

Perspectives of history and their lessons for today

As I thought about writing a piece for the *IDC Journal* of June 2108, as per solicitation, I wondered and worried about three ideas: (a) what topic would be of benefit to the Indian Diaspora; (b) why write anyway when millions of books have been written filling millions of shelves in thousands of libraries even as hundreds of millions of articles are being written for thousands of magazines/journals every day; (c) if I write what I know, would the IDC publish it? (I wrote a piece before and submitted it, but it was not published). The editor(s)' right, however, is noted.

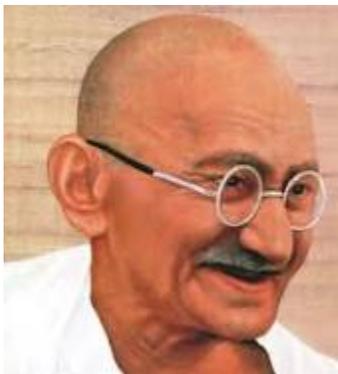
From the point of view of Biology, the usual behavioral response to threat is either "fight or flight." (In the USA we refer to the "fight" mode as "stand your ground.") Do Indians and People of Indian Origin (PIOs) ever stand their ground? And, if not, why not? (Well, if PIOs have the same MO as Indians, this is to be expected, since Indians and PIOs are from the same gene pool.)



A small island nation in the North Atlantic, England, some 7058 nautical miles away around the Cape of Good Hope, ruled India for some 200 years until Lord Mountbatten agreed to depart "in dignity" in August 1947. "The history of the **British Raj** refers to the period of **British rule on the Indian** subcontinent between 1858 and

1947. The system of governance was instituted in 1858 when the **rule** of the East **India** Company was transferred to the Crown in the person of Queen Victoria (who in 1876 was proclaimed Empress of **India**"). www.wikipedia.org.

Of course, Lord Mountbatten did not just agree to "leave in dignity"; the Congress party under the spiritual, tactical and political leadership of Mahatma Gandhi (who was trained as a lawyer in England) stood their ground and forced the approx. 250,000 India-



resident-British occupying administrative force (with a military mainly of Indians) to agree to India being "granted" its independence. During the period of British abuse,

there were approx. 300 million native Indians. This was a ratio of approx. 1200 Indians to 1 resident British. (Note that the British controlled the military in India and had millions of soldiers and other reinforcements in Britain. India was not "granted" its independence; the British recognized their defeat and saw the wisdom of departing "in dignity." Gandhi should not have agreed to Mountbatten's request to "let us leave in dignity." The British had lost, and losers must leave. It's the natural and universal law.) Gandhi's Photo: www.wikipedia.org

Prior to the rule of the East India Company, India was conquered and ruled by the Moghuls for 317 years. "This dynasty was resumed by Akbar after second was of

Panipat where he defeat last Hindu King of Delhi Hemu Vikarmaditya and lasted till **1857** when Last Mughal Emperor Zafar was de-throne by East India Company. So overall they ruled India for approx. 317 years." www.wikipedia.org. So, in this instance the East India Company was the victor and, "to the victor belongs the spoils." The East India Company ruled India until 1858. Apparently, India did not stand its ground against the Moghuls; Gandhi taught India to stand its ground and face the enemy, the British beast, (even though the British boasted that, "the sun never sets on the British Empire" and "that Britannia rules the wave.") Gandhi and India proved that a small oppressive minority cannot rule India.



"Indo-Fijians are Fiji citizens who are fully or partially of Indian descent, which includes descendants who trace their heritage from various parts of the Indian subcontinent. They number 313,798 out of a total of 827,900 people living in Fiji". www.wikipedia.org

Yet the democratically elected government under the leadership of Mahendra Chaudhry was removed by a coup. "On May 19, 2000, Chaudhry and his government were taken hostage and deposed by a group led by businessman [George Speight](http://www.britannica.com), who claimed to be acting for indigenous Fijians." www.britannica.com The Chaudhry government was never returned to office. The PIOs did not stand their ground and enforce their Democratic and popular Rights.



In Guyana dictatorial rule under Burnham and his PNC reigned supreme for 28 years. PIOs in Guyana are the majority. They did not stand their ground. The PNC was removed through the work of overseas Guyanese who were successful in getting the Carter Center of the USA to send USA's ex-president, Jimmy Carter, to observe the

free and fair national election in 1992. Carter declared the PPP/Civic the winner. Photo: www.britannica.com

PIOs are also the majority in Trinidad yet Eric Williams, the architect of unfair electoral practices in the Caribbean, ruled T&T from 1962 until his death in 1981. (He apparently owned T&T.) PIOs in T&T did not see it fit to stand their ground and enforce



Democratic principles and free and fair national election to remove a prime minister who was essentially a dictator, not very unlike Burnham in Guyana. Photo: www.thecaribbeancurrent.com.

Standing his ground, Gandhi set the example in India.

Roopnarain Persaud: *He made indelible and effective contributions to Democracy in Guyana and Queens, NY. He is co-founder and General Secretary of the Indo-Caribbean Council (ICC-NY) He is an educator and has designed and managed Work Force Training Programs in New York, graduating tens of thousands of "hard-to-serve" drop-outs in NYC, to name a few of his contributions to make our world a better place. He thinks "outside the box" and is a "problem solver."*