

## **Prof. Rajmohan Gandhi**

Rajmohan Gandhi is a Research Professor at the Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

A former member (1990-92) of the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of the Indian Parliament), Rajmohan Gandhi led the Indian delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva in 1990. In the Indian Parliament he was the convener of the all-party joint committee of both houses addressing the condition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Associated from 1956 with Initiatives of Change (formerly known as Moral Re-Armament), Rajmohan Gandhi has been engaged for half a century in efforts for trust-building, reconciliation and democracy and in battles against corruption and inequalities.

These efforts, made in India and across the world, have involved writing, speaking, public interventions, and organizing dialogues.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, he played a leading role in establishing Asia Plateau, the 67-acre conference centre of Initiatives of Change in the mountains of western India. Asia Plateau has been recognized in the Indian subcontinent for its ecological contribution.

During the 1975-77 Emergency in India, he was active for democratic rights personally and through his weekly journal *Himmat*, published in Bombay from 1964 to 1981. He has worked consistently for India-Pakistan and Hindu-Muslim reconciliation. Since 9/11, he has also tried to address the divide between the West and the world of Islam. A Muslim-non Muslim dialogue at Caux, Switzerland, in 2002 was one such initiative.

He was unanimously elected President of Initiatives of Change International for a two-year term, 2009-2010.

At the University of Illinois he has taught political science and history courses from 1997. His latest book, *A Tale of Two Revolts: India 1857 & the American Civil War* (New Delhi: Penguin India, December 2009), studies two 19th-century wars occurring in opposite parts of the world at almost the same time.

His previous book, a biography of his grandfather Mahatma Gandhi, *Mohandas: A True Story of a Man, His People and an Empire*, received the prestigious Biennial

Award from the Indian History Congress in 2007. It has since been published in several countries. In 2002 he received the Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters) Award for his *Rajaji: A Life*, a biography of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (1878-1972), his maternal grandfather and a leading figure in India's freedom movement who became Governor General, 1948-50.

Other books include *Ghaffar Khan: Nonviolent Badshah of the Pakhtuns* (Penguin 2004); *Revenge & Reconciliation: Understanding South Asian History* (Penguin, 1999); *Patel: A Life*, a biography of Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950), Deputy Prime Minister of India, 1947-50 (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1990); and *Eight Lives: A Study of the Hindu-Muslim Encounter* (SUNY, 1987).

One of his earlier books, *The Good Boatman: A Portrait of Gandhi*, was published in 2009 in a Chinese translation in Beijing.

Before teaching at the University of Illinois, he served as a Research Professor with the New Delhi think-tank, Centre for Policy Research. From 1985 to 1987 he edited the daily *Indian Express* in Madras (now Chennai), India.

In 2004 he received the International Humanitarian Award (Human Rights) from the City of Champaign, and in 1997 he was awarded an honorary doctorate of law from the University of Calgary (Canada) and an honorary doctorate of philosophy from Obirin University, Tokyo.

He currently also serves as a Jury Member, Nuremberg International Human Rights Award, and Co-chair, Centre for Dialogue & Reconciliation, Gurgaon, India.

Rajmohan was born in 1935 in New Delhi, India. He is married to Usha. They have two children, Supriya and Devadatta.