

## Natal Indian Congress [1894-1914]

This organization was triggered in response to the repressive anti-Asian Franchise Law Bill in Natal; a year after Gandhi arrived in South Africa.

In June 1894, Gandhi sent telegrams to Speaker of Natal Legislative Assembly, Prime Minister Robinson and Attorney-General Escombe, asking for postponement of consideration of the Franchise Law Amendment Bill until an Indian petition was presented.

In July, Gandhi led a deputation to the Natal Governor and urged him not to sanction the Franchise Bill. A week later, he petitioned the Governor requesting postponement of dispatch of the Bill to the Imperial Government for Royal assent, pending Indian petition to the latter. On July 17, 1894, he submitted lengthy mass petition signed by 10,000 Indians to Natal Government (addressed to Lord Ripon, Secretary of State for Colonies).

In late August, these preceding activities led Gandhi to establish the Natal Indian Congress- to carry on sustained agitation against discriminatory legislation in the Crown Colony. Gandhi became the organization's first Secretary.

In 1947, long after Gandhi left South Africa, this organization formed the core of the budding anti-apartheid movement.



Dr. A. B. Xuma was President of the African National Congress.

Dr. Yusef Mohamed Dadoo was President of the Transvaal Indian Congress.

Dr. G.M. (Monty) Naicker was President of the Natal Indian Congress.

[South Africa \(1997\): Commemorative pictorial post card from the South African Post, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tripartite Alliance that launched the anti-apartheid struggle.](#)

All three organizations had joined forces in the face of the new apartheid government that took over South Africa in 1946. Indian political organization in SA was in good hands by the 1940s. Dadoo and Naicker [native born in Transvaal and Natal of Indian immigrant parents] had kept in touch with Gandhi throughout their struggle on behalf of the Indian community.

The Transvaal Indian Congress crystallized from the efforts against the 1906 Transvaal Asiatic Law and the 1908 Transvaal India Registration act that Gandhi organized against.

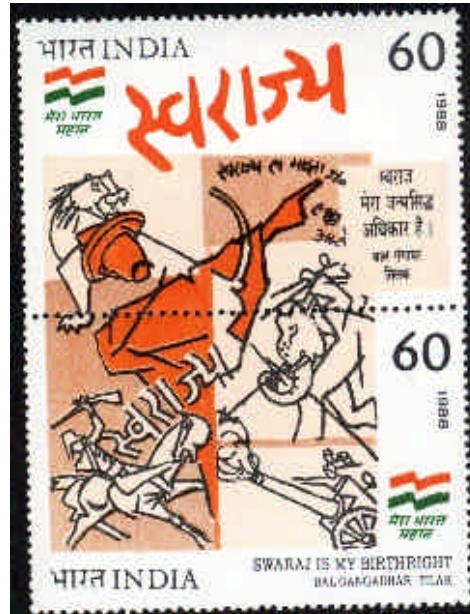
Political Organizer and Negotiator .....

## Indian National Congress [1897-1948]

The Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 to function as a “safety valve” to protect the British interests in the face of Nationalism after the 1857 *Sepoy Mutiny*.

The founder of the INC was an Englishman, Alan Octavian Hume. By 1907, Congress had split functionally- with the militant Bal Gangadhar Tilak from Bombay asking for unconditional self-rule. Lala Lajpat Rai from Punjab, a journalist who edited *Young India* before Gandhi took over, was another militant leader. At times, he served as a mediating intellectual force with the party’s moderates.

India (1988): Stamp commemorating the Home Rule (Swaraj) movement, with a mural depicting the slogan “Swaraj is my Birthright”



India (1988): Mutiny for the British was the “First War of Independence” for India, as depicted in this stamp.

India (1956): Bal Gangadhar Tilak.



India (1965): Lala Lajpat Rai.



India (1966): Gopal Krishna Gokhale.



India (1958): Bipin Chandra Pal.

Gandhi’s activities in South Africa led to his association with the INC from 1897, long before he returned to India.

Bipin Chandra Pal from Bengal was another militant leader who countered Gokhale’s influence in the INC.

Throughout his early years at the INC, Gandhi had to face the *Lal-Bal-Pal* Trio [as they were called] in his efforts to organize a pragmatic political party out of the elitist organization.

India (1985): Presidents of the Indian National Congress since inception in 1885. Gandhi is in Row 2, cell 3 of the bottom left stamp.



While he had to wage his internal struggles with Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal, one steady assistant Gandhi had for his causes in the Indian National Congress was Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru met Gandhi for the first time in 1916, when he was a 27-year-old budding lawyer with political aspirations within the INC. In 1924, he became the INC secretary-general with Gandhi's support.

The image of Gandhi and Nehru shown in all the stamps below is from the 1946 session of the Indian National Congress convened in Bombay on July 6. The newly elected and energized post-war All India Congress Committee [AICC] session was held under the "Presidentship" of Nehru. Earlier, Nehru was elected as the AICC President in 1929 [Lahore].



Guyana (1998): 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gandhi's death.



India (1973). 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Gandhi's death.



Maldives (1990) Nehru Birth Centenary.



Grenada (1990): Nehru Birth Centenary.



Zambia (1998) 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gandhi's death.



Mauritius (1989): Nehru Birth Centenary.



Zambia (2000): Two overprint varieties of the revalued Zambia stamps from the 1998 issue, on airmail covers to the USA.  
The original denomination was for local postage rate.  
Note: One variety has single bar across original value. The other has two bars.

## Congress After Gandhi

The 55<sup>th</sup> session of the All India Congress Committee met in Jaipur in December 1948, over 10 months after Gandhi's death.

Nehru, former president of the INC, who was elected Interim Prime Minister of India before independence, was now serving as the first Prime Minister of Independent India since August 15<sup>th</sup> 1947.

In honor of Gandhi, the location of Jaipur where the Congress convened was named Gandhinagar.

India (1948): These covers feature the special cancellation applied to mail sent by the Congress' delegates.

The two covers with lower value Gandhi stamps are cancelled with an CDS in Hindi only, another new feature in Independent India's post office. The CDS reads- "55<sup>th</sup> Congress, Gandhinagar, Jaipur". The date, also in Hindi numerals, reads "4 Dec 1948".



India (1948): The cover with the 12 anna stamp is tied to an English-only CDS, which was the practice in British India. This was applied on the four days before the last session of the Congress.



Nehru and Patel were considered the logical leaders to take over the strategic reins of the INC from Gandhi. The latter served as Nehru's defense minister in the cabinet and made several decisions that could be construed as "un-Gandhian" over the next year.



Venezuela (1998): Stamps of Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Mahatma Gandhi, issued to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indian Independence. Curiously, issued on the anniversary of the Republic Day (26<sup>th</sup> January 1950).

## First Indian Round Table Conference

Arrested on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1930, in the aftermath of the Salt March, Gandhi and most leaders of the INC were imprisoned without trial for the rest of the year. In response, the Non-cooperation movement [that began in 1920] was intensified. Ramsey MacDonald, as the Labor Prime Minister, made overtures to Congress for a political compromise.

Discussions were held in prison and the Congress Cabinet held on to demands authored by Gandhi in June '30:

- ❖ Constitutional goal of Dominion Status
- ❖ Repeal of the Salt Tax
- ❖ Amnesty for political prisoners
- ❖ Prohibition of liquor and opium sales

The British government accepted none of these demands. The Indian National Congress, the mainstream of Indian Nationalist politics, did not participate in the London conference that followed. The First Indian Round Table Conference was held in London November 12- January 19, 1931. Attending were 60 to 70 Indian representatives handpicked by the Viceroy.



India (1991): Portrait of Dr. Ambedkar, considered Gandhi's political adversary in India.

B. R. Ambedkar, a lawyer, was one of the most prominent Indian delegates- representing the backward class- referred to as "untouchables" in India.

Despite having broken ranks with Gandhi and the Congress establishment recently, he surprised the British by calling for nothing short of full Dominion Status for India.



India (1970): V. S. Srinivasa Sastri stamp tied to piece with FD cancel.

Rt. Honorable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, an educator [*The Silver Tongued Orator*], was chosen to represent moderate Hindu intellectuals, outside the main stream of Hindu nationalism.

Sastri reminding delegates and the press that both Lord Irwin and Ramsey MacDonald were going back on explicit commitments they made in 1929 about Dominion Status.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah was chosen to represent the Moslems of British India as the emerging leader of the Muslim League.

Jinnah ended his speech with "*I must express my pleasure at the presence of the Dominion Prime Ministers... they are here to witness the birth of a new Dominion of India*".



Burkina Faso (1988): Jinnah shown in western clothing.

The conference failed due to British obduracy regarding granting full Dominion status.



UK (1930): London-Delhi Registered airmail cancelled with "Indian Round Table Conference" CDS. The cancel from St. James Place was used during the 2-month period for mail from participants.

## Second Indian Round Table Conference

Within a week after the end of the first RTC, Gandhi and his Congress colleagues were released from prison on January 26, 1931.

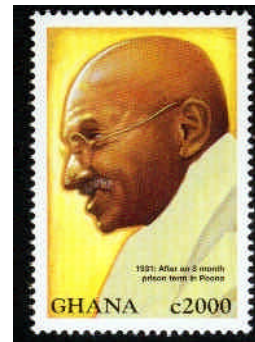
Earnest dialogs to insure the participation of Congress in future conferences ensued.

The "Delhi Pact of Truce" between Lord Irwin and Mahatma Gandhi [on behalf of the Congress] was signed on March 5, 1931.

In return, Gandhi agreed to suspend the civil disobedience movement and participate in the forthcoming Second Indian Round Table Conference to hammer out the structure for a federalized constitutional entity in India. Meanwhile, coercive handling of farmers with respect to land tax arrears and the restoration of property escalated with the involvement of Congress in the implementation of the Delhi Pact.

The British Government agreed to:

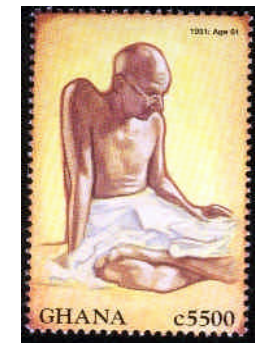
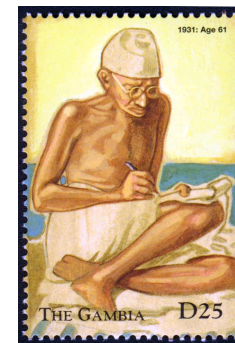
- ❖ Release all political prisoners and restore confiscated farmers' property
- ❖ Withdraw arbitrary ordinances and repressive legislation
- ❖ Repeal the Salt Tax for those living along the sea shore
- ❖ Recognize the people's right to lawfully and peacefully picket dealers of opium, liquor and foreign goods



Not pleased with the resolution, The Congress Working Committee pulled out of the RTC. Gandhi negotiated a solution with the Viceroy by August 26, leading to his decision to proceed to London on August 29, 1931. The Second Indian Round Table Conference was held in London September 14- December 1, 1931.

[Ghana \(1998\): Gandhi upon release in 1931, after serving 8-month prison term.](#)

At age 61, Gandhi set sail from Bombay on August 29<sup>th</sup> 1931. This was to be his last voyage to England. Upon boarding the SS Rajputana, Gandhi, always with his sense of humor, remarked to Captain H. Morton Jack "I am a prisoner to you for a fortnight"! The S.S. Rajputana arrived at Marseilles, France on September 11<sup>th</sup> 1931 and Gandhi traveled to London by road.



[Gambia \(1998\) and Ghana \(1998\): Gandhi at age 61, based on photographs taken aboard the SS Rajputana on his last trip to England.](#)



[UK \(1931\): London SW1-NW2 Registered mail cancelled with "Indian Round Table Conference" CDS. The cancel from St. James Place was used during the 6-week period for mail from participants.](#)

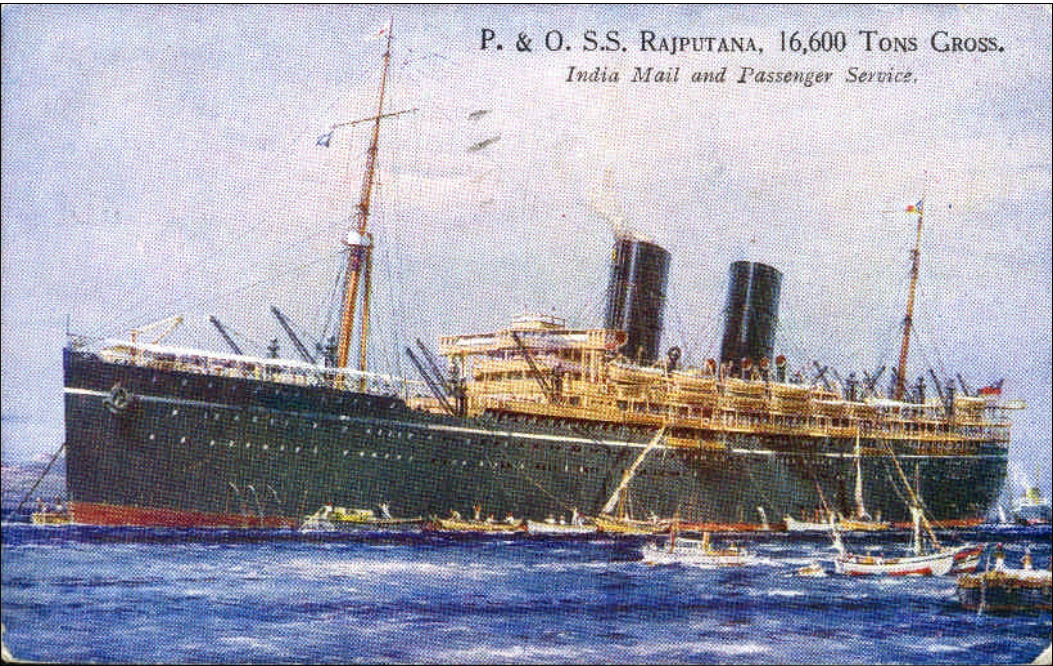
Delegates to the Second RTC included:

- ❖ 13 British ministers and MPs headed by Ramsay MacDonald
- ❖ 19 Indian Maharajas and Princes representing the states
- ❖ Gandhi and 75 other representatives of British India

Mohammad Ali Jinnah and V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Indian delegates from the first RTC, also attended the second Round Table conference.

Participation in Wars .....

..... Anglo-Boer War [1899-1902]



Indian Delegates. Prominent among the British Indian delegates were Madan Mohan Malaviya [founder of Banaras Hindu University], Mohammad Iqbal [poet and philosopher], G.D. Birla [industrialist] and Sarojini Naidu [poet and Congress activist]. All but Mr. Iqbal [who was in London] were also passengers with Gandhi on the SS Rajputana from Bombay to Marseilles.



**UK (Marseille-Gare PAQUEBOT).**  
Maritime mail from the SS Rajputana [France-England].  
Same ship that Gandhi took, sailing on the same route.

India (1962)  
Pandit  
Madan  
Mohan  
Malaviya.



India (1988): Mohammad Iqbal.



India (1984): Ganshyam das Birla.



India (1964):  
Sarojini  
Naidu.

Through Aden, Suez and Port Said, Gandhi familiarized himself with many mechanical devices on the ship, including looking through the sextant on the ship.



Comoro Islands (1991): Imperforate souvenir sheet with margin illustrations including image of Gandhi with the sextant aboard the SS Rajputana.

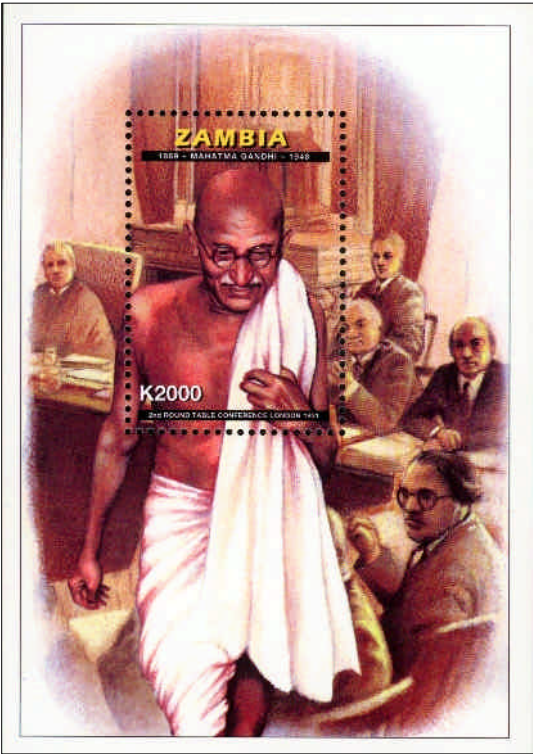
Political Organizer and Negotiator .....

..... Indian Round Table Conferences [1930-1931]

St. James' Place. Gandhi made his maiden speech at the conference on September 15, 1931, in which he elaborated on the mandate of the Indian National Congress. He subsequently addressed ten other sessions.

Will Rogers, famous American artist, captured the image of Gandhi at the conference thus:

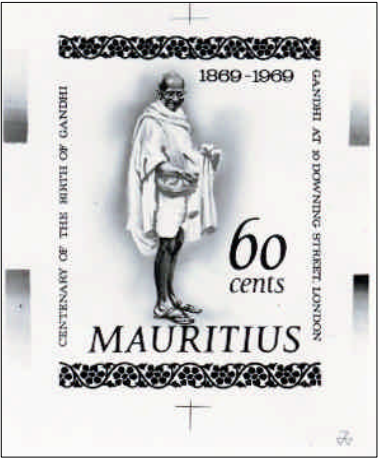
*"All Delegates were well dressed in tailor made suits. But a skinny little fellow with nothing but a breechcloth, with a spinning wheel and an old she-goat comes there representing more humanity and with more authority than all the high hats in the world. It's sincerity versus diplomacy!"*



Zambia (1998): Needless to say, all eyes were on Gandhi every time he walked into or out of a session, as shown in this souvenir sheet.



St. Vincent (1998): Gandhi shown seated at the Second RTC next to Malaviya and Sastri. This stamp's face value (\$5) was for fiscal use.



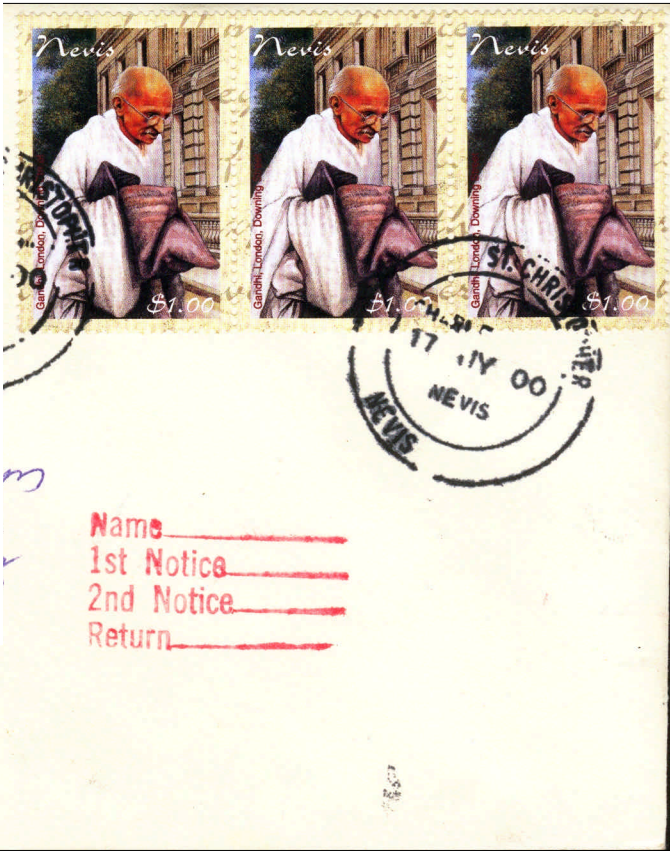
Mauritius (1969): Printer's die proof of stamp showing Gandhi at 10 Downing Street, London.



Montserrat (1998): Specimen souvenir sheet showing Gandhi outside #10 Downing Street,

While in London, Gandhi visited with British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald at his residence at 10 Downing Street, an image captured in the stamps shown here.

Nevis (1998): Multiple copies of stamp showing Gandhi at #10 Downing Street, on registered airmail cover to the USA.



More than whom he visited, it was Gandhi's attire in England that attracted a lot of attention. When questioned by a reporter about his attire, he said: *"When Englishmen visit India, do they forsake their European clothing and adopt our Eastern dress...? No. If I came here to live and work as an English citizen, then.. I should wear the dress of an Englishman. But I am here on a great and special mission, and my loin-cloth, if you choose so to describe it, is the dress of my principals, the people of India."* And then he quipped: *"If this depression keeps on much longer, I shall be the best dressed man on this island!"* When he visited the King and Queen Buckingham Palace, he did better, saying that the King wore enough for both of them!



Scottish Local (1979): Archival Progressive Proofs. Only issue to show Gandhi and Ramsey MacDonald together.

While in England, Gandhi visited Manchester area mills in Lancashire and was warmly welcomed by displaced mill workers and owners. They sympathized with him and appreciated efforts to revive the domestic handloom industry in India! The boycott of British goods was part of the movement that had intensified by 1930. Gandhi's "homespun" movement particularly hit cotton exports from mills in the Lancashire region to India.

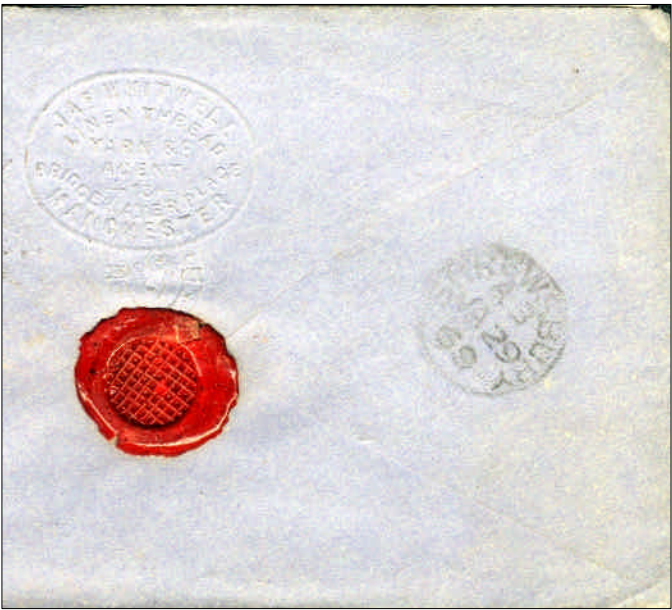
Gambia (1998) Stamp showing Gandhi spinning yarn in 1931.



As early as 1920, records indicate that India imported over £34 million in textiles from Manchester and Liverpool mills in the Lancashire region. This was part of the £80 million of textile and machinery that were exported to India from England that year. After over 100 years of stable business, import of British cloth and yarn fell by 75 percent between December 1929 and December 1930.



UK (1866): Liverpool-Shrewsbury letter. Addressed to family of Linen company's owner.



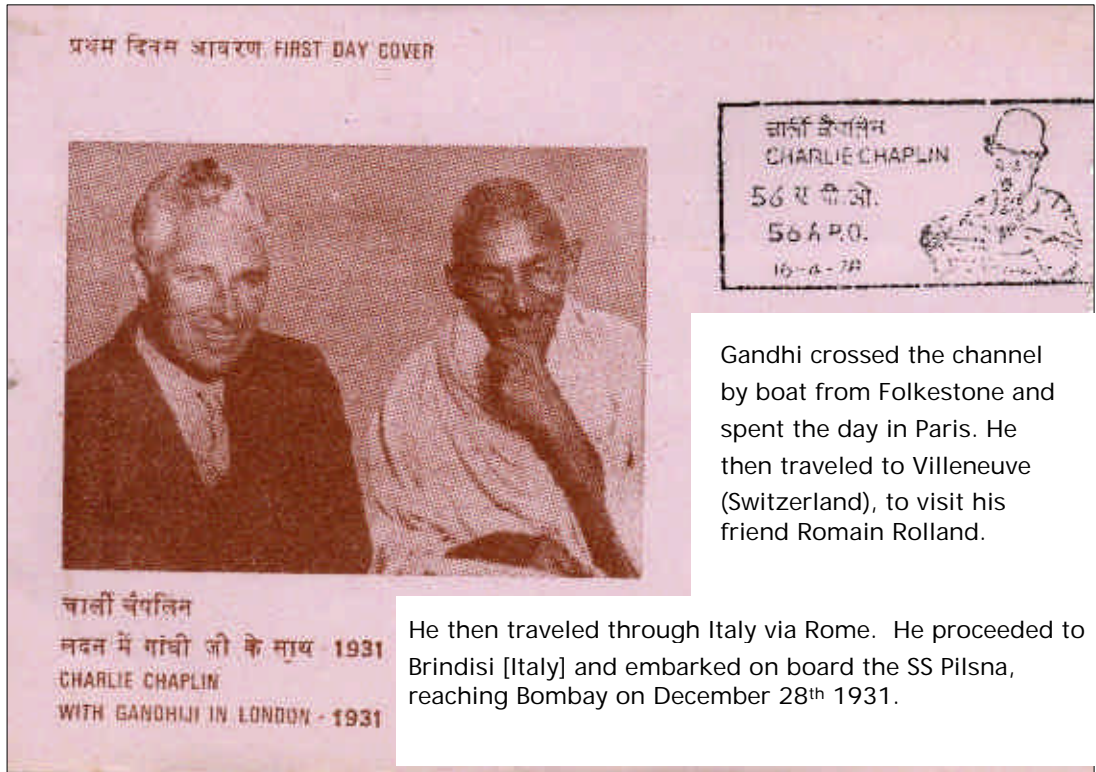
UK (1869): Manchester-Shrewsbury letter. Note embossed seal: Whitwell Linen Thread Yarn & Co. Note Manchester CDS.



Other London Visitors. While in England, Gandhi also visited M.P.s at the House of Parliament, Professors at Eton, Oxford and Cambridge, the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Bernard Shaw, Marie Montessori, Arthur Henderson and Lloyd George. Perhaps the most unusual visitor he had, while in London, was Charlie Chaplin. It was stranger, when Chaplin (an admirer of Gandhi) found out that Gandhi had never heard his name before he met him!



Belgium (1999): Stamps of Gandhi and Chaplin issued in a set. On Registered airmail cover from Antwerpen to USA. 34 BF postage + 150 BF registration fee.



India (1978): Cachet of official FDC from post office, commemorating Chaplin, shows historical photograph of Gandhi meeting Chaplin in London in 1931.

Antigua and Barbuda (1984): Archival gutter pair, with bottom stamp pair showing Gandhi leaving London by train. Mrs. Naidu, who accompanied him to Folkestone, is also shown looking out the train window. Others seen in this stamp are his assistant Pyarelal and Madeline Slade.

Leaving London. Gandhi left England on December 5<sup>th</sup> 1931. At 8:30 AM, he was driven to Victoria Station, where he bid farewell to friends, Indian and English. He took the train to Folkestone and traveled through France to Italy and then set sail to India.



Architect of Civil Disobedience .....

## Satyagraha in Southern Africa [1907-14]

In August 1906, a draft Asiatic Law Amendment was published in the Transvaal Gazetteer. Immediately upon reading it, Gandhi decided to organize, to demand its repeal. Under his leadership, mass protests were held in Johannesburg.

Gandhi convinced his fellow Indians to not submit to the law, even by risking arrest. Thus was born "Satyagraha" or achieving effect through "truth force".

To assist the several hundreds of Indian resisters who were going to prison and being released repeatedly, as a result of the protest, Gandhi established the Phoenix Ashram in Transvaal.

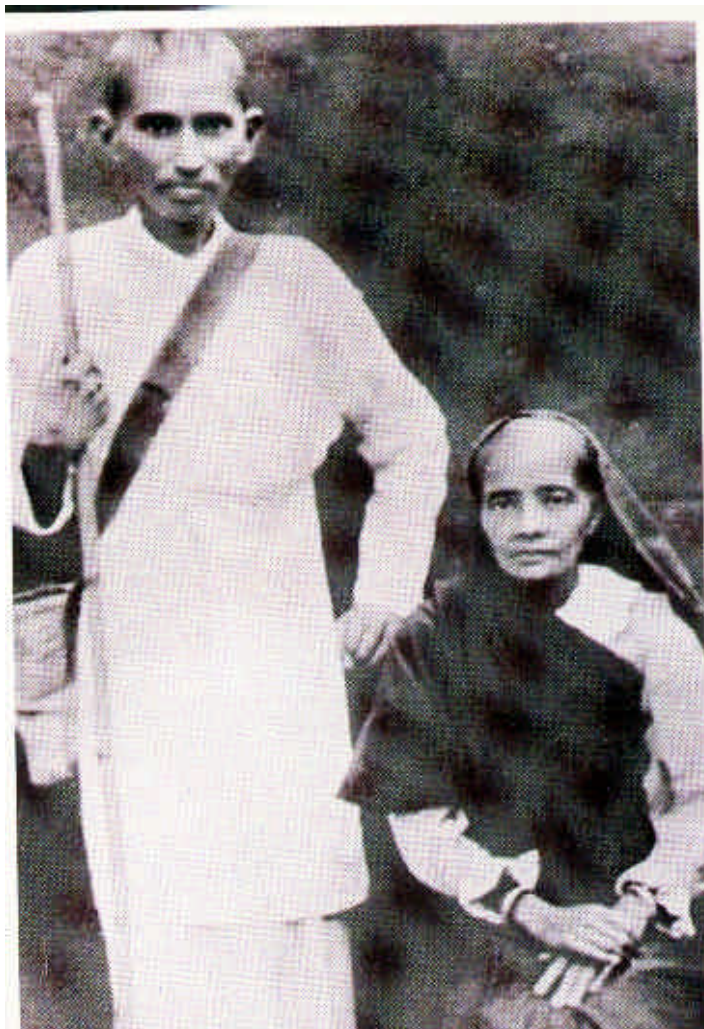
Nevis (1998): Multiple use of stamp showing Gandhi as Satyagrahi at Phoenix ashram in Transvaal. Registered airmail to USA.



On October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1906, Gandhi set sail for London as part of the Transvaal Indian delegation. They arrived in Southampton on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1906.

While in London, Gandhi lobbied the various legislators in Parliament to influence the now-British Transvaal government into repealing the Asiatic Law.

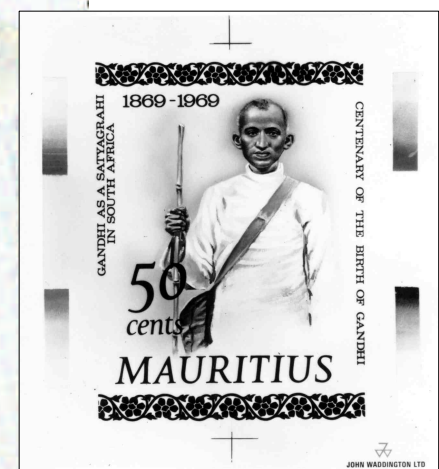
Gandhi met with Winston Churchill on November 28, 1906. He left London on December 1<sup>st</sup>. The delegation left Cape Town and returned on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1906.



South Africa (1995): Official picture postcard, issued by the South African P.O., showing Gandhi and Kasturba in the Satyagrahi ashram near Pretoria.



Sierra Leone (1998): Margin Illustration in souvenir sheet features another image of Gandhi as satyagrahi in Transvaal.



Mauritius (1969): Printer's die proof of stamp showing Gandhi as Satyagrahi at an ashram in Transvaal.

Architect of Civil Disobedience .....

## Swadeshi Movement- Boycott of Imports [1906-1935]

Gandhi added a twist to the movement that started in the early 1900s, by promoting home spun yarn and the boycott of imported yarn as a component of his civil disobedience movement.



Labels like the ones shown above were used in mail in the 1920s and the post office was instructed to reject them, due to the slogans specifically targeting British imports for boycott.



More generic labels that included the message of boycott along with messages of non-violence and Gandhi's image appeared in the 1930s.



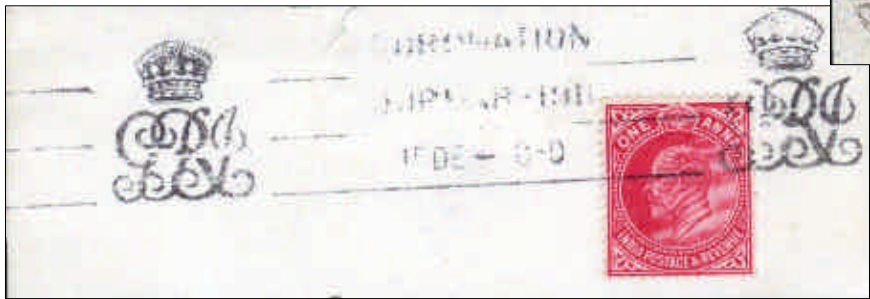
Perhaps the least offensive to British officials and the postal authorities were these labels that merely called for patronizing Indian goods.



Uruguay (1969): Gandhi and Swadeshi Rally shown on full sheet with color-shift error on all stamps.

Boycott of KGV Coronation in Durban [1911]

Due to the unresponsiveness of the British Government to the calls of its Indian citizens in South Africa for justice, Gandhi urged the boycott of the coronation celebrations in Durban. At the same time, he affirmed his loyalty to the Crown.



India (1911): Uncommon Coronation Durbar Rolling cancel on piece, with 1anna Edward VII stamp. Used 15 December 1911.



India (1911): "Queen Empress Camp PO and "King Emperor Camp PO" cancels from the coronation celebrations in Calcutta.



Little cover mailed from India to Ireland with 1 anna postage and the "GRI" Coronation Durbar 1911 cancel.

India (1911): Very early usage of the "Coronation Durbar" cancel in October.



India (1911): This coronation Durbar cancelled cover was mailed from Madras on 7 Dec 1911. Durbar cancels from Calcutta and Delhi are common, ones from Madras are not. Note rolling cancel from Chelsea in England in front of cover.

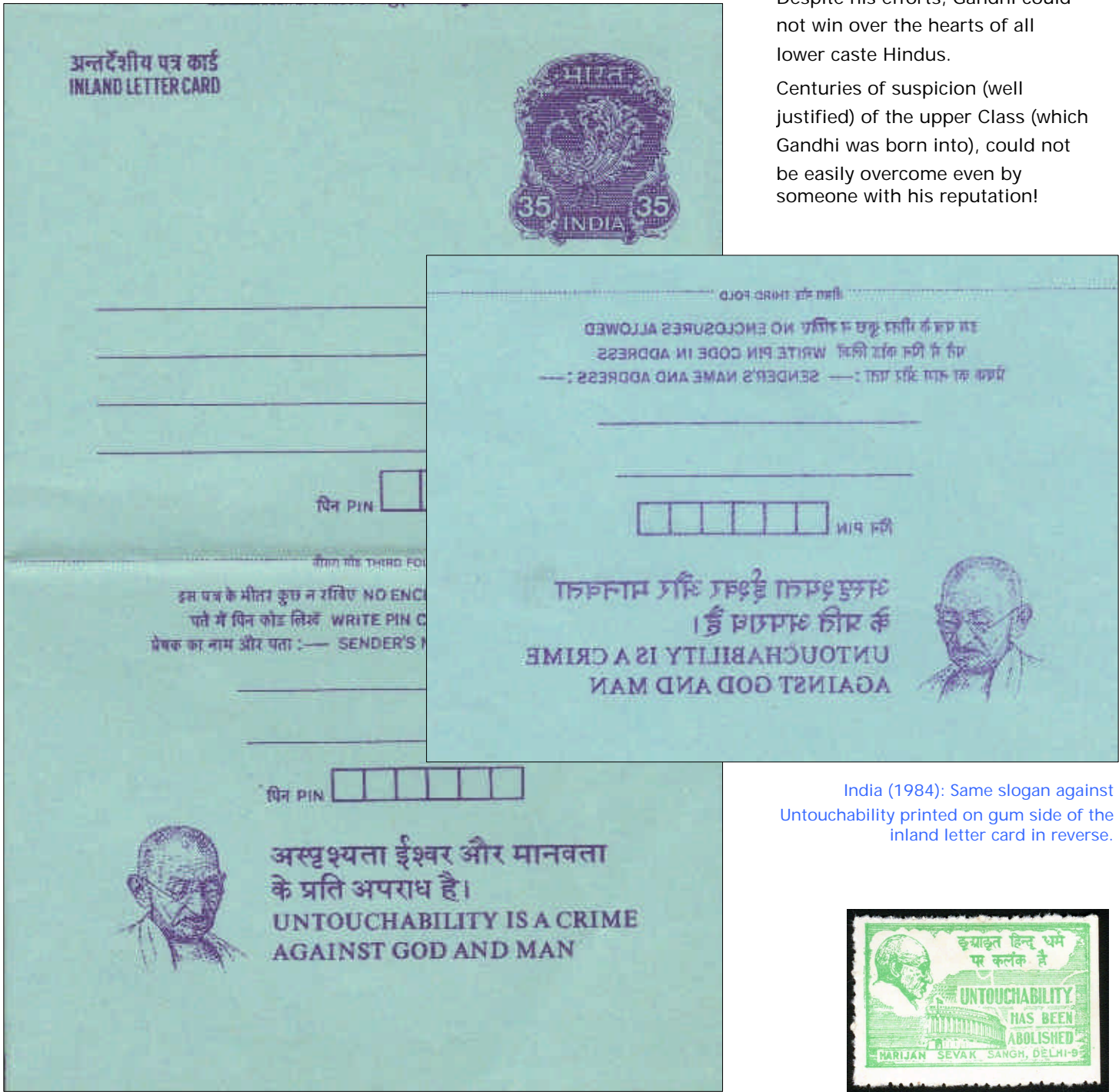


The Harijan Movement- Fighting Untouchability [1916]

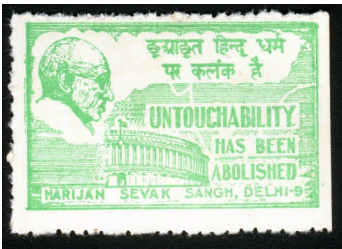
Immediately upon returning to India, Gandhi initiated dialog on the Hindu caste system. He particularly spoke out against the “untouchability” practice. It was perhaps is association with members of all religions and castes in South Africa that sensitized Gandhi to this issue.

This alienated several conservative upper caste Hindus.  
Gandhi named the lower caste Hindus as Harijans, or Children of God.

Despite his efforts, Gandhi could not win over the hearts of all lower caste Hindus.  
Centuries of suspicion (well justified) of the upper Class (which Gandhi was born into), could not be easily overcome even by someone with his reputation!



India (1984): Same slogan against Untouchability printed on gum side of the inland letter card in reverse.



India (1940s): Slogan in this label claims prematurely that “Untouchability has been abolished”, with a portrait of Gandhi in the foreground and the Parliament Building in the background.

India (1984): Slogans like this, quoting Gandhi on several social issues, are common in Indian stationery, long after his death.

Architect of Civil Disobedience .....

## Fighting for Peasants' Rights [1915-1918]

Gandhi, encouraged by the success in Champaran [where he successfully defended Indigo farmers against ruthless English landlords], organized peasants in Gujarat [western India] against regressive land taxes imposed by the Bombay Provincial government. This was later called the "Kheda Satyagraha".



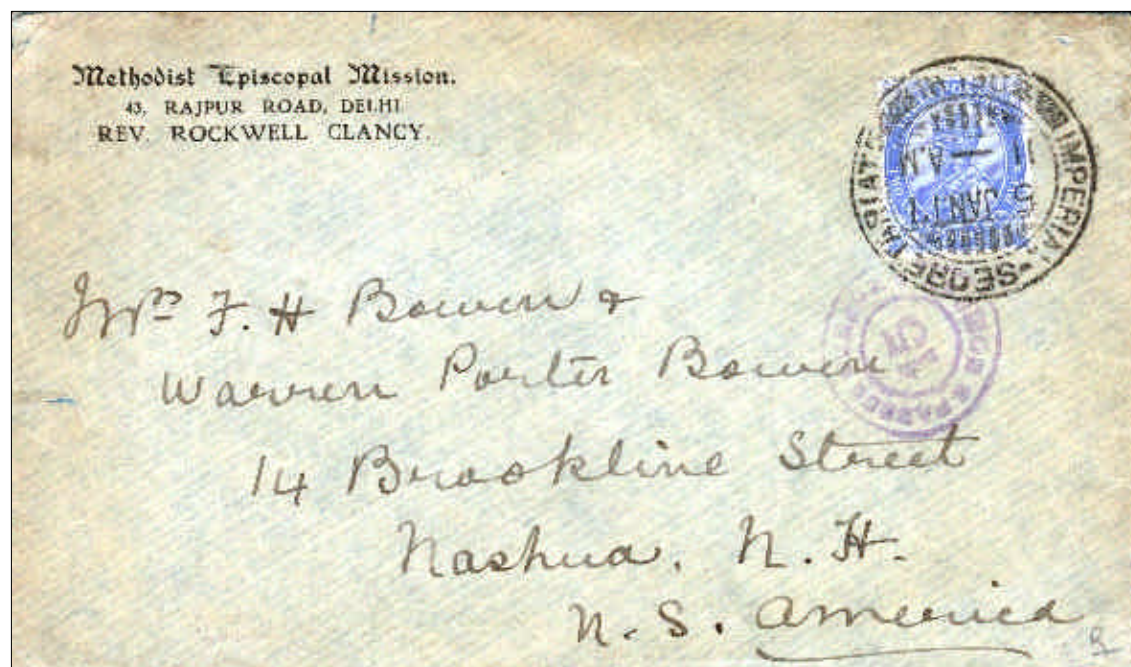
India (1998): Gandhi shown in stamp that also features the theme of peasants' rights.



Gambia (1998) and Sierra Leone (1998): Gandhi, as he was in 1915-16, after his return to India from South Africa, is pictured in the three stamps above. This was when he began organizing a successful protest against the persecution of Indigo farmers in the Himalayan foothills.

The effort by Gandhi in Champaran paid off dramatically.

Despite objections from the English landlords in Bihar, the Imperial secretariat in Delhi issued regulations that reversed several despicable practices.



India (1917): Cover with rare Imperial Secretariat Cancel mailed from Delhi to USA. Note WWI censor marking.

## Boycott of Prince of Wales Royal Visit [1921-22]

On July 10<sup>th</sup> 1921, Gandhi had suggested that while he would “extend the heartiest welcome to His Royal Highness if he came without official patronage”, a boycott directed at “the insolent bureaucracy and dishonest ministers of His Majesty” was in order.

The Prince of Wales visited the Indian subcontinent from November 1921 to March 1922. The special cancellation with the Royal Insignia of the Prince of Wales was used for mail sent by the Royal entourage.



India (1922): Royal Visit Special Cancellation. The last day of the official visit was March 17<sup>th</sup> 1922 in Karachi. Shown above is the cancellation on the entire set of British India stamps in circulation at that time- up to a value of 1 Rupee. The paper used to mount the stamps bears Royal Insignia as a watermark.