

Tolstoy Farm in the life of Gandhi

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Tolstoy Farm fell into decay during Apartheid but is now being revived.



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Establishment Tolstoy Farm:

- **Mahatma Gandhi** set up Tolstoy Farm in **1910** with **3 goals** in mind while he was supervising the satyagraha by South African Indians in the Transvaal that discriminated against them because of their race.
- **Funds were running short, morale was sinking**, and the movement missed the benefits that might accompany the **establishment of a centre** where its followers might **assemble** and coordinate their activities.
 - The Transvaal settlement **accommodated all 3**.
- Gandhi's friend and associate, the Jewish architect **Hermann Kallenbach** bought 'Roodepoort No. 49' in 1910.
- Tolstoy Farm is located in a southwestern corner of the **Johannesburg municipal area**.

Purpose behind the establishment:

- The vision was to create a **self-supporting agricultural commune** that could provide for basic **needs**.
 - Because on a deeper **spiritual level**, Gandhi was concerned with trying to develop himself and others in terms of personal growth, spiritual understanding and strength of character through hard labour.
- There was the sense that one wanted to **connect with a simpler, more natural way of life** close to the **earth and elements, clearing the mind and soul** for deeper reflection and fundamentally connecting with natural forces.
- Tolstoy's **relative remoteness** and natural ambience supported the thinking of Gandhi, something

which he shared with **Count Leo Tolstoy** (after whom Kallenbach named the settlement).

Why did Tolstoy farm fell in ruins?

- Tolstoy Farm was a place of great import, especially to **followers of Gandhian philosophy**.
 - However, it fell into ruin during **Apartheid**.
- **Apartheid authorities** deliberately suppressed information related to Gandhi.
- There was no support to any **Gandhian structure or institution**.
- **Blacks, Whites, Indians and Coloured people** were forced to live in **racially-segregated neighbourhoods** and settlements as per **official apartheid policy**.

About Apartheid Policy:

- The **Apartheid** (1948 to 1994) in South Africa was the **racial segregation** under the **all-white government of South Africa**.
- The policy dictated that **non-white South Africans** (a majority of the population) were required to live in **separate areas from whites** and use **separate public facilities**, and contact between the two groups would be limited.
- In the 1980s, with **mounting internal and external pressures** for the government to denounce apartheid and pave the way for democratic non-racial South Africa, the government became even more brutal until it had no choice but to submit to pressure after years of being isolated from the international community.
- In **1994**, after political prisoners were released from prison and freedom of association was established, South Africa ushered in a **constitutional democracy based on non-racialism**.

About Leo Tolstoy:

- **Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy**, also referred to in English as **Leo Tolstoy**, was a **Russian writer** regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time.
- He **received nominations for the Nobel Prize** in Literature every year from 1902 to 1906 and for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901, 1902, and 1909.