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KCHR WEBINAR  
**WHO IS GANDHI'S  
NEIGHBOUR?**

This webinar is organised as a part of KCHR's ongoing series commemorating the 75th year of Indian independence.

**PROFESSOR AJAY SKARIA**

**28 MARCH 2022 | MONDAY | 7.30 PM (IST)**

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## ABSTRACT

As Gandhi comes to be increasingly influential in the movement for Indian independence, one word surges to prominence in his vocabulary—*swadeshi*. While the word was scarcely new, Gandhi gives it a distinctive twist—for him, it is the aspiration to what he calls a ‘non-violent nationalism.’ Thinking especially but not exclusively with Gandhi, this essay explores the stakes of “nonviolent nationalism” both in his times and ours. It suggests that what most characterises such a nationalism is a skeptical though not antagonistic relation with the nation-state, as with the sovereignty-centred liberty that the citizens of such a nation-state exercise—a liberty centred around rights and duties. Instead, nonviolent nationalism involves what could be called a political friendship, or, more specifically, a democratic neighbourliness: a conception of place centred around the equality of neighbours. The paper tracks how Gandhi conceptualises the figure of the neighbour and explores the relation of this neighbourliness with the nation-state.

## ABOUT THE SPEAKER



**Professor Ajay Skaria** studied Political Science and History at Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara, during which period he also worked as a journalist for *Indian Express*. He received his PhD in History from Trinity College, Cambridge, and currently teaches at the University of Minnesota. A member of the *Subaltern Studies* editorial collective from 1995 till its dissolution, he is one of the co-editors of *Subaltern Studies Vol. XII*, and the author of *Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers and Wildness in Western India* (1999) and *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi’s Religion of Resistance* (2016). He is currently working on two books, one on political friendship, and the other on political democracy.

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