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THE QUIET FORCE BEHIND THE FALL AND RISE OF EMPIRES AND NATIONS

"Changing the world together begins with changing oneself"

What links Dgania (the first Kibbutz), Lev Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King Jr.?

The following story takes place in the early 20th century in South Africa, the place and time of Gandhi's transformative years. It also involves a man called Hermann Kallenbach, which few know about his part in shaping Gandhi's worldview.

But the story behind this story is why I share it with you. Thanks to ample information about those events, we get a glimpse into the mechanism that causes old empires to fall. Simple, nonviolent methods and principles make it possible to speed up the inevitable, shorten suffering, and create a positive change in the life of a nation or, if you wish, in the life of any organization.

The heroes of our story are ordinary people, i.e., a lawyer and an architect. If they helped change the world, why can't you?

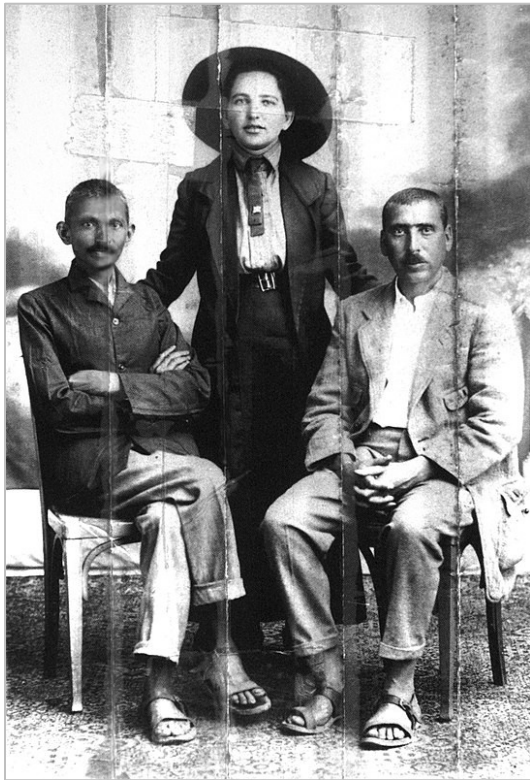
Background: People and Terms

The Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) dramatically increased global production capacity, and with it came the rise of the limited liability company (circa 1850), which introduced a new generation of organizational structure and business models. This period, which I call the "Ltd-era," facilitated more efficient and profitable trade, primarily benefiting the elite—those with capital and connections, such as young Gandhi. However, the Ltd-era also exacerbated inequality and worker exploitation.

The term "company" is derived from the Latin words 'com,' meaning 'together,' and 'panis', meaning 'bread.' It describes how merchants gathered, prepared, and ate bread while doing business. Hence, companies are communities, and the Ltd-era represents the age of coming together and forming business communities.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) was born in India into a relatively privileged environment. At 22, he graduated from law school in London. After two years of unsuccessful practice in India, in 1893, Gandhi moved to South Africa, where he would spend the next 21 years. In South Africa, Gandhi confronted stark inequalities, apartheid, and social injustice. Rather than looking the other way, these experiences sparked his profound transformation, leading him to emerge as a global leader advocating nonviolent resistance to promote equality, civil rights, and social justice.

Hermann Kallenbach (1871-1945) was a Lithuanian-born (then part of Russia) Jewish South African architect. In 1904, Gandhi was introduced to him, and soon, they became good friends and, in Gandhi's words, "soulmates". They lived together for some time in the Satyagraha House, designed by Kallenbach. Gandhi frequently mentioned Kallenbach in his autobiography as instrumental in shaping his ideology.



Mahatma Gandhi's (left) five best Western friends in South Africa were Jewish, including his secretary, Ms. Sonja Schlesin (center), who acted more as a manager, and his soulmate, Kallenbach (1913).

Satyagraha (Sanskrit for "holding firmly to truth") is a philosophy and practice of nonviolent resistance developed by Gandhi, beginning in South Africa. This principle became the foundation of his efforts for Indian independence and later influenced global leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela.

Leo Tolstoy was a Russian writer and philosopher whose work, notably *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, greatly influenced Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence. Although Gandhi did not share Tolstoy's disdain for organized government, Tolstoy's ideas about renouncing force resonated deeply with him. Gandhi and Tolstoy corresponded, with Gandhi seeking Tolstoy's moral guidance on the struggle of the Transvaal Indians.

Tolstoy Farm - In 1910, Kallenbach provided Gandhi and a group of followers with a place to live on his 1,100-acre farm near Johannesburg. The community, named after Tolstoy, was run without servants, with all residents participating in daily tasks. This ashram became the headquarters for the satyagraha campaign against discrimination in South Africa.

Gandhi reflected on Tolstoy Farm's significance: "*I have serious doubts as to whether the struggle could have been prosecuted for eight years, whether we could have secured larger funds, and whether the thousands of men who participated in the last phase of the struggle would have borne their share of it if there had been no Tolstoy Farm.*"



Some members of Tolstoy Farm in 1910. Gandhi is in the middle, second row, fifth from the right.

Togetherhness

The story of Tolstoy Farm underscores the profound impact of "togetherness." Often, I mention the advantage for those lacking means or resources, like smallholders, to collaborate and work together, as the Kibbutz pioneer did. The Tolstoy Farm shows that **even those with means**, like Gandhi and Kallenbach, **can achieve far more by working together**. Gandhi's journey was marked by an increasing commitment to "togetherness." As he embraced the virtues of modesty, self-reliance, nonviolence, and togetherness, he drew closer to his goals of equality and freedom. These virtues and values became the foundation of his efforts to unite people in pursuing social justice and independence in South Africa and later in India.

It may seem coincidental that the first Kibbutz, Dgania, was founded in 1910—the same year that Tolstoy Farm was established. Yet, the parallels between these two communities are striking. Both were founded on the principles of race and gender equality, shared labor and responsibilities, and both sought to create a more just and equitable society. To further establish the link, Kallenbach's ashes were buried in the cemetery of Dgania, next to A.D. Gordon, the leading philosopher of the Kibbutz movement.

These historical connections suggest that no one operates in isolation; we are always influenced by and influence others. Would history have unfolded the same way if Gandhi had not studied law in England, had not been thrown off that train in South Africa, had not met Kallenbach, or had not been inspired by Tolstoy?

By reorganizing their societies, the pioneers of Kibbutz Dgania, Gandhi, Mandela, King, and Tolstoy (through his books) transformed communities and the broader social, economic, and political landscapes worldwide. They did so without needing advanced technology or

outstanding wealth; instead, they relied on principles such as equality, togetherness, and shared vision.

Gandhi and his generation were born into a world dominated by racist colonialism and an economic system that supported its business models. Gandhi arrived in South Africa as a free man to work for a company corresponding to the Ltd-era structure and business models. This clashed with the colonialist and racist framework, which had been built on rigid hierarchical structures and business models that, by the early 20th century, were already outdated. This context explains why Gandhi was ejected from a first-class train carriage despite holding a valid ticket—a stark illustration of the racial discrimination and systemic inequality embedded in colonial society.

This incident highlighted the outdated and unjust "masters and servants" structure, which allowed only the ruling class to maximize their potential while oppressing the majority. In the early 20th century, the colonial organizational framework had become outdated and increasingly incompatible with the innovative Ltd-era business models and structures that championed equality and togetherness, gradually replacing the old social and economic order. This misalignment between the colonialism-era and the Ltd-era significantly constrained economic potential, as the systemic inequality inherent in colonialism suppressed entrepreneurship, innovation, and productivity.

Consequently, embracing equality and togetherness within modern Ltd-era business models and organizational structures was both a moral imperative and a strategic approach to unlocking economic prosperity. In addition to the economic benefits of equality, the stories of Tolstoy Farm, Gandhi, and the Kibbutz underscore the hidden power of working together. Collaboration, cooperation, and integration, guided by shared values, a unified vision, and a common purpose, pave the way to greater prosperity and provide a path out of poverty.

Two guiding principles emerge from these stories: equality and togetherness. When appropriately applied, these principles can transform the world, ending centuries of oppression, as happened in India, and lifting farmers from poverty to prosperity, as exemplified by the success of the Kibbutz model.

In light of this, let us remember that traditional villages are rooted in the Agricultural Revolution, where farmers were unequal to the village head and often lacked the "togetherness" elements, such as cooperation, collaboration, and integration. This resulted from the lack of shared mission and core values that are key to a prosperous Ltd-era organization, including the Kibbutz model.

*"I have a dream that one day, this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created **equal**.*

*I have a dream that one day out in the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down **together** at the table of brotherhood." Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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If you enjoyed this column, please share it with a friend who will enjoy it too.

[Dream Valley Fruit Export Program 2025](#) is now officially open for new exporters from developing economies who wish to export to Europe. Text me.

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TAKEAWAY MESSAGES

- **Equality** is moral and essential for maximizing economic potential.
- **Togetherness** amplifies social and economic.
- **Dare to reorganize** societies to unlock economic opportunities.

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More on the October 7th genocide in South Israel:

[Humanity is one organism](#)

[Videos - The October 7 genocide](#)

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Here are ways you can work with me to help your rural communities step forward to shift from poverty into ongoing prosperity:

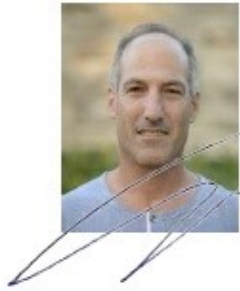
- * **Nova Kibbutz and consultancy** on rural communities' models.
- * **Local & National programs related to agro-produce export models** - [Dream Valley](#) global vertical value and supply chain business model and concept connects (a) input suppliers with farmers in developing economies and (b) those farmers with consumers in premium markets.
- * **Crop protection:** [Biofeed](#), an eco-friendly zero-spray control technology and protocol.

If you got to here, read this column, and enjoyed it, please be nice to your friends, share it with them, or help them [Subscribe](#).

"Mental and Economic Freedom Are Interconnected."

See you soon,

Nimrod



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P.S.

If you missed it, here is a link to last week's blog, "[The Hidden Engine of The Kibbutz Success](#)."

P.P.S.

OPEN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES:

- 1) Exporting fresh fruits from Africa to the EU under the Dream Valley regenerative protocol brand for the 2024 season.
- 2) Joining the Nova-Kibbutz concept project or establishing a similar initiative in your region.

Kindly provide your background and credentials to receive tailored next-step instructions.

P.P.P.S.

[Dream Valley](#) is a field-proven disruptive business model based on the successful Israeli Model.

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*This article addresses general phenomena. The mention of a country/continent is used for illustration purposes only.