

Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948):
Major Events in the Life of a Revolutionary Leader

Glossary

Boer War (1899-1902): South African Dutch colonists (known as Boers) living in Transvaal and the Orange Free State, increasingly concerned with British expansion into South Africa, declared war on the English in 1899. Despite Boers victories at the start of the war, the English were eventually victorious, and all of South Africa was brought under British rule.

British East India Company: The British East India Company was chartered as a joint-stock company by Queen Elizabeth I in 1600. The original charter granted the company a monopoly on trade with the East Indies (South and Southeast Asia), and as its interests in that area grew, so did the Company's involvement in local politics and governance. By the end of the 17th century the Company was actively governing large parts of India, including Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. This presence continued to expand across the 18th and much of the 19th centuries. In 1858, when the Company's reign was replaced by direct British imperial rule, the Company controlled nearly the entire subcontinent through a patchwork of direct and indirect administrations.

Indian National Congress: The Indian National Congress, founded by British and Indian activists in 1885, was a body of nationalist leaders who banded together to push for changes in British colonial administration. Members were originally focused on reforming the system of British rule rather than overthrowing it, but as Indian nationalism grew and British recalcitrance worsened, the Congress's leaders began to argue for home rule and independence. The Congress was the most important pro-independence group in India during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and is still active today as a political party.

Satyagraha (Roughly translated "holding firmly to the truth"): A type of protest pioneered by Gandhi involving large-scale non-violent civil disobedience.

Untouchables: According to traditional Hindu belief, all people are born into a caste — that is, a hereditary rank or position within society. The untouchables are the lowest caste in the Hindu caste system. Believed to be unclean, untouchables are ostracized in Hindu society, often made to live in isolation with no contact from people of other castes.