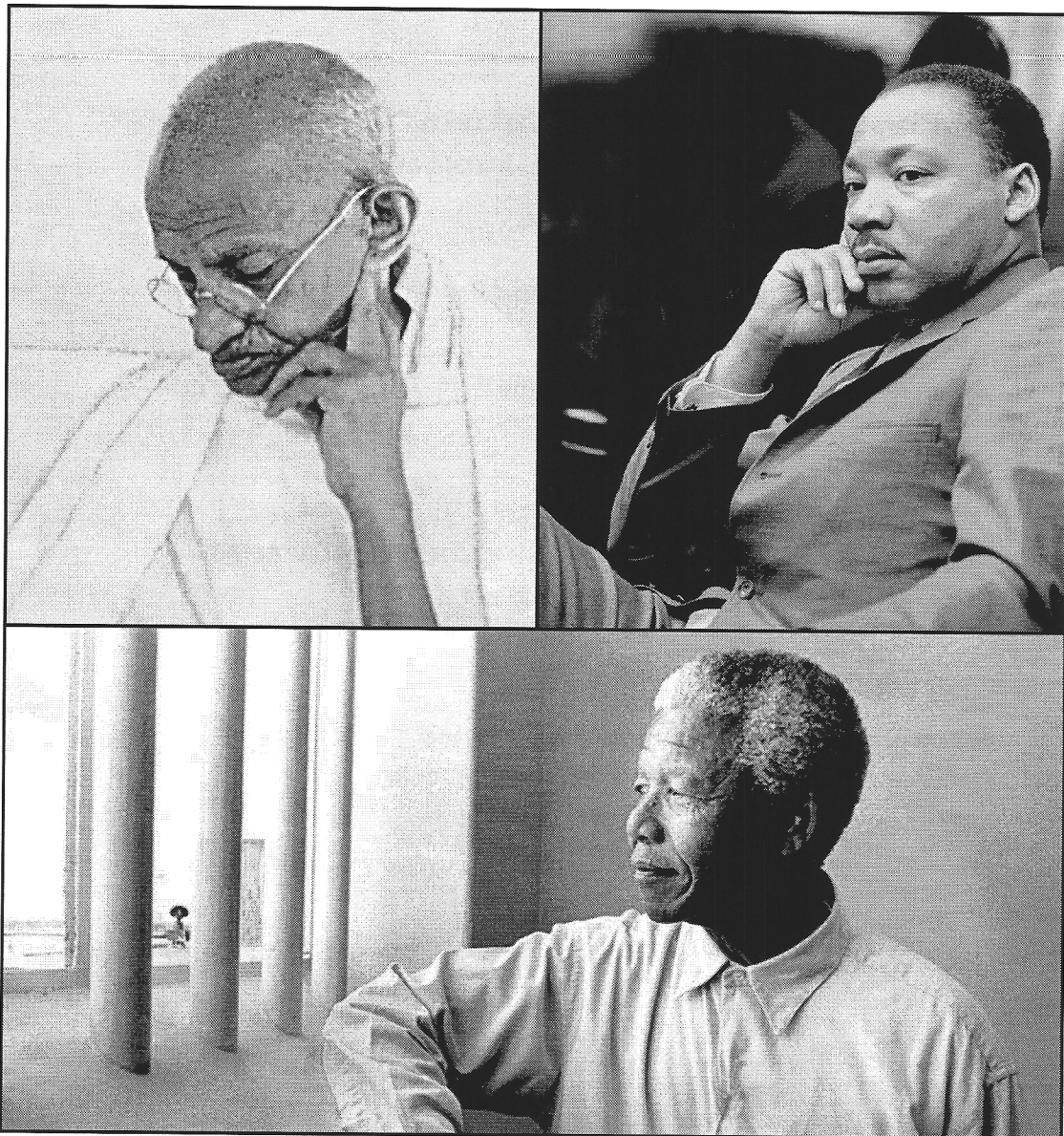


Gandhi, King and Mandela: What Made Non-Violence Work?



A Document Based Question (DBQ)
World History

STUDENT GUIDE SHEET

Gandhi, King and Mandela: What Made Non-Violence Work?

Directions: Much of world history focuses on war; less is said about peace. The 20th century gives us three excellent examples of how three men used non-violence to bring about change even though violence threatened to occur. These leaders – Mohandas Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States, and Nelson Mandela in South Africa – gave the world a model for how non-violence could work. But what are the essential ingredients in that model?

It is suggested that you follow these steps:

1. Read the Background Essay.
2. Skim through the documents to get a sense of what they are about.
3. Read the documents slowly. In the margin or on a Document Analysis Sheet record the main idea of the documents and how they should be grouped.
4. Decide what label is best for each of the groupings you have made.
5. List the most important elements to the least important.
6. Outline your answer to the question.

The Documents:

- Document 1: Salt
- Document 2: "I Took Part in the Lunch Counter Sit-ins...."
- Document 3: Defiance of Unjust Laws, 1952
- Document 4: The Dharasana Salt Raid
- Document 5: Birmingham
- Document 6: "Discipline must be maintained...."
- Document 7: Vegetable Days
- Document 8: "People had rushed down to get arrested."
- Document 9: "... we would not appeal...."
- Document 10: Salting the Lion's Tail (cartoon)
- Document 11: March on Washington button
- Document 12: "And the winners are ..." (cartoon)

Gandhi, King and Mandela: What Made Non-Violence Work?

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. – MLK, Jr.

The history of violence in the world is well documented. However it is also possible to use non-violence to bring about change. This DBQ will look at three countries where a non-violent movement was successful.

Historic Context

India, the United States, and South Africa. Three important nations on three different continents. But although they looked strong on the outside, each one suffered from a disease that threatened the health of the whole. For India, the disease was colonialism. For the United States and South Africa, it was racial segregation.

Three Conditions

In each of these nations three conditions help explain why non-violence worked. **The first condition** was that all of them had been colonies of England. And like England all three countries thought law was very powerful – more powerful even than government officials.

The second condition was the presence of violence. Without the possibility of a violent revolution, the government might not have been willing to change.

The third condition was the presence of a leader — Mohandas Gandhi in India, Martin

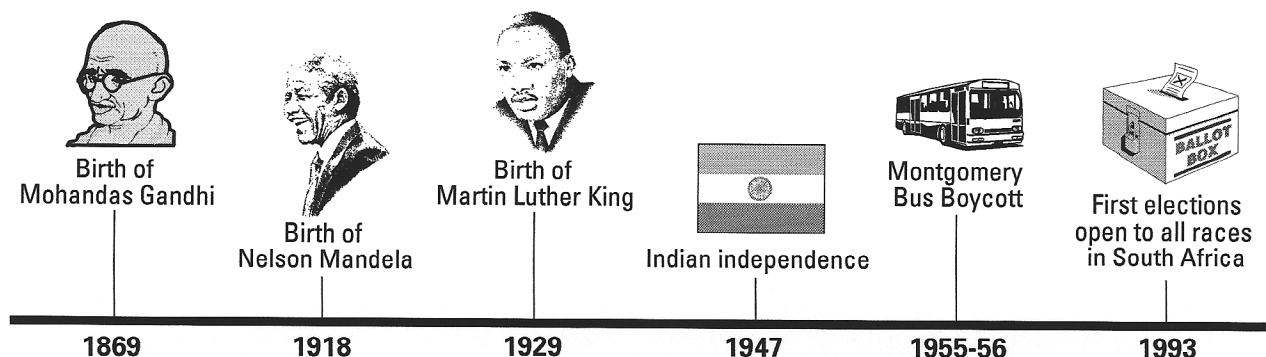
Luther King in the United States, and Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Each of these men was so charismatic he could lead his followers to a non-violent victory. All of them gave their lives to the cause. Gandhi and King were shot by assassins; Mandela spent almost twenty-seven years of his life in prison. These are their stories.

Mohandas Gandhi

Mohandas Gandhi was born in 1869, in Porbandar, India. His father taught his son respect for all religions. His mother taught him that all living things are holy. Following custom, Gandhi married at age 13; his wife, Kasturbai, was even younger. At age 19 he went to London to study law, and at age 22 Gandhi completed his studies. He now felt more than ever that the English, who had ruled India for almost two centuries, were law-abiding and fair. Hopes high, he sailed for home.

Gandhi tried to set up a law practice in India but was so shy he failed miserably. When someone suggested he try his luck in South Africa, he jumped at the offer. But no sooner had he arrived there than he was thrown off a train, just for being a “colored” man holding a first class ticket! Even for a shy man, it was too great an insult. When he fought back he was sent to jail. It was there he became a leader, bringing about important changes for South Africa’s Indian community.

When Gandhi returned to India, he was paraded around like a hero because of his South



African victories. But everywhere he looked he was horrified by the poverty he saw. He saw, too, that to be successful in the world the English had built, Indians had to imitate their rulers – their clothes, their manners, and their standards of beauty. Gandhi refused!

Gandhi wanted people to live free of all kinds of snobbery, even the ones imposed by India's ancient **caste system**. The first thing he

*An eye-for-an-eye only makes
the whole world blind.*

— Mohandas Gandhi

did was to build a different kind of community where he could model this classless society. He dressed in the clothes a poor man would wear and did chores an **untouchable** [people so low they are below caste] would do. Most Indians thought he was absurd. But slowly his strange ideas were accepted until Gandhi came to be known as '**Mahatma**' or 'Great Soul.'

Gandhi saw that India's self-respect was tied to independence. But England was a giant with colonies all around the globe. And Indian politicians had worked for independence for at least half a century. How much harder would it be for the gentle Gandhi. Yet in the end Gandhi succeeded. The question is how?

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Michael King, Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929. His father was a Baptist preacher, his mother a schoolteacher. So when Martin Luther, as he came to be called, earned his doctor of divinity and two other degrees within seven years' time, it was not really a surprise. When he moved with his bride Coretta to Montgomery, Alabama, as the new preacher of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, this, too, was not a surprise. And because he was an African-American living in the South, his arrest for such trivial things as driving five miles over the speed

limit wasn't altogether a shock. What was surprising was what he chose to do about it.

About this time a woman named Rosa Parks refused to give her bus seat to a white man and set the civil rights struggle in motion. In one courageous act, she had challenged "**Jim Crow**," the segregationist laws of the South that had dominated the lives of African-Americans far too long. The back of a bus, the back of a theater, the back of a sandwich shop, poll taxes, inferior schools, segregated housing, lynching by hooded mobs – these were the things Southern blacks faced every day of their lives.

King and other black ministers met together in 1957 to find a peaceful solution to these problems. From that meeting, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was born and King was chosen as its first president. There were honors that came with his new title, like a meeting with President Eisenhower and a trip to Africa. But there were also risks, frightening ones, like death threats and fire-bombings to his home. And when those arrested for the crimes were proven guilty, all-white juries freed them.

But the campaign for civil rights had begun and there was no turning back. In 1959, King

*Hate cannot drive out hate;
only love can do that.*

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

went to India to meet with friends and family of a man whose non-violent techniques he admired, the late Mahatma Gandhi. He came back a few weeks later surer than ever that this was the strongest way to fight injustice. But like Gandhi, King found it hard to keep things under control. Anger was building in the white man who had been in the driver's seat for so long. And frustration was boiling over in the black man, who once again was told he could not

enter a certain school or voting booth or park or library or restaurant. How could he, King wondered, achieve the goals he and his followers longed for? And how could this be done without violence?

Nelson Mandela

Rolihlahla Mandela was born in 1918 in a tiny village in South Africa. He was still a baby when his father, a tribal chief, was dethroned for disrespecting an English judge. At age seven he was sent to a boarding school where he learned to live under **apartheid**, a Dutch South African word meaning “racial apartness.” There he was given the name “Nelson” because his African name, which could sometimes be translated as “Troublemaker,” wasn’t European. This was the first time, though not the last, that Mandela felt

*People must learn to hate,
and if they can learn to hate,
they can also be taught to love.*

– Nelson Mandela

disrespected for his blackness.

In the 1930s it was rare for a black South African to attend college. But Mandela not only attended, he graduated, got a degree from law school, and set up a practice in Johannesburg which he hoped could support his small family. Yet apartheid was always a humiliation to him. When the **Afrikaner**, or Dutch South African, Nationalists came to power in the 1948 election, the segregation habits of the past three hundred years became law. Hoping for a brighter future, Mandela joined the African National Congress (ANC) and became its first Youth leader.

In the 1960s, many of the colonial nations of Africa were gaining independence. The ANC was encouraged and campaigned for democracy in South Africa. They were mild campaigns at

first, but as the government became more hostile, so did ANC protests. In November 1961, a military branch of the party was organized with Mandela as its head. It authorized the limited use of arms and sabotage against the government, which got the government’s attention – and its anger! Mandela went into hiding. In 1964, he was captured, tried, and sentenced to life imprisonment. It was a sad day for black South Africa.

As days stretched to months, months to years, and years to decades, Mandela lived most of them at brutal Robben Island Prison. There his guards did their best to break his spirit with isolation and abuse. Remarkably he kept his hope and dignity alive. Then, twenty-six and a half long years after his imprisonment began, he was released. Again Mandela could tackle the job of dismantling apartheid. He hoped, like the Afrikaner government that freed him, that he could keep South Africa from erupting into civil war.

The Question

Gandhi, King and Mandela were sitting on powder kegs built of hate and injustice. The people in each society knew the powder kegs existed. More importantly their governments knew they existed. Yet all three men were able to bring about non-violent change. Gandhi brought independence to India; King brought civil rights to the United States; Mandela brought democracy to South Africa.

So how did they do it? The presence of violence, the respect for law, the leadership of a charismatic individual – these three ingredients were important, but not the whole story. Now examine the documents that follow, looking for further ways that non-violent change was achieved in India, the United States, and South Africa. Again, the question – *Gandhi, King, and Mandela: What made non-violence work?*

Document 1

Source: Mohandas Gandhi, "Letter to Lord Irwin," March, 1930, in Louis Fischer, *Gandhi: His Life and Message for the World*. Reprinted by permission of Navajivan Trust.

Gandhi's letter to Lord Irwin, English governor in India, before marching to the sea and breaking the English Salt Tax Law

**Sabarmati, India
(March, 1930)**

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Dear Friend,

Before embarking on Civil Disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would ... approach you and find a way out. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst therefore I hold the British rule to be a curse, I do not intend harm to a single Englishman or to any legitimate interest he may have in India.... And why do I regard the British rule a curse? ...Even the salt [the peasant] must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him.... The tax shows itself still more burdensome on the poor man when it is remembered that salt is one thing he must eat more than the rich man....

My ambition is no less than to convert the British people through nonviolence, and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India.... But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and if my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the eleventh day of this month I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashram [Community] as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the Salt Laws....

Note: Gandhi's march to the sea is generally called "The Salt March." Most historians consider it the turning point of the movement to free India from British control. The Salt Tax Law made it illegal for Indians to manufacture or collect their own salt.

Document 2



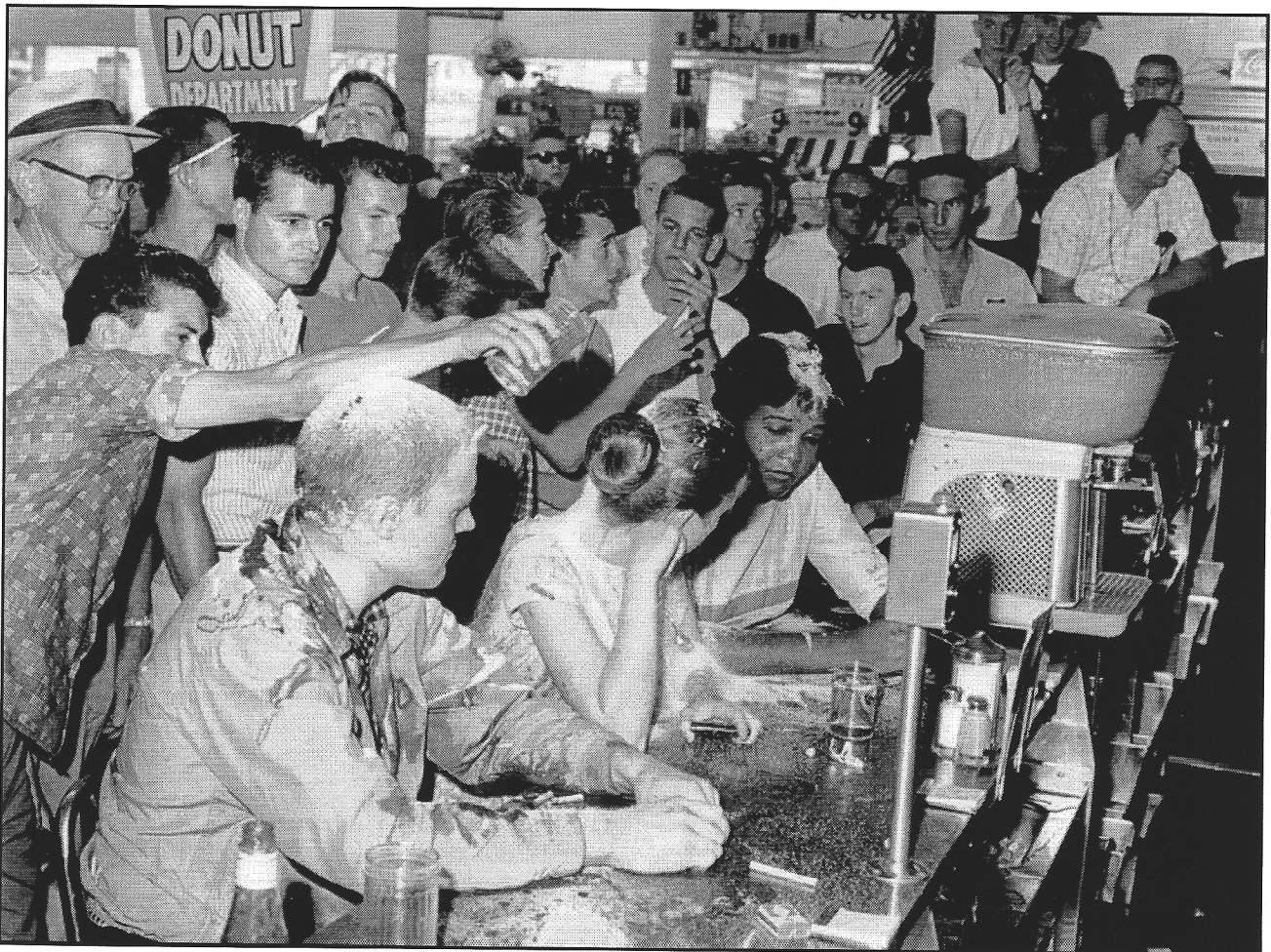
Source: Martin Luther King, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Reprinted by arrangement with the Estate of Martin Luther King Jr., c/o Writers House as agent for the proprietor, New York, NY. Copyright 1967 Martin Luther King Jr., copyright renewed 1995 Coretta Scott King.

Atlanta, Georgia**(October, 1960)**

I took part in the lunch counter sit-ins at Rich's department store as a follower, not a leader. I did not initiate the thing.... I was arrested along with some two hundred eighty students in a sit-in demonstration seeking to integrate lunch counters. I said when I went in Fulton County Jail that I would stay the full time if it was one year, five, or ten years. Of course the students agreed to stay also.

If, by chance ... we are guilty of violating the law, please be assured that we did it to bring the whole issue of racial injustice under the scrutiny of the conscience of Atlanta....

We do not seek to remove this unjust system for ourselves alone but for our white brothers as well. The festering sore of segregation debilitates the white man as well as the Negro. So if our actions in any way served to bring this issue to the forefront of the conscience of the community, they were not undertaken in vain.



Scene from May 28, 1963 sit-in, Jackson, Mississippi.
Photo by Fred Blackwell, Jackson Daily News. © 1999 The Clarion Ledger.

Document 3

Source: Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Copyright © 1994 by Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. By permission of Little, Brown and Company, Inc.

**Port Elizabeth, South Africa
(May, 1952)**

We also discussed whether the campaign (for Defiance of Unjust Laws) should follow Gandhian principles of nonviolence, or what the Mahatma called satyagraha, a nonviolence that seeks to conquer through conversion.

Some argued for nonviolence on purely ethical grounds, saying it was morally superior to any other method.... Others said that we should approach this issue not from the point of view of principles but tactics, and that we should employ the method or tactic demanded by the conditions. If a particular method or tactic enabled us to defeat the enemy, then it should be used. In this case, the state was far more powerful than we, and any attempts at violence by us would be devastatingly crushed. This made nonviolence a practical necessity rather than an option. This was my view....

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Document 4



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Source: "They That Turn the Cheek" Abridged with permission of Simon & Schuster. In Webb Miller, *I Found No Peace: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent*. Copyright 1936 by Webb Miller. Copyright renewed © 1963 by Mrs. Webb Miller.

The Dharasana Salt Works, 150 Miles North of Bombay, India

(May, 1930)

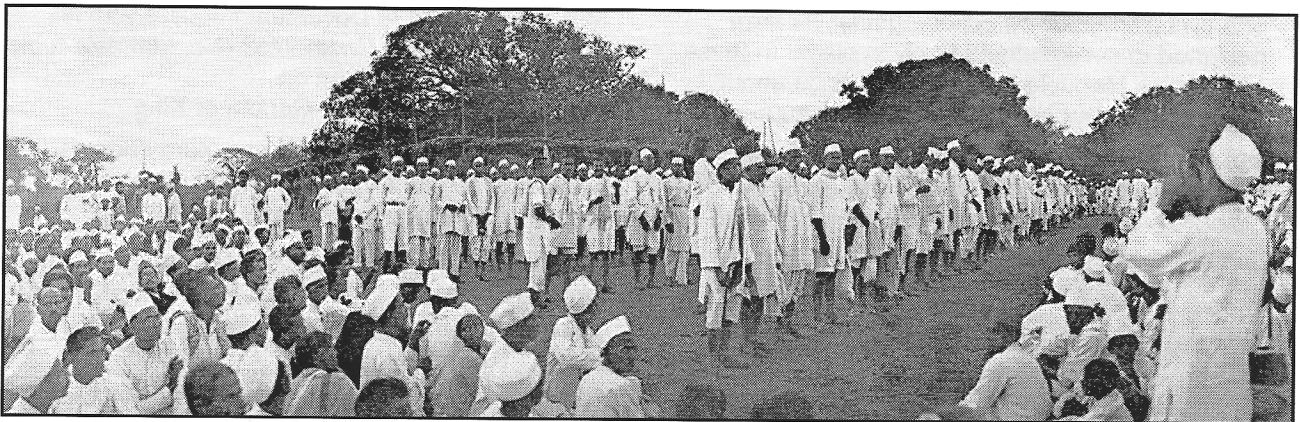
Mme. Naidu called for prayer before the march started and the entire assemblage knelt. She exhorted them: "Gandhi's body is in jail but his soul is with you. India's prestige is in your hands. You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten but you must not resist; you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows." Wild, shrill cheers terminated her speech....

In complete silence the Gandhi men drew up and halted a hundred yards from the stockade [surrounding the Dharasana Salt Works].... Suddenly, at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers and rained blows on their heads with their steel-shod [clubs]. Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows.... The survivors without breaking ranks silently and doggedly marched on until struck down.... The blankets used as stretchers were sodden with blood.

At times the spectacle of unresisting men being methodically bashed into a bloody pulp sickened me so much that I had to turn away. The western mind finds it difficult to grasp the idea of nonresistance.

Note: Mme. Naidu was a well-known Indian poetess who was to take Gandhi's place should he be arrested. The author of this document, Webb Miller, was a foreign correspondent present at both the raid and the hospital where the wounded (320 injured and two dead) were taken afterwards. This is the report he filed.

Source: Photo copyright Vithalbhai Jhaveri/Gandhi Serve. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.



Protesters preparing to march in Dharasana.

Document 5

Source: Martin Luther King, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Reprinted by arrangement with the Estate of Martin Luther King Jr., c/o Writers House as agent for the proprietor, New York, NY. Copyright 1967 Martin Luther King Jr., copyright renewed 1995 Coretta Scott King.

Birmingham, Alabama

(April, 1963)

Toward the end of our mass meetings ... I would extend an appeal for volunteers to serve in our non-violent army. We made it clear that we would not send anyone out to demonstrate who had not convinced himself that he could accept and endure violence without retaliating. At the same time, we urged the volunteers to give up any possible weapons that they might have on their persons. Hundreds of people responded to this appeal.... We proved to them that we needed no weapons – not so much as a toothpick. We proved that we had the most formidable weapon of all – the conviction that we were right.

Note: King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference followers began a drive to end segregation in Birmingham in the spring of 1963. Despite King's determination to conduct a non-violent march the protesters were met by police chief "Bull" Connor and his men, cattle prods, fierce dogs, and fire hoses.

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Document 6

Source: Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Copyright © 1994 by Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. By permission of Little, Brown and Company, Inc.

Johannesburg, South Africa

(April, 1952)

I explained to a group of several hundred Africans, Indians, and Coloured that volunteering (for the Defiance of Unjust Laws campaign) was a difficult and even dangerous duty, as the authorities would seek to intimidate, imprison, and perhaps attack the volunteers. No matter what the authorities did, the volunteers could not retaliate, otherwise they would undermine the value of the entire enterprise. They must respond to violence with nonviolence; discipline must be maintained at all cost.

Document 7

Source: M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Madras: Ganesan, 1928.

Johannesburg, South Africa (January, 1908)

I had just heard (that my fellow Indian protesters) had been sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labor, and had been fined a heavy amount.... If these men had committed an offense, I had committed a greater offense and I therefore asked the Magistrate to impose upon me the heaviest penalty.... I well remembered that I ... did not feel the slightest hesitation in entering the prisoner's box.

On vegetable days which were two in a week we cooked twice and on other days only once, as we were allowed to cook other things for ourselves only for the noonday meal. We were somewhat better off after we began to cook our own food. But whether or not we succeeded in obtaining these conveniences, everyone of us was firm in his resolution of passing his term in jail in perfect happiness and peace.

Note: Gandhi spent a total of 2,338 days in jail.

Document 8

Source: Martin Luther King, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Reprinted by arrangement with the Estate of Martin Luther King Jr., c/o Writers House as agent for the proprietor, New York, NY. Copyright 1967 Martin Luther King Jr., copyright renewed 1995 Coretta Scott King.

Montgomery, Alabama (March, 1956)

At the jail, an almost holiday atmosphere prevailed. People had rushed down to get arrested [for their part in the Montgomery bus boycott]. No one had been frightened. No one had tried to resist arrest. Many Negroes had gone voluntarily to the sheriff's office to see if their names were on the list, and were even disappointed when they were not. A once fear-ridden people had been transformed. Those who had previously trembled before the law were now proud to be arrested for the cause of freedom. With this feeling of solidarity around me, I walked with firm steps toward the rear of the jail.

Note: King was arrested 37 times and jailed 14 times.

Document 9

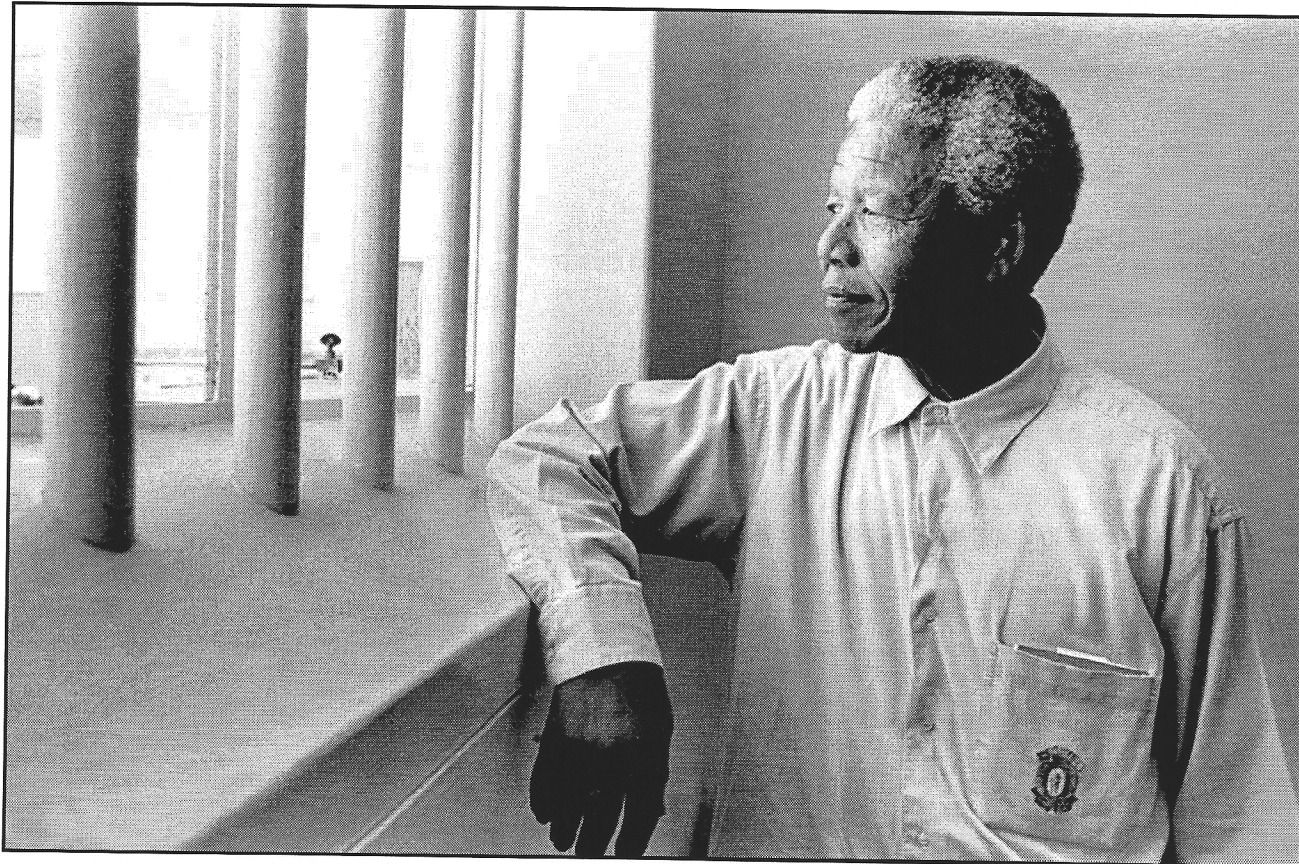
Source: Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Copyright © 1994 by Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. By permission of Little, Brown and Company, Inc.

**Rivonia, South Africa
(June, 1964)**

That night, after discussion among ourselves, Walter, Govan, and I informed counsel that whatever sentences we received, even the death sentence, we would not appeal. Our decision stunned our lawyers. Walter, Govan and I believed an appeal would undermine the moral stance we had taken. We had from the first maintained that what we had done, we had done proudly, and for moral reasons.... Our message was that no sacrifice was too great in the struggle for freedom.

... If we were sentenced to death, what then would happen? ... I told (my counsel) that I would have a lot to say. I would tell (Judge) de Wet that I was prepared to die secure in the knowledge that my death would be an inspiration to the cause for which I was giving my life. My death – our deaths – would not be in vain; if anything we might serve the greater cause in death as martyrs than we ever could in life.

Source: Photo by Jürgen Schadeberg.



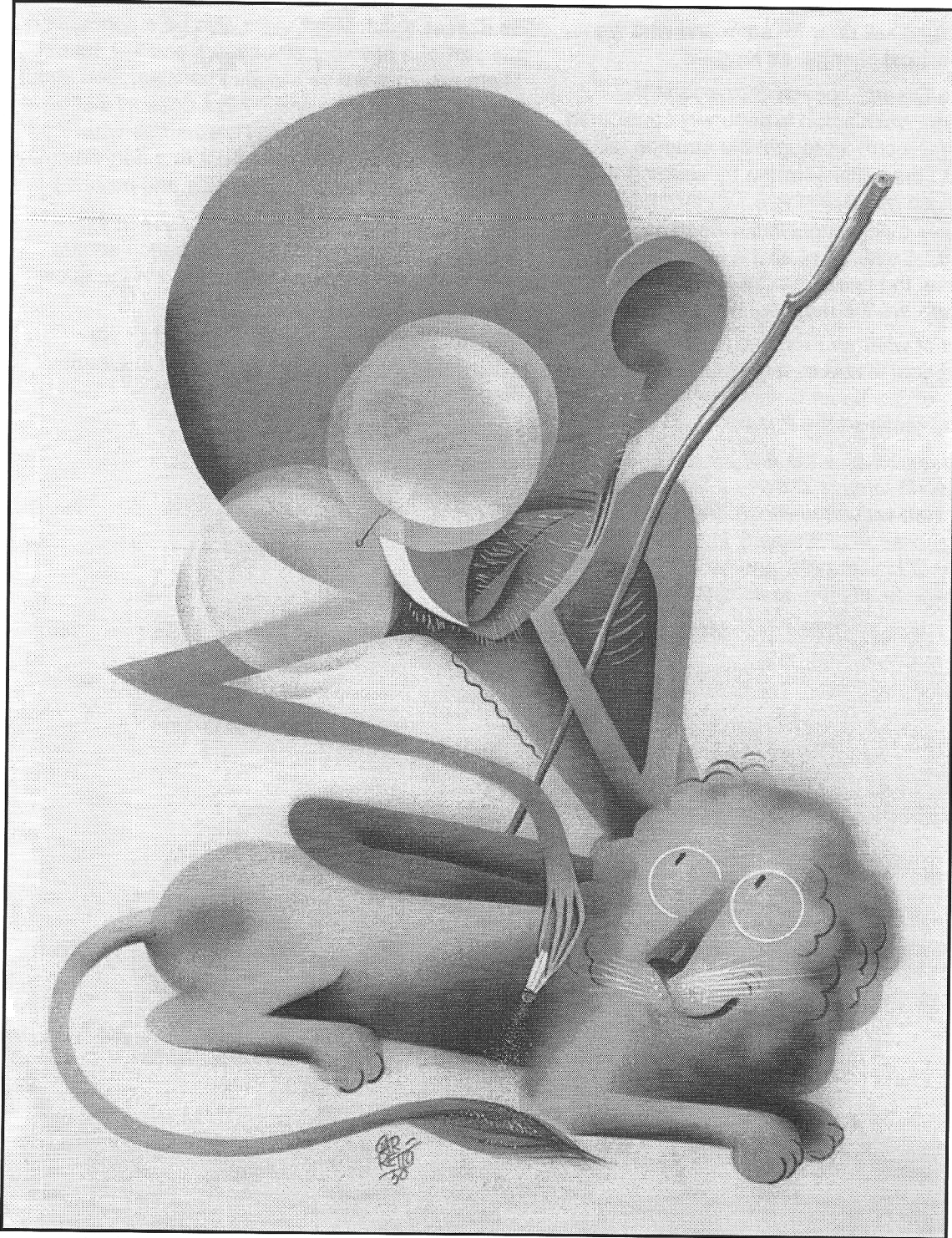
Nelson Mandela re-visiting the jail cell on Robben Island where he spent most of his 26 years, 8 months in jail.

Document 10 **Notes**

Source: Garretto, caricaturist, *The London Graphic Illustrator*, May 24, 1930.

Salting the Lion's Tail

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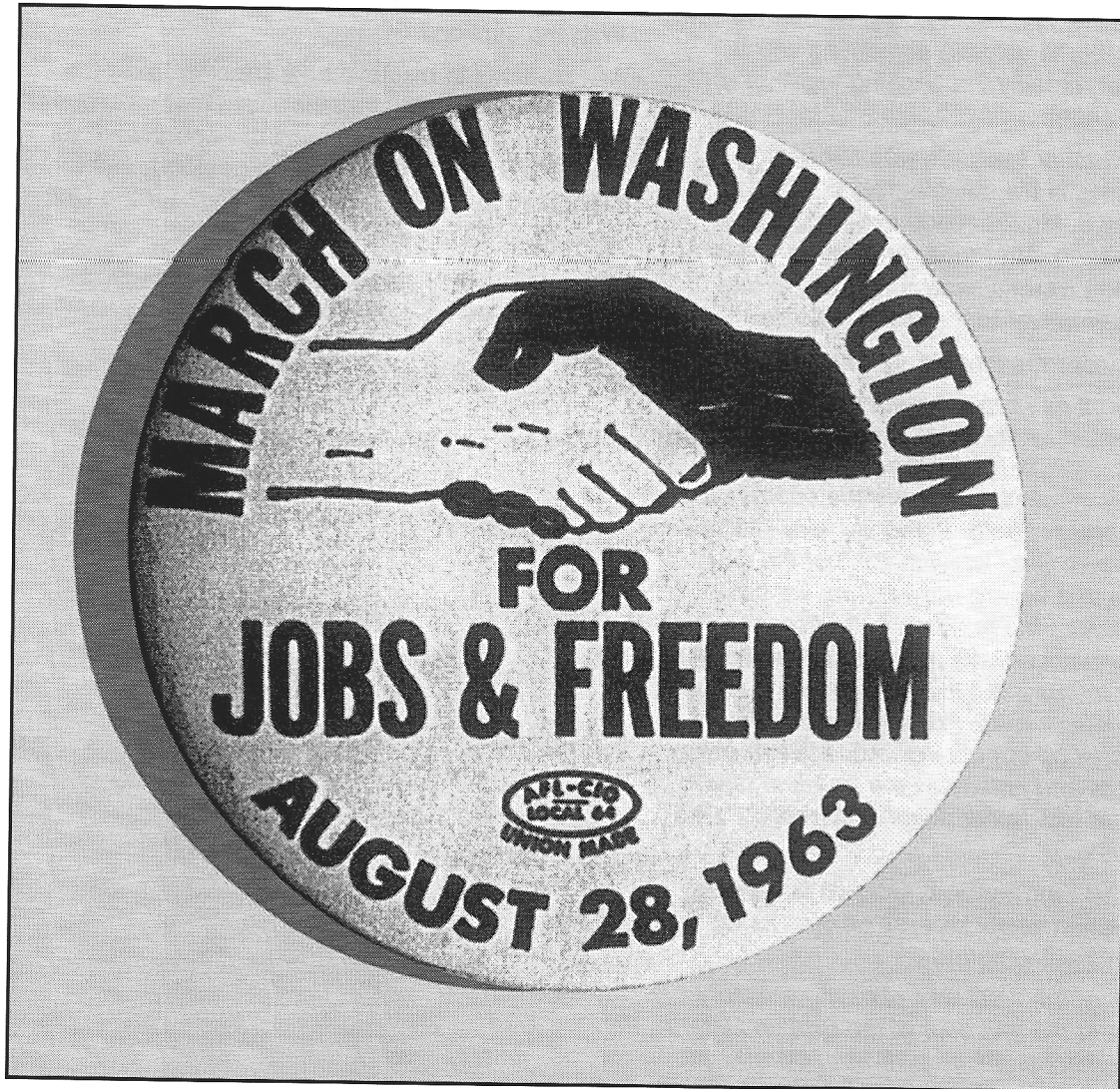


This cartoon shows Gandhi salting the tail of the British lion.

Document 11



Source: "March on Washington for Jobs & Freedom, August 28, 1963" button.
Reprinted by permission of AFL-CIO.



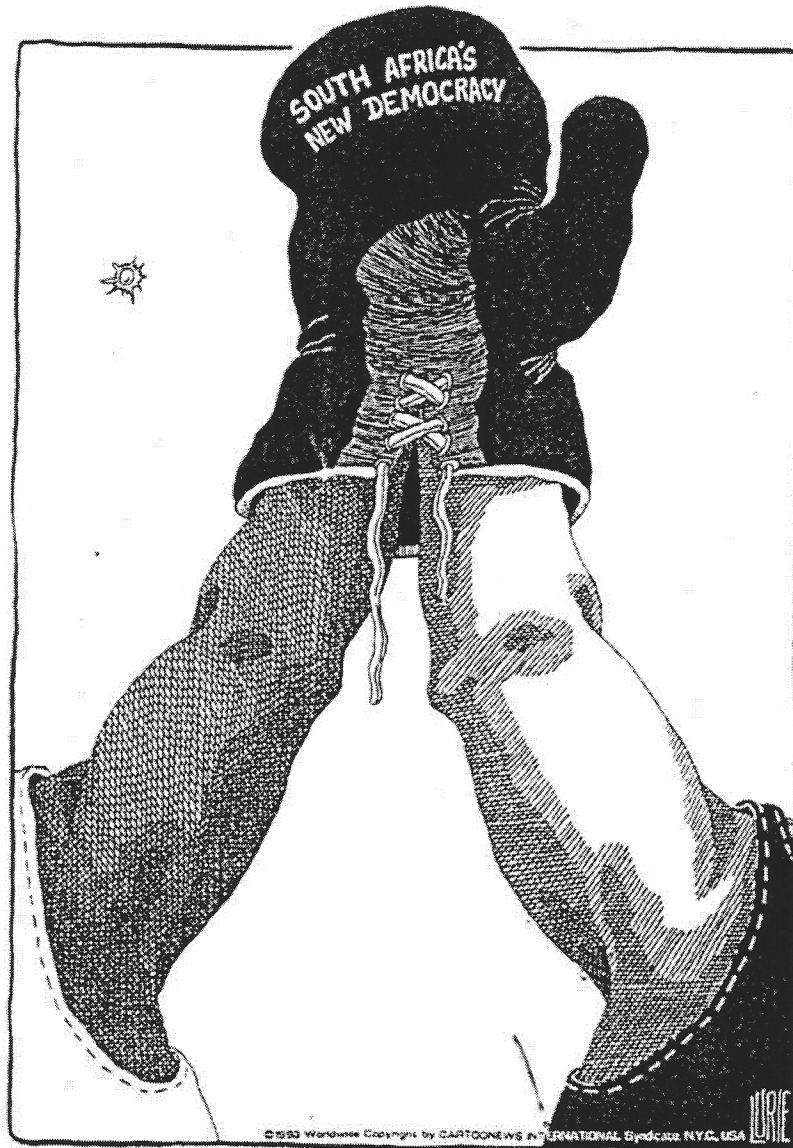
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*"I have a dream
that one day on the red hills of Georgia
the sons of former slaves
and the sons of former slave owners
will be able to sit down together
at a table of brotherhood."*

Martin Luther King, August 28, 1963

Document 12

Source: © 1993 Lurie/Cartoonews International Syndicate. Used with permission.



And the winners are...

*"It was during those long,
lonely (prison) years that my hunger for the
freedom of my own people became
a hunger for the freedom of all people,
black and white."*

Nelson Mandela