

KUMARAGURU COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
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A project work on

MAHATMA
GANDHI

- THE MAN OF THIS CENTURY

Project work done by

S. SRIRAM
ASHWIN GANAPATHY
B. KALYAN
D. KARTHIKEYAN
M. MANIMUTHU
PRADHAP SINGH

K.K. DIVESH
S. DAMODHAR BHAT
K. KUMARAGURU
M. KARTHIKEYAN
B. JAGADEESH
RAHUL JOSHI

[Students of LBE (section B)]

KUMARAGURU COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled, " Mahatma Gandhi - The Man of This Century", is a bonafide work carried out by the students mentioned on the cover page, under the guidance of Mr. Jiju Varghese Jacob, and submitted to the Department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the 1st year English Paper.

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

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I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all those wonderful people, including our parents, who have inspired us and will continue to inspire us to achieve more.

*Moreover, our project, does not have a separate 'Introduction' part because we feel that none of us are qualified enough to introduce this great man. Indeed, **MAHATMA GANDHI** needs no introduction.*

S. SRIRAM
Centre-Director
(Project Team)

CONTENTS

	Page No.
The Watershed	1
Child of the Raj	2
Boy Bride groom	3
Student in the heart of the empire	4
A new life in South Affrica	5
The first struggles	7
A fundamental change	9
Gandhi comes home	10
The first campaign	12
The Amritsar Massacre	12
Congress Reform	14
Spinning for victory	14
Arrest and imprisonment	16
Civil disobedience	17
A pinch of salt	18
Satyagraha in action	19
The Round Table Conference	19
"The children of God"	20
Storm clouds of war	20
Karturba's death	21
The transfer of power	21
The last viceroy	22
Partition	23
"The Oldman has done it again"	24
One man boundary force	25
The last fast	25
The death of Gandhi	26
Gandhi's gifts to India and the world	28
Important dates	29

The Watershed

None of us likes to feel unwanted. Even we do not like to have to take insults and abuse from others. In South Africa, Mohandas Gandhi was rapidly made aware that Indian people were disliked, unwanted and frequently insulted. Barbers refused to cut his hair. He was not allowed to stay in white hotels. He was attacked and beaten up by a stage coach driver when he refused to give up his seat to a white passenger.

Shortly after his arrival on a business visit to South Africa, Gandhi was put off a first class railway coach by a policeman acting at the request of a white passenger who refused to share a compartment with a brown-skinned Indian.

After being made to give up the seat for which he had a valid first class ticket, Gandhi had to spend the night shivering in a freezing station waiting room. That night he had plenty of time to consider his future as a new arrival in a hostile unfriendly country. He had three options open to him. He could choose to ignore the insults and abuse and carry on regardless. Or he could go back to India as planned. Or he could decide to stay and fight racial prejudice. Gandhi decided it was his duty to stay and use his legal knowledge to fight for the black people of South Africa.

Gandhi described this early experience in South Africa as a watershed - a turning point in his life. He was a changed man, a man, moreover, who was born to change history. Now when we look back on his life, we can say it

must surely have been a good thing that Gandhi was forced to endure the hardship and humiliations which so many of his fellow countrymen experienced all their lives. These experiences of injustice turned the shy young Indian lawyer (he was only 24 at the time) into a passionate fighter for human dignity and freedom. For the next 50 years he was to fight injustice, not with weapons, but with words and ideas, example and self-sacrifice. He developed satyagraha, a method of highly disciplined non-violent civil disobedience. In South Africa, and later in India, he taught his followers to face the British guns, bayonets and lathi sticks with highly organized, unarmed passive resistance. When the protesters, including thousands of women, were attacked and brutally beaten, they did not strike back. The people made fair demands of those in power and they were prepared to break unjust laws and go to jail-in their thousands.

His teachings were to spread from South Africa to India and eventually throughout the world. And after his death they still give people deprived of freedom and justice a way to fight oppression without having to kill. Martin Luther King, Greenpeace, the overthrow of Marcos in the Philippines....today, we take protest demonstrations and disciplined pressure as the obvious way to fight wrong. Before Gandhi, the only successful way people knew to fight oppression was to organize a fighting force.

By the time of his death Gandhi had led the Indian nation to independence. Hitler had not been able to beat Great Britain's Churchill - but Gandhi had! This gentle, smiling man was revered by hundreds of millions of Indians but

by the leaders of the rest of the world. The United Nations, in an unprecedented move, halted deliberations when the news of his death reached New York. They recognized that here was a rare man indeed, a man whose influence would last far beyond his lifetime. He had given a new tool to all oppressed people across the world. It was a weapon of love, not of death.

Einstein said of him : "Generations to come, it may be, will scarcely believe that such one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth ".

Child of the Raj

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbandar in India on October 2, 1869. India at those days was ruled by the British. There were at the time more than two hundred million people living in India, at least seven times as many as lived in Great Britain and Ireland.



Above : The India Gandhi grew up in was the India of the British Raj, with all its pomp, grandeur and ceremony. The British brought great organization and technical progress to India, but they were all too often insensitive to the people they ruled.

Gandhi was born into a land of contrasts: of desert plains, vast rivers, swamps, arid plateaus, dense jungles and the highest mountains on earth. The climate of India is hot in the plains and cool in the highlands, but the vastness of India creates contrasts. India's peoples were separated from each other not only by the sheer difficulty of getting from one region to another but also by different habits, religions, and over 300 languages. Even peoples of the same race and religion were divided one group from another by their caste or station in life.

The British had been in India since the early seventeenth century when they set up trading posts by force, bribery, or in agreement with the Mogul Emperor and the local princes.

The British ruled over many races; people in the south with black skins, brown-skinned and pale-skinned people in the north. This was a land of princes and princelings, a land of great poverty and hunger and of vast riches. In India, those who were rich had to do nothing for themselves. There was always a servant to wash you, to shave you, to pour you a cool drink or fan you when you were hot.

There were many different religions in India. Most people were Hindus, though of many different sects. The Muslims, whose prophet was Mohammed and whose book was the Koran, were the second largest group. The Buddhists took their teachings from the Buddha who lived 2,500 years ago. A very old Christian Church, whose faith was first brought to India by St. Thomas, worshipped according to an ancient rite. Ancient communities of Jews had been in India for many centuries. There were

to primitive tribal peoples of the hills and forests and the Parsees, who had originally come from Persia, who worshipped fire as a symbol of God.

Hindu peasants, who were mainly vegetarians, worshipped the cow. Muslims, some of whom would eat beef, regarded pig meat as unclean. A sect called the Jains, who covered their mouths in case they swallowed a fly, would not go out at night for fear of treading on a worm. The white hunter meanwhile, who could well have been a devout Christian, took delight in hunting the graceful tiger almost to vanishing point.



Left: European "Gentlemen" Taxed Indian workers and paid very less salary.

All the way around Africa to reach India. The grip of British power on India had tightened. The links of trade had been made even stronger. Because Britain had colonies over most of the world, it used to be said "the sun never sets on the British Empire" - it seemed then that the Empire might

last forever. Yet by the time of Gandhi's death 78 years later, India had celebrated its independence from British rule. The gentle Gandhi was to play a great part in these important changes.

Boy bridegroom

Mohandas Gandhi was his father Karamchan's fourth and last child. Mohandas was born into the Vaisyu caste which ranked number three out of four in Hindu society, though below the most respected Brahmins (or priests) and the Kshatriyas, the soldiers or rulers. Still his caste was much more privileged than the Sudra (worker) castes. Below them all were those who had no caste, the untouchables or "outcasts". These were the people Gandhi later called the Harijan or "Children of God".



Above : Gandhi, at the age of 7.

Gandhi was a normal boy from a happy Hindu family, occasionally mischievous but no more than most. His father was a court official and became the first Minister of the small princely state of Porbandar. His mother, Putlibai, was a very religious Hindu who prayed at each meal and often fasted. She often visited the temple and did not care for luxuries and jewels. Gandhi would later become India's greatest spiritual leader and it was from this very early age that his mother's religious life had a deep influence on him.

There were books at home and life was comfortable enough. The whole family were strict vegetarians, but Gandhi was once per-



Above : Mohandas Gandhi (right) and his older brother, photographed when Gandhi was 14.

sued by a Muslim boy to eat goats' meat. He told Gandhi that meat would make him grow tall and strong - strong enough to push the Englishmen out of India! In the mistaken belief that he would grow stronger, Gandhi tried eating goats meat. It gave him horrific nightmares and he later deeply regretted the experiment.

Gandhi was a shy boy and he would often run home from school so that he did not have to speak to anyone. "I was always afraid lest anyone should poke fun at me, Gandhi remembered later. He loved taking long walks on his own and did not enjoy playing games.

When he was thirteen years old and still at school, Mohandas was married to Kasturba, the daughter of a Porbandar merchant. He had not been consulted about the marriage. As was the custom, and still is today in much of India, the parents of the young couple made all the arrangements and the bride and groom did not meet until the wedding. We may wonder how such a marriage could have a chance of success but for Mohandas and Kasturba it didn't seem strange and their marriage was to last for sixty-two years.

Student in the heart of Empire

In 1888, at the age of nineteen, Gandhi set out on the three-week voyage to London where he was to study law. He was already a father; Harilal his first son had been born some months earlier. His student days were not particularly happy; he felt lonely, cut off from his family, and distant from his spiritual home. He had sworn that, while in London, he would touch neither wine nor women, and would keep to his strict vegetarianism. Gandhi's strict principles cut him

f from many of his fellow students, making him
el even more isolated.

He wrote, "I would continually think of my
me and country. Everything was strange ...
e people, their ways and even their dwellings.
was a complete novice in the matter of English
tiquette and had continually to be on my guard.
is vegetarian diet made thins even more diffi-
ult. "Even the dishes I could eat weretasteless
and insipid."

Still, like most young people Gandhi wanted
to fit in as much as possible and to dress like his
fellow students - in fact he went through a pe-
riod of dressing in the fashion of the time. A
fellow student recalled meeting Gandhi in Pic-



Above : Gandhi as a young man, dressed in elegant European clothing. During his time at university in London he did not wear Indian national dress. It was more than ten years later when he again took to Indian-style dress. And then, he would dress as a holy man, in simple peasant garb.

cadilly Circus in London in 1890. Gandhi was
"wearing a high silk top hat burnished bright, a
stiff and starched white collar, a rather flashy
tie displayed all the shades of the rainbow under
which there was a fine striped silk shirt. He
wore as his outer clothes a morning coat, a dou-
ble-breasted waistcoat and dark striped trousers
to match. He also carried leather gloves and a
silver mounted stick."

This is an extraordinary contrast with the
Gandhi the world came to know - the famous
image of Gandhi dressed in his dhoti - a white
home -spun cloth, simple sandles and a shawl.

After two years and eight months in Eng-
land Gandhi passed his final examinations at the
Inner Temple Inn of Court in London and was
called to the bar in June, 1891. At just 22 years
of age he had successfully completed his studies
in French, Latin, Physics and Common and Ro-
man Law. No doubt these studies helped train
his mind but, though able and quick-witted, we
cannot yet see in the young lawyer, who sailed
back from England, the wisdom and resource-
fulness which was to inspire millions. He did
not look as though he was made of the stuff that
would free the largest nation in the British Em-
pire and inspire millions of people. He himself
referred to his college days as "the time before I
began to live.

A New life in South Africa

On his return to India, Gandhi learned to
his great sorrow that his mother had died. Gan-
dhi had adored his mother and she had a consid-
erable spiritual influence on him. Influenced by
her religious beliefs, Gandhi developed his own

erence for all forms of life and his teachings of pacifism and non-violence.

For nearly two years Gandhi tried to establish himself as a lawyer. The law practice was unsuccessful. He was given only one brief at when he stood up in Court in Bombay to argue the case, he became so nervous he was unable to speak. He sat down to the sound of laughter in the court room. Shortly after this Gandhi was offered the opportunity to represent a wealthy Indian merchant in South Africa, an opportunity which changed the whole of the rest of his life. He left to cover a single assignment but was to stay for twenty-one years.

Then, as now, South Africa was a deeply divided society. Black people outnumbered the whites by more than five to one. The whites were themselves divided and during Gandhi's time in South Africa, they were to fight a bitter civil war. As a community the hundred thousand or so Indian people in South Africa were despised. They had been imported to do lowly and disagreeable jobs which the black people would not do : mainly work on farms and growing sugar cane. These poor Indians, driven from home by semi-starvation, worked hard and lived in stinking wretched poverty. However, a few prospered and began to compete with the whites and for this they became hated and feared. Numerous government rules and laws were made attacking the Indians and removing their rights to vote, won land and move around freely.

Gandhi whose resolve was stiffened by his own experiences of racial injustice in his early days in South Africa, soon became a leader of

the Indian community. By 1896, he was also a rich and successful lawyer earning more than \$5,000 a year (worth over \$100,000 in today's values!)



Left : Gandhi with the Indian Ambulance Corps in the Boer War, 1899.

How then did Gandhi set about helping his people? Many of his ideas were practical and common sense. He set about making the Indians appear better people, more likeable, less strange to other people. He urged honesty in business so that they be trusted. He taught cleanliness and sanitation. He advised them to learn English so that they could talk to others. He urged them to drop their ideas about caste which separated one group from another.

On a trip back to India in 1896 to fetch his family, he wrote and published The Green Pamphlet which detailed Indian grievances in South Africa. Much indignation was aroused and, when he returned to South Africa in January 1897, he was attacked by a lynch mob. Under pressure from London, the Natal legislature later that year repealed the laws allowing racial discrimination in electoral rights and replaced it with an educational test.

Despite the fact that Gandhi was a pacifist, a man of peace, he taught that the Indians should accept the obligations of nationality. If the Indians wanted the rights of citizens of the Empire, they must accept the obligations of citizens of the Empire. In 1899 during the Boer War, although Gandhi sympathized with the Boers, he urged the Indian community to support the British. He helped to form and train an Indian Ambulance Corps. He led a thousand ambulance men, who served with distinction.

In December 1902 Gandhi presented the Indian community's grievances to Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary. Both Natal and the Transvaal were doing their best to drive the Indian community out. An Asiatic Department was set up in the Transvaal in 1903 and produced a stream of new rules and regulations over the next three years. Tension grew between Indians and whites but went into abeyance during the Zulu Campaign of 1906. Again, Gandhi offered his help to the government and organized another Indian Ambulance Corps. Marching up to 40 miles a day, they had to nurse a succession of flogged and wounded Zulus whom the white doctors and nurses would not touch!

The first Struggles

In August 1907, the feelings of injustice in the Indian Community came to a head. The Black Act required that all Indian men and women had to register and be fingerprinted. Anyone without a certificate could be imprisoned, fined or deported. The Indians called these the "Black Laws" because they were unjust and aimed at black, brown and yellow people from Asia. Gandhi, though himself light brown in ap-

pearance, would often describe himself as black.

The Indian community was well aware of what the whites intended. At an election meeting in January 1907. General Botha had declared, "If my party is returned to office we will undertake to drive the coolies (Indians) out of the country within four years."

It was at this time that Gandhi first articulated the idea of Satyagraha, meaning "truth-force" or "love-force", which is "the vindication of truth not by the infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self." It requires self-control because the opponent must be "weaned from error by patience and sympathy," It is much more than "passive resistance" as it requires a constant positive interaction between the contestants with a view to their ultimate reconciliation. He made strict rules as to how the "Satyagrahis" should behave and trained his people during the South African passive resistance campaigns. There was to be no retaliation for insults, floggings or arrests. These were to be borne patiently. The idea was to humiliate opponents, not to beat them but to melt their hearts.

In January 1908, because he had deliberately refused to register under the new law and had urged thousands of others to defy registration, Gandhi was sent to jail for two months. This was to be the first of many periods of imprisonment. He did not complain, but he was grateful to be given time for peaceful thoughts and reading. In fact he only served one month of the sentence.

To test the unjust laws on immigration, many Indians crossed the Transvaal borders il-

ally. Gandhi did so and was jailed twice more. Whenever the Indians felt they were being treated as second-class citizens, they quietly refused to co-operate and accepted their punishment.



Above : Kasturba, three Gandhi sons and a nephew. This photograph was taken in about 1903 - the Gandhi's would finally have four sons. Kasturba couldn't read or write and she seemed to have little understanding of Gandhi's sophisticated and demanding course in life.

In early 1913 Smuts went back on a promise to repeal oppressive taxes and the ban on Indian immigration; then a judge in the Cape colony ruled that only Christian marriages were legal all Indian wives thus became mistresses without any rights. For the first time, many women became involved in the civil disobedience campaign. The illegal border crossings into the Transvaal began again and a group of women called the "Natal Sisters" by Gandhi were

arrested. Other Indian women from the Transvaal then made their way to Newcastle in Natal where they persuaded the Indian miners to lay down their tools and go on strike. Many thousands of Indians were arrested and sent to jail and, as the word spread, thousands more workers went on strike.

Gandhi led his people into the Transvaal and in four days he was arrested three times and finally imprisoned for three months. Gandhi as usual was happy to go to jail for as he put it, "the real road to ultimate happiness lies in going to jail and undergoing suffering there in the interests of one's own country and religion".

By the time that Gandhi called off the satyagraha campaign, he was known and respected throughout South Africa and India. The barrister who had once been unable to speak in court was a famous statesman known for his honesty, skill and courage.

And so, in June 1914, Gandhi and General Smuts, the great South African white leader and statesman, eventually came together and worked out a give-and-take agreement which gave the Indian community more dignity and self respect. Gandhi's campaign of civil disobedience had triumphed, the first such campaign which would ever triumph.

General Smuts pushed through the Indian Relief Act and at last after twenty years Gandhi felt free to return home. On parting, he sent General Smuts a pair of sandals he had made in prison. Smuts later said: "I have worn these sandals for many a summer since then, even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man."

fundamental change

It was during the 21 years of struggle in South Africa that Gandhi developed even more profound spiritual beliefs. He had always been Hindu, but now the great principles of the Bhagavad Gita, the beautiful and powerful Hindu book of scripture, permeated his way of life.

His beliefs would from now on affect his political decision he would ever take. They also affected the way he dressed, the way he spoke - indeed, every facet of his life.

It is very difficult for non-Hindus to understand the principles Gandhi followed. Both in South Africa and later in India the British would misjudge his habits as "eccentric" and "faddish."

Gandhi was influenced by other religions and philosophies: he particularly liked Christian hymns. He loved Christ's teachings. Christ's Sermon on the Mount, he said, "went straight to the heart." "Blessed are the meek "Blessed be the poor for yours is the Kingdom of God ... "Love your enemies....," "These teachings of Christ were at the very heart of Gandhi's way of life.

He did not reject the other great religions and borrowed freely from the principles of other religious groups : Buddhists, Christians, Jains, Muslims. In fact, partly because of this, he was an unorthodox Hindu and was hated by strict Hindus. It was, in fact, a strict orthodox Hindu who finally assassinated Gandhi because of his attempts to help the Muslims.

For Gandhi, one of the greatest principles, found in the Bhagavad Gita, was called

samakhya, which meant that people should not allow themselves to be upset by either pain or pleasure. They should work for right without fear of failure or hope of success. Gandhi always laid as much stress on the means as on the end. He paid great attention on how to bring about change.

Another great principle he followed was Aparigraha, which is non-possession of material things. Spiritual riches could be reached by being poor and uncluttered - without owning lots of goods. If you turn to the next page you will see a picture of Gandhi's few possessions on his death.

Ahimsa, or non-violence to all living things is another great principle of Hinduism. This means non-injury to everything that lives. And so Gandhi would not eat animals or hurt them. He hated all violence and would not even kill, or allow to be killed, the deadly snakes sometimes found in the grounds around his home in South Africa. He would guide them away with sticks.

Gandhi's lasting legacy and most famous weapon was Satyagraha, truth force. It was a word he coined which has come to be translated as non-violence or passive resistance.

Gandhi always sought truth and rejected anything hypocritical or false. He cultivated love and tolerance of other people and he was usually loved and deeply respected by the people and he opposed.

He was always able to be at peace because of his ability to mediate. So that even when he was negotiating and working under great pressure sleeping less than four hours a night - he

always cheerful, smiling and joking. His fiercest opponents came to love him.

He changed a great deal in South Africa, learning to discipline his body and mind and to keep greed, selfishness and lust for any kind of worldly pleasure in check. He had for example, become extremely successful and wealthy because of his legal skills. But he gave up all his wealth, including his home and fine clothes. He started an ashram, a communal farm similar to an Israeli kibbutz. He even tried to give away his wife Kasturba's jewels - which had been shown as gifts on the Gandhi's by satisfied wealthy clients. This was especially unpopular with her because by tradition the jewels would be needed as wedding gifts for her daughters-in-law.

There were many other sacrifices Gandhi demanded from his family and his growing band of followers.

Gandhi and Kasturba came to a mutual decision to take the vow of Brahmacharya. This means the complete cessation of all sexual activity. Gandhi felt that he had to rid himself of all physical desires in order to be at peace within himself and to be free under all circumstances, to help others and to act with love at all times.

So it was that during this period in South Africa Gandhi's whole lifestyle had changed. And the non-violent methods he pioneered and the political triumphs he had already achieved were based on these deep spiritual beliefs.

His religion would be even more important in the coming struggle for freedom in India. The rise of Indian nationalism would go hand in hand with a resurgence of Hinduism. Gandhi

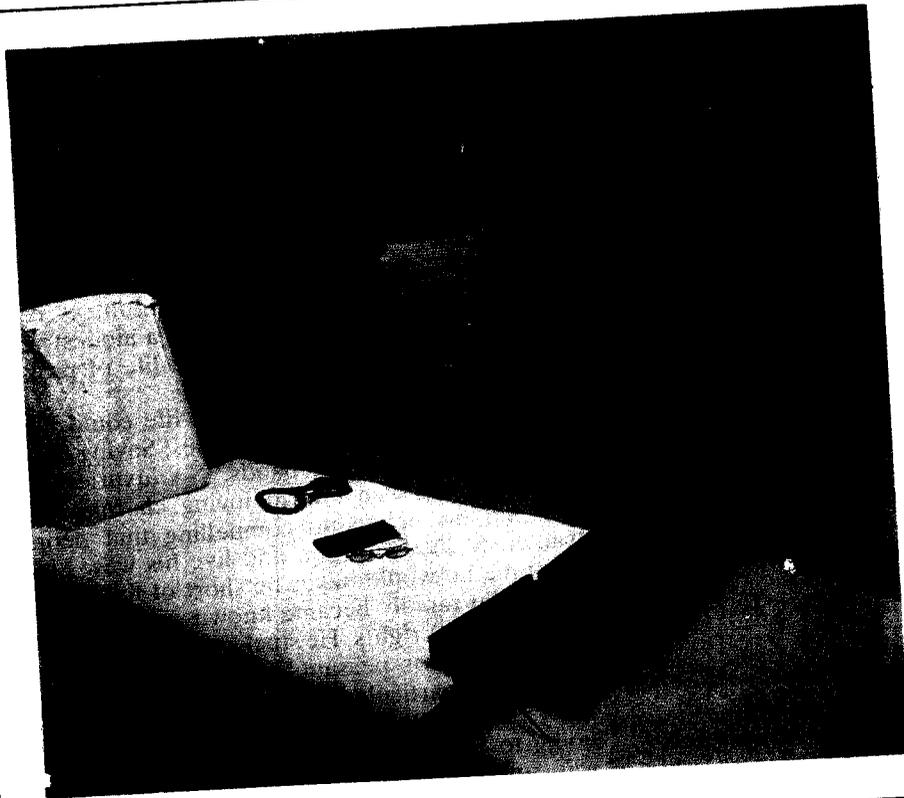
became the main instrument in both developments. Three quarters of the Indian people were Hindu and their religion had survived intact through wars, foreign conquest and occupation. The Muslims had ruled India for centuries, but left Hinduism basically untouched. The large number of Christian missionaries had also made little impact. It was to be Gandhi's religious leadership coupled with his political craft which would enable him to bring freedom to India.

Gandhi comes home

In January 1915 when Gandhi was forty-five, he returned home. He and Kasturba with their four young sons were surprised to be met by huge crowds when they docked. Gandhi's achievements in South Africa were famous and hundreds came to give him a warm welcome. The important people of Bombay held a grand reception to welcome him home.

Gandhi decided not to campaign for Indian rights until he had learned more about the problems in India. But he did set to work to establish his ashram at Sabarmati near the city of Ahmedabad. The men and women of the community, eventually about 200 of them, promised to live by Gandhi's rules. These were based on the religious principles he had taught himself to live by when he was in South Africa. Their lives were to be marked by honesty, truthfulness, celibacy and poverty. They were to eat a modest vegetarian diet. They were to lead a life of prayer and service to others.

You can imagine that ashram life could have become infuriating. All those rules! Saving paper and string and elastic bands. No



Left : A picture from Sevagram Ashram, showing Mahatma Gandhi's bed and belongings at the time of his death in 1948 - their value, \$4. Gandhi's poverty and his way of life made personal criticism impossible for opponents. So it became a great political strength. It also made the millions of Indian peasants feel he was one of them and that he could lead and understand them.

luxuries. Yet Gandhiji was such a warm, loving, charming person and his beliefs so compelling that people wanted to live with him and live his way. From this time he would never be short of followers.

Gandhi rapidly became known as a champion of the people's rights. He stuck up for the untouchables, the poor peasants and the poor factory workers in particular. He campaigned widely in early 1917 for the abolition of indentured workers going to South Africa. Later the same year, he was supporting the Indigo sharecroppers in Bihar against their British landlords, the farmers of Gujarat against taxes, and the millworkers of Ahmedabad in a strike against their employers. So influential did he become that later in 1917 in the darkest days of World War I,

he was summoned to Delhi. The Viceroy, the ruler of India, representative of the British, wanted Gandhi's assistance. To the great surprise of many pacifists Gandhi agreed to call for Indian volunteers to fight for Britain and the Empire.

Gandhi still believed that Britain was a force for good. He also believed, as he had in South Africa, that if the Indian people wanted the rights of the citizens of Empire they should serve the Empire if asked to do so.

So it was that volunteer Indian soldiers went to fight alongside British soldiers and those from the Dominions. The Indian soldiers fought in Mesopotamia and in Europe on the Western Front and many died in this cruel and wasteful war.

The Great War, as it became known, was after the course of history. The British and their allies finally won, but at a tremendous cost. Britain was severely weakened. Although few would have thought so at the time, the days of the British Empire were numbered.

The Indian soldiers knew they had earned the right to dignity, equality and self-respect. There was a new mood abroad.

Yet the Indian soldiers were to be disappointed. The understanding, the half promise of self-government Britain had given India during the War was not kept. Worse still the emergency war powers and restrictions on liberties were to be kept on after the war. Trial without jury and imprisonment without trial were to be maintained; the Indian people felt cheated.

The old insensitivity of the British that Gandhi had seen in South Africa, was unchanged. It was obvious that the British had no intention of giving up their most popular and profitable colony.

The first campaign

For the first time Gandhi decided to go against the British Government of India. He decided on a hartal, a kind of general strike. He proclaimed a day when no business was to be done. Stores were to stay shut. Employees were to strike. This began a 28-year struggle that would finally bring an end to British rule.

There was tremendous support for the hartals organized by Gandhi against the unjust laws. Unfortunately public protest turned into rioting in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Lahore and

Amritsar. Gandhi denounced the trouble-makers and called off the whole campaign. Gandhi saw that the people had to be trained in obedience before civil disobedience could work.

As a penance for the violence and rioting, Gandhi announced he would fast for 72 hours and he called upon others to fast for 24 hours.

The Amritsar massacre

April 13, 1919 was India's blackest day. A forbidden meeting was held at Amritsar, the sacred city of the Sikhs, in a large open space surrounded on 3 sides by high walls and known as the Jallianwalla Bagh. The local British Army Commander General Dyer, decided to suppress the assembly with the utmost brutality. Without any warning to disperse, he ordered a small force of native troops to fire into the unarmed crowd. There was no way to escape. The soldiers fired for ten minutes leaving 379 people killed and more than 1,200 wounded.

At least some of the lives may have been saved if General Dyer had not refused to allow Indian medics in to tend to the wounded.

Dyer said later; "I thought I would be doing a jolly lot of good." To the Commission of Enquiry, General Dyer said: "Yes, I think it quite possible that I could have dispersed them without firing, but I was going to punish them."

At Amritsar General Dyer also enforced the Crawling Order. He ordered that in retaliation for the injury of an English missionary woman, soldiers should be posted with fixed bayonets along the street where she lived. They ensured that all Indians had to crawl along the



Left : At the Sikh's holy city of Amritsar, the crowds gathered for a peaceful demonstration. Without warning, the troops opened fire and hundreds were killed. This was the turning point for Gandhi from then on he would oppose the British head-on. (From the film, "Gandhi.")

whole street on their bellies. It didn't matter if little old men had to pass down the street to reach their homes; hundreds had to crawl in the dirt and dust.

Most Indians Gandhi included felt totally humiliated by this. And it was something they would never forget.

Many British people, though not all, were deeply ashamed of General Dyer's deeds and of his various attempts at Amritsar to punish and humiliate the Indian people. The shock waves from the bloody event spread through the whole

of India. The effect of Dyer's cruelty was to strengthen opposition to British rule. It also brought Gandhi into politics in a way he had never before sought or wanted: "I had faith in them until 1919, but the Amritsar Massacre and other atrocities in the Punjab changed my heart. "For the first time he began to see that British rule had to be overthrown. He returned his two British war medals and took on the leadership of the Indian nationalist movement. He realized that mere "self-rule" and "justice" were not enough. The British had to leave India.

Congress reform

Before Gandhi joined it, the Indian National Congress was a kind of group of middle class windbags. Gandhi breathed new life into it and rapidly became its acknowledged leader. He turned it into a mass democratic organization with branches all over the country even in the villages.

In December 1920, the Congress at Nagpur passed Gandhi's resolution calling for self-rule, or self-rule, if possible inside the British Empire (like Canada or Australia), but outside the Empire if necessary. The Muslim leaders wanted to remain within the Empire and, after the resolution was passed, began to lose interest in the Congress. The Hindu and Muslim leaders started to drift apart.

At Nagpur in 1920 the Congress called for the liberation of the "untouchables" and for the revival of village industries. Gandhi hated the way the untouchable caste were treated by the caste Hindus. He saw it as an insult and a threat to the Hindu religion. He wanted unity, unity based on equality.

Spinning for victory

The collapsible spinning wheel was to become an article of faith to Gandhi and his followers. Its gentle and relaxing hum could be heard at Congress meetings or wherever nationalists gathered together. The spinning wheel was to become the symbol of liberation. It was practical. It was affordable. It made use of hands that had nothing else to do.

Gandhi saw in the spinning wheel and home weaving a way to revive the village economy and alleviate poverty. He attributed the desperate poverty of the Indian villages to the town dwellers and the British textile mills, which had destroyed the village craft industry. For the rest of his life Gandhi would spin 200 yards of yarn every single day. Even if he was at an international conference or worked till 2 in the morning he would not sleep until he'd spun his daily quota. Basic education and a campaign for Hindi as a "national" language were also encouraged to help the national revival.

Gandhi, as he said himself, "turned the spotlight



Left : As part of a boycott of British goods, Gandhi urged Indians to spin their own cloth. Every day Gandhi would spin 200 yards of yarn. No matter how busy he was, he would never go to sleep until he had spun his daily quota.



Left : Gandhi gave up the civil disobedience campaign after a group of his followers killed 22 policemen at Chauri Chaura. The demonstrators set fire to the police station, forcing the policemen out; they were hacked to death. This picture was a careful reconstruction of the event in the "Gandhi" film.

ll over." In these months of whirlwind activity he turned to all kinds of problems. He was concerned with dirty streets, people spitting, rudeness on trains, neglect of poor farmers, and above all, violence.

During 1921, Gandhi went all over India - in third class railway compartments- spreading the message that non-cooperation would lead to independence. At vast public meetings he urged the people to give up wearing foreign clothing and to boycott British cloth.

His followers would strip off their foreign-made clothes and throw them into a fire and volunteers picketed stores selling British cloth. By this time Gandhi himself had permanently adopted

his famous loincloth and carried a homespun bag. Unfortunately merchants stock of foreign clothing were also set alight and fires of burning warehouses lit the sky at night. Gandhi did not approve.

In October 1921, a Congress working party called upon soldiers and civil servants to desert their posts. Lawyers were urged to give up their practices, and many did so. Schools and colleges were disrupted. More and more villages refused to pay taxes. By December 20,000 people had been imprisoned for civil disobedience and sedition.

The country was in a state of great excitement. Chaos was the order of the day. But

... midst the fine expressions of pacifism and high ideals, there was growing disorder and violence in the streets. Even the British, who knew In- well, were bemused and bewildered by the leading revolutionary activists. Especially by Gandhi. Gentle Mr. Gandhi, middle-aged, dressed in a loincloth, always smiling his toothless smile, and by now attracting crowds of thousands of excited supporters wherever he went. They would walk for days just to see their great leader. As things came to the boil, rioting and disorder spread. Gandhi fasted as a penance for the violence. Then in February 1921, in the Chauri Chaura (United Provinces), 22 police constables were killed by an enraged mob during a campaign of mass disobedience. Gandhi was sickened by the atrocity and stopped the defiance of the government everywhere in India.

"It is better," said Gandhi, "to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and to sin against God. It is a million times better to appear untrue before the world than to be untrue to ourselves.

Many were disappointed, many felt let down, betrayed. But Gandhi was not prepared to sacrifice the principle of non-violence.

The first stage of the struggle was at an end. What had it achieved? In the first place Congress had flexed its muscles and demonstrated its power.

There were obviously hundreds of thousands of people prepared to make great sacrifices, to give up their jobs and risk imprisonment in the cause of freedom.

But it only convinced Gandhi that for "non-

violence" to succeed his supporters had to be highly trained and much more disciplined. He himself sought atonement for the murders in Chauri Chaura by going on a five-day fast.

For the British Government of India it meant that Congress could no longer be ignored. The demands of Indian nationalism had to be recognized and in some way satisfied.

The nationalists themselves felt a new strength. They had got rid of their inferiority complex and felt more able to deal with the Government on equal terms.

Arrest and imprisonment

Shortly after the killings at Chauri Chaura, in March 1922. Gandhi was arrested. He was charged with rebellion against the government. At his trial, Gandhi, who described himself as a farmer and weaver, pleaded guilty. He made a long statement in which he said: the section under which I am charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases under it, and I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege, therefore, to be charged under that section I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected toward a government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it a sin to have affection to invite and submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen."

Gandhi did receive the maximum sentence of six years and went cheerfully to prison again. Before the trial judge he was grateful for the sentence he had received during the trial. He had no regrets. "We must widen the prison doors," he said "Freedom is to be won only outside prison walls." Happy in his prison cell Gandhi spent his time at peace with his books, spinning his wheel and saying his prayers. He was released in 1924 because of an operation for acute appendicitis.

When Gandhi came out of prison he discovered that the Indian National Congress was in a disarray. The non-cooperation movement had collapsed. Even worse, there was much community unrest and bitterness between Muslims and Hindus. But Gandhi chose not to renew his campaign of civil disobedience until his prison sentence would have been served. Instead he devoted much of the next few years to trying to bring the two communities together.

In these quiet years Gandhi carried on teaching the virtues of the spinning wheel and the handloom. Gandhi said the wheel was like a peaceful prayer. He was accused of homespun fanaticism but he persisted. He said it was the great British textile mills and the Indian cities which had made the Indian countryside so poor. Gandhi urged his people to wear khadi or homespun cloth. By buying khadi the townspeople would help the peasants. Home-spun was to be the link between town and country, rich and poor. The India of jewels and riches and silver and gold brocade was not Gandhi's India. Home-spun became the badge of the nationalists and the Congress Party.

Civil disobedience

In 1929 Gandhi, now aged 60, turned again to the liberation of India. The new campaign of "civil disobedience" was to be different from the earlier campaign that had hoped to bring the government to a standstill by strikes and people pulling out of government jobs. That had failed, though it had given the Government a nasty jolt at the time.

The new campaign encouraged people to break the law. The mass arrests that would follow, would earn sympathy and gradually make government impossible.

Gandhi won the support of many doubters because of the sense of his position. He pointed out that over 80% of Indians were peasants - to win their support, it was essential to speak their languages, dress like them and understand their economic requirements and aspirations. They were far more likely to listen to an old man in a khadi loincloth and sandals speaking their own language, than to a Europeanized Congress member pontificating in English!

The new campaign started with a peaceful revolt against taxes. That ended with a total victory for the peasants. Throughout 1929, Gandhi toured India, speaking at rallies and organizing bonfires of foreign cloth.

But Gandhiji had promised that he would declare himself "an Independence-wallah" if Dominion status was not achieved by December 31, 1929. Now he moved into action with his historic "Salt March".

inch of salt

The climax to Gandhiji's much publicized Salt March, was when he quietly stooped and

The idea behind the march was to inspire widespread civil disobedience to embarrass the government. The Salt Tax which Gandhi set out



Left : Gandhi on the Salt March. He was with Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the poet and his close associate. Gandhi was soon arrested and Mrs. Naidu led 2,500 protesters on the world famous and fateful Dharasana Saltworks demonstration.

icked up a handful of salt. This simple gesture was the end result of Gandhi's carefully planned and disciplined 24-day, 200-mile march. Now over sixty and looking frail Gandhi had led his small band of 78 followers from his Sabarmati ashram to the sea. By the time they arrived several thousand villagers had joined them. The British treated it as a joke and dismissed the whole idea. Why was there any drama about picking up a handful of salt? Once again they underestimated Gandhi. They had no understanding of the feelings now running in India and they certainly had no understanding of how formidable and clever Mahatma Gandhi would be now that he was an outright opponent.

to destroy was not only a symbol of the Government's right to tax and therefore its right to rule—it was an emotional issue. The tax bore hardest on the poor, for no one, particularly in a hot country can live without salt. The poorest peasant was found to pay as much as the richest merchant. Many also thought that to tax a substance which nature provided free was especially repugnant.

Gandhi's flouting of the Salt Tax law gripped people's imaginations. Civil disobedience broke out in nearly every province. All over India poor people began taking salt from the sea. At least 60,000 people were arrested, including nearly all the Congress leaders.

On the night of May 5th Gandhi himself arrested. He had been asleep under a mango near the seashore. The police came brandishing guns. Gandhi was quite calm, he brushed teeth with a twig in the Indian way and allowed himself to be taken off. There was no trial and no sentence he was simply locked away.

Gandhi had relied on being arrested: it was part of the strategy.

Non-violence in action

Protests continued after Gandhi's imprisonment. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the poet, led 2,500 Congress volunteers to the Dharasana Salt works. This was defended by policemen armed with steel-shod staves. After prayers the protesters moved forward. The first column was headed by one of Gandhi's four sons, Manilal. They were viciously attacked and beaten about the head by the soldiers. Obeying the rules of non-violence they did not defend themselves. They fell where they stood as the staves rained down on their heads with sickening thuds. As the wounded fell with fractured skulls and concussions they were dragged away by women protesters. A second column drew up in complete silence approached the stockade. The British officer barked an order and the police beat the protesters down. They were dragged away.

The Round Table Conference

In August 1931, Gandhi sailed for Britain as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress. On embarkation Gandhiji warned: "I might come back empty handed." He didn't hope for much from the Conference. In truth he wasn't at all that interested in the details of just how a new

government should work. His was the human approach, and at the human level he scored a great success. He conquered the hearts of many British men and women and persuaded many more of the justice of his cause.

Newspaper headline writers loved him. When asked whether he had felt sufficiently clothed when he visited the King, he said "The King had enough on for both of us. "The English were intrigued by details of Gandhi's personal habits, his dress, his diet.

When he ventured into the cotton towns of Lancashire to explain his reasons for boycotting British cloth, Gandhi was cheered by the workers, many of whom were unemployed because of his policy. They liked the fact that Gandhi had taken the trouble to come and talk with them. This was something their own rulers rarely, if ever, did.

Do you want your own prosperity to be built on the misery of others? Gandhi asked them. And they said "No." He told them that they were much better off on their unemployment pay every week than an Indian worker who got less than half of that per month when he was working.

Gandhi was not a materialist. He did not value wealth but he hated grinding, desperate poverty. Gandhi said: "No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt that both England and the town dwellers in India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history.

My ambition is no less than to convert the

ish people through non-violence and thus
e them see the wrong they have done in In-

I do not seek to harm your people. I want
serve them even as I want to serve my own."

Gandhi's personal triumph was tremendous
the conference itself was a failure. In fact it
s worse than a failure because it widened the
ferences between the Indians themselves. As
ndhi put it: "They went into the conference
uslim and Sikhs and Untouchables, and they
me out of it Muslims and Sikhs and
ntouchables - and never at any moment was
e Indian nation there."

And so Gandhi - dejected but determined
left for India. He would never again return to
Britain.

"The Children of God"

Within three weeks of Mahatma Gandhi's
return to India, he was back in jail. Once again,
in prison he turned his attention to the
untouchables, and began a fast to the death. His
epic fast stirred the conscience of the people of
India. Gandhi won some concessions from Con-
gress about the way the untouchables were to
be elected. More importantly, the effect of his
fast was to improve the lot of the Harijan. They
were not only touched but even embraced by their
fellow Hindus. Wells and temples where they
had not been allowed to go were now thrown
open to them.

After his release from prison in 1933, Gan-
dhi set out on a twelve thousand mile Harijan
tour collecting money for the untouchables.

Gandhi was a very religious Hindu and believed
that if you led a bad life you would come back to
earth as a member of an inferior caste. But
Gandhi would not accept untouchability. As
Gandhi said: "I know of no argument in favour
of untouchability . . . indeed I would reject all
authority if it is in conflict with sober reason or
the dictates of the heart."

Gandhi's fight for the untouchables was
only partly successful. Yet the fight still goes
on. To this day government officials and com-
munity leaders lead little bands of untouchables
into tea shops and barber's shops; sometimes they
are allowed back even when the officials have
gone away again!

In these quiet years, Gandhiji took less di-
rect action in Congress affairs and concentrated
on welfare work. He also worked constantly on
an issue which was central to him - Hindu/Mus-
lim unity. The two groups were drifting further
apart and Gandhi was heartbroken. He could
see that independence would probably cause the
final split. He would always say that independ-
ence should be delayed if there was any chance
of avoiding that final rift.

Storm clouds of war

If there was ever any doubt that the Brit-
ish would be forced to leave India within a few
years, the events of 1939 settled the matter.
India was not prepared for war. The rise of
Fascism in Europe had seemed a faraway threat.
Yet when war came it was to have a dramatic
impact on Asian thinking.

On the whole India's Congress leaders
supported Britain in her fight, but they resigned

the Viceroy decided that India was also at without consulting them. To try to win press over, the British promised independence after the war, but Gandhi insisted on independence violently nor did he want to take advantage of Britain's difficulties. "We do not want our independence out of Britain's ruin," he

In August 1942, Gandhi called upon the British to "Quit India". He told the All India Congress Committee "Our quarrel is not with the British people, we fight their imperialism." Perhaps Gandhi did not fully understand the significance of his action. Certainly he regretted the mad riots that followed his "Quit India" demand.

Kasturba's death

Violence broke out again all over India when, two days after his "Quit India" speech, Gandhi was arrested and imprisoned yet again.

This was a time of great personal tragedy for Gandhi. Within a few days of his arrest, his devoted secretary Mahadev Desai died suddenly. When his wife became sick. Gandhi and Kasturba, whom he called Ba, spent the last months of their life. It had often been difficult when they were young but now mellowed with age. Kasturba had come to be a significant influence on Gandhi's life even if only in the background. When death came it was Gandhi who was holding her. Gandhi said; "I can say of the vacuum that has been created by Ba's death, it is something very different, a vacuum which cannot be filled." Ba had borne Gandhi four sons. And they had been together since they were children.

Six weeks after his wife's death, Gandhi was released from prison. He was very sick and the Viceroy feared more violence if he were to die in jail.

The transfer of power

The Allied Victory in 1945 at the end of the Second World War marked the beginning of the end of colonialism. Britain was exhausted and the new Labour government was committed to Indian independence.

The British in India knew that time was running out. The Indian Civil Service had not recruited an English person since 1939. The Civil Service in India was getting old, tired and understaffed. It had had to deal with mounting food and cloth shortages, including a terrible famine in Bengal in 1943. Desperate poverty was widespread.

In 1945, the other Congress leaders were released from prison. In the elections that followed Congress kept its position as the largest political party but it no longer spoke for the Muslims. During the war, with Congress leaders in prison, Jinnah's Muslim League had gained increasing support for a Muslim state of Pakistan. The idea of "Partition" the division of India, was hated by Gandhi and Congress.

Britain's new Labour government decided to make a last attempt to preserve Indian unity and a cabinet mission was sent out to Delhi in 1946. Negotiations dragged on for three months but finally broke down because Congress and the Muslim League could not trust each other.

The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, invited Gandhi's

ple Jawaharlal Nehru to form an interim (temporary) government. Nehru asked Jinnah his assistance in helping to run the government and offered the Muslim League several government posts. But Jinnah was unable to see.

In August the Muslim League decided on a "Direct Action Day" as a protest against Congress Government" and to force the British to recognize their demand for a separate state. This led to a fearful outbreak of violence in the Calcutta region. Four thousand people were killed and 15,000 injured in a wave of shootings, lubbings and burnings. The bloodshed and murder spread to East Bengal. Muslim gangs went about killing and forcibly converting Hindus.

The news horrified Gandhi who decided to go himself and "to bury myself in East Bengal until such a time as the Hindus and Muslims learn to live together in peace... I do not know, he said, "what I shall be able to do there. All that I know is that I won't be at peace unless I go.

Gandhi himself described his mission as the most difficult in his whole life. When a colleague went to visit Gandhi in East Bengal, he found him in the house of a dhobi, a village washerman. "So there he was in the little hut of the village washerman, writing his letters by the light of a kerosene lamp." People found it heartbreaking to see the frail little man, now 77 years old, walking barefoot from village to village. But Gandhi threw every effort into his supreme task. He held prayer meetings, he received deputations; he preached courage, forgiveness and truth.

From Bengal Gandhi went to Bihar where

the victims of the riots were Muslims rather than Hindus. By March Gandhi was holding prayer meetings, trying to get Muslims back in their homes, and collecting money from Hindus for Muslim relief. He stayed in a small Muslim village, went on a half-fast and vowed he would not leave until Muslims and Hindus were at peace. One month later, the killings stopped.

The last viceroy

The continuing disorder in India, despite the Mahatma's efforts, made the British Government fearful. Jinnah still held out for partition and the resolve of Congress was weakening. Despairing of reaching agreement and horrified at the prospect of civil war, British Prime Minister Attlee took a bold decision; the British would hand over power no later than June 1948. The new and final Viceroy appointed for the job was Lord Louis Mountbatten. He had been World War II Supremo in the South East Asia Command and was a cousin of Britain's King George VI. Mountbatten came to the job youthful, fresh, informed and with complete authority. He arrived in Delhi in March 1947, and almost immediately sent word to Gandhi that he wished to see him.

Mountbatten said he would send a plane to pick him up but Gandhi insisted on going to Delhi in a third class railway compartment. Their first meeting was something of a surprise for Mountbatten. "Certainly I was quite unprepared to meet such a lovable old man, with a warm, human manner; great good humour; charming manners, and perhaps most unexpectedly of all, an unflinching sense of humour. My wife and I welcomed him together, and friendly relations were effortlessly established."



Left : Lord Louis Mountbatten and Edwina Mountbatten invited Gandhi to tea on the lawn of the Viceroy's House. Mountbatten recognised that only Gandhiji held the key to a peaceful change-over. He came to regard Gandhi as the greatest person he'd ever met; "His life was one of truth, toleration and love. India, indeed the world, will not see the likes of him again, perhaps, for centuries."

Time was short. Mountbatten said "I could sense a real tragedy round the corner if we didn't act very fast - civil war in its worst form. Besides that, Partition, much as many of us hated it, seemed a much lesser evil. I could see no alternative." Partition was inevitable. And, inevitably, this also meant dividing two important regions with large Muslim populations Bengal in the east and the Punjab in the west.

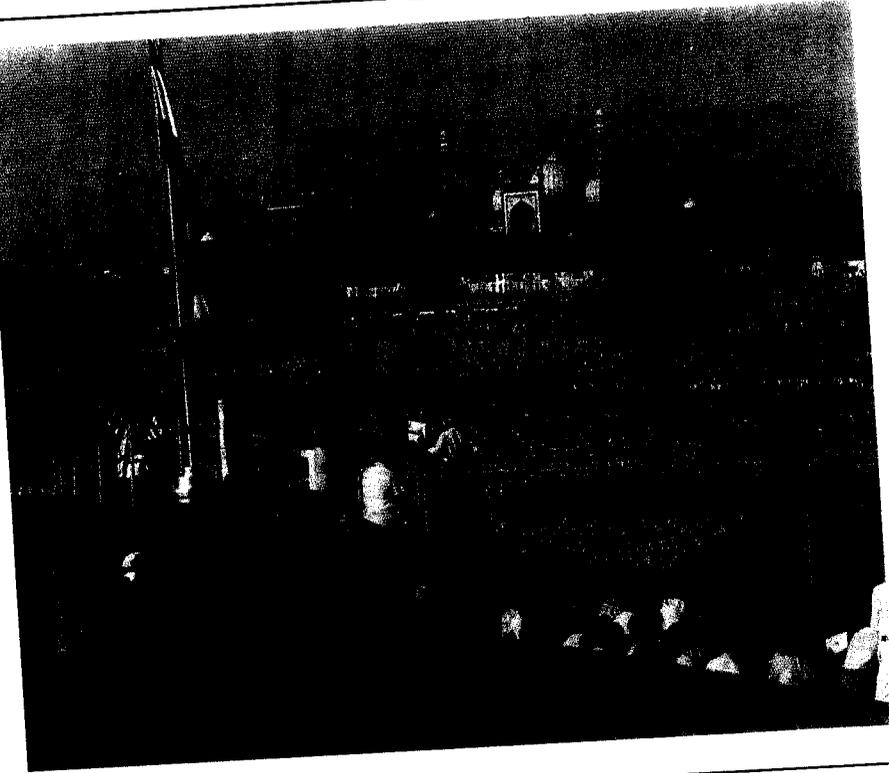
Working around the clock Mountbatten's team produced an Independence Plan in six weeks. Mohamed Ali Jinnah was not enthusiastic about it. Although he had insisted on Partition, he wasn't satisfied with what he called his "moth-eaten Pakistan." The main argument was over the two key provinces in Northern India, Bengal and the Punjab. Jinnah had insisted on Partition otherwise the Muslims would be swamped in Hindu India. Mountbatten and Congress said: "By the

same argument, the two provinces you want in Pakistan, with large non-Muslim minorities, well also have to be partitioned."

Independence when it came, came fast. Many said too fast. Most of the princes were persuaded, bribed, cajoled or frightened into joining the new Indian States. Pakistan was to become a country of two parts separated by more than 800 miles. A lot has happened since then. The eastern part of Pakistan, East Bengal, broke away in 1971 and became Bangladesh.

Partition

For many of India's people August 15, 1947 was one of the greatest days in history. One fifth of the population of the world gained independence that day. All the quarrels and animosities which had built up between the Indians and the British over the decades seemed to melt away. There was great rejoicing.



Left : August 15, 1947 : Independence Day at the Red Fort in Delhi. Even though Gandhi had devoted 40 years of his life to lead the Indian people to independence, he would not attend the ceremony. He was in Calcutta fasting and working for peace between violent Hindu and Muslim groups.

But Gandhi found nothing to celebrate. He felt "Partition of the Heart." "My independence," he said, "has not yet come there is no reason for festivals and merriments like this." Gandhi's ideal of "unity" for which he had fought all his life, had been rejected. He felt deserted by his fellow countrymen, abandoned by loved colleagues and friends.

Gandhi had always said he would like to live to be a hundred and twenty five years old. Now as the violence mounted and Hindus and Muslims started to kill each other he said at his prayer meetings: "I wanted to be 125. Now I have lost interest in life." But even in these last months of his life, Gandhi still had more great battles to fight.

"The Old man has done it again"

August 1947 found Gandhi in Calcutta. Feeling sad and rejected himself Gandhi could still bring courage, comfort and forgiveness to others. Calcutta had already been through a year of terrible violence before Gandhi arrived. A well known Indian writer, Sudhin Datta remembered later, "For a year it had seemed as if it was not worth living in Calcutta. And then Gandhi had come. The first day I think they threw brickbats at him, and sticks at him, and then of course he talked to them, and slowly in two or three days time the atmosphere changed and on the 14th what we saw is perhaps the only miracle I have seen in my life."

The "miracle" was Muslims and Hindus

ing and celebrating together and soldiers
littel flags on their bayonets pinned on by
crowd. Everybody said; "The old man has
it again!"

Still Gandhi could not celebrate. By the
of the monthly violence again erupted and
Gandhi himself just escaped injury. He told the
ple he would start a fast to the death in Cal-
cutta to end only when the violence ended.
Within four days the chief citizens of Calcutta
ought him written promises of peace by their
peoples and Gandhi was able to break his fast.

One-man boundary force

That was in Bengal. In the Punjab in the
north, where the authorities had also expected
troops, 55,000 soldiers were stationed. They were
overwhelmed by the violence and by the number
of people who were forced to leave their homes.
When Gandhi arrived. As Mountbatten said later,
"When the trouble started the 55,000 man
boundary force in the Punjab was swamped by
troops, but my one-man boundary force brought
peace in Bengal."

In September Gandhi undertook his last
journey - back to Delhi. The capital city was
in a blaze with communal strife. There was mur-
der and bloodshed. Refugees were fleeing from
the old walled city as others were pouring in.
His was just a small part of the mass move-
ment of peoples taking place all over northern
India. No one really knows how many lives were
lost in these tragic weeks of violence, but a fig-
ure of 200,000 killed is probably too low! More
than fifteen million fled from India to Pakistan
in the opposite direction.

Gandhi set to work. "I must do what I can
to calm the heated atmosphere," he said. He
visited the refugee camps; some housed Sikhs
and Hindus driven out of the Punjab, some con-
tained Muslims chased out of their homes in
Delhi. His platform was the daily prayer meet-
ing, which was usually held in the garden of Birla
House where he was staying. His preaching and
readings from the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, the
Muslim Koran and the Jewish-Christian Bible
were an inspiration. Hundreds attended, often
thousands more listened on the radio.

The last fast

Prayer was not enough. Gandhi felt he
must do more. In January 1948, he announced
his intention to begin a fast to the death. "The
fast will end," he said, "when I am satisfied that
there is a reunion of hearts of all communities,"
This, at the age of 78, his eighteenth great fast,
was to be the final fast of his life.

By the third day of the fast the Indian Gov-
ernment was persuaded by Gandhi to make a
considerable payment of money due to Paki-
stan. Many Hindus were outraged. They thought
Gandhi was fasting to assist the Muslims who
were at war with India in Kashmir. Crowds of
refugee Sikhs and Hindus demonstrated outside
Birla House, chanting "Blood for Blood" and "Let
Gandhi die."

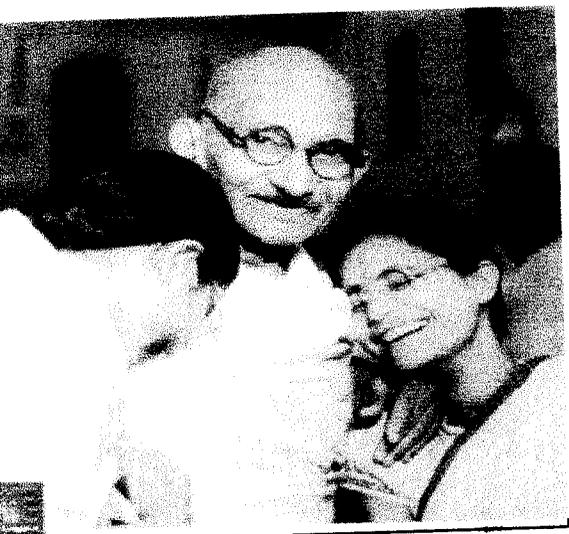
Gandhi was finally satisfied by the pledges
given to him by the leaders of the different com-
munities in Delhi. These representatives prom-
ised to restore communal peace and friendship
by every possible effort, even at the cost of their
own lives. Gandhi broke his fast on the sixth
day.

Gandhi did not spare himself. Without allowing himself time to recover from the fast he went back to work. He was now working furiously on plans to give power to the people, and many of his old ideas about putting life back in the villages. In the evenings he held the usual prayer meetings. At one of these, shortly after Gandhi broke his fast, a bomb was thrown. It injured nobody. But Patel, the Minister of Home Affairs, was fearful that Gandhi would be killed. He wanted everyone attending the prayer meetings to be searched; Gandhi refused.

"If I have to die, I should like to die at the prayer meeting. You are wrong in believing that I can protect me from harm. God is my Protector", Gandhi told Patel.

The death of Gandhi

When Gandhi was a young lawyer fighting for Indian rights in South Africa, he was



Above : Gandhi with his two greatnieces, Manu and Abhu.

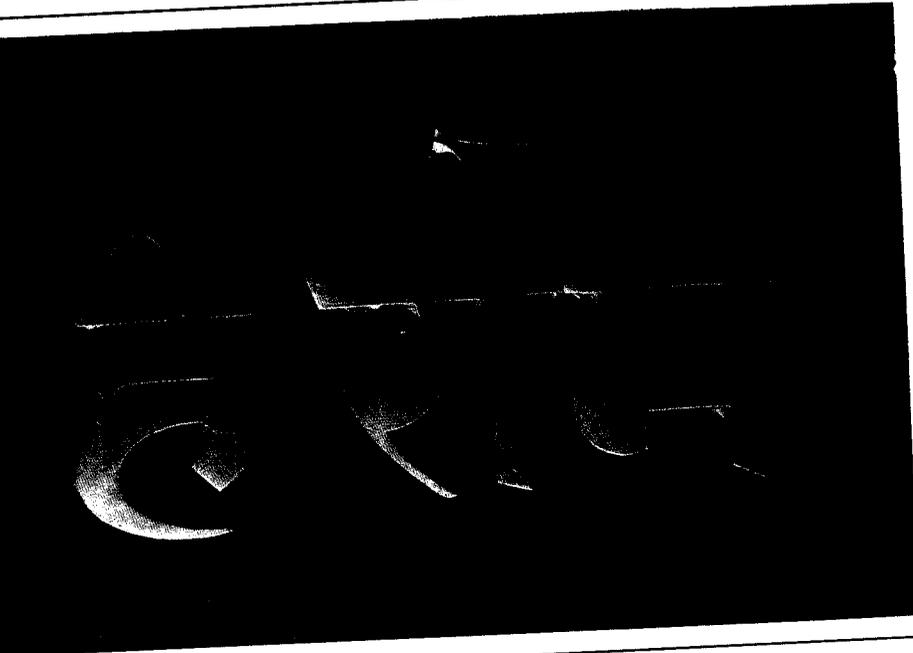
attacked by fellow Indians. One Muslim Indian who suspected him of betraying the cause threatened to kill him. Gandhi was not dismayed. Death held no fear for him. At that time Gandhi said, "Death is the appointed end of all life. To die by the hand of a brother rather than by disease . . . cannot to for me a matter of sorrow and if I am free from thought of anger or hatred against my assailant I know that will rebound to my eternal welfare."

And so, forty years later it was to be.

Gandhi's thoughts about death were Hindu thoughts. He did not believe in a personal meeting with God, in fact he believed the self, the individual person would disappear. He thought of death as like the joining of streams and rivers to the sea.

On the last day of his life Gandhi rose in the cold clear Delhi dawn at 3'o clock in the morning. Most of the day he worked, held meetings, and spent time in prayer. He was still at Birla House where he had entered on his final fast.

At about 5'o clock that evening, after a meeting with Sardar Patel, Gandhi came out hurriedly from the house because he was a little late for evening prayers. Robert Stimson, a British correspondent who was there tells us: "He was wearing his usual white loin cloth and a pair of sandals. He had thrown a shawl round his chest for it was getting chilly. His arms were resting lightly on the shoulders of two companions and he was smiling. There were only two or three hundred people in the garden and they pressed eagerly towards him as he climbed the steps lead-



left: Gandhi's tomb with the Hindu inscription "Hey Rama." In English the nearest translation is "Oh God," the words Gandhi uttered as he died.

g to the small raised lawn where the congregation had gathered. As he got to the top of the steps and approached the crowd he took his arms from the shoulders of his friend and raised his hands in salutation. he was still smiling. A nick set man in his thirties I should say, and dressed in khaki was in the forefront of the crowd. He moved a step towards Mr. Gandhi, took out a revolver and fired several shots."

Gandhi murmured "Hey Rama" (Oh God), stood for a couple of seconds, blood oozing into his white clothes and at once he fell down and he was dead.

Lord Mountbatten told the author some years ago what it was like to receive the news of Gandhi's death. "I was absolutely numbed and petrified," He said, "I went round at once to Birla House. There was a large crowd around the house already and inside it most of the mem-

bers of government - everyone in tears. Gandhi looked very peaceful in death, but I dreaded what his death might bring.

"As I went into the house where his body was lying, someone in the crowd shouted out: "It was a Muslim who did it!" I turned immediately and said : "You fool, don't you know it was a Hindu?"

"Of course I didn't know - no one knew at that stage. But I did know this, if it was a Muslim, we were lost. There would be civil war without fail. Thank God it wasn't!"

It turned out to be a mad Hindu extremist - a young man from Poona, named Nathuram Godse, who was later hanged, along with another conspirator. Five others were sentenced to life imprisonment. Gandhi's funeral took place on the banks of the holy river Jumna at Rajghat

e a million people waited for the cortege. Das set fire to his father's funeral pyre, which ed for fourteen hours. Gandhi's ashes were scattered in the sacred rivers of India and e sea at Bombay.

Prime Minister Nehru, speaking on radio, given the news of Gandhi's death to the In-people shortly after the murder. "The light gone out of our lives and there is darkness ywhere and I do not know what to tell you how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu as call him, the Father of our Nation, is now no e.

Gandhi's gifts to India and the world

Nehru said, "The light has gone out, I said, yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in country was no ordinary light. The light his illumined this country for this many years l illumine this country for many more years, d a thousand years later that light will be seen his country, and the world will see it and it l give solace to innumerable hearts. For that ht represented the living truth, and the eternal n was with us with his eternal truth reminding of the right path, drawing us from error, tak- g this ancient country to freedom."

This little man in the loin cloth left behind r more than his modest possessions: his wire ectacles, his sandals, his nickle-plated watch, s stick, his twopenny chinese monkeys.

If it is true that the evil that men do lives ter them, then so, surely does the good. The oblem is we can't measure it.

Gandhi's great success in many ways was

to prepare his people for independence. All his life he had taught truthfulness and cleanliness. He taught the Hindus proper pride in their own culture and traditions. He taught self-respect where before under the yoke of Empire there had been submissiveness. By the example of his own courage and fearlessness Gandhi taught his people to stand up for themselves.

Gandhi identified with the poor and they with him. He was loved by the factory workers, the poor peasants and the depressed classes for whom he consistently fought. He won the affection of many Muslims for his efforts on their behalf. He came to embody the true spirit of India.

Gandhi, in his loin cloth, visited the King of England at Buckingham Palace. The King asked him, "Mr Gandhi, how is India doing?" Gandhi replied pointing to his skinny limbs and his poor loin cloth, "Look at me, and you will know from me what India is like." Perhaps this was the secret of Gandhi's power and his mass appeal. Many Indians looked upon him as a real symbol of India. In his poverty and his humility he mirrored their lives. He could talk to them. He expressed their thoughts. He was one of them.

Thus, in a nutshell Gandhiji can rightfully be described as the greatest man of this century. Gandhiji is indeed, the man of the 20th century.

Important Dates

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi born on October 2 in Porbandar.

Married to Kasturba. Both aged 13.

Gandhi's first son, Harilal, born. Gandhi sails to England to study law.

Returns to India after being called to the bar.

His second son, Manilal, is born.

In April, sails to South Africa to work for Dada Abdullah & Co.

Returns to India to collect his family.

His third son, Ramdas, is born.

Boer War: Gandhi supports British and organizes Ambulance Corps.
His last son, Devadas, is born in 1900.

Phoenix Farm purchased and Gandhi sets up his first ashram.

Zulu Rebellion: Gandhi again organizes Ambulance Corps.

First Satyagraha campaign begins in South Africa. Gandhi is sent to prison four times in next five years.

South Africa repeals some of the discriminatory legislation against Indian community.

Gandhi returns to India and founds an ashram at Ahmedabad.

Gandhi calls a hartal for March 30 and April 6; the massacre at Amritsar occurs on April 10.

Gandhi jailed in March for six years (released in February 1924).

Congress calls for Independence for India.

March: the Salt March to Dandi. Gandhi arrested in May just before Congress organizes the demonstration at the Dharsana Saltworks.

Gandhi released in January and leaves for Round Table Conference in London.

On his return to India, Gandhi is re-arrested (released in May 1933).

September : starts fast to the death on untouchables issue.

"Quit India" resolution passed by Congress. Gandhi and other leaders arrested.

Kasturba dies in prison on February 22. Gandhi released in May.

April : Jinnah calls for a separate Pakistan.

August : Muslims massacre Hindus in Calcutta. Gandhi goes to the troubled areas.

February : Lord Mountbatten appointed as last viceroy.

August 15 : Independence declared.

September : Gandhi undertakes fast to the death against Hindu-Muslim violence.

January 30 : Gandhi assassinated by Nathuram Vinayak Godse.



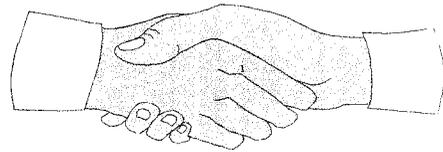


*Let us follow the
great man's footsteps
and make the world a
better place to live
in . . .*



**S.SRIRAM
ASHWINGANAPATHY
B. KALYAN
D.KARTHIKEYAN
M.MANIMUTHU
PRADHAP SINGH**

**K.K. DINESH
S. DAMODHAR BHAT
K. KUMARAGURU
M. KARTHIKEYAN
B. JAGADEESH
RAHUL JOSHI.**



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