

## At the Roots of Degrowth: Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa's Economy of Permanence

by Chiara Corazza\*

J.C. Kumarappa, Indian Christian and Gandhian economist, was the inventor of the term "Gandhi's economy". He was the first theorist who organized Gandhian economic thinking in an alternative economic model to industrialism, achieving this in 1945, and was the first person to put it into practice. This economic system - called "economy of permanence" or "village economy" - was structured on the socioeconomic organization of the Indian village. Subsistence agriculture, mutual exchange of services, and self-sufficiency in providing primary needs with small industries and local handicrafts, would assure the peace and prosperity of everybody, or *sarvodaya*. It was introduced to rural India by the work of the All India Village Industries Association (AIVIA), coordinated by Kumarappa, which protected the small-scale village industries against the high-scale industrial products, and promoted subsistence agriculture. Small industries and subsistence agriculture would be the best solution to unemployment and exploitation of human and natural resources in the industrial economic system.

Industrialism, free trade, exploitation of natural resources and transformation of agriculture into agribusiness were criticized by Kumarappa. He described the Western economic model, based on high-scale production, consumerism and individualism, as being intrinsically transient. Conversely, in his model the concept of "permanence" was coined in relation to the long-lasting life of Nature as a whole. A permanent economic system pays attention to its impact on the entire living world, human and non human; it is inspired by the mother's love founded on spiritual and not material values; it employs human, animal and not mechanical labour; it presents a basis for true democracy by distributing the means of subsistence. Kumarappa was inspired by Tolstoy and Gandhi who heralded modern criticism of the present economic system. He made a great impression on Ernst Schumacher and Ivan Illich, a "canonical author" of degrowth thought.

In this paper I firstly describe the re-making of values in Kumarappa's view. Secondly I connect environmental sensibility to the concept of permanence, emphasising the attention Kumarappa paid to the preservation of natural resources, and the importance of organic agriculture. Then I demonstrate the realism of this economic model as inspiring such current associations as the Kumarappa Institute of Gram Swaraj and the Dr. J.C. Kumarappa Institute of Rural Technology and Development. Finally, I turn to the links between E. Schumacher and I. Illich, and refer to Kumarappa as I relate Gandhi and Tolstoy's thoughts to his, to demonstrate the economy of permanence as the root and source of degrowth thought.

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### A Gandhian Economist

Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa was born in Tanjavur in Tamil Nadu, to an Indian Christian family, on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1892. His mother contributed largely to Kumarappa's moral and spiritual education. Her teachings and actions impressed and inspired him throughout his life. He learned from her how to put into practice the precepts of the Gospels<sup>1</sup>.

Kumarappa was brought up to believe in the trusteeship of the British government. He had a Western basic education in an Anglo-Indian college in Madras and left for London in 1912. Here he attended a Chartered Accountancy course and worked as a chartered accountant in a bank. His official duties put him closely in touch with large-scale and centralized industries.

In 1919 he returned to India and worked in Bombay where he set up his own firm of auditors called "Cornelius & Davar".

In 1928 he moved to the United States where he did a B. Sc. in Business Administration at Syracuse University in New York and then a M. A. in Public Finance at Columbia University. His professors, Edwin Seligman and Herbert Davenport taught him to apply moral and social standards in the economic sphere. His thesis, *Public Finance and India's Poverty* deals with the exploitation of India by the British through their taxation policy.

In 1929 he returned to India. He was looking for a chance to publish his thesis, and someone suggested submitting his work to Gandhi, who would probably be interested. Kumarappa managed to make an appointment to meet Gandhi at *Sabarmathi Ashram* on May 9, 1929 at 2.30.

This historical meeting radically changed Kumarappa's life. Gandhi said that Kumarappa was the first student of economics he had met with the same point of view. He offered to publish Kumarappa's manuscript as a series in his journal, *Young India*. Then Gandhi asked him to undertake a survey in a rural area of Gujarat. Kumarappa, used to a city-centered life, got in touch with the poor reality of Indian villages for the first time.

In 1934 Kumarappa was assigned to direct the All India Village Industries Association for the development of rural economy of the country. The Association patronized only village-industry products conforming to "genuine *Swadeshi*". This association was founded on self-reliance and self-sufficiency, and developed within the political struggle for India's freedom. Kumarappa developed various experiments in rural technology and worked to reorganize village industries all over the country.

In 1945, during the Quit India Movement, he was imprisoned for two years in Jabalpur. While he was in jail, he wrote *Practice and Precepts of Jesus* and *Economy of Permanence*, in which he explained his constructive program as an effective alternative to Communism and Capitalism.

After India's Independence and Gandhi's death Kumarappa did not take part in official policies because his ideas diverged sharply from Nerhu's industrialization program. He attacked the way higher priority was given to industrial infrastructure than to the fulfillment of basic needs, pointing to the dire effects of such misdirection.

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<sup>1</sup> J.C. Kumarappa, *Practice and Precepts of Jesus*, Ahmedabhad, Navajivan, 1945.

He participated in pacifist meetings in Europe but criticized Western pacifist movement. He recognized that wars were caused by a wrong economic system. Changing that was the right way to stop conflicts.

He went to USSR, China and Japan to study their economic system and to compare it with his village-centered economic model. He came to the conclusion that the former systems are not completely non-violent; Nehruvian economic policy was far from non violence, too.

In 1952 he quitted from AIVIA campus to live in a mud hut in one of the poorest *dalit* villages in Gujarat. He started *Pannai* (agrarian) *Ashram* and lived there for three years. His health was deeply compromised during his imprisonment in Jabalpur and slowly deteriorated in these last years. He died on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1960<sup>2</sup>.

### New Values against Development

“Degrowth” is a political slogan against productivism; it is a recent term in the economic debate, but it has historical roots. Non-conventional projects of a self-sufficient society had been formulated in the past. Serge Latouche mentions past and present thinkers who demystified the belief that measurable productivity and growth are necessarily good. Tolstoy, Gandhi, Ernst Schumacher, Ivan Illich and Vandana Shiva criticized the industrialist civilization<sup>3</sup>. They had been criticized for being utopist and romantic. On the contrary they contributed to create a tradition of alternative thought to economicism.

In *The Slavery of Our Time* (1900) Tolstoy condemned modern civilization. He wrote that industrialist economy led humanity far from nature, towards destruction. He denounced the slavery of workers in modern factories. Bearing in mind Tolstoy’s writings, Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj* (1909). In this *pamphlet* he stated that India must be independent from the Western religion of productivism, industrialism and global trade.

Tolstoy’s and Gandhi’s thought was thoroughly interlinked to Kumarappa’s, as he was Gandhi’s economist and he was deeply inspired by Tolstoy’s writings. After reading Tolstoy’s *What I Believe* Kumarappa wrote his most important books, *Practice and Precepts of Jesus* and *Economy of Permanence*. Tolstoy believed in the sincere application of Gospel teachings, and Kumarappa wrote about the “service economy”, referring to the example of Jesus, who served his people and sacrificed himself on the cross<sup>4</sup>.

Kumarappa, taking his lead from Gandhi’s concept of *Swaraj*, focused his economic ideas in an effective model that he called “village economy”. Each village must locally provide all its own food requirements and raw materials for primary necessities. Cultivating food crops instead of money crops is the right way to avoid famines. “Our first care – he

<sup>2</sup> M. Vinaik, *J.C. Kumarappa and his Quest for World Peace*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1956; M. Lindley, *J.C. Kumarappa: Mahatma Gandhi’s economist*, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> S. Latouche, *La scommessa della decrescita*, tr. it. di M. Schianchi, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2010, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> C. Corazza, *La semplicità, il servizio, il villaggio. Riflessioni sull’economia spirituale di Tolstoj, Gandhi, Kumarappa*, in “*Fa’ quel che devi, accada quel che può*”. *Arte, pensiero, influenza di Lev Tolstoj*, a cura di I. Adinolfi, B. Bianchi, Napoli, Orothes, 2011.

wrote – must be food and clothing. To this end we must concentrate on Agriculture and Village Industries”<sup>5</sup>.

Subsistence agriculture should have priority. This is the aim of *Navdanja*, a program which safeguards biodiversity, coordinated by Vandana Shiva since 1987<sup>6</sup>. The gandhian ecofeminist criticized “maldevelopment”, meaning “wrong development because male”. As an alternative to patriarchal economicism and productivism, she supports informal culture, and awareness of nature and all living being rights. Shiva’s ecofeminist thought and Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa’s economy of permanence have in common the criticism of development as a starting point. In their thoughts, “feminine/motherly” values, such as cooperation, mutualism, care and service replace individualism, the most important value in the western and “masculine” economic system<sup>7</sup>.

“The standard of value applied – Kumarappa wrote – and the method of valuation used impress their characteristic trait on their users. The spirit of the most predominant value that prevails amongst a people will color a whole civilization for centuries. Hence the great importance of choosing our standard consciously and deliberately”<sup>8</sup>. Kumarappa criticized the influence of monetary standards in the present age. The prevailing school of economic thought is founded on notions as “profit”, “price”, “purchasing power” and “foreign trade”. But the economy of permanence focuses on spiritual values and the deeper, more essential aspects of life. An economy which is founded only on material standards of value is not realistic, but shortsighted.

Building a new society on new values is one of the first steps of degrowth. Serge Latouche suggests the so called “underdeveloped” nations should delink from the consumerist way of life. It is important to decolonize the imaginary. Gandhi wanted to reintroduce ancient practices, such as spinning and weaving, and to re-link Indian villages to their past culture (supporting vernacular language education and traditional work education) in the aim of creating self-reliance and self-confidence in the minds of the Indian agriculturists and inhabitants of rural villages. Kumarappa adopted this program and re-organized Gandhi’s ideas in his economic model founded on bread-labour (i.e. subsistence-labour), mutualism, and self-sufficiency. These values did exist in India before colonization. In fact when British colonized India, the country had sustainable agriculture, developing village industries and commercial towns which the colonizers methodically destroyed to take possession of raw materials for British industries.

Kumarappa put the value of service, instead of competition, first. No monetary, nor materialistic appeasement is expected in his “economy of service”, but spiritual. It is best represented by the mother feeding her children. She contributes without desire to benefit personally. This is the nearest economic system to non-violence.

<sup>5</sup> J.C. Kumarappa, *Economy of Permanence, A Quest for a Social Order Based on Non-Violence*, Wardha, Sarva-Seva-Sangh, 1958, p. 134.

<sup>6</sup> Navdanya, <http://www.navdanja.org/> (07/08/2012).

<sup>7</sup> C. Corazza, *Il principio femminile/materno. La critica allo sviluppo di J.C. Kumarappa e V. Shiva*, in Dep n°20 / 2012, [http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=18891](http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=18891).

<sup>8</sup> S.K George, G. Ramachandran, *The Economics of Peace. The Cause and The Man*, Sarva Seva Sangh, Kakavadi, Wardha, 1952, p. 74.

In the 70s Ernst Schumacher wrote about the “intermediate technology” and criticized the industrialist system because it did not pay attention to spiritual needs of human nature. Ivan Illich underlined the importance of safeguarding values such as friendship, equity, altruism and self-sufficiency in his book *Tools for Conviviality* (1973). He coined this term from the latin “*convivalem*” meaning “sharing something with others”. Illich’s ideas on sharing tools and natural resources and Schumacher’s thought are near to Kumarappa’s.

Kumarappa foresaw the danger of consumerism in advance and suggested critical approaches and alternatives. He emphasized the role of consumers in producing process. He was aware of the power of the boycott movement against British imperialism (*Swadeshi* movement). Exploitation takes place due to the ignorance of the consumers. Awareness of the consumer is an important step in Kumarappa’s thought.

Buying an article made in the condition of slavery means supporting an exploitative system. “Often buyers are only concerned with satisfying their own requirements as near as possible and as cheaply as they can. This way of going about the business is to shirk one’s duties [...] When buying an article of everyday use one has to take account of the full repercussions of one’s transaction”<sup>9</sup>. Similarly Illich wrote: “Dictatorship of proletariat or market dictatorship are two political variants that hide the same dominion of humanity by industrial machinery constantly expanding”<sup>10</sup>.

Kumarappa suggested some questions that a consumer must ponder over before purchasing any article: Where does the article come from? Who makes it? From what material is it made? Under what conditions do the workers live and work? Consumers must have a wide understanding: “When we buy an article we buy with it all the conditions of production that have gone into making it. If it is produced by slave labor, we become party to such slavery [...] If it is marketed by violence we are guilty of shedding human blood”<sup>11</sup>.

Education is an important means to make the population aware of her duties. Kumarappa was interested in the propagation of a work oriented education. He was firmly convinced that this was an important step towards India’s emancipation at a grass-roots level. In *Deschooling society* Illich underlined the programmed education responsibility in destroying spontaneous creativity and local culture. He wished for the recovery of human-nature creative relations and *genius loci*<sup>12</sup>.

Kumarappa was very interested in supporting Indian languages. He thought that the language was a vital mean of self-expression for people. Even if he used English and expressed himself with this global and universal language, he supported the teaching of Indian vernacular languages. He believed that localism and decentralization were the right

<sup>9</sup> J.C. Kumarappa., *Why the Village Movement? A Plea for a Village Centered Economic Order in India*, Sarva Seva Sangh, Rajghat, Kashi, 1960, p. 77.

<sup>10</sup> I. Illich, *La convivialità. Una proposta libertaria per una politica dei limiti allo sviluppo*, tr. it. di M. Cucchi, Boroli Editore, Milano, 2005, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> J.C. Kumarappa, *Christianity. Its Economy and Way of Life*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1945, pp. 29-30.

<sup>12</sup> I. Illich, *Descolarizzare la società*, tr. it., Mondadori, Milano, 1971.



path towards real democracy. This point of view corresponds to Latouche's, as he writes: "democratization would probably realize on a local extent"<sup>13</sup>.

### The Permanence of Nature

What is permanent? What is transient? Apart from God there is nothing that can be said to be permanent. [...] Nature (when it is not a term convertible with God) is limited by Time and Space. It came into existence once in the remote past and will cease to be sometime in the future. Human life rarely reaches even a hundred years while the unit to reckon the life of Nature will run into astronomical figures. Hence the life of man is said to be Transient in comparison with that of Nature which is Permanent. It is in this relative sense that we speak of "An Economy of Permanence".

These words introduce Kumarappa's *Economy of Permanence*. Kumarappa imagined an economic model in which human actions are respectful of nature.

The need to build an ecological society is underlined by Latouche. Degrowth thought sprouted from the initial acknowledgment that limited resources cannot support an unlimited economic growth.

Kumarappa wrote about renewable and non-renewable resources, which he defined "current" and "reservoir". Current resources are for example coal, minerals and petroleum. Reservoir resources include forests, air and water. A reservoir economy is short-sighted, while a current economy emphasizes self-control and respect of nature.

The official interest in the environmental issue is conventionally dated to the early 1970s with the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. In the 70s Illich wrote about environmental degradation: "Man was born and evolved inside a cosmic niche. Earth is our home; and man now is menacing it"<sup>14</sup>. He hoped that man would recover a balance with the natural world. This equilibrium is still menaced by industrialism and economic growth.

Kumarappa is mentioned in the intellectual genealogy of Indian environmentalism. His thought is revalued as providing important insights into the human-nature relations by Ramachandra Guha. Almost unaware of Kumarappa's work, present environmentalists are taking up where he left off<sup>15</sup>.

In *Economy of Permanence*, resource conservation is deemed essential. Kumarappa devoted all his life in studying the agrarian economy in the aim at rehabilitating it in accordance with social and ecological principles. He made a distinction between "pack-type" and "herd-type" societies, referring to the non human world. Predatory societies include the western civilizations, meanwhile agrarian cultures, such as China, India and Japan (before industrialization) are exemplars of herd-type societies.

<sup>13</sup> S. Latouche, *La scommessa della decrescita*, p. 176.

<sup>14</sup> I. Illich, *Convivialità*, p. 73.

<sup>15</sup> R. Guha, *Prehistory of Indian Environmentalism*, "Economic and Political Weekly", XXXVII (1992), n. 1&2, January 4-11.

He denounced industrialization, as industry heavily modified the natural world using violence. On the contrary, in an agricultural civilization nature is not interfered with to any great extent. The agriculturalist only aids nature or intensifies in a short time what naturally takes place in a long period.

Kumarappa claimed that the soil is living, as all its inhabitants, like worms, bugs and microorganism, contribute to his life and fertility. He condemned the use of chemicals in agriculture because they poisoned soil and humans, and he stressed the importance of converting village waste into compost manure.

Kumarappa was a practical man; he concentrated his efforts in ameliorating the Indian peasants and artisans' conditions. He was critical of the agri-intensive system introduced in some areas irrespective of water availability. Even if it helped industrial sector and global market system, it reduced small farmers to beggary. He dwelt on the need of monitoring soil erosion and forest management by terracing and using natural fertilizers, and he remembered the need to arrange a water canalization system in most of the country.

He claimed that the production of industrial raw material rather than subsistence production would cause drought and famines. He critiqued mass-breeding:

Quantitative output in industry – he writes – and agriculture is resulting in fragmented persons, disintegrated families and communities, on the one hand, and in weakening soils, plants and animals, multitudinous pests and greatly increased drug taking, on the other [...]. Quantitative output in industry at the expense of distinction and quality and of human personality, and in agriculture at the expense of quality and of health from the soil to man, in the interest of economic labor, is the major temptation of our age. But it is a short-term policy which points to the termination of Western civilization on the same broad grounds that so many of the civilization of the past have perished<sup>16</sup>.

Subsistence farming was destroyed by the new equipment and tools of production, in one case the use of tractors instead of bullocks. This was a short-sighted choice because tractors depended on foreign fossil fuel, so Indian agriculture would depend on this reservoir resource. The whole world depending on limited resources would then be led to conflicts and global wars, each country against the others in the aim at appropriating fossil resources. As Illich then wrote: "Consumerism and richness are a peaceful and hidden war"<sup>17</sup>.

Kumarappa saw in a reservoir economy the best solution of peace and prosperity. He adopted a parallel life to natural law in order to minimize violence. He lived in simplicity in a mud hut without electricity. He had a vegetarian diet and was very careful in feeding himself without waste. He was strictly convinced that if everybody would live in simplicity there would be enough food for everyone.

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<sup>16</sup> J.C. Kumarappa, *The Cow in Our Economy*, Sarva-Seva-Sangh, Wardha, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> I. Illich, *Convivialità*, p. 26.

### Towards Sarvodaya

Kumarappa invented a new philosophy called “villagism”. It was a real form of democracy, or *Sarvodaya*, according to him. Villages were custodians of the roots of Indian culture and history. In this philosophy peace and non-violence would reign.

It is important to say that villagism was not an impractical and romantic theory, but a concrete way of life. Somebody criticized Gandhi and Kumarappa saying that the “cry of back to villages” was putting back the hands of the clock of progress. But Gandhi and Kumarappa wanted to render back to the villages what was due to them.

Agriculture and cottage industries were the priorities. Villagism was a seed of real democracy: “In a true democracy – Kumarappa wrote – the society is so planned as to allow full scope for the development of the individual and yet should establish equality by helping and safeguarding the interests of the weak, thus forming a brotherhood in which no one can exploit another [...] Democracy vanishes the moment anyone person or group of persons obtain a dominating position”<sup>18</sup>.

Decentralization is an alternative path towards peace and prosperity. Self sufficiency and subsistence agriculture granted the villages prosperity and peace.

Industrialism, the world market and a growing economy are intrinsically violent: “When there is no sufficient purchasing power [...] an artificial situation will be created. These periodical business cycles are relieved from time to time by the wars between nations [...] whenever unsold goods accumulate, we have a period of depression and to liquidate this depression it becomes necessary to have a war”<sup>19</sup>.

Schumacher wrote: “Premises for peace cannot depend on material wealth, because this prosperity is possible only using eagerness and envy, capable of destroying intelligence, happiness, serenity and the peaceful coexistence of humanity”<sup>20</sup>.

Similarly, Shiva analyzes the reductionist science and the violence of the present global economic system. She underlines the need to support the non-reductionist alternatives people are building together in respect of nature and culture<sup>21</sup>.

Kumarappa said that in the economic activities everybody indirectly becomes responsible for exploitation. We can prevent wars by being self-sufficient and self-reliant. Re-localization, de-linking from consumerism, re-valuation, recovery of local culture: these are some of the concrete ways to put Kumarappa’s idea into practice in the virtuous circle of alternatives suggested by Serge Latouche in degrowth thought.

We can remember Shiva’s *Navdanja* and two Indian associations still working today in accordance with Kumarappa’s thought: the *Dr. J.C. Kumarappa Institute of Rural Technology and Development*, born in 1956 and involved in practical education programs<sup>22</sup>, and the Kumarappa Institute of Gram Swaraj (Kigs), non-governmental organization founded in 1965, aiming at social transformation on the basis of self-

<sup>18</sup> J.C. Kumarappa, *Why the village movement?*, p. 193.

<sup>19</sup> Id., *The Gandhian Economy and Other Essays*, AIVIA, Wardha, 1948, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> E. Schumacher, *Piccolo è bello. Uno studio di economia come se la gente contasse qualcosa*, tr. it. di D. Doglio, Milano, Mondadori, 1998, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> V. Shiva, *Terra Madre. Sopravvivere allo sviluppo*, tr. it. di M. Correggia, UTET, Torino, 2002, pp.15-17.

<sup>22</sup> Gandhi Niketan Ashram, <http://www.gandhiniketan.org/> (10/08/2012).



sufficiency, co-operation and non-violence and involved in social programs of improving women's social role in the village organization<sup>23</sup>.

### Roots of Degrowth

The father of *Economy of Permanence* is almost unknown. We can easily find mentions about Gandhi's Economy but nothing about the person who systematically organized his economic thought in a practical model. The post-1947 political leadership never bothered to collect and publish his writings and document his activities because of sharp divergences from the official policies.

In the present global situation Kumarappa's thought is very relevant. Kumarappa is defined as "a sane voice that articulated the serious maladies that confront the modern man and seriously tried to evolve solutions"<sup>24</sup>.

Gandhi and Tolstoy are mentioned by Serge Latouche as two personalities who heralded modern criticism of the present economic system<sup>25</sup>. Now we know that they deeply impressed Kumarappa. It is important to underline that Kumarappa's economic thought was original. In fact Gandhi admitted that he had not trained Kumarappa, he came to him ready-made<sup>26</sup>. He influenced many thinkers in India and abroad. Kumarappa's thought inspired Ernst Schumacher and Ivan Illich.

It was in 1973, after he visited India and studied Gandhian literature, E. Schumacher wrote *Small is Beautiful*. Bearing in mind most of the principles of Kumarappa's thought, he became famous for his ideas on "intermediate technology". He acknowledged Kumarappa as the Indian philosopher and "Buddhist economist". In his book he quoted Kumarappa's Economy of Permanence: "From an economic point of view, the central concept of wisdom is permanence. We must study economics of permanence [...]. Permanence is incompatible with a predatory attitude which rejoices in the fact that 'what were luxuries for fathers have become necessities for us' [...] the economics of permanence implies a profound re-orientation of Science and Technology, which have to open their doors to wisdom"<sup>27</sup>.

Ivan Illich, a canonical author of degrowth thought, interviewed by the major expert of Kumarappa, Solomon Victus, admitted that Kumarappa's writings made a great impression on him, and he owed his own ideas to the Gandhian economist<sup>28</sup>. Illich visited India in the 70s and read Kumarappa's books. He wrote his books, *Deschooling society* and *Conviviality* bearing in mind Kumarappa's ideas on education and understandings of the limits of Earth resources. His observations about decentralization echo Kumarappa's thought.

Conscious efforts were made to keep Kumarappa's ideas alive by some associations in India. The Dr. J.C. Kumarappa Institute of Rural Technology and

<sup>23</sup> Kumarappa Institute of Gram Swaraj, <http://www.kigs.org/> (12/08/2012).

<sup>24</sup> T.G. Jacob, *The contemporary relevance of J.C. Kumarappa's life and works*, "Frontier Weekly" XLIII October 2010 in <http://frontierweekly.com/> (07/08/2012).

<sup>25</sup> S. Latouche, *La scommessa della decrescita*, p. 65.

<sup>26</sup> M. Vinaik, *J.C. Kumarappa*, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> E. Schumacher, *Piccolo è bello*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>28</sup> S. Victus, *Religion and Eco-Economics of Dr. J.C. Kumarappa: Gandhism Redefined*, ISPCK, Delhi, p. 215.

Development and the Kumarappa Institute of Gram Swaraj are still working along with his principles today. Vandana Shiva's *Navdanja* program is very close to the Gandhian economist's vision.

Finally Kumarappa's ideas could be included in the archipelago of ideas ascribed to degrowth thought and we can definitely say that *Economy of Permanence* is a precursor of degrowth thought, sensitive to the environmental issues, promoting democracy of knowledge and technical instruments, inspiring new ethics respectful of animal, vegetal and human rights, aiming at the permanent state of things in the world.