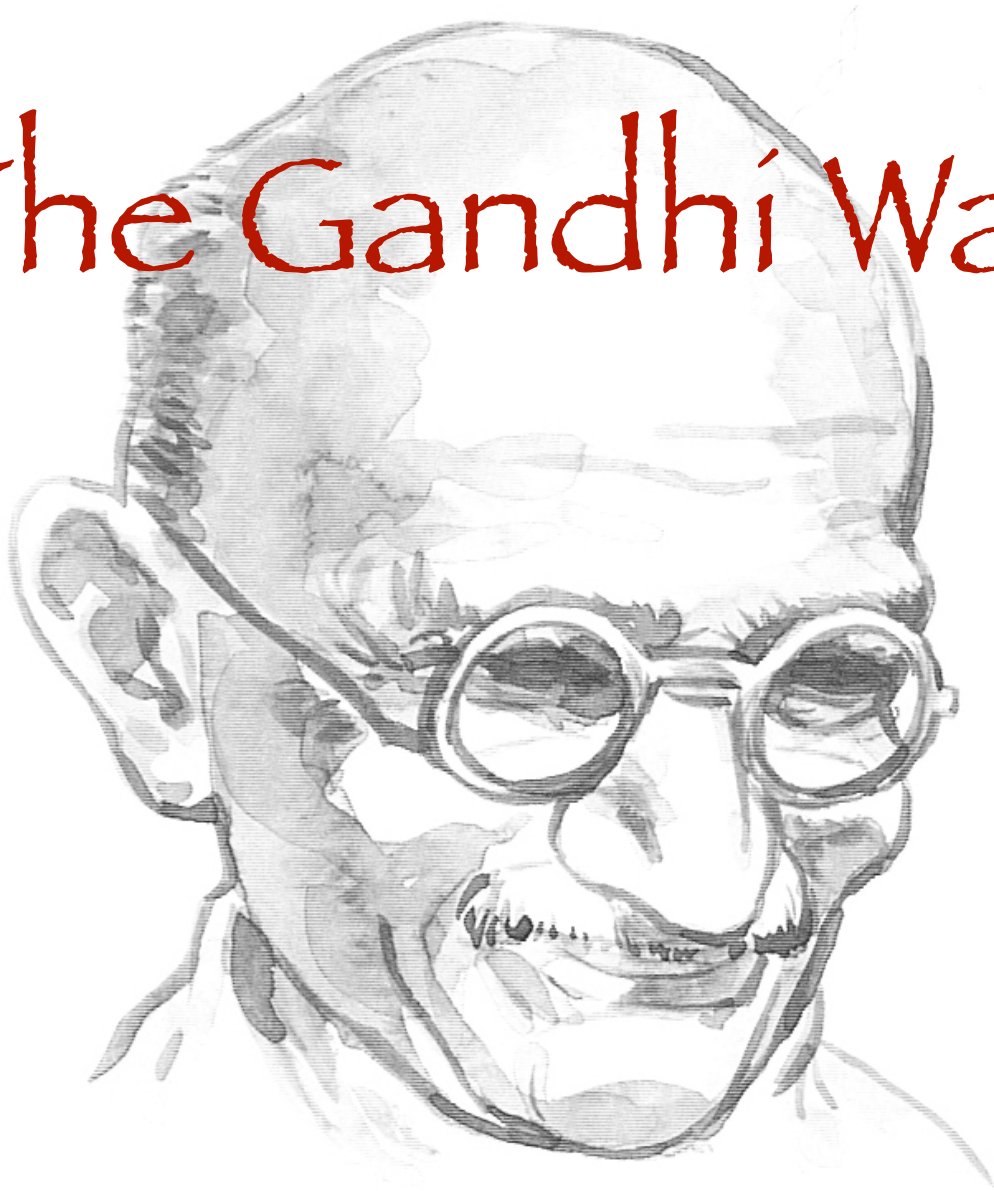


# The Gandhi Way



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# Gandhi Multifaith Celebration 2023

Saturday 21 January 2023

*on a Green theme*

3.30pm (doors open from 3pm) Light refreshments around 4.30pm

*Golders Green Unitarian Church, 31 1/2 Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS*

Also online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83123128983?pwd=a0JIMlhBaGRmbVhvWjVmamJoSHRIUT09>

Meeting ID: 831 2312 8983

Passcode: 216313



Photo of Cactus Parodia by Jane Thomas

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# Peacefully Preventing and Stopping War: Some Challenges to Conventional Wisdom

*Alexandre Christoyannopoulos*

The Gandhi Foundation's Annual Lecture 2022 was delivered on 27 October in the House of Lords and chaired by Lord Navnit Dholakia. This is Part 1. Part 2 will appear in the next issue of *The Gandhi Way*.

The conventional wisdom today is that, when it comes to preventing and stopping war, the best moral and legal compass we've got is the Just War Tradition and its associated framework of international law and international institutions (the UN Charter and the Geneva and Hague conventions). Yet these conventional tools keep proving insufficient: in the twenty-first century (not to mention the twentieth), wars have continued to erupt, linger, and destroy lives and communities whether in Iraq, Syria, Congo or Ukraine. Their causes are multiple and complex. I don't want to claim that the Just War tradition is the only or even the *main* culprit for these wars. But I do want to explore three factors that might help explain why it has proved so weak and insufficient in preventing and stopping war. These are: (1) the widely-shared yet increasingly-questionable assumption that violence can be an effective instrument to achieve political ends; (2) the deep institutional dynamics which incentivise a chronic slide towards systemic militarism; and (3) the very structural foundation of our international order. Before I turn to these, however, let me just explain how conventional wisdom is informed by the Just War tradition, and say a few words about the more radical critical angle on which my arguments are based.

## I. The Just War Tradition

The one main framework from political and moral theory to analyse the legitimacy (or 'justness') of political violence is Just War Theory (or the 'Just War Tradition'). The JW tradition goes back to Augustine in the 5<sup>th</sup> century (354-430 AD), and even before that to Roman Law. Interestingly, it is both widely and uncritically accepted, and it differs very little to what thinkers have believed since the Middle Ages.

Traditionally, the philosophical treatment of just war is divided into two categories of conditions that must all be met for 'war' to be 'just': *jus ad bellum* (about the conditions for actual *resort* to war), and *jus in bello* (about the conditions for the *conduct* of war, its methods, if that war is to be 'just'). There are slight variations in how these are articulated (Cady 2010, chap. 2; Moseley 2022; Sussmann 2013), but on the whole, they go as follows.

A resort to war is said to be just only if:

1. It is waged by a legitimate authority. Even just motives cannot be pursued by individuals or groups who do not constitute an authority sanctioned by wider society.
2. It is fought to redress a wrong (and with 'right intention'). For example, self-defence against an armed attack is usually considered to be a just cause – indeed self-defence had until recently been seen as the only justifiable cause (where defence is of a state's territory or sovereignty). More recently, there have been pressures to recognise humanitarian crises (massacres, starvation, mass population transfers, etc) as justifiable causes of ('humanitarian') intervention. In any case, the ultimate goal of a just war is to (re-)establish lasting peace. More specifically, the peace established after the war must be preferable to the peace that would have prevailed if the war had not been fought.
3. The aim must be proportional (on the scale of the whole conflict): the total harm which the war inflicts must be less than the harm which would have ensued without the war.
4. It is fought with a reasonable chance of success. This refers to the reasonableness of correcting the relevant wrong/harm by means of violence. It must be likely to produce the desired effect. Deaths and injury incurred in a hopeless cause are not morally justifiable.
5. It is a last resort. This means that all non-violent options must be exhausted before the war can be justified. As it is often a condition that is (not necessarily correctly) seen as difficult to meet, a looser condition is that of necessity (rather than unavoidability), meaning that there must be good reason to believe that no alternative to war would have an equally high probability of achieving a just aim.

As for the conduct of war, in order for the war to remain 'just':

1. The violence must be proportional (tactically): the harm spared or averted must clearly outweigh the harm caused. A just war party is prohibited from using force not necessary to attain the limited objective of addressing the injury suffered.
2. All combative action must be necessary to the speedy resolution (ideally the termination of warfare).
3. Combative action must discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. Civilians are not permissible targets of war, and every effort must be taken to avoid killing civilians. The deaths of civilians are justified only if they are unavoidable victims of a deliberate attack on a military target.

Nowadays, the United Nations Charter (and the UN Security Council), along with the Hague and Geneva conventions (broadly speaking concerning weapons and people respectively) govern those domains. In other words, they



represent the institutionalisation of Just War principles embedded in the current international order.

The Just War tradition is thus the main *moral* framework people explicitly or implicitly refer to when reflecting on the legitimacy (or otherwise) of war, and it is embedded in the post-1945 international order. For liberals, internationalists, and in fact not just for progressives but for the main state actors in the international area, this framework is *the* accepted one to try to prevent and stop wars, by articulating the principles according to which wars would be exceptionally acceptable today.

## II. An Anarcho-Pacifist Critique

My aim today is to question this commonly-accepted perspective, and to do so from an admittedly more radical angle – a ‘pacifist’ one informed by elements of ‘anarchism’. My argument will basically cover some of what I cover in an article I recently published with *International Studies Quarterly* titled “An Anarcho-Pacifist Reading of International Relations” (Christoyannopoulos 2022).

‘Anarchism’ carries negative connotations, in part because of the association of *some* anarchists with terrorist violence at the end of the nineteenth century. It nonetheless has a long pedigree as a legitimate political ideology. At its core is a critique and rejection of domination, whether in the form of political hierarchies (the state), structural economic inequalities (capitalism), power distributions and unequal outcomes based on gender or ethnicity (patriarchy, racism), or other oppressive socio-political norms and practices (Kinna 2005, 2019; Marshall 1993). The association of anarchism with violence is somewhat ironic, by the way, given how often it is based on *mainstream* arguments that violence is justified in politics.

‘Pacifism’ is also often misunderstood. Richard Jackson speaks of it being “subjugated” in the dual sense of it being both “ignored” and “disqualified” as “insufficiently elaborated” (2018a, 165-6, 70). It is often assumed to stand for a naïve, single, and absolute moral position, as advocating a form of passivity, as immoral and as ineffective. Yet that is another misjudged caricature: there is a wide range of pacifist positions which include opposition to all wars but also opposition to nuclear wars only, or to modern wars, etc (Cady 2010). And it certainly does not necessarily imply passivity. (By the way, next year will see the launch of a new academic journal, the *Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence*, which intends – among other things – to provide a forum to critically explore and discuss precisely the different nuances of pacifism and nonviolence, the criticisms of it, etc.) Either way, like anarchism, pacifism is too often ignored and dismissed instead of being engaged with and

approached as a source of potentially interesting and important critical reflection.

There is also considerable overlap between pacifism and anarchism in both theory and practice (Christoyannopoulos 2010, 2020; Fiala 2018; Llewellyn 2018; Ostergaard 1982; Pauli 2015). To be sure, not all anarchists are pacifists, and not all pacifists are anarchists. But a committed critique of violence can often develop into a critique of the structures of governance which mete out much violence. And the struggle against structures of domination can often come with a commitment to nonviolence, even if not necessarily a principled endorsement of pacifism. In the article for *International Studies Quarterly*, I provide a short historical account of the connections and interactions between anarchism and pacifism to illustrate this overlap.

For the rest of this lecture, however, I want to build on claims that have emanated from anarcho-pacifists in order to articulate three (of five) main sets of anarcho-pacifist reflections about why we so often fail to successfully prevent and stop wars in the current international order. These are: first, drawing especially on the pacifist pillar of anarcho-pacifism, a critique of the *fetishization of violence*; second, building on both pacifism and anarchism, a warning about *chronic sliding towards systemic militarism*; and third, drawing more on anarchism, a set of reflections on *how international politics is currently structured*, and how it could be structured differently.

I should add that it is easy to forget that both anarchism and pacifism are concerned not only with preaching specific alternative models of political interaction, but also and in the first place with denouncing the problems of the current order – its violence, its domination, its injustice. Pacifism, anarchism and thus anarcho-pacifism offer a diagnosis about the world which is analytically separable from what they propose to do about it. What follows is primarily such a diagnosis, although it does include some comments on its implications regarding what might be done about it.

### III. Fetishizing violence

Pacifists and anarcho-pacifists argue that violence is much too fetishized as a means to get to one's preferred political ends. In war, in terrorism, but also in counter-terrorism, in border control, in the deployment of drones, and indeed in domestic order maintenance, direct physical violence or the threat of it is much too quickly and often resorted to as an instrument of policy.

Yet it is far from clear that such violence is as instrumentally effective as its fetishization would assume (Dexter 2012; Frazer and Hutchings 2008; Howes 2013). To quote Jackson again: violence 'rarely achieves either its strategic or

normative goals’ (Jackson 2018a, 169). There is growing evidence that using it against an oppressor can threaten the very civilians it is adopted to protect (Wallace 2018); that violent counter-terrorism often backfires or generates more problems than it addresses (Argomaniz and Vidal-Diez 2015; Jackson 2017a, 258-361; Zulaika 2009); that armed insurgencies fail much more often than they succeed (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011); and that belligerent states with greater military capacity increasingly struggle to convert that superiority into clear victories (Biddle 2004).

Moreover, there is growing evidence that nonviolent methods can in fact often be just as effective, if not more. A famous 2011 study demonstrates with solid empirical evidence that nonviolent resistance succeeds more often than violent resistance (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). Unarmed peacekeeping and nonviolent civilian defence initiatives can be successful, too (Julian and Schweitzer 2015; Julian 2020; Salmon 1988; Wallace 2017). Even in the high politics of classic interstate foreign policy, the nonviolent methods of diplomatic engagement, negotiations and confidence-building can often be effective in achieving strategic and political goals. Besides, what nonviolent methods do, but violent methods do not, is ‘[force] us to wrestle with the humanity of our adversaries’ (Wallace 2020, 53). Nonviolent methods are more humane. They aim ‘not at the obliteration of the antagonist but at reconciliation’ through ‘transformed human relationships’ (Pauli 2015, 74).

Violent methods *appear* to offer quick and visible courses of action, but, beyond the immediate and apparent success of inflicting such violence, it is not clear that they achieve the strategic aims for which they are deployed. What they do generate is plenty of collateral grief in the process. Policymakers and politicians can fetishize violent options because they produce visible effects and help project an image of them ‘doing something about’ whatever is seen as a problem, but they can often backfire and complicate genuine and longer-term resolutions of political problems. What a comparison of the evidence for violence and for nonviolence therefore suggests is that it is ‘the practitioners of violence’, not the pacifists, who ‘are more often the tragic idealists’ (Howes 2013, 438). ‘When the war broke out in 1914’, Cooper for example observes (1991, 140), ‘no Continental peace activist was taken by surprise’ – it was, rather, the proponents of militarism who proved deluded about the efficacy of the strategy which they had been selling vigorously to their compatriots. It is the fetishization of violence which is naïvely optimistic, and its consequences tragic and brutal.

Not all pacifists and anarcho-pacifists are committed to an absolute ‘holier than thou’ rejection of violence in all possible circumstances (Rossdale 2019, 192). Along the continuum of pacifist positions, some identify more as contingent pacifists, or as pacifists who would still take up arms in an extreme emergency (Cady 2010; Fiala 2018; Jackson 2017b; Parkin 2018). What

pacifists of all stripes nevertheless do share is deep circumspection about violent methods, and they all articulate a variety of arguments against violence and in favour of nonviolent alternatives. Pacifism thus contributes a rich and nuanced critique of the violence of the international system which helps interrogate the fetishization of violence in international politics and invite serious consideration of alternative options.

Some, liberals in particular, might contend that when it comes to war, ‘just war’ principles often impose considerable and generally sufficient restraint, and their institutionalisation in the structures of the international order ensures some legal enforceability (Walzer 1977; Williams 2005). As I mentioned earlier, these principles do indeed, in theory at least, impose substantial constraints on when and how violence is to be deployed. In reality, however, the list of conflicts that have been justified through ostensible appeals to just war principles is extensive. Admittedly, few recent wars ever did fully meet just war criteria (perhaps except Ukraine, depending on how it continues to be conducted), but that is precisely one of the issues with the way the just war tradition is negotiated in the actual practice of international politics (Fiala 2008; Finlay 2019; Holmes 2017; Ryan 2015). Appeals to just war criteria are made when it is politically expedient, only for them to be quietly ignored when that becomes more expedient politically, strategically, and tactically. The institutionalisation of just war principles in the UN Charter and in the Hague and Geneva Conventions has not prevented many a conflict from breaching those principles even when sometimes pretending to respect them.

In a sense, those who identify with more ‘liberal’ thinking about international politics have similar concerns to pacifists about violence, but liberals are softer and more trusting of international institutions than pacifists, whose critique runs deeper and is more radical. The peace movement was itself quite moderate and liberal in the nineteenth century (Ostergaard 1982). But after the traumatic violence of the early twentieth century, in light of emerging evidence in favour of more radical nonviolent alternatives, and in the context of a postwar global order intoxicated by nuclear weapons and gripped by anticolonial struggles, many pacifists concluded that liberal solutions have proved too weak and insufficient. For pacifists in the early twenty-first century, both the scholars and the practitioners of liberal international politics concede too readily to rationalisations of violence. There are plenty of important and constructive criticisms and debate about the ‘responsibility to protect’, about ‘humanitarian interventions’, about ‘peacekeeping’ and ‘peacebuilding’ projects, and more generally about liberal international institutions, but for pacifists and anarcho-pacifists these often just do not go far enough in questioning the instrumental utility of violence (Jackson 2018b; Moses 2020; Ryan 2015).



#### IV. Sliding to systemic militarism

Beyond the question of whether violence is a worthy instrument either in principle or in reality, pacifists and anarcho-pacifists are also concerned with the way in which ‘war takes a life of its own’ and generates a deadly military-industrial complex (Ryan 2019, 23). Classical defenders of the way things are organised today like to project the hypothetical self-defence impulses of individuals onto states, personifying states to argue that war is an inevitable consequence of human nature writ large (Christov 2017; Jespersen 2020). Indeed, one typical charge against pacifists consists in pointing to the apparent inconsistency between their presumed likelihood to defend themselves when attacked and their opposition to war (Jackson 2018a).

However, leaving aside the questionable assumption (which pacifists dispute) that the only rational and effective human response to fear or even attack would have to be violence, states are simply not sentient beings with animal instincts. War is ‘not a natural phenomenon but a human institution’ (Ryan 2015, 34). It ‘requires extensive preparation, major social organisation, the institutionalisation of a permanent military force, a supporting economic base (or military-industrial complex)’, and ‘the construction of a violence-supporting culture (including the cultivation of enmity sufficient for mass killing)’ (Jackson 2017b, 216). Indeed there are ‘immense political and material interests invested’ in the ‘military industrial complex’ (Jackson 2017a, 366; see also Christoyannopoulos 2021). The machinery of war therefore works differently from what goes on within a human being under attack, and there is a danger that what can begin as seemingly innocuous preparations for war as an insurance policy can soon enough slide towards increasingly deeply embedded, systemic militarism. The resulting military-industrial complex then tends to ‘lubricate’ the ‘slippery slope ... towards unjust wars’ (Fiala 2012, 100). Preparing for war certainly has considerable institutional effects which can be overlooked when we insist on ascribing to states the biological characteristics of independent human beings.

Indeed, the very process of state-building seems to have in fact been driven by war-making. That is, preparing to try to win the next war is what drove the very construction of the modern state: conscription to staff the army, taxes to pay for the cost of running and arming it, up-to-date population censuses to monitor available resources, roads to reach every corner of the land to extract those resources, the police to ensure compliance, even welfare policies to secure consent, and so on (Tilly 1985; Ryan 2019). War-making in late medieval and early modern Europe is what accelerated the emergence of the modern state.

This is one of the areas of ‘affinities’ between pacifism and anarchism because many pacifists worry about how ‘predatory political power’ results from the

‘centralisation’ of ‘killing for political ends’ (Ryan 2019, 14). Moreover, once that political power with its ability to mete violence is constituted, it can be deployed to protect and maintain other hierarchies of oppression and domination – hierarchies based on class, race, or gender for example (Honeywell 2021; Fiala 2018). It is also worth paying attention to what the establishment of a permanent army does to a society: the moral damage to citizens who are conditioned into soldiers, the risk of *coups d’état*, the attracting of pre-emptive attacks, the consequences of ill-advised militaristic hubris, and the leaking of militaristic mindsets onto civilian life and culture (Dobos 2020). More generally, ‘violence is never purely instrumental, but rather is *constitutive* of identities, ethics, practices and, consequently, politics’ (Jackson 2017a, 360; see also Dexter 2012; 2017b; Ryan 2015).

Therefore, by reflecting on how war is a ‘social practice’ which ‘shapes our perception of the world’, pacifism and anarcho-pacifism here again raises deeper questions than just war theory tends to tackle (Reeves-O'Toole 2020, 8; see also Ryan 2018). The just war tradition pays insufficient attention to the ‘constitutive’ nature of ‘war as a condition’ (Reeves-O'Toole 2020, 9). In fact, it arguably ‘strengthen[s] the military-industrial-entertainment complex’ by giving it ostensibly legitimate purpose, instead of questioning the powerful dynamics that feed it and that constitute us as war-ready societies (Kustermans et al. 2019, 3). Just war theory also overlooks ‘the injustices of *war building*’: the ‘repression’, the ‘elimination[s]’, the ‘rights violations’ (Ryan 2019, 22). Just war thinking does not prevent the entrenchment of a military-industrial-entertainment complex which generates glorified narratives about war-fighting, produces a readiness to fight, and becomes tempting for politicians to invoke. Pacifists and anarcho-pacifists, however, are alert to this, and can thus bring specifically anarcho-pacifist observations to reflections about the just war tradition.

The remainder of the Lecture will appear in the next issue out early February 2023. There will also be a summary of the Q & A session with Lindsey German of Stop the War and others attending.

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Following the Lecture the **Gandhi Foundation International Peace Award 2022** was presented to Esther Trienekins of **Action Village India**. AVI work at present with seven grassroots organisations in many parts of India. Esther has recently travelled in India to meet up with activists in the different organisations. Her very informative talk will be reproduced in the next issue of *The Gandhi Way*. [actionvillageindia.org.uk](http://actionvillageindia.org.uk)

In the article below by Paul Shears he recalls his volunteering with Gandhian organisations in the 1970s and tells of a link with Action Village India today.





From left: Lindsey German, Alex Christoyannopoulos, Navnit Dholakia, Esther Trienekins.  
Omar Hayat, Mukul Agarwal, Mark Hoda (Photos by Jane Sill)

Below: Presentation of the Peace Award to AVI with Ivan Nutbrown to Esther's left







**Gandhi Jayanti**  
 2 October 2022  
 Tavistock Square, London

Left: Indian High Commissioner and his wife with representatives of the London Peace Pagoda and Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda

Below: Camden Deputy Mayor with child and the event presenter



Photos by Jane Sill

# **Memories of Gandhian Leaders in Odisha (Orissa) and Bihar in the 1970s**

*Paul Shears*

In the 1970s, I worked in rural development with several Gandhian groups in Odisha and Bihar. I met, and worked with, remarkable people, some of whom had worked with (and been jailed with) Gandhi in the independence movement. These are their stories.

In the early part of the twentieth century, the area we now call the state of Odisha was initially part of the Bengal Presidency, and then, in 1905, was formed into the joint state of Bihar and Orissa. Much of the area of Orissa was "sub ruled" as princely states, whose rulers were more inclined to British rule than ideas of Indian independence. With the exception of a few social activists, Orissa until 1920 was largely a political backwater, though local movements to promote Oriya language and culture were developing.

Then, in 1921, Gandhi made his first visit to Orissa. It was the first time an awareness and awakening of the independence struggle had a real voice, though some social activists had been working with poor and tribal communities. Among these was 21 year old Rama Devi Choudhury. She, like many others, was convinced by Gandhi's enthusiasm and message, and wholeheartedly joined the freedom movement. In 1930 Rama Devi participated in the Orissa Salt Satyagraha, a protest against the import of salt from Britain, which was taxed, rather than using Indian salt, and was arrested and jailed by the British administration. She was again arrested and jailed at various times over the coming years for her activities with Gandhi's non-cooperation movement and independence struggle. In 1932, Gandhi requested her to do specific work among the Harijan and landless communities, which, with empowering rural women, was her main activity in the 1930s.

After independence, Rama Devi devoted herself for many years to the Bhoodan and Gramdan movement of Vinoba Bhave, encouraging landlords to donate part of their land to landless and marginal farmers, and was active in the development of khadi home spinning and weaving. In 1981 she was awarded the Jamnalal Bajaj award for her Gandhian work.

From her ashram, Gunandihi, in Cuttack, a group of younger Gandhian workers developed, supporting her work with poorer and tribal communities, and in girls' and women's education.

One of her lasting legacies is the Rama Devi Women's University in Bhubaneswar, which as well as being an eminent academic institution, encourages Gandhian ideals among the students.



Rama Devi was not the only woman activist on the Orissa Salt Satyagraha who went on to play a major role as a follower of Gandhi and in the independence movement. Malati Devi, who was born to a well established family in Simultala, Bihar, went as a teenager to the ashram of Rabindranath Tagore at Shantiniketan. She was much influenced by the philosophy and action of Tagore, a basis for her life as a social activist. Here she met her future husband, Nabakrushna Chowdhury, from Orissa, someone who had already been active in social activity and politics.

In 1927, Malati Devi moved with her husband to Orissa, and together they worked in rural areas and became aware of Gandhi's movement. In 1930, she took part in the Orissa Salt Satyagraha, along with Rama Devi. In 1934, she accompanied Gandhi on his 'padyatra' through Orissa, a walk of many hundreds of miles in the rural areas encouraging villagers in khadi and following Gandhi's way in their lives.

As with Rama Devi, she was arrested and jailed several times by the British administration for her work with the national movement.

After independence, Malati Devi and her husband set up an ashram in Angul, and began their social welfare and development society, Uktal Navajeevan Mandal. They worked particularly against the large landlords (zamindars) and money lenders, and for the social improvement and uplift of women. Along with other Gandhian workers in Orissa, they worked with the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements. Around them grew a new generation of Gandhian workers who continued their work.

Malati Devi's husband, Nabakrushna Chowdhury, was himself a social activist and Gandhian follower. Born in 1901 in Jatasinghpur, Orissa, in 1921 he joined the non-cooperation movement. In 1922 he went to Gandhi's Sabarmati ashram to learn about khadi, and organised Gandhian programmes in Orissa. In 1925, he went to Shantiniketan, where he met his future wife Malati Devi and then returned to Orissa, participating in the Orissa Salt Satyagraha in 1930. His politics were initially to the left of the mainstream of Gandhism, and he was involved in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party with Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) in the early 1930s. In 1936 Orissa became a separate linguistic province, and he was elected to the state legislature.

Against Gandhi's wishes, he mobilised resistance to the remaining princely states in Orissa, who were more inclined to remain within British rule.

In 1942, Nabakrushna joined the Quit India movement, and was among thousands who were jailed for several years. During his imprisonment, he courageously stood up to the administration against bad treatment of political prisoners. He was released in 1945. In the 1946 Indian Provincial elections he

was elected to the Indian Congress Government party, and became a cabinet minister. In 1950, at Nehru's request, he became chief minister of Orissa, putting through many agrarian reforms, and also became involved in the Bhoodan movement. In 1955 he resigned from politics, and became more actively involved, with Malati Devi, in Gandhian based programmes for the poor in Orissa from the ashram in Angul. His national role was not finished, as he was a key peace negotiator in conflicts in Nagaland and Kashmir, and later in naxalite affected areas.

He died in 1984, but the work of Navajeevan Mandal continued, with young people motivated by Gandhian ideals working in the villages.



I had met Rama Devi, Malati Devi, and Nabakrushna Chowdhury in 1974 when I was working with Oxfam (then a smaller organisation and closer to its Quaker roots) during a drought programme in several districts of Orissa. Our field director, himself a Gandhian and colleague of JP Narayan, had suggested I should coordinate supplies, but to meet the Gandhian groups to ask them to help with field workers. A major object of the programme was to provide relief work programmes in the drought area, to reduce the number of poor migrating to an uncertain future in large towns and cities. Hence, I spent many days talking (and listening) in the ashrams in Cuttack and Angul.

My contact with Gandhian workers in India had started a few years before my time in Orissa when I worked with a programme involving Gandhian ashrams in Bihar. Following a severe drought in 1968 (very much

more severe than the 1973 drought in Odisha, with widespread starvation as well as crop failures), several Gandhian ashrams, following their work in direct relief in the drought, received support from Oxfam (even closer to it's Quaker roots than with a Quaker field director in India) to help small farmers with resources to improve crops, particularly by digging wells and small reservoirs. The original idea was to develop land given by Bhoodan and Gramdan (hence the name, the Oxfam Gramdan Action Programme, OGAP), though in reality other small and marginal farmers were helped. The programme worked with four Gandhian ashrams, Sokheodora , Samanvaya at Bodh Gaya, Shramabharati at Khadigram, and Simultala.

The ashram at Sokheodora (Gram Nirman Mandal below) had been started by Jayaprakash Narayan, and when I was there was led by the friendly and dedicated Tripurari Sharan, known affectionately as "TP". TP had devoted his life to promoting khadi, and importantly the rights of the landless and marginal farmers against landlords and money lenders, and ensuring



support they should get from local government officials went to the right recipients. He was for some time the president of the National Lok Samiti, a network of organisations supporting the marginalised. He was also closely involved with the social development organisation Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK), which continues to support Gandhian based development and education programmes.

The ashram at Khadigram was that led by Acharya Ramamurti. In 1951 he became associated with the Bhoodan movement, and the social service organisation, Shrambharati. Khadigram became, like Sokhodeora, a centre

for working with the landless and marginal farmers, and supporting local khadi industry, and with the Oxfam supported programme, brought many acres of unused or poorly fertile land into production.

Ramamurti played an important role nationally as the chairman of the National Education Review Committee, and lectured widely on Gandhian ideas and philosophy. He later became the director of the Institute of Gandhian studies in Patna, and founded the Mahila Shanti Sena, a peace and social activity organisation for women.

Samanvaya ashram at Bodh Gaya, initially founded by Vinoba, was led by Dwarko Sundrani, or Dwarko ji, who, until his death at the age of 99 in 2021, was one of the last (the last?) surviving persons to have worked with Gandhi.

The contributions to society by Dwarko ji, forever a devoted Gandhian, went far beyond his work in improving agriculture and water resources. He was committed to the need to make education more relevant, and more accessible, and started over a hundred village schools, and built a residential school, Samanvaya Vidyapith for children who had become orphans in the 1968 famine. He worked among the outcaste mushahar (rat eating) community, when no other sector of society would help them. In later years Samanvaya ashram also became a centre for cataract and other eye surgery, restoring not just eyesight, but the means of having a livelihood again, for many.

Despite (perhaps because of) his determined humility, Dwarko ji and the ashram, became something of a centre for young people, both Indian and international, who wanted to learn and be a part of Gandhian ways. Dwarko believed as Gandhi had said, first it was inner peace and truth before one could do wider actions, the “soul force” as Dwarko described it. He summed it up as follows; “Nonviolence is not a campaign, it is a way of life”.

While my experiences were many years ago, there is a continuity from then till now. Two of the people who worked with the Bihar ashrams at that time, Ivan Nutbrown, who worked with Dwarko ji between 1969 and 1975, and Alan Leather, the field coordinator for the Oxfam Gramdan programme, have been instrumental in the work of Action Village India, the recipient of this year’s Gandhi Foundation Peace Award. Action Village India supports several Gandhian organisations in different parts of India including Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Tamil Nadu.

Dr Paul Shears trained in medicine after his period in India and then worked with Oxfam in several African countries. He then joined the NHS but with links to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and WHO, and did some work in Sudan and Bangladesh.



## Bhikkhu Nagase's Pilgrimage to Villa Romain Rolland, Switzerland



Romain Rolland (Nobel Prize for Literature 1914) was one of the earliest biographers of Gandhi, 1924. Villeneuve, Lake Geneva, was his home for years.



## David Maxwell 1935-2022

David Maxwell and his older sister Joy were born in China where their parents were missionaries. During the war David's school was evacuated to England and later his parents had to flee Communist China. He attended Dean Close School where he performed in school plays and developed his musical talent, learning the piano, and also played rugby.

In 1954 David registered as a conscientious objector and he joined the Friends Ambulance Unit instead of doing National Service. His commitment to peace was life-long, and in Quakerism he found a way to worship and a belief in peace and justice that matched his values.

David went to Queen's College, Cambridge, reading History and English. He trained as a teacher and had a very varied career. He worked in very exclusive schools as well as local secondary and middle schools and Freetown Grammar School in Sierra Leone. Wherever he taught his approach was unconventional and he always looked for opportunities to include creative expression such as dance or drama or poetry.

David also lectured at London University Institute of Education which included teaching Conflict Resolution in the Classroom and the Wider World. At the end of his career he taught Fitness for the over 50s at the Mary Ward Centre, continuing for nearly two decades. He had a devoted following and he enjoyed introducing people to a range of dance and music.

David worked tirelessly for peace, for example marching with Bruce Kent and CND at Aldermaston; setting up the Dorset Peace Council and instigating the post of peace worker there; supporting the peace camps at Greenham and Molesworth; he worked for the Peace Pledge Union for a period of time. In Bedford he was working closely with Christian CND even in the months before he went into hospital.



Another of David's passions was concern for the environment. Latterly, he settled in Bedford and there he became involved in environmental campaigns as well as the peace activities which he continued throughout his life. With Beds Climate Change Forum he organised a large, well-attended public meeting to challenge the building of the Covanta Incinerator, including the

latest research about the danger of toxic small particles emanating from its chimneys across Bedfordshire. He booked Tony Juniper, Executive Director of Friends of the Earth at the time, to speak in Bedford about the climate emergency, along with our local Labour MP, chaired by Hazel Mitchell, Bedford's Quaker Mayor. In a large venue, it was well-attended.

In the 1950s David had volunteered at a Mennonite work-camp renovating Kingsley Hall where Gandhi stayed when he came to the UK. He met his first wife Sally there. Their two children, Jenny and William, were born in Africa where David was teaching. There are four grandchildren.

David is fortunate to have had the love, friendship and daily companionship of Heather over the past two decades. Heather has brought out the best qualities of David, supporting his interests and enthusiasms but keeping his feet on the ground. She has been able to gauge his feelings and thoughts despite his difficulties with speech during his poor health in the last year.

(The above was compiled mainly from information supplied by David's daughter Jenny and his partner Heather Mitchell)

Graham Davey, Trustee and Treasurer of The Gandhi Foundation, recalls David's involvement with The GF:

“David made a significant contribution to the work of the Gandhi Foundation. He first attended what was then called the Gandhi Foundation Summer School in 1997 and was a regular participant in the following years. His enthusiasm for dancing enabled him to lead everyone in circle dancing in the evenings and later on, he choreographed a movement from Beethoven's choral symphony and performed it while we struggled to follow him. He enjoyed playing the grand piano in the hall at The Abbey and showed his ability at informal times during the day though I don't remember him ever playing music on his own during an evening social.

In 2004, David trained as an advice worker in Tower Hamlets and this involved shadowing a worker at Father Joe Colella's Limehouse Project Advice Centre. Like many others, he developed a deep admiration for Father Joe and wrote a moving tribute to him for *The Gandhi Way* after his untimely death. At about the same time, David researched the history of Kingsley Hall and wrote it up in the booklet, *Muriel Lester, Gandhi and Kingsley Hall*.

*The Gandhi Way* benefited from more articles written by David over the years. He spent two months in Sri Lanka while the civil war was going on and wrote reports on his experiences. An interesting piece, 'Learning from Gandhi', compared the mass disobedience in relation to the pass laws in South Africa in 1906 with that of the Salt March in 1930. David went on the 'Make Poverty

History' rally in Scotland in 2005 and wrote a report on that. This was followed by a survey of the development of departments of Peace Studies in universities world-wide as a response to the philosopher, Roger Scruton, who claimed that the subject did not exist. A correspondence on the subject of nonviolence in *The Gandhi Way* in 2007 showed the strength of David's conviction that military action was wrong, even as a last resort. He accepted that Gandhi's position had wavered when Japan threatened to invade India during the Second World War but said that Gandhi's complete commitment to nonviolence had been confirmed by the use of the atom bombs in 1945. For David also, the use by Britain of any weapon of mass destruction was unthinkable and this led to his becoming co-chair of Christian CND.

As a member of the Gandhi Foundation Executive Committee, David worked hard to promote the Foundation. He tried twice unsuccessfully to set up a winter weekend gathering in the north of England but was undeterred by the fact that it didn't attract enough people to make it viable. He designed T shirts, had them printed and sold them. He organised the making of a banner to use on marches and stalls and was insistent that the wind must be allowed to pass through it to avoid the banner and those holding it being blown away. The problem was solved by the purchase of two string vests which were incorporated into the design. For several years, David organised the Multi-Faith Commemoration of Gandhi's death and coped successfully with difficulties that cropped up.

He was not a fluent speaker but what he lacked in the skills of oratory, he more than made up for with the strength of his convictions. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer and had to step down from the Executive Committee in 2011. After taking advice, he committed himself to the use of holistic or natural medicine, mainly through diet, and overcame the cancer successfully. He was self-effacing and was probably never aware of how much those who knew him respected and admired him for his deeply held beliefs and the commitment with which he supported those who thought as he did."

From Jane Sill, member of the Executive Committee of the GF:

"My memory of David was a very vibrant, creative person, full of energy and life. He was very adept at bringing out the often hidden artistic and musical talents of adults and children alike, especially at the Gandhi Summer School. He was a passionate supporter of the causes which he held dear and for which he designed a series of colourful banners and posters which he displayed with his usual verve and panache. David will be very much missed by us all."





In Trafalgar Square



David with Graham Davey



At a GF Summer Gathering, on right



## Lake Geneva

## GF Publications

*Muriel Lester, Gandhi and Kingsley Hall* by David Maxwell. £2

*A Gandhi Alphabet* by George Paxton & Antony Copley. £2

Memorial Booklet for John Martin Rowley

Donation

Please order from George Paxton, 2/1, 87 Barrington Drive, Glasgow G4 9ES  
With cheque made out to *The Gandhi Foundation*. Please add estimated  
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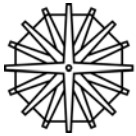
# GF Annual Report 2022

A printed version of the Annual Report can be requested from George Paxton.

It can also be viewed on the website at News & Updates then Annual Report.

This year's Annual Lecture and Peace Award can also be viewed on the website – [gandhifoundation.org](http://gandhifoundation.org)





# 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: Navnit Dholakia, Denis Halliday, Martin Polden,  
Diana Schumacher, Mark Tully, Sandip Verma

Members of Executive Committee:

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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**  
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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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