

The Historical Gandhi Exposed

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What's the source of your evidence about Gandhi's racism, defense of Hitler, and support and participation in war?

A: Most of our evidence is directly quoted from "The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi," aka "CWMG." Much evidence is also taken from *The Indian Opinion*, a paper Gandhi published in South Africa to promote his political views. A smaller amount of evidence is also taken from primary sources such as interviews, affidavits, and articles.

Q: What is CWMG?

A: "The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi" is the official collection of Gandhi's writings. The first volume was published by the Indian government in 1960 and the last in 1994. There are 100 volumes and approximately 50,000 pages in the collection. References are abbreviated "CWMG" and include volume and page number (eg. CWMG Vol. 1, p. 1).

Q: Doesn't Gandhi's youth excuse his racism?

A: Many people argue that Gandhi was "young and naive" during his anti-black activism. There are three problems with this argument:

First, Gandhi was 45 when he left South Africa for good. Considering the 2008 life expectancy in South Africa for males is 49, Gandhi could not reasonably be considered "young" while in his 30's and mid-40's in early-20th century South Africa.

Second, Gandhi's racism continued until his death. He was in his 50's when he covered up the racially motivated murder of William Doherty by Gandhians, in his 60's when he fasted to deny fair political representation to the Dalit, and in his 70's when he wrote letters defending Hitler and condemned the Jews for not surrendering to the Holocaust.

Third, Gandhi received an elitist education at University College London, which is often ranked in the top 20 universities in the world. He also spearheaded the South African campaigns for Indian civil rights and claims personal exposure to racism. All these points indicate that whatever his age, Gandhi was anything but naive during the South African period.

Q: How long did Gandhi live in South Africa?

A: For nearly 21 years, from 1893-1914.

Q: Didn't Gandhi change later in life?

A: As demonstrated in the previous answer, Gandhi's racism continued until his death. Although his anti-black activism did end around 1914, it's reasonable to conclude that this was simply because he had left Africa and was no longer surrounded by black Africans. At that point, he simply began discriminating against new minority groups, such as the Dalit, Muslims, and Sikhs.

Even if his views *had* changed, the damage was already done. There is a vast difference between simply holding racist opinions and actually acting on them. Gandhi did the latter, energetically promoting racism, demanding segregation, and even going to war against the black Africans.

Most importantly, in 1935 Gandhi failed to admit to his anti-black activism when meeting in person with African-Americans such as Dr. Howard Thurman, Rev. Edward Carroll, Benjamin Mays, and Channing Tobias. Gandhi even lied to Dr. Thurman, saying he "purposely did not invite" the South African blacks to his Indian civil rights campaign because it would have "endangered their cause." The truth is, Gandhi actually campaigned *against* the South African black cause.

Gandhi *never* apologized for his racism. This is the surest indicator that his views never changed.

Q: Did he know what "Kaffir" means?

A: The term "Kaffir" is a South African pejorative for blacks which is equivalent to the "n" word. Its use has been an actionable offense in South Africa since 1975. Despite always using it to describe black Africans, Gandhi was fully aware of the offensive nature of the word. While protesting religious conflict, Gandhi wrote: "If 'Kaffir' is a term of opprobrium, how much more so is Chandal?" [CWMG, Vol. 28, p. 62] "Chandal" is a racist term for low-caste Hindus.

Q: Everyone was racist back then. Wasn't Gandhi a product of his era?

A: At best, this argument means there was nothing special about Gandhi. It says he was just more of the same and didn't stand out from the crowd. Yet idolization of Gandhi is usually premised on his false image as a civil rights icon who refused to go with the flow, championed equality, and loved everyone regardless of race, color, or creed. Considering his indisputable anti-minority activism, Gandhi should at least no longer be associated with civil rights movements and Gandhi enthusiasts should reconsider their promotion of him.

However, as a highly educated London-trained lawyer, Gandhi certainly knew about contemporary civil rights struggles. As a lawyer demanding civil rights for high-caste South African Indians, he also was aware that South African blacks faced many of the same issues. This did not stop him from simultaneously praising racial registration for blacks and rejecting it

for Indians or demanding equal access for Indians while promoting further segregation for blacks.

Like many of his contemporaries, Gandhi likely knew better and yet promoted racism anyways.

Q: Why did Martin Luther King, Jr. credit Gandhi?

A: Dr. King was assassinated in 1968. The first volume of CWMG was not even published until 1960. Like many people, Dr. King had only heard about the mythical Gandhi. Further complicating the pursuit of truth, Gandhi lied about many things in his autobiography, including his reasons for fighting in the Bambatha Uprising. Without the easy access to Gandhi's South Africa era writings which we have today, Dr. King had no reason to doubt or ability to verify the official story. It is our belief that if Dr. King had known the reality of Gandhi's racism, he would not have promoted the man.

Q: Can't we thank Gandhi for giving the world nonviolence resistance?

A: Nonviolent resistance is *not* unique to Gandhi. In fact, the writings of Josephus document one of the earliest incidents of nonviolent resistance, when Jews in Roman-occupied Jerusalem protested the erection of images of Caesar. Nonviolent resistance was also practiced by many in the British-occupied American colonies, by blacks in 1830's Trinidad, and even by the black South Africans during Gandhi's time.

In fact, Gandhi's anti-minority beliefs were far stronger than his belief in nonviolent resistance. This led to situations, for instance, where Gandhi's anti-black activism (which involved accusations of laziness and calls for higher taxes on the black population) occurred at the same time the black South Africans were nonviolently resisting British occupation through work slow-downs and refusal to pay taxes. Similarly, while Bhagat Singh, an Indian freedom icon, was hunger striking in jail, Gandhi insisted the British "had the right to hang" him. Singh was a Sikh who was jailed in 1931 for opposing British occupation.

Finally, can Gandhi really be considered the pioneer of nonviolent resistance when he supported every war in his lifetime? He supported the Second Boer War, the Bambatha Uprising (even joining the British Army to fight against the blacks), World War I, World War II, and blessed the forcible annexation of Hyderabad and Kashmir, the latter of which still bleeds today. That is not the legacy of a devotee of nonviolence.

Q: Shouldn't we credit Gandhi for achieving India's independence through nonviolence?

A: The nonviolent methods attributed to Gandhi were employed against the British by Ram Singh as early as 1872. In other words, Gandhi did merely attached himself to an in progress movement.

Since his *satyagraha* campaigns generally ended with Gandhians murdering whites and minorities, one could argue that Gandhi's involvement actually made the nonviolence struggle *more* violent. Nearly four million Indians died in the post-independence Partition of India, which also saw the largest short-term migration in history. With this end result, how can the Indian Independence Movement seriously be called nonviolent?

Q: Won't this information about Gandhi damage the peace movement?

A: The peace movement is far bigger than just one man. The universal virtues of peace, love, and nonviolence are powerful enough to stand without the assistance of a man who preached prejudice and racism. Furthermore, Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Perpetuating the Gandhi myth is not only an affront to the truth but a danger to social justice.

Additionally, the peace movement will suffer greater damage by linking itself with a racist than by exposing and repudiating him. Telling the truth about Gandhi demonstrates intellectual and moral integrity and real dedication to rooting out prejudice wherever it is found.

Q: Didn't Gandhi do some good?

A: Everyone does some good in his or her life. But the majority of Gandhi's life was spent hurting people.

In South Africa, he preached racism, advocated segregation, and paved the way for apartheid. He volunteered to fight against blacks in one war and supported every other major war of his lifetime. In India, he supported the crippling Hindu caste system and fasted to deny fair political representation to lower castes. He incited his followers to racial hatred and tried to cover up an ensuing murder. He defended Hitler and condemned the Jews for not surrendering to the Holocaust. Perhaps most shockingly, he regularly slept naked with young teenage girls, including his own niece, to "prove" his celibacy.

Whatever good Gandhi did in his life is nearly impossible to separate from the taint of all the bad things he did.

Q: It's a good story. Why can't you just leave Gandhi alone?

A: Gandhi hurt many minorities, both in South Africa and in India. His fast against fair representation for the black Dalits crippled their movement for equality. Mayawati, a contemporary Dalit leader, blames Gandhi for India's current caste problems, saying, "Gandhi divided the country on caste lines." To this day, millions of Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains suffer because of Gandhi's attempt to convert them to Hinduism with the stroke of a pen through Article 25 of the Indian Constitution. As the "Father of the Nation," Gandhi negatively influenced Indian state policy in a wide variety of other ways.

Internationally, Gandhi has become a propaganda tool for the Indian government to whitewash its questionable activities. For instance, state-sponsored pogroms by Narendra Modi are countered with ads in U.S. papers comparing Modi to Gandhi. After authorizing the bloody invasion of the Golden Temple, Indira Gandhi said that Mohandas Gandhi “accepted that necessity.”

Finally, blacks have been twice victimized by the perpetuation of the Gandhi myth. First, he led anti-black campaigns in South Africa and then he was promoted as a hero for black civil rights. Presently, India is using Gandhi’s false image to befriend African countries for use as a voting bloc in the United Nations.

Social justice, the restoration of the Indian minority communities, and the elimination of propaganda all require that people learn the truth about Gandhi.