

Organization for Minorities of India (OFMI)

Sikh Information Centre (SIC)

Contact: Sikhinfosic@gmail.com | 888-551-7454

The Indian Association of Strasbourg plans to install a statue of Mohandas Gandhi in a prominent Strasbourg location by October 2, 2011. However, this is a very controversial proposal which has divided the Indian community. Many people of all nationalities are very strongly opposed to the idea. Here is one reason for their opposition:

Covering up the Doherty Murder

In 1921, Gandhi helped cover up the murder of an American citizen by Gandhians who were rioting during the Second *Satyagraha* Movement. His followers offered the murdered man's wife bribes and Gandhi himself presented veiled threats.

Below we have included the sworn statement of the murdered man's wife, made to a Californian notary on January 4, 1929:

State of California County of Los Angeles

ANNETTE H. DOHERTY, being first duly sworn oath, deposes and says:

My deceased husband, William Francis Doherty, an American citizen, was a mechanical and electrical engineer and business associate of Mr. Richard J. Brenchley, engaged in sand extraction at Mumbra, adjacent to Bombay, India.

On November 19th, 1921, as he was quietly proceeding to the Bombay Improvement Trust work-shops, he was set upon, his eyes were gouged out and eventually he was beaten to death by a group of rioters in a public street of Byculla, a suburb of Bombay.

This was during the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, when Gandhi was at the height of his popularity as a saint and political leader, and had, through his violent speeches against the British, worked his followers into a frenzy of race hatred. My husband was probably mistaken for a Britisher when he was murdered by Gandhi's followers.

Within three days following this killing of my husband, word was brought me from Gandhi that he greatly desired an interview with me, begging me to set a time when I would receive him. I was then stopping with an

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American family in Bombay. Gandhi's emissary was Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poetess and politician.

Mrs. Naidu was greatly agitated, and made many statements to me that I feel she would now like to unsay. Her chief concern, however, was that the American public should never be allowed to hear of this outrage committed upon my husband; and she very frankly asked me my price for refraining from ever discussing or advertising the affair in America and from myself returning to America. Under no condition, said Mrs. Naidu, would they be willing that the American public should learn that they were killing people so promiscuously that even a white face cost a man's life.

As to Gandhi's request for an interview with me:

At that time he was going about so unclothed that Mrs. Naidu suggested I call upon him rather than that he come to the American home where I was stopping - inasmuch as this latter might prove embarrassing. It was therefore determined that I should see him at his own headquarters in Bombay, which I did, a motor car having been sent by him to fetch me.

Upon this occasion of my visit with Gandhi he repeated to me in substance what Mrs. Naidu had said, but even more emphatically stressed the point that Americans, because they were so much in sympathy with him in his political views, must on no account learn the details of the murder of my husband lest it hurt the success of his movement in America and prejudice our people against him.

ANNETTE HELEN DOHERTY.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 4th day of January, 1929,

W.J. SCHISEL Notary Public in and for the County of Los Angeles, State of California. My commission expires Jan. 18, 1931.

[source: *Gandhi Under Cross-Examination*, G. B. Singh and Tim Watson, pp. 269-271]