

The Gandhi Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT

2018 - 2019

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Registered Charity No. 292629

About The Gandhi Foundation

The purpose of the Foundation is to promote knowledge about the life and teaching of Gandhi and to relate it to some of the major challenges and conflicts of our time such as social injustice, poverty, discrimination, destruction of the environment, the arms race and war. Gandhi's advocating of non-violent approaches to conflict are valued and promoted. On 15 June 2007, the United Nations General Assembly voted to establish Gandhi's date of birth, 2 October, as the International Day of Non-Violence.

The Gandhi Foundation was set up at a meeting in October 1983, following Richard Attenborough's film "Gandhi" and the renewed interest that it aroused. The Foundation has no full-time staff, but is administered by the Executive Committee (assisted by a Secretary), whose members take forward the purpose of the Foundation through its ongoing projects. All Gandhi Foundation Friends are encouraged to become involved in areas that are of particular interest to them.

President: Bikhu Parekh

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

Volunteer Outreach Worker: William Rhind

Executive Committee:

Mark Hoda, GF Chair since 2010, T(rustee) – also The Hoda Evans
Memorial Fund, & Jeevika Trust

Graham Davey T, Treasurer

Omar Hyat T (Gandhi Peace Award, Annual Lecture)

Trevor Lewis (Ashram Experience Co-ordinator)

George Paxton T, Editor – The Gandhi Way (also GF Membership)

John Rowley T Gandhi Peace Award, Patron Liaison

Shaheen Choudhury-Westcombe (Kingsley Hall Liason)

Twisha Chandra

Prem Prakash

Jane Sill

William Rhind

REPORTS OF EVENTS

(These have been taken from the Gandhi Way and reflect the views of their respective authors)

Summer Gathering/Ashram Experience 2018

William Rhind

This year's Summer Gathering saw it being given a new name: 'Ashram Experience'. I guess as some long-standing members still refer to it as the Summer School, the name Summer Gathering will continue to be used by some. It was a very hot week with temperatures topping 30C (90F) some days and the only rain occurring on the last day.

We returned to St Christopher School in Letchworth Garden City and had a theme of 'Making the World Great Again'. Sadly numbers were down again with only 12 in attendance but it did see the return after many years of Mary Brown and after a gap of a couple of years of Esther Klaassen. Esther was accompanied by her friend and yoga teacher Ellen Dijkstra.

With Ellen's help the week followed the standard formula of voluntary 7am yoga followed by breakfast and a morning study session. Graham Davey led these sessions and the focus was on having a discussion (rather than lecture) and working out how we may act as individually, collectively and sway political and public opinion.

We covered six topics to cover the 6 days: health, reducing inequality, pollution, dealing with religious differences, climate change and population. In respect of the last point Graham advised that had we had a session thirty years ago it would have been entitled population growth but with socio-economic changes in the world one must look at the topic in a more nuanced way than simply talking about a population explosion.

Space does not permit a full account of each of the days discussions however certain threads were established; such as we all have a responsibility to do something however small, acts of witness are important and collective action is needed.

We also had two outside speakers visiting us for the first time in a number of years. Duncan McNair came on the Wednesday afternoon to give a very professional explanation of the work of Save the Asian Elephant (stae.org) Afterwards he stayed for supper and it was felt that the GF exec should discuss how and if we can work together in the future. It was certainly an eye-opening experience for me as it brought home the cruel pujan methods employed in training elephants to break their spirit, and the problems of 'sanctuaries' simply pandering to

tourist trips and prejudices rather than protecting and caring for elephants (see also below).

Thursday evening saw Kevin Jones of Transition Letchworth (<http://www.transitionletchworth.org/>) visit us. He talked about how the Transition Movement fitted in with both Gandhi's ideas and Ebenezer Howard's ones about Garden Cities (Kevin being a trustee of both Transition Letchworth and the Letchworth Heritage Foundation). After a most successful discussion we have agreed to work with him at next year's Summer Gathering and hopefully getting greater involvement with the local community.

The week also saw the Gandhi Foundation have its Annual General Meeting on the Tuesday for the first time ever outside of London (this was changed as Chairman Mark Hoda had to return to London due to illness at his office). This event also included a discussion about events for the coming year to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Gandhi's birth in 2019. The report of these discussions will be covered elsewhere. It was disappointing that the only members of the GF Executive Committee were those already present for the week, namely Mark Hoda, Graham Davey, Trevor Lewis, William Rhind.

As usual the last Saturday was taken up with a wide-ranging discussion about the theme and programme for next year. After agreeing to return to Letchworth it was determined to move the event back a week to ensure that the week coincides with the school holidays. Accordingly, the Ashram Experience 2019 will be from 27th July to 3rd August and will have the following theme 'Thinking About Change: Thoughts are the Seeds of Actions'.

Human Rights and Interfaith Harmony Gandhi Foundation Multifajth Celebration 2019 Jane Sill

The annual commemoration of Gandhi Ji's assassination took place this year on 9th February as part of Interfaith Harmony Week and also to mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the 150th anniversary of Gandhi Ji's birth year. The evening was organised by Saara Majid on behalf of the Gandhi Foundation who also performed with Sacred Sounds. The setting was the beautiful Unitarian Church in Golders Green. The church has been lovingly maintained with many original features, such as a beautiful painted pastoral scene depicting a deer park which had been created especially for the space, as had the organ, nestled neatly in an alcove beside. This formed the backdrop to a rich offering of prayers, thoughts and music from many

traditions which was enjoyed by a large audience of all ages and backgrounds.

The evening began with the familiar chanting of Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo, by Reverend Nagase from the London Peace Pagoda who was accompanied by Sister Marutasan, the nun in charge of Milton Keynes' Peace Pagoda

There followed an address by Rev Feargus O'Connor, Minister in charge of Golders Green Unitarian Church, who spoke on 'The Golden Rule, Compassion and World Religions'. Drawing on The Charter for Compassion Rev O'Connor described how the principle of compassion is the Golden Rule that lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, 'calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves'. As the Charter states, "Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect". This ethic inspired spiritual teachers from all faiths, such as Confucius, Buddha, Rabbi Hillel, St Francis of Assisi, the Sikh gurus and many others. Rev O'Connor then went on to quote from a selection, including Gandhi Ji: ('Our innermost prayer should be that a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, a Christian a better Christian. I broaden my Hinduism by loving other religions than my own ... All religions are true". This sentiment is echoed by HH Dalai Lama: "My fundamental belief is that all religious traditions have the same potential to make better human beings, good human beings, sensible human beings, compassionate human beings". Rev O'Connor concluded by hoping that each of us "pledge ourselves to ...build that ideal human commonwealth which alone can bring about the happiness and wellbeing of all".

There followed a series of beautiful musical and poetical offerings, including a Hebrew Prayer, 'Ma Na'vu, al heharim'; a Medieval Christian Hymn, 'Baluiaiw'; a Bosnian Sufi Blessing, 'Salla Aleijke', and a selection of poems by Dennis Evans, a member of the Church and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. They offered deceptively light hearted, closely observed vignettes of everyday life.

Bubbles For Peace

There were Reverends and Rockers
Housewives and children.
There were old friends and new friends,
Politicians, policemen.
There were Christians and Muslims,

Communists, and Buddhists.
And banners, such banners,
Banners for peace.
There were dancers and drummers,
And children in pushchairs.
There were priests and our poets,
And grannies in wheelchairs.
There were students and stiltwalkers,
And a brave paraplegic.
And a man with his toy gun,
Lit by his laughter,
Blowing bubbles, such bubbles.
Bubbles for Peace
London Peace March, 15 February 2003

After a short tea break which gave time for people to mix and chat, there was an address on the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights which celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2018. This was concluded by an appeal on behalf of Medical Aid for Palestinians towards which all proceeds from the evening were donated. There followed a beautiful 13th century Iranian song, 'Bani Adam or Sons of Adam' by Saadi which described all our lives as limbs of the same body. Mark Hoda, Chair of the Gandhi Foundation, spoke on Gandhi Ji's emphasis on duty rather than 'rights'. This was echoed by Saara Majid who reflected on how each of us can help make the standard of universal human rights a reality in society, by quoting from Eleanor Roosevelt: "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home — so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

Beautiful renditions of Bikhodee, 'Without Self' by Rumi, Gandhi Ji's Salt March song, 'Ragupati raghava and 'Bread & Roses', a protest song from the American Women's Movement (1912), brought to an end an evening celebrating the richness and diversity of our common humanity.

Atonement in Politics
Perspectives from Gandhi
Gopalkrishna Gandhi

The GF Annual Lecture delivered 31 May 2019 in the Nehru Centre,
London

Part 1

"Short-horn cattle", it is said, "are highly effective in bestowing their characteristics on their progeny". Put simply, this means the young of short-horned cattle will turn out to be short-horned cattle. High-minded human beings are highly ineffective in bestowing their characteristics on their progeny. Put simply, this means that the descendants of the high-minded will turn up with minds of opposite height. And so anyone speaking about a great ancestor has to be just about as impressive as an earthworm speaking about the earth.

In inviting me to give this lecture in the strong and strength-giving name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Professor Lord Bhikhu Parekh and members of the Gandhi Foundation have put me to a hard test. I do not know whether to marvel at their optimism in asking me or at my audacity in accepting. Be that as it may, I offer to them my sincerest thanks and my deep appreciation for the high honour, and I offer to those present, my assurance that I will speak not as a Gandhi descendant but as one who finds Gandhi's mind fascinating to partner one's thoughts with, to share hopes and fears with. And I will try — not easy ! — to do this in his spirit of faith which included faith in the saving grace of humour. Sitting his Matriculation examination as a 'lad' of seventeen, Mohandas was given a deck of subjects from which to choose one for his English essay. He chose to write 'On the Advantages of a Cheerful Disposition'. That essay of his has gone to dust — a great pity for our times in which cheer, as an emotion, is severely challenged, though laughter at other's expense thrives especially in the world of competitive politics.

Atonement for Gandhi

Another text written by Gandhi, of which the original has also gone into the dust of evanescence, is a letter he wrote to his ailing father. He was fifteen and wrote it in his first language, Gujarati, which was the only language his father, a wise and brave man, knew. And it sought forgiveness for what Mohan, as he was called at home, regarded as amounting to a theft he had committed on behalf of his elder brother. "I wrote it on a slip of paper", he writes in his autobiography. "In this I not only confessed my guilt but I asked adequate punishment and closed with a request to him not to punish himself for my offence. I also pledged myself never to steal in future." His father, Mohandas writes, read the

letter silently as tears welling up in his eyes flowed onto the paper he held in his forgiving, blessing, cleansing hands.

That was Gandhi's first recorded act of atonement, one of many to follow.

And it has three notable ingredients: First, a clear admission of culpability. Second, a request for punishment — external punishment. Third, a promise of non-repetition of the guilt. A fourth is hinted as well: that the one addressed might transfer the expiation to himself, hurt himself, become one with the guilty one. Atonement, after all, is at-one-ment, fluxing the guilt, the guilty, the one causing wrong or pain, the one wronged or pained with the wrong and pain in one at-one-ness.

A sense of responsibility which is allied to a sense of accepting guilt, of feeling regret, remorse, of wanting to do penance, even to hit himself which he urged his father not to do but which he himself did, as a young father, were all integral to Gandhi. As were his resolves to fast, something he did on more than thirty occasions in the period 1914 to 1948, totalling about 150 days, as penance or self-purification, or to make his 'target' feel a need to atone, the idea of just reparation, and atonement. They were integral to him from just how he was made. The Jaina influence on his mother, and hers on him had I am sure much to do with this. But it was, basically, Gandhi himself, growing with a deep sense of right and wrong, of the importance of going beyond expressing regret in words to atoning through corrective action for errors, his own and those of others he felt responsible for or connected with. And as he moved inexorably into a life of politics, atonement became part of his politics which played itself out through a war – the Boer War – he participated in as a non-combatant and World Wars I and II in both of which he was directly involved, first as an enthusiast, then as an opponent both of the wars' specifics and then of war itself. And, most importantly, in the nonviolent war he waged for the freedom of India from British rule. His ahimsa – nonviolence – implied just and fair means for just and fair goals. And self-punishing for lapses stayed part, a critical part, of the proceedings.

Atonement in politics

Its freedom, in 1947, blood-stained by partition saw India vivisected, homes broken, shattered peace, left about 14 million displaced either because they were Hindus or Sikhs in Muslim areas or Muslims in Hindu-Sikh areas, an estimated 2 million dead and nearly 80,000 women abducted. 'Nearly' and any round figure to describe the abduction of women are outrageous. Each abduction has to be, and was, in that grim theatre, an epic tragedy. How India and Pakistan have lived with and are living with that guilt on their consciences passes understanding. An agonised Gandhi, at 78, was in Bengal and Bihar as India inched through the mayhem and murder of Partition at the time. "Kill me, kill me", he said to a mob that came to Gandhi's dwelling in Calcutta, looking for the outgoing Premier, Suhrawardy, "I say, why don't you kill me?" and then

fasted, in Calcutta, to atone, to restore peace, sanity. He had just about achieved it, to Governor General Lord Mountbatten's astonished appreciation, when another crisis, for him an existential one, arose in Delhi.

Under the terms of partition, India was to pay Pakistan as its share of the undivided balance in the national exchequer, Rs 750 million. Of this India paid up, as a first instalment, Rs 200 million. Before it could remit the balance of Rs 550 million, Kashmir was invaded. Prime Minister Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Patel felt giving the second instalment would only fund fresh armed action from Pakistan and so held the instalment back. This was to Gandhi dishonourable, intolerable. "Pay up", he told the Government, his own, the Government of India. When it demurred, he resorted to his tested mode of atonement, self-punishment. He began a fast for what he said was for the honour of India. It almost looks like he knew this was to be his last fast. Not because he thought he could not, would not, fast again but because he was assassinated, the payment of Rs 550 million to Pakistan being pointedly cited by his assassin as a motivating trigger. Those three bullets sounded like an encore to the ballistics of World War II.

Atonement and war

So much has happened, so much of it so violent, across the globe in recent times that even World War II has receded from active political memory. The restrictions and reparations it called for are now the subject of historians' study, not general active interest. But we are still living under the shadow of that war and its long after-shock, the Cold War.

As self-punishment for all that happened at the hands of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis, Article 26 of the 1949 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, amended and extended to all of the country after unification in 1990 and therefore, very alive even today, said: "Activities tending and undertaken with the intention to disturb peaceful relations between nations, especially to prepare for aggressive war, are unconstitutional. They shall be made a punishable offense". In addition to military curbs the Potsdam Agreement required Germany to pay the Allies US\$ 23 billion in machinery and manufacturing plants. Article 11 of the Constitution of Italy required it "to repudiate war as an instrument of offence against the liberty of other peoples and as a means for settling international disputes" and "agree, on conditions of equality with other states, to such limitations of sovereignty as may be necessary to allow for a legal system that will ensure peace and justice between nations". The US-authored Constitution of Japan sounds more stringent. It says "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling

international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised".

To describe these Constitutional provisions for self-restraining reparation as acts of political atonement may not be quite right, for they were virtually dictated to the countries concerned but to do so would not be that wrong either for they still are active as expiations, internationally-determined and monitored acts of self-regulation.

Germany, Italy and Japan, prominent nations otherwise, have as a result remained out of the United Nations Security Council all these seven decades and more. The nations keeping them out having, of course, established their own shining records of the "use of the right of belligerency". Beyond atoning which the world 'made' Germany undergo, a deep existential moment arose within that country. The name of Conrad Adenauer will not ring too many bells today. The leader of the Christian Democratic Union party and the first post-war chancellor of West Germany, Adenauer did what would have been considered unthinkable by all those who had imposed Potsdam on Germany. He went into negotiations with Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion for another reparations agreement. This was not just a matter of the head. It needed investments. Adenauer is unlikely to have known of Gandhi's fast over the Rs 550 million owing to Pakistan. And yet he was speaking in Gandhi's voice. Seeking his parliament to approve the financial arrangement, Adenauer spoke of the debt Germany had to pay: "Unspeakable crimes", he said, "have been committed in the name of the German people, calling for moral and material indemnity." His Government, he said, was prepared to offer a "solution of the material indemnity problem, thus easing the way to the spiritual settlement of infinite suffering". There was opposition to the move and his own finance minister was against it. But Adenauer pressed on, driven primarily by what can only be called the imperative urge to atone. I would not underestimate pressure on him from NATO and also perhaps the Jewish lobby in the United States but Adenauer's was a moral putsch.

When a man or a woman is brave, wise, he or she is seen as being lofty, noble. Activists, writers, philosophers get to be seen as such. If they stand or – as Americans would put it – run for office and are lucky enough to lose, they are then seen as being all that raised to an even higher plinth. In Gujarati or Hindi they would be charitravan: having 'character'. And that would be that. But when a politician says something wise or does something brave, the observer turns cynical and asks: 'What is the chakkar in this?', what is her or his game? The politician is invariably regarded as being intelligent in the guise of being wise, smart, in the shape of being brave and a Gujarati or Hindi word comes into play – chatur, 'clever'. Unfair, I would say, to politicians. Bravery, wisdom and

why, even nobility can be and should be political for every idea and every step in the public sphere or the polis is political.

Elton John's song on the word 'Sorry' is music and also lies at the deepest core of politics. Similarly, every politician being owner of a feeling brain and thinking heart can be, and should be, wise, sensitive, human for every political act being concerned with human beings is about humanity.

Than the Emperor Asoka's edicts of 2000 years ago or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in our times there can be nothing nobler, also nothing more political. It is good to be smart, smarter to be good – so much the better for smarter, so much the worse, alas, for goodness.

That Adenauer was no freak of faith but was made of politics' wisdoms is borne out by subsequent events. On December 7th, 1970, there took place an event that belongs not to legend, not to lore but to the history of pain, remorse, atonement. The then German Chancellor Willy Brandt was in Warsaw, Poland (then part of the Eastern Bloc) and visited the monument there to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. After laying his wreath, to the surprise of all present, he did something unexpected. He knelt and remained silently in that position for a short time – half a minute – by the clock but an eternity in atonement. The photograph of that act is of the stuff of Michelangelo's sculptures and indeed has been carved in stone on a tablet that stands by the monument. The sculptor Wictoria Czechowska-Antoniewska is 90 this year. Gandhi once said if he only had time he would spend hours, days, studying the art treasures of Europe. He would have gazed at her depiction of Kniefall von Warschau long and lovingly.

But it is important to know that Brandt's gesture was not about that physical gesture alone; he signed on that visit the politically vital Treaty of Warsaw between Germany and Poland, guaranteeing German acceptance of the new borders of Poland and easing tensions between East and West during the Cold War. Equally important is the fact that Kniefall and the Treaty were not immediately accepted 'back home' in Germany. Only a narrow majority of the people of Germany backed him and as with Adenauer, there was opposition within Brandt's own party. Der Spiegel reported at the time that 48% of all West Germans thought the Kniefall was excessive, 41% said it was appropriate and 11% – bless them – had no opinion. It was only later, in April 1972, that Brandt after winning a vote of confidence in Parliament by only two votes went on to win in the next elections, in late 1972.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel recalled, during a visit to Japan in 2015, a 1985 speech by the then West German President, Richard von Weizsacker who called Germany's wartime defeat, his own country's defeat, a "day of liberation". And speaking for herself Chancellor Merkel said: "We Germans will never forget the hand of reconciliation that was extended to us after all the suffering that our country had brought to Europe and the world".

Another name that would ring few if any bells today is that of Nobusuke Kishi, a war-crime accused but also post-war leader, twice Prime Minister of Japan and maternal grandfather of the present Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Japan's war crimes in China, Burma, Indonesia are not in need of any repetition. The Nanking massacre is part of the darkest history of inhumanity. It is not forgotten. But we do not remember or at any rate do not remember the enormity of the fact that the United States was in occupation of Japan until as long or late as 1952, withdrawing only after Tokyo signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty and accepted the verdict of the Tokyo trials. On December 22, 1948, Tojo and six other Japanese leaders were hanged while sentences of the remaining 18 were commuted to imprisonment lasting over 400 years. Bearing in mind the torture and killing of Burmese nationals at Japan's hands, Prime Minister Kishi said in 1957 to the people of Burma: "The Japan of today is not the Japan of the past, but as its Constitution indicates, is a peace-loving nation". And adds: "We view with deep regret the vexation we caused to the people of Burma in the war just past. In a desire to atone, if only partially, for the pain suffered, Japan is prepared to meet fully and with goodwill its obligations for war reparations".

As with Warsaw and Brandt, Yangon can have a plaque for Kishi. Successive Prime Ministers of Japan have apologised, expressed remorse, offered and provided reparation for its war crimes including to its own daughters who were forced to work as 'comfort women'. I do not think atonement can ever find anywhere a parallel to match Japan's.

Each act of atonement is, however, sui generis for atonement is daughter to remorse, which is personal, the child of conscience which is as personal, as private, as anything can be. Among those who helped end the Cold War from positions of power, by using it redemptively, Mikhail Gorbachev stands tall. He is a tragic, lonely and yet compelling figure. He was troubled in his hugely powerful office, he was restless to set several wrongs right. As a recent study by Werner Hertzog shows, his predecessors who were 'Soviet' and his successors who are 'Russian' did and have done very similar things with their people, with their adversaries. Gorbachev stands apart from them, wanting, like Bernie Sanders tries to do today to turn a harsh, aggressive society towards being just, incorporative. Gorbachev failed in many senses but in his very failure, in the solitude of his tragedy, lies his stature. His form of atonement has been giving up without fuss, power, vast power or what Sanskrit would call an *ahuti*, a sacrificial offering to humanity.

The second and concluding part of the lecture will appear in the next issue of The Gandhi Way.

Ashram Experience 2019

Trevor Lewis

For this year's Ashram Experience (formerly the Gandhi Summer School/Gathering) we returned to the St Christopher School in Letchworth Garden City. Our accommodation is in the block that is usually occupied by the sixth-form students. As our numbers were reduced compared to previous years, partly due to last-minute cancellations and sickness, we had a wide choice of rooms, one or two of which have en suite bathrooms. Traditionally we daily take part in shramadana, in other words performing cleaning and cooking, and other tasks, for the benefit of the community. However, as the school provides paid staff to do the cleaning, and there were no opportunities to do gardening, etc. we were left with meal preparation and washing-up as our only shramadana duties.

Often we have been fortunate to have among us someone skilled in demonstrating yoga, and so there has been an opportunity for people to have an early-morning session of communal yoga. Unfortunately, this year we had no such person, so it was not available.

Morning Sessions

In our first morning discussion session, i.e. on the Sunday, Graham Davey outlined changes in the UK and in the wider world that he would like to see, then we had a wide-ranging discussion on those topics, and they were added to by other participants. By general consensus we decided that the highest-priority and most urgent topics were the reversal of processes that contribute to climate change and also the reduction in equality both in the UK and across the world.

On the second day, Monday, our discussion started by considering three questions:

- i) can education bring about the change we want to see
- ii) does education exist to pass on human knowledge or to develop character?
- iii) Gandhi said that the purpose of education was to instil values and develop character. Is this still true?

We all contributed to this discussion, starting with our personal experience of school and college/university education, either private or state school, etc. By consensus we decided there should be much more emphasis on vocational education, as it is at least as worthwhile as academic education, and indeed essential for providing a skilled workforce. Also that teaching of moral philosophy and life skills should be expanded, at all stages of learning.

Our third session, on the Tuesday, focused on the media, and the way they shape our ideas of events. In our definition of media, we lumped together

newspapers (in print and digital form), television, and social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook et alia. It was pointed out that we are totally dependent on these for our knowledge about the world, and that these media channels are not as neutral as perhaps we might like to think. In particular the BBC is notably biased and susceptible to influence by outside bodies. On Wednesday we turned to changes we would like to see in our political system, both at local and national level. We were agreed that a clear priority is to move away from a first-past-the-post system, and have some form of proportional representation instead. Another aim, to reduce inequality in UK society, is to firstly remove charitable status from public schools, and ultimately to abolish them altogether.

In Thursday's session we considered which organisations we are involved with and/or support. They included Greenpeace, The Green Party, Amnesty International, Democracy Now, Lendwithcare, Peace Direct, The Scouts movement, CND and several others. We agreed that it was normal in the past that in order to bring about change one would become a member of one or more suitable organisations, and join in their activities. Now there is often no need to pay something to join: often one can take part via social media. We also agreed that it is much less common for people to join any organisation.

Friday morning was the occasion for our final session, where we had a discussion about changes in our lifestyle we had individually made, or were considering making in the future.

Our morning sessions were notably more interactive than they have been in previous years, which was generally considered to be an improvement

Afternoon Sessions

In the afternoons, we traditionally try to engage in some creative activity. For the first time we had a small amount of equipment with which we could practice some circus skills. Some of us needed more practice than others!

Evenings

On each of the first two evenings we watched a documentary made by Heaven on Earth Creations. One was Gandhi's Gift and the other was Gandhi's Awakening. A few years ago, the Gandhi Foundation made a donation towards the cost of making the former film. Each has been shown numerous times on PBS in the United States.

We played games on several of the other evenings, i.e. Uno, Consequences, Boggle, Banagrams.

On the final evening, instead of our traditional party we had a session of dancing to 5Rhythms music.

Future

The Ashram Experience 2020 will again be held at St Christopher School, Letchworth. The theme for 2020 is Finding Principles to Live By.

Peace Award

GF Peace Award 2018:

The Peace Award was given jointly to Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples, and the organisation Mines & Communities. Ms Tauli-Corpuz is from the Philippines, where she faces considerable harassment, as does the organisation Tebtebba, with whom she has worked for years (<http://www.tebtebba.org>). Both she and Mines and Communities have done extraordinary work on behalf of indigenous peoples and nature-based communities who face constant pressures from land mafias and 'developers', but who play an increasingly important role in safeguarding the ecosystems that future human life depends on. So this award is for an individual and an organisation in view of their work for indigenous communities. The award ceremony took place in September 2019 rather than in 2018 as it was difficult for Victoria to get permission to travel and also due to her work commitments.

The 2019 Peace Award is being determined at present but there has been considerable interest and a number of nominations have been received from peace activists and climate change activists and global educationalists. We aim to have the ceremony in the House of Lords in November 2019.

Omar Hayat, Trustee, Peace Award Committee Chair

GENERAL REPORTS

Membership and The Gandhi Way

The pattern of recent years of a slow decline in the number of subscribers has continued. We have just over 200 people and organisations on our list to receive our newsletter, The Gandhi Way, including complimentary copies to individuals and groups.

The Gandhi Way continues to announce and then report on events organised by the Foundation. It also has articles relating either directly or indirectly to Gandhi and his philosophy and similarly book reviews. We have carried particularly this year obituaries on members who have made a notable contribution to promoting the Gandhian way in diverse and individual ways – Mildred Mashedar, Margaret Chatterjee, Ellen Moxley, Negeen Zinovieff. The editor would like to see more feedback on the content of the newsletter or raising issues that they think we ought to be covering.

George Paxton

The Gandhi Foundation and its Friends

You can become a Friend for an annual minimum subscription of £20 (concessions available), or become a Life Friend for a donation of £200. You will receive the quarterly newsletter, The Gandhi Way, as well as notices of the annual events organised by the Foundation.

We are always seeking to increase our number of Friends, who represent the life blood of the organisation and without whom the vital work, activities and objectives of the Foundation would not be able to continue.

To join us, please contact George Paxton at: 87 Barrington Drive, Glasgow G4 9ES, Tel: 0141 339 6917; email : gpaxton@phoncoop.coop

Membership forms can be sent out via post or are available on our website.

We always welcome articles, book reviews and letters of a specifically or broadly Gandhian nature for The Gandhi Way. Please send pieces for consideration to George Paxton (the Editor) at his contact details given above. There is a maximum word limit of 2000 words for submissions.

We would like to thank all The Gandhi Foundation Friends for coming to our events, reading The Gandhi Way and for supporting us with your goodwill, subscriptions and generous donations.

Our Executive Committee quarterly meetings are open to any GF Friend to attend – just let us know if you would like to come along. You can also become a member of the Executive Committee following attendance as an observer at three consecutive meetings, by invitation. Please contact us if you have a special area of interest or skill-set that you feel you would be able to contribute to the organisation.

The Gandhi Foundation
Income and Expenditure Accounts for the year 2018

INCOME	2018	2017	EXPENDITURE	2018	2017
Subs and Donations (Inc. one life)	£27609.73	£3004.11	Gandhi Way Print & postage	£686.09	£743.00
Grants received			Gandhi Way expenses	£137.40	£144.15
Nageen Zinovieff	£950	£6400	Printing		£42.00
Scott Bader	£250		Admin & outreach	£12.23	£55.92
Literature sales		£5.00	Kingsley Hall rent	£1560.00	£2480.00
Reclaimed Gift Aid tax		£1355.91	Multi-Faith Celebration - Hall	£400	
Collections (at MFC)	£250	£79.42	MFC - Artistes	£405	
Bank Interest	£0.02	£0.02	Annual Lecture and Peace Award		£1072.85
GF Ashram Experience	£2590.25	£2047.60	GF Ashram Experience (GFAE)		
Total Income	£6810.00	£12892.06	GFAE Insurance £209.80		
			GFAE Publicity £61.64		
			GFAE Food £251.51		
			GFAE Total	£2172.95	£1924.31
			Network for Peace Donation	£40	£40
			Omar Expenses	£19.32	
			Phone Coop	£7.45	£6.48
			Transition Letchworth Donation	£50	£50
			Total Expenditure	£5940.44	£6558.71
			Surplus	£1319.56	
				£6810	

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Treasurer's Notes

Our income was increased exceptionally by the Antony Copley bequest and reclaimed Gift Aid tax. The Multi-Faith Celebration (MFC) and the Ashram experience were the only two events that took place in 2018, so I have incorporated their income and expenditure figures in the main accounts. This gives a total income of £6810.00 for the year.

Expenditure for the Kingsley Hall office was high in 2017 because we paid for 18 months instead of 12. The rent remains at £30 per week because we allow the office to be used by other groups. The GF Ashram Experience was attended by 13 participants, 8 of whom were present for the whole week. It produced a surplus of £418. Detailed accounts for the week are available separately.

The total expenditure of £5490.44 is less than the income by £1396.56 and our total cash assets as held in the three bank accounts shown above show the same increase from £16022.15 to 17341.71.

The Cecil Evans bequest of 2000 shares in what is currently called the BMO Responsible Global Equity Fund (Inc) (Share Class 1) is now valued at £10220 which is virtually the same as it was at the beginning of 2018.

Our finances therefore remain in a very healthy state. The Charity Commission may say 'too healthy' but we don't have to declare our reserves.

Graham Davey Treasurer 1-2-2019