's quote on their website.



This is thought provoking. We can only rest by putting this in our actions.

*Asha Buch*  
[71buch@gmail.com](mailto:71buch@gmail.com)

# **Glorious Chapters in India's History**

*Vasudev Kutumbakam* – The World is a Family

This aphorism has been part of India's spiritual heritage for thousands of years

## **A Maharaja Creates a Special Bond between Poland and India**

According to the Polish History Museum, as the Second World War raged, Poland was trapped between Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany. Hundreds of Polish children were orphaned. Maharaja Digvijaysinhji Ranjit Singhji of Nawanagar, near Jamnagar, Gujarat, India, came to know about it and offered to host them. In 1942, around 600 Polish children, some of them Jewish, made the hazardous journey by sea and land from Siberia. On the way, they were denied entry from all ports from Iran to Mumbai, which was under British rule at that time. When they at last arrived at Nawanagar, the Maharaja welcomed them personally and said, "You are no longer orphans. From now on you are Nawangarians, and I am Babu, (father) of all Nawangarians, so I'm your father as well." The age range of the children was from two to seventeen. The malnourished and unwell children were given great medical care. An Indian doctor, Asham, learnt Polish to be able to understand the health issues of the children. The Maharaja offered the guest rooms of his palace to be used as a school for the children. The children were provided with many activities, including sports and other outdoor pursuits. Businesses such as Tata and many individuals raised over 600,000 rupees for the welfare of the children. It was a huge amount at the time. A Chapel and a Catholic priest were provided to meet the spiritual needs of the children. Special care was taken to teach the children about their cultural heritage. The Polish government gave Maharaja Digvijaysinhji the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland posthumously. Another refugee centre for older people was set up in Valivade near Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India. Between 1942 and 1948, there were 5,000 Polish refugees there. Over the period of six years some 20,000 refugees from many nationalities passed through the centre. A square in Warsaw, Poland, is named after the Maharaja, and a small park in Warsaw's Ochota area is also called the Square of the Good Maharaja. The Friends of India Education Foundation in Warsaw runs schools in Bednarska and Baszynska Street, which keep the arts and artefacts of India as a reminder of the refugee children who spent time in India. The school also provides free food for the refugees in the city. This event is a proud chapter in India's history, which saved the lives of hundreds of children.

## **The welcoming of the persecuted Zoroastrians from Iran**

Sometime around the 8th Century CE the Zoroastrian community arrived in India as refugees from Iran. They were fleeing religious persecution and when they arrived in Gujarat the local king gave them full freedom to practice their religion. Known as Parsis they have been living in India for almost 13 centuries with no known case of any malice or hatred from the

majority Hindus. In fact the Parsis are the most successful community. They are captains of industry and they have played a unique role in some of the most powerful positions of the country. They practice their faith with full freedom.

Here is an introduction to some of the great Parsis of India. The most prominent name is that of the industrial giant, Tata. It was founded in mid-19th century by Jamshedji Tata and is now an international conglomerate involved in steel, motors, chemicals and much else.

Dr Cyrus Poonawala, industrialist, pharmacologist and founder of Serum Institute of India. The institute was founded in 1966. It is at present the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by the number of doses produced and sold globally (more than 1.5 billion doses). For most of the developing countries India is the main supplier of essential medicines. India has provided free CoronaVirus vaccinations to almost 37 countries.

Dadabhai Naoroji was the first Indian MP in the UK. He was elected as a candidate for the Liberal Party for Central Finchley in 1892. He passionately fought for the freedom of India and came to be known as the 'Grand Old Man of India'. He was also professor of Gujarati at University College London between 1856 and 1865!

There are many other prominent Parsis playing important roles in Indian society. The total number of Parsis in India is around 61,000 compared to the almost 1.2 billion population of the country. The achievements of the Parsi community are incredible. The Parsi community is also big in philanthropy. Just around Mumbai they have around one thousand Charities.

Operation Jiyo Parsi (Live Parsis)!

In 2015 the Indian government earmarked 100 million rupees to help increase the population of Parsis. Their numbers have been going down for decades. The community were to be offered all the help they needed in increasing their numbers. This extent of support to a minority community is not heard of throughout Human History!

### **The Jewish Presence in India**

There has been a Jewish presence in India for 2000 years. It is acknowledged by Jewish people that they have never faced any persecution in India. Like the Parsis, the Jewish people have played a prominent role in Indian Society.

David Sassoon (1792-1864), a Baghdadi Jew and his family were the largest textile mill owners in India. They had around 17 mills in Mumbai. Their business supported over half of Mumbai's households either by direct employment or indirect trade. They too were big in philanthropy. They contributed to the construction of Gateway of India and the Institute of Science.

Leela Samson is a Bharatnatyam dancer, choreographer, instructor, writer and actor. She has also served as the director of Kalakshetra for the promotion of traditional arts. She has also been the Chairperson of Sangeet

Natak Academy and Chairperson of Central Board of Film Certification (2011). Many actors of India's film industry have been Jewish.

### **The Baha'is**

Persecuted in Iran the Baha'is have also found a safe haven in India. Right in the Center of Delhi they have the Bahai Lotus Temple. It is a major tourist attraction.

### **The Tibetan Buddhists in India**

Ever since the Chinese invaded Tibet in 1959 the Tibetans have found a safe heaven in India. There are around 100,000 Tibetans living in India. The largest settlement of the Tibetans in India is in Bylakuppe, Mysore district of Karnataka. Bylakuppe Tibetan Settlement (BTS) is a 3000 acres of land leased by the then Chief Minister S. Nijalingappa to the Tibetan community. They practice their faith with full freedom and keep their culture and traditions alive. The spiritual leader of the Tibetans, the Dalai Lama says that he is 'son of India'. Based at the headquarters of the Tibetan community in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, the Dalai Lama has said that religious harmony in India was remarkable and there is 'Free Media'. Describing India as a secular country, the Dalai Lama said he has been promoting "Ahimsa and Compassion", which are intrinsic values of Indians that have been followed over thousands of years. According to him other countries need to follow India's principles of religious freedom.

*Nitin Mehta* [www.nitinmehta.co.uk](http://www.nitinmehta.co.uk)



## **Book Review**

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***Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy***, Christophe Jaffrelot, trans. Cynthia Schoch, Princeton University Press £28  
ISBN: 978-0-691-20680-4

When India became independent in 1947, its constitution upheld secular democracy, religious freedom and toleration for all faiths including minorities, respect for the rule of law and other 'Western' values shared by Congress leaders. Nehru espoused 'progressive' ideologies such as Fabian Socialism; Gandhi dedicated himself to nonviolence and harmony of all faiths, especially India's Hindus and Muslims. For several decades India was lauded as the exemplary Asian mass democracy.

However, since the Bharatiya Janata Party's 2014 electoral victory under its populist leader Narendra Modi, all this has been negatively impacted by his strident Hindu nationalism, illiberalism and intolerant anti-Muslim policies. This development, deeply disturbing to both disciples of Gandhi's principles and advocates of liberal democracy, is examined in depth by French scholar Christophe Jaffrelot of CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS in Paris.

Massive detail and profound analysis interweave in his 467 pages (plus 147 pages of notes and extensive bibliography). One can but highlight key themes.

Hindu nationalist sectarianism emerged in the early 20th century, inspired by V D Savarkar's *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1923) and M S Golwalkar's *We, or Our Nation Defined* (1930s). They urged India to renew its national destiny with inspiration from its ancient Hindu roots and traditions. After independence, it found political expression in the BJP which won national power under Modi, who had honed his populism while chief minister of Gujarat (2001-2014). Playing on Hindus' hopes, fears and resentments to unite many across caste and class divides, he invoked ancient Hindu identity using ultra-modern electioneering – even projecting himself by holograms! In power, his de facto Hindu 'ethnic democracy' has deployed its majoritarian power to discriminate against secularists, liberals, Christian and especially Muslim minorities; vigilante violence and online hate campaigns often go unpunished. Christians comprise only 2% of India's population, yet are targets of rising xenophobia: attacks on churches and clergy, 'reconversion' campaigns, and restrictions on Christian NGOs (pp.188-193). Anti-Muslim campaigns, intensified by anti-Pakistan sentiment, are much worse (pp.194-210). Socially marginalised, India's Muslims are now effectively excluded from national institutions.

While Modi promotes Hindu allegiance as primary signifier of national identity, it is unclear how far there is a genuinely spiritual revival of the Hindu religion, with intensified temple attendance and devotional practice, and how far its resurgence is socio-cultural under political pressure. Certainly the state promotes the building of temples.

"Officially, the state does not break the law or transgress the spirit of the constitution" (p.249). However, ultra-Hindu movements such as RSS (National Volunteer Association) dedicated to building a 'Hindu nation' (*rashtra*), and Bajrang Dai (active in demolishing the Ayodhya mosque in 1992) often inciting anti-Muslim riots, now form a "parallel power structure". Mass mobilisation of lower caste Hindus with promises of social welfare (largely unfulfilled) and visions of national greatness, has ensured electoral success. Attacks on media freedom, neutering the Supreme Court and limiting federalism, have reduced customary checks on central state power. Above all, Modi dominates by his charismatic style, posing as self-sacrificing for the nation, even emulating the 'saintly politics' of the Mahatma while rejecting his principles.

Muslim states, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, United Nations Human Rights Council, European Parliament, and US Commission on International Religious Freedom, have all criticised Modi's policies – to little effect. Keen to participate in India's economic rise and set it as counter-weight to totalitarian China, Western states keep silent on its increasingly authoritarian regime. Jaffrelot paints a dismal picture: sadly, India has joined the growing club of elective autocracies.

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



Photo by Jane Thomas



Bee on Lavender



# Gandhi Foundation Annual Report 2021

## Events 2021

This year's **Multifaith Celebration** took place online due to the pandemic. It was on the actual date of Gandhi's assassination – 30th January. The title of the event was 'Many Hearts – One World' expressed through a great variety of readings and music, some pre-recorded and some live. A full description of the event appeared in *The Gandhi Way* Spring 2021 (No.147).

Sadly, only two days previously, long term active Trustee of the Foundation, **John Rowley**, had died. The Multifaith event was dedicated to him and a Memorial Gathering was held later in the year on 2nd October (Gandhi's birthday) in Golders Green Unitarian church when some of the Covid restrictions had been lifted and family and friends from some of the organisations John had been involved in were able to gather and pay tribute. An Obituary appeared in *The Gandhi Way* Summer 2021 (No.148) and the Memorial Gathering features on the new website.

In August The Gandhi Foundation collaborated with Khadi London and other organisations in a **Festival of Natural Fibres** held at Craft Central in east London. The intention was to show textiles of natural fibres as a sustainable alternative to synthetic fibres. It included a competition among students of the Chelsea College of Arts who produced beautifully designed fabrics which were shown at the Indian High Commission in October. An Exhibition of Natural Fibres at Kingsley Hall was also arranged for early December but had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. It is hoped that it will be put on in 2022.

On 4th September a Panel Discussion was held on Zoom on **The implications of the Covid pandemic** for India and the world. The focus however was primarily on India and how some of the grass roots Sarvodaya organisations continued to operate in the very difficult circumstances. Leading activists from Ekta Parishad, EquiDiversity and Action Village India spoke as well as GF President Bhikhu Parekh giving an overview.

Our President and Chair spoke at different events to mark **Gandhi's birthday**: Lord Parekh at the Indian High Commission and Mark Hoda at the Jain All Party Parliamentary Group's Ahimsa Day celebration.

In the second half of the year the Committee chose a small company called Comma to develop a **new website** for The Foundation. This was launched officially on 4th December with Alastair Burns of Comma acting as guide to the new site which we hope will introduce new people to Gandhi and his ideas.

We have a dedicated core of **members** but need to expand and enrol new people to carry on the work of the Foundation. An attractive website should help towards that. The appearance of *The Gandhi Way* every three months is the principal means of contact with our members and the editor is very grateful to those who contribute articles, reports, reviews and illustrations to it.

The Gandhi Foundation

Statement of Accounts for the Year 2021

INCOME	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	EXPENDITURE	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Subs & donations					
Current account	1815.00	1842.00	Gandhi Way, print and post x4	624.78	684.11
Paypal	312.09	313.86	G Paxton expenses	-	89.19
2 Life members	400.00				
Grant – Scott Bader C'wealth	250.00	250.00	Kingsley Hall office rent	1560.00	1560.00
Donation I.Evans	100.00				
Bequests	-	30088.54	Multi-Faith Celebration (J Katarina in 2021)	100.00	289.88
			Annual Lecture (Webinar cost)	-	38.40
Bank interest	13.50	42.59	Peace Award (engraving for 2019)	-	117.60
Total income	<u>2890.59</u>	<u>32536.99</u>	Website –'We are Comma'	2150.00	-
Deficit for year	<u>4966.07</u>		Website domain	-	10.36
	7856.66		Multi-fibre Festival sponsorship	2900.00	-
BALANCES			Examination of accounts for 2020	480.00	
	<u>1-1-2021</u>	<u>31-12-2021</u>	Donation – Oasis for Peace	-	500.00
Current account	2045.56	753.90	Phone Co-op	1.88	0.59
Savings account	44076.02	40089.52	Network for Peace sub.	40.00	40.00
Paypal	313.86	625.95	Total expenditure	<u>7856.66</u>	<u>3330.13</u>
Total cash assets	46435.44	41469.37			
Add deficit for year		<u>4966.07</u>			
		46435.44			

## Treasurer's Notes

In addition to our cash assets we have the Cecil Evans bequest of 2000 shares in the BMO Responsible Global Equity Fund (inc.) which in January 2021 was worth £14,977 and is now valued at £16,920, an increase of £1943 in the year. This makes our total assets £43,412.

We shall not have to have these accounts examined for the Charity Commission so I have decided to give priority to intelligibility over accountancy rules. Income was a bit higher than usual thanks to two people becoming life members and Isabel Evans's donation of £100. Against this, the Executive Committee authorised exceptional expenditure on re-building the website and sponsoring the Multi-Fibre Festival. To this total of £5050 had to be added the unavoidable cost of examining the 2020 accounts. Hence we had a deficit for the year of £4966.07.

In the bottom left-hand corner above is a statement of how much was held in each of our three accounts at the beginning and end of 2021. The totals show a difference of £4966.07 which is the deficit on financing our activities.

*Graham Davey, Treasurer, January 2022*

**The Gandhi Information Centre**, based in Berlin, has been a nonviolent research and education service for about three decades. The President, Christian Bartolf, has written books and produced many exhibitions on peace topics. Among his books are a biography of Hermann Kallenbach, Gandhi's close colleague from his South African days, which was co-authored with Isa Sarid, as well as studies of Tolstoy and the Dutch pacifist Bart de Ligt. The most recent exhibitions are *Bread and Roses – Voices Against War* to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and *Aldous Huxley – Alphabet of Peace*. The exhibitions can all be viewed online and are very worth while visiting.

<https://nonviolent-resistance.info/eng/exhibitions.htm>

<https://nonviolent-resistance.info/exhibitions/eng/breadandroses/index.htm>

<https://nonviolent-resistance.info/exhibitions/eng/huxley/index.htm>

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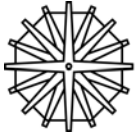
### **A Precious Human Life**

Every day as you wake up, think  
today I am fortunate to have woken up,  
I am alive, I have a precious human life,  
I am not going to waste it.  
I am going to use  
all my energies to develop myself  
to expand my heart out others  
to achieve enlightenment for  
the benefit of all beings.  
I am going to have kind  
thoughts towards others.  
I am not going to get angry  
or think badly about others.  
I am going to benefit others  
as much as I can.

*His Holiness XIVth Dalai Lama*

*The above was sent in by Crispin McCreery*

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# 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: Shaheen

Choudhury-Westcombe, Graham Davey, Omar Hayat, Mark Hoda (Chair), Trevor Lewis, George Paxton, William Rhind, Jane Sill

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).

**General inquiries to**  
**[contact@gandhifoundation.org](mailto:contact@gandhifoundation.org)**  
**[www.gandhifoundation.org](http://www.gandhifoundation.org)**

Registered office: Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, Bromley-By-Bow, London E3 3HJ  
Charity Number 292629

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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](mailto:gpaxton@phonecoop.coop)**  
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