

Original transcript of “Anecdotes of Mahatma Gandhi’s Inner Circle” by Peter Ruehe at the International Centre for Peace and Development Studies at Nongchok, Bangkok, Thailand, 15 July 2019.

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The next part of our session is going to be the screening of the photos, the collection of our brother, Peter. Can we start? Yes, go. Honourable President, Friends. I'd like to start to thank Khun Sabur and his wonderful team for organizing this remarkable programme. It's a great honour for me and for our institution to be co-organizers of this programme. It's the first time we cooperate with a programme like this, and I hope it's not the last time. I'm representing GandhiServe. GandhiServe is a multinational network of institutions having the aim to promote Mahatma Gandhi's life and work and the ethics of nonviolence. We have a foundation in Germany. We organise programmes on a regular basis, organizing lectures, seminars, film shows, exhibitions. We have a partner organization in India. Jayan is the President and a friend of mine who is heading this institution. GandhiServe is in existence for more than 20 years, and we do our small bit to keep Gandhi's legacy alive. Our main activities, I would say, on the internet, we have various websites presenting Gandhi's photographs and media on Gandhi.

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GandhiMedia.org is a major website which has thousands of films and photographs of Mahatma Gandhi. My main activity in the 1980s and '90s was to preserve such material in India and elsewhere, and then we later on digitized it and made it available on the internet. But by this, I'm already coming to my presentation. It's not about Gandhi's life. Although I'm going to show a few pictures of Gandhi, but it's not a documentary on Gandhi's life, but it has some anecdotes of Gandhi's life, and especially, obviously, his inner circle. I'll tell you a few words about my own background. Interesting is Subaraj's message started with the Second World War, and that's also where I would like to start because my family is from Germany. My family suffered a lot during and after the second World War, and I was brought up with this spirit, “never again”. It should never, ever happen again. World War, war is the most horrible thing you can experience, and it should never happen again. Then in the early 1980s, the Cold War was still on. The

Americans deposited their cruise missiles in West Germany. The Russians had positioned their missiles in East Germany.

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They were targeted towards each other. It was politically a very tense period, very dangerous situation, comparable to the Cuba crisis in the United States in the early '60s. The peace movement in Germany was very strong. I joined the peace movement, and that was my second introduction to Gandhi and his ideas. The first introduction, of course, was in school, but that was rather superficial what we learned about India, Indian freedom struggle and Gandhi. But I heard his name at that time for the first time. Then in the peace movement, we discussed non-violence resistance, civil disobedience, tax boycotts. We discussed it, we practiced it also. I got to know Gandhi from this rather political, social angle. That was a time, early '80s, where I worked at the Technical University as a computer engineer in Berlin, and I had a colleague from India, from Chandigarh. He and his family, they told me a lot about Indian culture, life in India. We decided to travel together. In 1983, together with my friend Ravinder and his family, we went to see his family in Chandigarh. He gave me addresses of his friends throughout the country, which I visited. That was a period, '83, when Attenborough's feature film on Gandhi came out.

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He was famous 8 Oscar Winner feature film. I saw that film a few days after its release in Bombay, Regal cinema. It left a lasting and deep impression on me. Although I knew a bit about Gandhi before, then seeing this film, it had a very deep impression because the film is very intense. I thought at that time, 'is it really necessary to show so much violence and bloodshed in a film, in a movie?' But then afterwards, I studied history and I knew the reality better, I realized that the film was just a very small part, a very mild representation of what really happened in India at that time. The violence that was experienced at that time and the bloodshed was unbelievable. On that very first journey to India, I visited different Gandhian institutions, initiatives, projects. I met associates of Gandhi, relatives who were associates of Gandhi who were still alive at that time. I deepened my own understanding about Gandhi's life and work and what he stood for. I was very much impressed by his writings, actually, because he wrote in a very simple language which was easy to understand for a layman as well as for academics.

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He was able to express himself and talk about things beautifully, how the ideal society should look. He expressed ideas which I had in my mind before, but I would not have been able to express it so beautifully. These were just fragments and mosaic stones, but Gandhi brought them together, so to say. He not only wrote about it, but he practiced. He was a living example of that it's possible to create a peaceful society based on nonviolence. I visited several Gandhi institutions. I visited the Gandhi Museums as well, the Gandhi Museum in Bombay, for instance. A couple of these places had exhibitions organized by a person, I would call him the foremost biographer of Gandhi, Vithalbhai Jhaveri. He prepared three major exhibitions on Gandhi. He prepared a 5 1/2-hours documentary film, best ever done documentary on Gandhi, and he did the photo selection for the eight-volume biography by D.G. Tendulkar MAHATMA, which is a famous biography on Gandhi, printed in the 1950s. Now it's almost forgotten because people don't read 8-volumes biographies anymore, unfortunately. I was very much impressed by the work of Vithalbhai Jhaveri. Here he comes. Very poor picture, but that's the only one I could get.

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After this first journey to India, when I returned to Germany, I started doing some public work, sharing my own fascination for Gandhi with my countrymen. I organized an exhibition, which was shown in 1984 for three months in Berlin. I needed photo material for this exhibition. I contacted the embassy in Germany, or then the consulate. I got some very poor material, which was really not worth presenting to the public, actually. But we did it because we had no access to other material. Then I wrote to Vithalbhai Jhaveri. I wanted to meet him and see whether we can get some material from him and also know his experience in that field. We had a common friend, the then director of the Gandhi Museum in Bombay. She arranged a meeting. But when I arrived at Bombay to meet him, she told me, "Peter, he just expired. He died." So there was no chance to meet Vithalbhai Jhaveri in person. But I met his family the next year, not on that visit, only the next year. And his family, his son, he gave me a chance to take a look at his material, the material he had collected on Gandhi being the major biographer.

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He had collected photographs and films from sources all over the world. He even started collecting during Gandhi's lifetime. He himself, Jhaveri, was involved in the Freedom Struggle in the 1930s. He actually was an integral part of the Underground Radio in 1942. Then he got in prison because of this activity. After release from prison, I think '44, '45, he started collecting material on Gandhi. When I took a look at the photo collection his son showed me; it was just amazing! The photographs were kept in a big wooden overseas trunk, kept on the terrace in Bombay, in Worli Seaface. People who know Bombay, Worli, it's very close to the sea. It's just 30, 40 meters away from the seashore. The trunk was kept on the terrace outside. It was exposed to the moist, to all the bad influences of the climate. Some pictures were already stuck beyond repair, but the majority was intact. When I saw that collection, and by that time, I visited several museums, I contacted several collections, I realized that this was by far the best collection, photo collection on Gandhi. and file them. At that time, there was no scanning. Scanning came later.

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We did the scanning of all the pictures in the late 1990s. And then the material was returned to India. And since 1994, the material is accessible through, first the Dinodia picture agency, a famous picture agency in India, and then later on through GandhiServe. Now I'm going to show you a few photographs of that connection and tell you the background. This is again, Jhaveri, during the recordings of his five-and-a-half-hour documentary. This is definitely the longest film on Gandhi, and we were the ones who put this film on YouTube. If you check YouTube for Gandhi Mahatma, five and a half hours, you can see the whole film there, which is the most remarkable document on Gandhi's life, I would say. This is the oldest photograph of Gandhi taken at the age of seven.

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It's quite interesting because at that time, I'm talking about the late 19th century, 1895, approximately. No, 1885. It was quite unusual to take photographs of children, and only the very rich families could afford to do that. Gandhi's family was not that rich, but still, they took a photograph of young Mohandas at that time, and this is the oldest

photograph which is known of Gandhiji. Then later on in South Africa, his wife, he had four sons. They all were brought up in South Africa, which became close associates of Gandhi, natural, including his oldest son. Who, again, later on, separated from his father. But in the beginning, he was a very close follower of his ideas and collaborator. He was known as *Chota Gandhi*. This is Harilal Gandhi on the left, the oldest one. He quite supported his father's activities, but then he did not get the support he expected from him.

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That was the reason to separate from him and to move to India. It meant a very different life than what his father had in mind. It was the part of Gandhi's family, members of Gandhi's family, his nephew, to of his nephews Chaganlal Gandhi, Maganlal Gandhi, and their wives and sons. I'm showing this picture because this is Prabhudas Gandhi, son of Maganlal Gandhi. Prabhudas Gandhi was born in 1901, the same year as Devadas Gandhi, Gandhi's youngest son was born, and they grew up together. They were like brothers. And Prabhudas was considered by Gandhi, his fifth son. And throughout his life, he was very close to Gandhi. And all the family members of Gandhi I spoke to, they said, Prabhudas is the one who understood Gandhi best and implemented his ideas in his own life to maximum extent. I was lucky enough to meet Prabhudasbhai in the mid '80s. We spent a lot of time together. He told me a lot of things of the good old days in South Africa and later on in India. He was a living encyclopedia on Gandhi. His knowledge about Gandhi and his understanding was fantastic.

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Also in his looks, he was quite close to Gandhi. In fact, the Japanese TV once did a documentary on Gandhi in India, and they used Prabhudasbhai's shadow as Gandhi because his shadow, his features were quite close to Gandhi. I spent a lot of time with Prabhudasbhai. We travelled the country, wide and far. He had a Freedom fighter pass and he could travel first class and with company. So, he took me along because his family didn't want to travel with him as he used to carry lots of luggage with him. So, his family said, he's a difficult traveler. We don't want to travel with him. I volunteered, it was such a great pleasure to carry five, six bags and holding him at the end of the jam-packed train stations in India. It was a fantastic experience. I learned so much from him.

Of course, he was my guru in spite of the age difference, also very close friend. He definitely belonged to the inner circle of Gandhi. His father, Chaganlal, after returning from South Africa to India in 1915, Chaganlal was the first manager of Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad.

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Then Prabhudasbhai, he was the editor of a magazine which was published at Sabarmati Ashram. Later on, he participated in several Satyagraha campaigns and was then sent by Gandhi to North India to carry his message forward in that region. This was a visit together with Prabhudasbhai at the house of Madalsabehn Bajaj, the daughter of Jarnalal Bajaj. This is Shivaji Bhave, the brother of Vinoba Bhave. He was very close to the Bajaj family, and we met in the house of Madalsabehn Bajaj. This is at the train station at Sabarmati (wrong: it was Sevagram). It was not just the knowledge of Prabhudasbhai, but just to see him interacting with people. It showed me what nonviolence in practice means. Not only in friendly situations, in good situations, but also in difficult, tense situations, he kept calm and he knew ways to resolve the conflicts. That was a great example for me how nonviolence works. Together we visited in Taj Mahal. Well, there are funny stories behind all this pictures, but we don't have sufficient time to tell all of them.

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It was a visit with a second German Ambassador in Delhi. For him, it was a great honour to meet a senior member of the Gandhi family. A very well-known journalist in Germany on the left. In 1994, on the 125th birthday anniversary, we attended the commemorative programme at the Birla House in New Delhi, where he was assassinated. Being the senior of the family, he had the honour to sit next to the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi and his wife, Sonia Gandhi. This, by the way, this is Nirmala Gandhi, Gandhi's daughter-in-law from the Sevagram Ashram in Wardha. Now, I show a brief video on the occasion of Prabhudas Gandhi's 100th birthday anniversary.

Alright. So, this was Prabhudas Gandhi, Prabhudas live. Now we come back to South Africa, Gandhi's South African period. This is the Tolstoy Farm. The land for this farm near Johannesburg, he got donated from his friend, Hermann Kallenbach, a German Jew who lived in South Africa, was an architect, pretty successful architect. And He

donated the land for the Tolstoy Farm, which was Gandhi's second settlement in South Africa. First was the Phoenix farm, I mean the Phoenix settlement near Durban. Tolstoy farm was the second one. There he lived with people from all over the world, literally, and they experimented in communal living. It was the first time they did experience. They paid a lot attention on manual labour. They did everything themselves, basically, grew food themselves and did all the construction of the buildings. It was a great learning process. People in South Africa always say, Gandhi came to South Africa as an unpolished diamond, and he left the country as a polished diamond, or he came as Mohandas, and he left as a Mahatma. And that's true. It was a great period, more than 20 years he spent in South Africa, where he learned a lot about how a society should live together and how spirituality can form part of their day-to-day life.

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Of course, I never met Kallenbach, but I had the great chance to meet Dr. Isa Sarid in Haifa. She lived in Israel. I met her in the mid 1980's. She was Kallenbach's pet niece. Kallenbach never married. His niece was very close to him. She visited him in South Africa a number of times. After Kallenbach died, she also inherited the Kallenbach archives. Kallenbach had collected lots of material, letters, documents, photographs on Gandhi's period in South Africa. She inherited that material. She showed it to me. It was a great moment to see all these original documents. She inspired me to do an exhibition on Gandhi in Israel, which happened in 1987. In fact, right before the first Intifada started, the first uprising of the Palestinians in Israel. It was the first exhibition on a non-artistic subject in which Palestinians, Israelis, and the Indian community cooperated in Israel. The exhibition was shown in an ecumenical centre near Jerusalem. The inauguration was attended by about 400 people. As I did several exhibitions before, I thought it's one of those exhibitions. Exhibition is a cultural event, mainly, normally.

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But having done this in Israel at that period, it wasn't just a cultural event. It was highly political. But I realized that only... Actually, I realized it only about the day before the inauguration took place, when the director of this ecumenical centre asked me whether I have taken care of the security of the audience, which is to come next day, and I had informed the army to protect the event. Why? So, on short notice, some arrangements were done. During the inauguration, I could see why he said that, because it was such a

tense period in Israel, and many people were not happy with the politics of the Israeli government, including Israelis, those Israelis in the peace movement. It was just apt to have an exhibition on Gandhi in this part of the world. At that time, one of the People who were organizing the Intifada, the uprising of the Palestinians, had started the Palestinian Centre for the Study of Nonviolence in East Jerusalem, Dr. Mubarak Awad. Initially, the Intifada was to be nonviolent. The uprising of the Palestinians was to be without violence. They had printed Badshah Khan's autobiography in big numbers and distributed amongst the Palestinians, hoping that they would learn what it means to do a resistance without violence against the Israeli politics.

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This nonviolent uprising lasted for three days. For three days, they were really they went out on the streets and they protested. Then when the Israeli soldiers came and shot at them, they took to stones and threw stones at them, and that was the end of the nonviolent movement. Then it became very violent after that. This was a preparatory meeting for the exhibition in Ramallah. It was the first meeting of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the occupied territories. The Fellowship of Reconciliation, were our partners in Israel. Were as the Palestinian Centre for the Study of Nonviolence were the Palestinian partners. I think you can sense from the face expressions how serious the whole project was. It was quite an experience for me. Now, coming back to South Africa, this is one of the most remarkable photographs, which I discovered only in South Africa. It's not from the Jhaveri collection, but when I went to South Africa in 1999, I visited several archives and came across this photograph. It shows Gandhi, when he crossed the border from Natal to Transvaal, opposing or supporting the miners who were striking in Transvaal.

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He had quite a few people following him. You can see from the picture, the officer tells him, If you proceed, if you cross the border, which was right there, if you cross the border, you will be arrested. That's what happened actually. A few minutes, a few seconds later, he and his group went across the border, then he got arrested. That was one of his first imprisonments actually after the event. I think it's a remarkable photograph. The photographer has sensed the moment just right. It's a great document of the beginning of Gandhi's Satyagraha. It was also in South Africa when the

movement was a bit later, about '13, '14. He took to the white dress. Why white dress? Because in Asia, I don't have to tell you, but in Asia, the white dress, it's a mourning dress. It's worn during mourning periods. When somebody dies, you can take the white dress. He took to the white dress in sympathy to the poor and oppressed people. Mainly the oppressed Indians in South Africa. That was his concern at that time. From that time onwards, he always wore the white dress. When I did the presentation in the United States, I told it's similar to Johnny Cash, the American country singer who took to black, and he was known as *Man in Black*, out of sympathy, his own sympathy for the poor.

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So, Gandhi took to white, and he never left it. He even developed his dress further. In 1924, as we can see here, he dropped the upper dress. So, he wore only a dhoti around his waist, all in sympathy with the poor in India. Of course, he promoted spinning. As we have seen in Prabhudasbhai's video, spinning became a very important tool in Gandhi's armory, so to say. In the next picture, we see him bicycling. Probably the only photograph which shows him bicycling. The story behind this picture is, that it took place in Ahmedabad in Gujarat. His ashram was in the outskirts of Ahmedabad, then outskirts, and now it's in the centre of Ahmedabad. He had his prayer meetings always sharp at 6:00 in the evening, and he was in the centre of Ahmedabad. In order to reach the prayer meeting in time, he borrowed a bicycle from a student to reach the prayer, to be in time in his ashram for the prayer meeting. Now we make a jump to 1931. This was Gandhi on his way to England to attend the Roundtable Conference. This is the daughter of Sardar Patel, Manibehn Patel.

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Sardar Patel was an eminent collaborator and friend of Gandhi in the movement. This is during the voyage on the deck, the sun deck of the ship. This picture shows Mirabehn. We come to her a bit later. She also played an eminent role in Gandhi's life and in the movement. She was of English origin. She had joined Gandhi in 1925. Now, this shows the sympathy Gandhi had in the English population. Although he fought the English, he fought the industrialization of the British and the exploitation of India by the British, the people understood him. The people understood that he fought for the rights of the poor, and they had lots of sympathy with Gandhi, which can be seen in this picture, which was taken during his visit of the mills, the spinning mills in Lancashire. Now, this is the

only stage picture of Gandhi, which he did on the request of Lord Irwin, the then-Viceroy, the British Viceroy of India. He took it in a famous studio in London, in Elliot & Fry. This is also a nice photo, I think it shows him with his friends in the Kingsley Hall.

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This is the main hall in Kingsley Hall, where he used to stay during his visit in England. Kingsley Hall was the centre of the Quakers and social workers. In the beginning, he was to stay in the heart of London, actually, in a posh hotel. But after one day, he said, "No, I wanted to stay with the poor people". So, he moved to the centre (Kingsley Hall) and stayed there throughout his stay in England in 1931. From England he went to France. Then he passed Switzerland, and from Italy he returned to India. Now, this shows him before his arrival in Switzerland. This is right after the arrival in Switzerland, Professor Edmont Privat was a close friend of Gandhi. They had a very good correspondence. He was an excellent translator of Gandhi's speeches during his stay in Europe. The person on the left, he is actually Gandhi's bodyguard. He got assigned the job to look after Gandhi when he came to England. He stayed with Gandhi throughout his stay in England, which was a couple of weeks. He got to know Gandhi better. He sort of fell in love with Gandhi. He liked him so much that he said, I'm going to volunteer to look after you, even after you leave London, even after you leave England.

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When he went to France, Switzerland, Italy, he travelled with him and he acted as his bodyguard. You can see what sympathy Gandhi had within the Western people at that time. Also, it's interesting when you read the newspapers, the German newspapers, for instance, how they reported about Gandhi. It was quite positive and with lots of sympathy. It was even more positive when Hitler came to power because Hitler fought the British, as Gandhi did. So, Hitler embraced Gandhi at that time because they had the same enemy. It's quite strange. So, this is during Gandhi's speech in Geneva. Dr. Edmond Privat is translating Gandhi's speech. Now we come to Mirabeau. This is during the evening walk in Switzerland. Mirabeau was a very interesting figure because she was a daughter of a British admiral, and she liked to organize concerts. She was a great fan of Beethoven, and she organized concerts in England for Beethoven's classical music. The French writer, Romain Rolland, he wrote a biography on Beethoven. Mirabeau went to see him, to meet him, to talk about Beethoven. At the end

of their meeting, Romain Rolland mentioned, "And by the way, I have just finished a new biography which is about an Indian person called Mahatma Gandhi."

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Then she asked, "Who was he?" So, Romain Rolland told her about him. Then she read the book, and she was so thrilled, so fascinated about Gandhi, that she said, "I must meet him. I want to meet Gandhi." She wrote to Gandhi, his then-secretary, Mahadev Desai. Desai replied, "You're most welcome to stay with us if you are prepared to stay under Indian conditions. If you are prepared to sit on the floor, to take your meal, sitting on the floor, to use your hands and sleep on the floor", and she practiced. For six months, she practiced all that. Then she was prepared and she went to India. Until her very late age, she never left India. She stayed in India until a couple of years after Gandhi died. She became a very close associate of Gandhi. She was so close to Gandhi that at some stage, he even sent her to other areas in India to do his work there. She was a very close associate to Gandhi and there's an interesting story.

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I should tell you this. In Germany, I met the then German Ambassador of East Germany to India. He went to India in 1936 by bicycle and on foot to meet Gandhi. He spent a lot of time, many years in Gandhi's vicinity. He had the privilege to have an interview with Gandhi, to talk with Gandhi every Sunday for one hour. That's what he did for many years, about three or four years. Later, he wrote a book about it. His name was Herbert Fischer, by the way. He told me a very interesting incident, which is quite characteristic. After the meeting with Gandhi, they had lunch together. It was lunchtime. At the Ashram, you sit in a row, you have your plate in front, and then somebody serves you. So, on one Sunday, it was Mirabehn's turn to serve the meal. Mirabehn was so focused on Gandhi, because she wanted to serve him so properly, that she turned her back into the face of Herbert Fischer. This shows how devoted, focused people were on Gandhi, especially Mirabehn. At her old age she lived in Austria, next to Beethoven's grave, actually, near Vienna. And she became a very wonderful old lady and died in the late '80s then.

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These are photographs by an Austrian photographer, Barbara Pflaum. This is with her secretary, Brahmachari Dutt, who joined her to Austria. Later on, I had an opportunity to meet him and he said, "Mirabehn was a wonderful person. Austria was a fantastic country. Only one thing, I couldn't stand the cold. It was just too cold." As I said, she lived near Beethoven's grave in Vienna. She was a close friend to Sunderlal Bahuguna, the founder and ambassador of the Chipko movement, the hugging tree movement. He visited us in Germany also. We had a couple of programmes with Sunderlal Bahuguna. He also had a good knowledge and understanding of Gandhi and the whole atmosphere. We had a good opportunity to get first-hand information about the independence movement and also the post-independence movement, that is the Chipko movement, the hugging tree movement, which was quite imminent at some time. Now it's being slowed down. Bahuguna is still alive. He's in his 90s. He's not forgotten. It was a walk we did in the Himalayas, Himalaya region. For a couple of days, we walked from village to village without food, without money, in order to promote protection of trees and leading an eco-friendly life, so to say.

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It was an interesting experience to travel without food and without money, because in each village, we arrived, we had to knock the doors of the houses and say, "Do roti do" (some food, please). We got food in plenty and people there were so friendly. So, if you're working for a good cause, it's normally appreciated. In 1985, I took part in a TV production of Austrian TV. They brought the ashes of Mirabehn from Austria to India to hand it over to the Ganga, the river Ganges. And that was done by Swami Chitanand Saraswati, who was the guru of Sunderlal Bahuguna, actually. Mirabehn considered Sunderlal Bahuguna as her guru, and he was the guru of Bahuguna. It was an interesting, nice function. The ashes were delivered to the Ganga. So, in the end, Mirabehn has been taken back to India, to her favourite country. Now, this, again, is a very special picture. Many of you may know this photograph. We have seen that in the museums in Delhi.

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Most captions say, "The leader being led", giving the impression that this is one long stick, and the boy is pulling that and leading. When I saw this picture in the museum - by the way, at that time, the picture had not the same quality as this. It was very blur -

you could get the impression that it's one long stick. But I felt something is wrong with it. When I always kept it in my mind, I wanted to find out the truth about this picture and this situation. Many years later, I always kept it in my in my mind. I could not do any proper research, but just by chance, I came to know this small boy in the picture. It was another grandson of Gandhi, Kaana Gandhi. I met him in the late '80s. Now, they know the story was printed in the newspapers about this photograph. This is Kaana Gandhi in an advanced age. So, when I met him in the house of Prabhudasbhai Gandhi in Rajkot, the first thing when I met Kaana Gandhi was, 'now, please tell me the truth about this photograph. What happened?' And he said, "Peter, you know, when I was a boy, I was very slow.

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I used to accompany Gandhi on his evening walks on the beach. That was in Bombay at that time. I fell back. Gandhi was walking very fast, and I was very slow, so I fell again back, then he said, 'Come on, walk in front, walk in front'." So, he walked in front, and again, he fell back. Then, Gandhi took his lathi and poked him in the back and said, "Walk faster". The small boy, he had a stick of his own. He had a small stick of his own, and it had just the same angle as Gandhi's stick. And this gives the impression that it was one stick. But in fact, these were two sticks, and Gandhi is poking him in the back. Now we come to the pictures of another famous photographer of Gandhi, that is his nephew, Kanu Gandhi. Kanu Gandhi belonged to the very inner circle of Gandhi's group in the Sevagram Ashram in the heart of India from the mid-1930s onwards. Here we see him together with his later wife, Abhabehn, in whose arms Gandhi died.

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They were very young when they joined Gandhi in the Sevagram Ashram. At that time they were not married. And Kanu Gandhi was given a camera by Jawaharlal Nehru, and he started taking photographs. His most favourite subject was Gandhi. He took Gandhi's photograph. Gandhi didn't like to be photographed. He absolutely disliked it. But being very close to Kanu Gandhi, he allowed him to take his photograph at any time in any situation on three conditions: Gandhi would never pose for a photograph, no flash was to be used, and Gandhi would not fund the hobby of Kanu Gandhi. So, he (Kanu Gandhi) was forced from the very beginning to sell his photographs to magazines and newspapers to have some income to buy new film roles and carry on his hobby. When

you go to the Sevagram Ashram, you can still see the... What's it called? The Lab. No, we can call it the Lab, but where the films were developed, darkroom, which was used by Kanu Gandhi to develop his films. It's still right behind Kasturba's hut, Kasturba Gandhi's hut. Right behind there is a concrete building which was used by Kanu Gandhi to develop his films.

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He took very personal photographs of Gandhi. I met Kanu Gandhi in his wife, Abhabehn, in the mid-1980s, '85, I think. It was in Rajkot at their home, and he showed me his photographs. 1,300 photographs of Gandhi he took, and he was very proud of them because they were really unique. Interestingly, those photographs, at that time in India, during Gandhi's lifetime, and even after that, most people were interested in the official photographs, showing Gandhi with Nehru, showing Gandhi with Jinnah, but not so much the personal photographs, showing him eating or handling animals or so. But for us in the West, these photographs are much more interesting and important than those official photographs because they show the personality of the person, they show a bit of the atmosphere he lived in. After the first meeting with Kanu Gandhi, we separated. We said, next year, when I come to India again, we must meet again, and then he will tell me more, show me more. Okay. When I came the next year, his wife told me, that "he just passed away a few day ago and we are just in the mourning period.", and I attended those sessions.

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Then a few days after that, she showed me to the photo lab, which she herself was not allowed to enter during Kanu Gandhi's lifetime because he was so possessive about his photographs and actually, nobody was really interested in it. He handled everything himself. When we entered this photo lab, it was also the first time for Abhabehn, and she didn't know what to expect. We went together. It was a small room, flooded with photographs, thousands of photographs on the floor, on the shelves, in the cupboards, and most of them were Gandhi. I asked her, "What are you going to do with all these photographs?" She said, "Peter, you know, Kanu Gandhi has not left much for me in monetary terms. So, I have to rent out this room. I'm going to clear the room. I'm going to throw away all these things because I have albums of Gandhi's photographs myself, so I don't need these prints and rent out the room as quick as possible, as soon as

possible.” I said, “Okay, you can do that, but don't throw the pictures away.” And by that time, I had started doing public work in Germany on Gandhi, and we organized exhibitions.

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As I mentioned before, in the beginning, we had very poor quality photographs available. We didn't get good photographs on Gandhi. So, we arranged a lump sum and we shipped thousands and thousands, I think, maybe 5,000 photographs to Germany, which then got cleaned and I was able to use for my exhibitions, which was a fantastic resource, actually. In the photo lab, there was also a trunk, a wooden trunk with discarded negatives. Negatives which were thrown away by Kanu Gandhi because he believed that they were of no use. I searched the whole trunk, thousands and thousands of negatives, and there were 41 negatives of Gandhi. Most of the negatives were blurred like this one. He believed nobody would be interested in these photographs. But from the Western point of view, or to me at least, they have a kind of artistic touch. They have their own charm, especially, well, especially of Gandhi, I should say. I prepared a special exhibition only of the Blur photographs, which were shown in the Indian Embassy in Berlin 10 years ago.

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It was quite interesting, quite successful because people had I've never seen such photographs of Mahatma Gandhi. Some photographs you can hardly make out that it's him, but to me, like this photograph, for instance, has a special charm, I think. Kanu Gandhi was his major personal photographer. He is known for that. His photographs are the ones which are mostly used in publications in these days. Now, going back to Gandhi's life story, that was during his visit in the Northwest Frontier provinces, which is now the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan. When he visited it in 1938, he visited Badshah Khan, who at that time had started a nonviolent army of 100,000 people, 100,000 soldiers, which is a remarkable thing. Badshah Khan, he was a close follower of Gandhi. He was actually just one to one. There was hardly any difference between Badshah Khan as far as his thoughts are concerned. And this is a photograph showing him during this visit together with his associate and medical doctor, Dr. Sushila Nayar. She was very, very young at that time. She joined Gandhi right after her

university studies. I had a good chance to meet Dr. Sushila Nayar, who, by the way, was the first Health Minister in India after Independence.

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Then she became Director of the Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Sevagram, Wardha. Being a medical doctor, she was also very close to Gandhi. She knew his physical weaknesses and mental weaknesses. She told, for instance, that Gandhi liked to fast. He fasted many, many times, right? For various purposes, various reasons. But she said, he was physically not prepared to fast because during the fast, you have to drink a lot of water. And Gandhi, he was not able to drink a lot at a time. He was not able to swallow the quantities of water. And so, he had kidney problems. And she was always afraid during every fast of Gandhi that his kidneys would fail, and it was very critical. So, she always scolded Gandhi, "You should stop your fast. You're not prepared for it." But he didn't listen, of course. This is during the visit in the Northwest Frontier Provinces together with Badshah Khan, who's a chap of his own, so to say. He was really a fantastic person and an example. It's such a pity that he ended so unrecognized in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan. But his biography written

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by Eknath Easwaran is out, which is very famous. Now, this is Gandhi's secretary, Mahadev Desai, who also was very close to him and he stayed with him until he died during the detention in the Aga Khan Palace in 1942. Probably the only picture of Gandhi's sister, Raliatbehn, also known as Gokibehn. This is during the Rajkot fast in 1939, where she is giving massage to her brother. Now, this is probably the only picture showing Gandhi sitting on a real silver chair. This is during the visit of the Highness of Rajkot. He was invited by him and they were all sitting on real silver chairs. Interestingly, Gandhi had that capacity to sit on silver chairs as well as on the floor, right here in this picture. Another nice picture where Gandhi shows him carrying the son of an ashramite, Shardabehn of Sevagram Ashram.

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Here he is attending to a leprosy patient who went to Gandhi to actually to say goodbye. He was about to die. He had leprosy in an advanced stage. He went to Sevagram

Ashram to say goodbye to Gandhi. He was a former prison companion of Gandhi 20 years before. So, a Sanskrit scholar named Parchure Shastri. But Gandhi said, "No, you're not going to die. I will look after you." So first, he took the permission of the other ashramites that he can take the leprosy patient to the ashram. And very hesitatingly, the other ashramites agreed to it, because at that time, leprosy was a curse. Everybody believed that if you touch a leprosy person, you will catch it. So, Gandhi was bold enough to convince his people to treat the leprosy patient. He gave him massage every day, personally. He (Shastri) survived for many years, actually. He (Gandhi) not only helped the leprosy patient directly, but he changed the minds of people, of his own people, to understand that this was the matter. Now, he and his wife, Kasturba, at Sevagram Ashram. This is during the... I'm sorry, before the Quit India movement, in 1942, at Birla House in Bombay.

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Spinning the wheel. All of you know the significance of the wheel. Spinning became his major tool. But it was also good for meditation and for introspect. It was after his release from Aga Khan Palace at the Juhu Beach, together with his host, Sumati Morarjee, a famous woman in India. A very nice photograph during the evening walk on the beach, Juhu Beach, with his companions, close companions. As his wife died in Aga Khan Palace, it was a very grief period in his life. He was very sad. You can see the sadness in Gandhi as well as his son Devadas in this photograph. Now, probably some of you have seen this picture before. In the Indian Museum, it's also in most of the exhibitions this photograph is to show Gandhi's empathy for kids. Of course, I saw this picture at a very early stage, probably on my first visit to India. I quite liked it. I also remembered the caption. It says, Gandhi presenting a birthday present, a banana, to the niece of Pyarelal. This is Pyarelal, his other secretary. She is his niece, Nandini, and Gandhi presented a banana on her birthday.

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So, I kept this in mind. From 1998 to '99, I lived in India at Bombay. During that period, I wanted to visit Dubai. I went to the UAE embassy in Delhi to apply for a visa. The lady behind the counter asked me, "Why are you applying in India? Why not in Germany? What are you doing in India?" So, I told her, "I'm visiting Gandhian places, I'm interested

in Gandhi”, and all that. Then she said, “Oh, that's interesting, because my uncle was Gandhi's secretary.” My uncle was Gandhi's secretary? Maybe she's the small girl in the picture. I asked her, “Are you Nandini by any chance?” She said, “What? What are you saying? How do you know?” She indeed was the small girl of the picture. She worked with the UAE Embassy in New Delhi. The world is small, isn't it? Here are a few more pictures, expressions of Gandhi. He's getting out of the car for a meeting with Mohamed Ali Jinnah. This is probably one of the few pictures of seeing Jinnah smiling because he was known as a very dry person who hardly smiled. Although, politically, they were worlds apart, but Gandhi had the capacity to make him - at least a little bit - smile.

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These are the colleagues of Gandhi. Here was Sardar Patel. This is Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the later governor of Tamil Nadu. Gandhi's youngest son married his daughter. So, four of Gandhi's siblings, their children are the children of the couple, the grand children of Rajaji and Gandhi. This photograph is showing his colleagues like Nehru, Badshah Khan, and Kripalani in the back, and Sardar Patel on the left. This probably is a picture perfect one of Gandhi. Just a shot of the right fraction of a second, the right angle, good smile. It's a famous picture used in many publications. Here he's leaving the third-class compartment in the train. He was known to travel always third-class, which was not always easy for his associates to accompany him in these conditions. Here he's visiting a prison in Calcutta, but here he is outside the prison.

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He's just visiting prisoners, not being a prisoner. Many times, he was also inside. Here he was on a tour, on a train journey in South India, collecting funds for Harijans, untouchables, or Dalits, as they are called today. Gandhi, also charged for his photographs. He was a good collector. He collected lots of funds for his activities, and he also charged money from the photographer. “If you want to take my photograph, you have to pay.” He was a Banian after all, wasn't he? He knew how to make money. By the way, when he died, he was one of the richest persons in India. The money that was collected for his activities and later on was administered by the Gandhi Memorial Trust, was a high amount, actually. People had lots of trust in Gandhi. He just reached out his hand during the train journeys and people put money and jewelry in his hands. He just took the hands in and gave it to his treasurer to document it and put out the hand again.

This is the former American President Hoover. We see a few photographs taken by the famous American photographer, Margaret Bourke-White. This is really the close circle of Gandhi's associates, his doctor, Sushila Nayar, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, princess from the North.

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That's Devadas Gandhi, Pyarelal, Sushila Pai, Sushila, his granddaughter, Abhabehn, Kanu Gandhi and the Delhi Gandhi, who was known as the Delhi Gandhi. These pictures were used for an Apple Macintosh advertising campaign 20 years ago. These are Margaret Bourke-Whites photographs. Now we come to another interesting picture. Does this picture remind you of anything? The Indian? I was asking the Indians, especially. This photograph was used for the Rupee note. This picture appeared on the Rupee note from the very beginning after independence. This photograph was used for that, but not in the same way. The face was twisted in the other direction. It was only recently when the denomination of the Rupee took place, two years ago, when the new Rupee notes came out, the government realized that, get that in the right direction. You can see it on the next page. This is the old Rupee note, right? Where he looks in this direction. And now this is the new one where he looks in the wrong direction. I don't know how many people have realized that. It's quite interesting. Now, this is also an interesting picture. You get the impression when you see this picture that this is a beggar who wants something from Gandhi, right?

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That was my first impression of that picture. But actually what happened was that it was during a visit in the north, and the beggar, he fasted for one day, and all the money he collected on that day, he donated to Gandhi. So, this picture shows, he begs Gandhi to accept the donation. It's quite a different connotation, isn't it? This is Gandhi with a son of Abdul Bari who got killed the day before, consoling him. This is a picture by another very professional photographer, Jagan Mehta from Ahmedabad. I had the good chance to meet him in the late '90s, when he was almost 90. He had been in India just for two weeks, but he took fantastic photographs during that time, and he had lots of stories to tell, especially about this one photograph where Gandhi is consoling the son of the professor. This is a rare picture showing Gandhi in an operation theatre. His granddaughter, Manu, got operated on appendicitis. He remembered his own operation

on appendicitis in the early '20s, where he almost died. We understood how dangerous it is.

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So he insisted to attend the operation of his granddaughter. He was accepted in the operation theatre, which is quite a rare thing, actually. A hardly known photograph. Has anybody seen this before? No. This is a rather known photograph. Gandhi with his granddaughter and grandniece in Delhi. During his last stay in Delhi, right after his last fast in January '48. The prayer meeting before he got assassinated in New Delhi. Then on 30th January, 1948, he got killed. Well, we're showing only this photograph of the office after Gandhi got killed, but there's a series of very interesting photographs, actually. But if you want to see more photographs of Gandhi, colourized photographs, by the way, I got all the more than 5,000 photographs of Gandhi colourized about seven, eight years ago. We published a book with 1,280 colourized photographs of Gandhi. You can take a look at the book here. It's almost too heavy to carry. I'm going to put one on. 6.5 kilos. Which is a about Gandhi's life and otherwise photographs.

[01:22:23.630]

This is the three question. Can we see this challenge? Anybody? No question? Oh, yes. There's a question. You're doing well. Thank you so much, Mr. Peter, for your presentation. My question is that you have spent a lot of time in your life to do this. Do you get funding or just by yourself? Do you get any funding from the organisation? Or funding? Yes, or by yourself. That's a good one. When I prepared the first exhibition in 1983 on Gandhi, I had a good chance to meet a very famous peace researcher who was guest professor in Berlin at that time. His name is Johan Galtung. We met a couple of times. He was a great admirer of Gandhi, and he had a very good knowledge and understanding about Gandhi. He told me... He appeared in many small functions in Berlin, small circles of 15, 20 people, students, who invited him. We always went without charging anything.

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Before we had our first exhibition, I asked him, "How should we conduct this? We have expenses. We have to recover these expenses. How do we do it? Do we charge

entrance fee? Or how do we do it? How do you do it?" He said, "Well, you see, I'm invited by companies, by top people, by top institutions, and they have to pay. If they want me to speak, they have to pay for it. This gives me the freedom to go to small circles and deliver my service for free." So accordingly, we do it with our work. When we have a chance to sell photographs, we are licencing photographs for publications and other use. So, if they are licenced by companies, by banks or bigger institutions, we charge for it. But then there are numerous requests by small institutions saying, "Oh, we want to prepare a small brochure on Gandhi, but we have no funds. Can we still get your photograph?" I say, "Yes, why not?" Because I know that some other opportunity, I have a chance to charge for it, and that's it. I made it a point from the very beginning to be independent not to depend on donations.

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Because this is not in the spirit of Gandhi. Gandhi would have refused this completely. In fact, he called those people who depend on donations, beggars. People should stand up and create their own source of income. If you know the Gandhi's educational concept, the Nai Talim, the new education, which is also known as *Wardha Scheme of 1937*. One of the foremost points of this scheme was: the institution must be financially independent. They must have a source of income. They must create a source of income so that they do not depend on donations. So same way, I'm conducting my own activities. I always have one or the other source of income which enables me to do these activities. And so many times, I don't charge for it. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you, Peter, for your excellent presentation, especially in showing the pictures of Gandhi. Being a student of history, I just wanted to know whether you could collect photographs of Gandhi with his eldest son, Harilal Gandhi. If you can give us some light on their relations, though they were father and son. ...

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... Just to give a brief answer, there's no photograph of Gandhi together with his eldest son. Okay. Actually, it's a wonderful presentation. And I have gone to many of the museums all over, didn't see this much of collection. But one thing surprised me, the person who called Gandhi a Mahatma, and from where it came. This picture is not here. ... This is surprising to me. ... That's a bit different because the first time Gandhi was called Mahatma was in South Africa still. It was not even Tagore, which is commonly

believed that he called Mahatma, Gandhi Mahatma. But in one of the farewell meetings in South Africa, 2014, he was already called Mahatma. So that was the first time this was recorded. It's in the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Most of the collections we have read, they referred to Tagore.

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That's right. But Tagore, he met in 1915, and he made it public, actually. He publicized it as Mahatma. But if you go back to history. You can see the records of the farewell meeting in South Africa that he was already called Mahatma. Why there's no picture of it here?. We can't call it an exhibition. You know, this is just a decoration. Just a few pictures. And this is also just a very rough selection. You have so many thousands. But there are many. There are many... Yes, please. Then, Brother Langevin. Thank you very much, Peter. Your extraordinary presentation. I studied in USA, Trinity College. So, studies all were candid. So, the subject is the peace of restorations and the reconciliation. So, in my opinion, I accepted Gandhi not only profession, but also their religious leader or spiritual leader. Among my professors, they are doing, I knew about, he is a real profession or spiritual or religious. So, your opinion of Gandhi? Is it a profession or religious, religious leader or a special leader? How do a special leader organise speakers for his successful achievements of the politics?

[01:30:32.620]

Thank you. Good question. You have an answer already. Thank you. Thank you for your very good presentation. My question is that: Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, they are part of a struggle against the British imperialism. But most of the time, on the ... But why Gandhi did not accept his advice? Also, Muhammad Ali Jinnah now wanted to separate the country just by the name of Islamic country, established already. That was the reason of the Muslim, to have separate countries. But there is also a mind under your Muslim, inside the India, what was the real reason why Gandhi did not accept the advice of Fajana? You understand, maybe? Well, I mean, this is a very special, very... I mean, we would have to really go deep into history, which probably is boring for most of the people. I don't think we have the time to really discuss history to that extent in order to understand it. But just in general, and this also answers your question to some extent, the first question, Gandhi never saw himself as a spiritual leader and not a leader or teacher as such.

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He refused the title Mahatma. Never wanted to be a Mahatma. He said, "I don't want to have students. I'm my only student, and that's difficult enough." In his acting, in his writing, he never appeared as a leader. But he was a very religious person, and that was a moving force behind his activities. Because what his main aim was, what he wanted to see was Ramraj, Kingdom of God on Earth. That's what he wanted to see. That was his utopia which he strove for, which also guided him throughout. The Baghavad Gita was a guiding light throughout his life, from the very beginning. He was a deeply religious person, which is very often neglected. Even in Attenborough's film, it is not shown properly. But this people have to understand that that was a moving force behind his activities. So religious, yes, but leader, no. Now, I forgot the other question. But I think we can discuss it over the lunch table if you don't mind. Yeah? Right. Okay. Please, Peter accept our gratitude to you.