



As the concluding event of the
150th Birth Centenary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi

Victoria Memorial Hall
presents an online illustrated lecture on

**Lost Letters and Feminist History:
Gandhi's Letters to Sarala Devi Chaudhurani**

Speaker

Geraldine Forbes

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Friday, 2 October 2020, 7.00 pm

Webinar link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86109915078?pwd=SXJhQlNPeE5ZVkFwd0xBbXF1SUI2QT09>

Meeting ID: 861 0991 5078

Passcode: 973410

This talk will focus on a series of previously unpublished letters written by Gandhi to Sarala Devi Chaudhurani in 1920. The few letters that were published, in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* and Mahadev Desai's *Day-to-Day with Gandhi*, have led some authors to conclude Gandhi and Sarala Devi had a romantic relationship. Contextualizing the unpublished letters, Forbes argues Gandhi imagined Sarala Devi's emergence as a national leader who, with him, would bring all of India into the national movement. However, it did not happen and Sarala Devi's decision to retire from public life in 1922 followed by her husband's death in 1923 essentially ended her political career but not her political writing or her advocacy and activism for women's rights. While feminist historians are well aware of Sarala Devi's place in Indian history, androcentric historians have painted her as an ambitious vamp who almost led Gandhi astray. Unfortunately, this has both sidelined a remarkable woman leader and foreclosed discussion of Gandhi's interest in gendered leadership.



Image courtesy: Dibyashish Roy