

The Father of a Nation Who Inspires the World

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Last Friday, the 2nd of October, a new statue of Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled in a tiny town called Runse, on the border of Lithuania and Russia in honour of Gandhi's birthday. The Lithuanian government chose erect this monument to signify their hopes for a peaceful relationship with Russia. This piqued my interest because I thought it was odd to use Gandhi as a mark of peace in this region, since Lithuania has historical its own freedom fighters, and could have elected to use one of them as an icon instead. As I considered it I realised, that it did not matter that Gandhi's most tangible impacts had graced a different continent, or that Lithuania did not even exist as an independent nation during his lifetime: Mahatma Gandhi had such a profound impact on the planet that he has become the symbol of non-violent revolution internationally.

Reflecting on my own upbringing only emphasised this point further. Despite the fact that I grew up in Singapore, I am no stranger to Gandhi's legacy. Far from it, his story was even a compulsory part of the syllabus at the school I went to, though I did not study in India. In fact, Singapore, like most countries, celebrates Gandhi Jayanti as 'International Non-violence Day' because there is no other person as qualified to share his birthday with a day that demands peace.

There have been approximately 250 stamps, issued by 80 different countries bearing Gandhi's face, and he has also been featured in 26 different movies. But perhaps the most incredible truth is that countless artistic representations of him published internationally, in the form of paintings and sculptures, so many that I was unable to find consensus on a number. Below are twelve of the most famous statues of Gandhi that have all been established outside India, in honour of his global influence.

