


# Mahatma Gandhi & Non-Cooperation Movement

**Professor (Dr.) Nand Kishore Singh**

Former Dean, Faculty of Social Science/Education  
& Head, University Department of History/AIH,A&C  
at Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, Bihar

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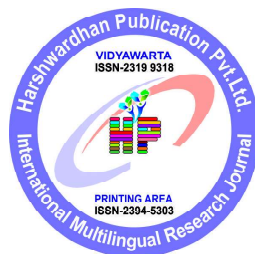
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**Dedication**

I dedicate this book to my favourite  
teacher Late Prof. ShyamBihari Singh  
Former Pro Vice-Chancellor, Magadh  
University, Bodh-Gaya.

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**CHAPTER-I****Mahatma Gandhi & Non-Cooperation Movement**

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Among very few political instruments Mahatma Gandhi invented and used for the emancipation of the country from the British yoke, non-cooperation movement was undoubtedly very important. On the one hand, non-cooperation movement contributed to the socio-economic uplift of crores of Indians, on the other hand, it proved to be a valuable source of It was, in fact, a sort of people's war national awakening.

which gave rise to unique social awakening as well and filled the minds of people with energy and hope. By introducing this device. Gandhi practically introduced himself to his motherland as the torch-bearer of India's freedom struggle.

The true significance of this historic movement lies in the fact that in addition to the political impact it left on the future course of nationalist movement, even the socio-economic dimensions of this experiment were very impressive. As regards the genesis of non-cooperation movement, with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the political scene of India, India's freedom movement entered into a hitherto unknown

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## **Mahatma Gandhi & Non-Cooperation Movement** 7

phase. People had become weary of the policy of prayers and persuasions which were earlier practised by the freedom fighters towards the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The circumstances prevailing in the country right after the partition of Bengal, compelled people to feel restive. Several factors, which contributed to the frustration of Gandhi, accounted for the sudden shift in Mahatma's approach to freedom struggle. It was this approach of Gandhi that he embodied in non-cooperation movement.

So far as Lord Curzon's seven years' regime is concerned, it was full of "missions, omissions and commissions". His frontier policy and his missions abroad were subjected to bitter criticism. The Official Secrets Act of 1904, the Calcutta Corporation Act and the Universities Acts were doing immense harm to the people. The Indian nationalists were in no mood to be cowed down by such reactionary measures of the British Govt. A country-wide agitation against the Universities Act and partition of Bengal was started. The Amrit Bazar Patrika, a contemporary Calcutta daily, wrote fearlessly, "Is it then a fact that the English people and Queen Victoria cheated the Indians by holding out some false promises, 1

The worst and the most foolish act of Curzon's vice royalty was still to come in the guise of the partition of Bengal. The "Patrika" asked the people to hold public meetings and prepare petitions against the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon. About this time, the success of Japan in her war with

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Russia introduced a threatening note in the tone of the Bengali press. The Indians were called on to see what Asians could do against one of the mightiest powers of Europe, and the Amrit Bazar Patrika asked, "what was the difference between the Japanese and the Bengalis, except that the former were armed whereas the latter had been deprived of their arms by a high-handed and suspicious foreign Government.

Two things combined to inflame public opinion in Bengal and in India as a whole against the partition. It was generally believed by the intelligentsia that the partition of the province was designed with the sinister motive of destroying the growing solidarity of Bengali nationalism, driving a wedge between the Hindus and the Muslims of the province and creating disunity between them.

The anti-partition agitation, which was confined mostly to the Hindus, was naturally resented by the officials." The nationalists saw the act of partition as a challenge to Indian nationalism and not merely as an administrative measure. They saw that it was a deliberate attempt to divide the Bengalis and to disrupt and weaken nationalism in Bengal.

The people of the province realized that it would also be a big blow to the growth of Bengali language and culture.

The anti-Congress attitude of Lord Curzon convinced more and more people that it was useless to expect any political and economic advance as long as British ruled India. Even the moderate leader Gokhale complained, "the bureaucracy was growing frankly selfish and openly hostile to

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national aspirations.”

The warning of the Indian press was that a national struggle of the greatest magnitude would be launched, if the decision to split Bengal in two arbitrary parts was not reversed.”

In the Calcutta Town Hall on August 7, 1905 the biggest anti-partition meeting was arranged by Ambika Charan Mazumdar, S.N. Banerjea and J. Roy. The students of the Ripon, Duff, City, Sanskrit, Presidency, Bangalis and Bengal Veterinary colleges and Madarsas as well as the students of the Metropolitan Institution, the Aryan Institution, the Cambell Medical College and the St. Xavier College formed a huge procession and marched to the Town Hall. Their total number, according to official figures, was not less than twelve thousand. The people of Bengal were forced to think of some more vigorous methods which the imperialists could understand and appreciate. Some one hit upon the idea of boycotting British manufactured goods as a retaliatory measure until the partition was annulled. This proposal was in complete harmony with the spirit of Swadeshi” which was already making much headway, and was easily adopted. A campaign in support of the boycott was launched throughout the province which was a great success. S.N. Banerjea wrote, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counter the evil effects of the dismemberment of our province and to maintain the integrity of our race. So God help us.”

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The twenty first session of the Congress met at Benaras in December 1905 under the shadow of the partition and the close of Lord Curzon's viceroyalty.

The controversy in the twenty first session centred round the Subjects Committee's deliberation over the proposal to pass a resolution of welcome to the visiting Prince of Wales.

The resolution was opposed by Lajpat Rai, who argued that the visit of the Prince of Wales staged a gala show which aimed to divert the public from the political unrest." Gokhale and Banerjea pressed for the acceptance of the resolution. When the resolution was carried by the majority of the subjects committee, Lajpat Rai and Tilak warned that they would oppose its passage in the open assembly.

Gokhale presided over the 1905 Congress. The most important declaration in his presidential address was, the goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves and that in the course of time, a form of Government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire."1

Referring to the anti-partition agitation, Gokhale praised Swadeshi but cautioned against boycott. He explained that the term boycott "meant" a vindictive desire to injure another, and emphasized that 'such a desire on our part is a normal feature of relations with England is of course out of the question. In contrast, Lajpat Rai impressed upon Con-

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gressmen that boycott ushered “the dawn of a new political era for India.”

Throughout 1906 the anti-partition agitation gathered momentum in Bengal and its repercussions widened the gulf between moderates and extremists of the Congress. Indian nationalists had grown in self-respect and self-confidence.

The defeat of the Indian army by the Ethiopians in 1896 and of Russia by Japan in 1905 exploded the myth of European superiority. Everywhere in Asia people heard with enthusiasm the news of the victory of a small Asian country over Russia, one of the biggest military powers of Europe. It would not be out of place to observe here that in view of the aforesaid facts, the mood of the nation was becoming very tough and now any type of cooperation with the British Raj did not have any relevance.

Tagore gave great impetus to the Rabindra Nath Swadeshi movement by his patriotic writings, speeches and songs. Side by side with the Swadeshi and Boycott Movements, a National Council of Education was brought into existence for making arrangements for imparting national education.<sup>12</sup>

There was great popular enthusiasm everywhere in Calcutta. New organisations came into existence to propagate the twin ideas of Swadeshi and boycott. The Government came down upon the agitators with a heavy hand. Despite all this, Swadeshi and Boycott Movements had become their universal weapons. S.N. Banerjea declared, “so far as

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practicable, we shall use home-made articles and abstain from the use of foreign articles. So help us God. The Patrika commented that agitation against the partition took the form of a national struggle. Public meetings and processions, picketing, patriotic songs, bonfire of foreign goods and fiery speeches kept the spirit of nationalism at fever pitch.<sup>16</sup> Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo threw in their weight with the agitators.

The success of the Movement exasperated the government which resorted to every type of repressive measures to break the spirit of the people. A virtual reign of terror was let loose in East Bengal and Assam. Fifty thousand people gathered at Kalighat temple to vow for abstaining from buying foreign articles.<sup>17</sup>

“At times, youngmen would spread themselves before the carriages of fashionable ladies to prevent them from proceeding to purchase goods from English stores;”<sup>18</sup> “A girl patient would cry out in high fever and delirium that she would not take foreign medicine.” Students would indulge in burning Manchester cloth and foreign cigarettes. There emerged a new group within the Congress which declared Swaraj to be their goal and it was to be won by a bold self reliant action and not by appealing to the British sense of justice and fairplay. This group came to be called extremist in distinction from the Old Guards” which was designated as moderate. Several subsequent events impressed upon both the aforesaid elements that struggle, and not cooperation, was the key to

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the problems of India.

It was on 30 December 1906 that the All-India Muslim League was formed. The Muslim League, it is interesting to observe, supported the partition of Bengal and demanded special safeguards for the Muslims in government services.

The Muslim League's political activities were directed not against the foreign rules but against the Hindus and the National Congress. Hereafter, the League began to oppose every nationalist and domestic demand of the Congress. The League soon became one of the main instruments with which the British hoped to fight the rising nationalist tide. Communal elements were thus introduced with the connivance of the British rules. How the League danced at the tune of the Britishers is revealed by this instance. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, then Prime Minister of England, said in 1911, "The political successes which have rewarded the efforts of this League are so fresh in the public mind that I need not refer to them specifically."<sup>21</sup>

As we have already said above, Congress was getting sharply divided in two camps-extremists and moderates. In 1907, there was thus a split in the Congress and the moderates parted company with the extremists. There were basic differences between the moderates and the extremists on the question of loyalty to the British throne and the continuance of the alien rule in India. The moderates believed in loyalty to the British throne. The view of the extremists was that the British rule in India was a curse. Pheroza Shah Mehta, Surendra

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Nath Banerjea and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were the chief spokesmen of the moderates while Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose represented the extremists. The leaders of the two groups were Gokhale and Tilak respectively.

When the Congress delegates assembled at Surat in the afternoon on 26 December 1907 for the inauguration of the twenty third session of the Congress, the atmosphere was full of unusual tension and excitement. Because of delay in printing, the draft resolutions had not been circulated in advance and there was rumour that the four Calcutta resolutions were not going to be reiterated at all. The circulation of the drafts just at the time of the commencement of the Congress session failed to reassure the rank and file on this point.

The major share of responsibility for this split must be borne by the moderates, although the extremists were not absolutely free from blame. From the very beginning, the former were determined not to give any quarter to the extremists but maintain their exclusive hold over the Congress.

This is clearly borne out by the text of the undelivered presidential address of Rash Behari Ghose which contained these words, "The National Congress is definitely committed only to constitutional methods of agitation to which it is fast moored. If the new party does not approve of such methods and can not work harmoniously with the old, it has no place within the pale of the Congress. Secession, therefore, is the

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only course open to it.”\*

At Surat Mr. Ghosh seems to have played the key role in inspiring those in the extremist ranks who did the shouting on 26 December and joined in fighting the next day. He himself wrote later; “very few people know that it was I, (without consulting Tilak), Who gave the order that led to the breaking of the Congress.” 23

While the Indian national movement was progressing by stage, some persons turned out to be terrorists to achieve independence. Terrorism may be called the militant phases of Indian nationalism. The terrorists believed that it would not be possible to end foreign rule without the use of force.

They were exasperated by the reactionary and repressive policies of the government. They believed in violent action to demoralise the British administration in India and its Indian collaborators. They smuggled arms and manufactured them for using these against the British. Funds were collected even by dacoities. The earliest sturm-centre of terrorist movement was Maharashtra.

Shyamji Krishan Verma, V.D. Savarkar and Ganesh Savarkar were its important leaders. The revolutionary movement became strong in Bengal after its partition in 1905. Its leaders were B.K. Ghose (brother of Shri Aurobindo) and B.N. Dutt (brother of Swami Vivekananda). Pondicherry was another centre. There were revolutionaries in the Punjab also and some of them were associated with the attempt on the life of Lord Hardinge in 1912. The policy of ruthless

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repression was adopted by the government in dealing with the anti-partition agitation.

In view of the split in the rank and file of the Indian National Congress, the government felt quite strengthened, and it decided to crush the public sentiments. Since the house of the Congress was divided, the Britishers thought of aiding the Muslims League and encouraging it against the Congress party. The government of India recommended to the Home Government to accept the principle of giving separate representation to the Muslims. Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India, agreed after some hesitation. The Indian Councils Act of 1909, popularly known as Morley-Minto Reforms, was passed by the British Parliament.

The British Government played the game of “divide and rule” and tried to win over moderate nationalist opinion, so that the militant nationalists could be isolated and suppressed. To placate the moderate nationalists, it announced constitutional concessions through the Indian Councils Act of 1909 which came to be known as the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909.

The Morley-Minto Reforms increased the number of elected members in the Imperial Legislative Council and the Provincial Councils. But most of the elected members were elected indirectly by the Provincial Councils in the case of the Imperial Council and by Municipal Committees and District Boards in the case of Provincial Councils. Some of the elected Seats were reserved for landlords and British capitalists in

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India. For instance, of the 68 members of the Imperial Legislative Council 36 were officials and 5 were nominated non-officials. Of the 27 elected members, 6 were to represent the big landlords and 2 the British capitalists.

Morley openly declared at the time: "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it,"\*

The real purpose of the Reforms of 1909 was to confuse the moderate nationalists, to divide the nationalist ranks, and to check the growth of unity among Indians.

The reforms also introduced the system of separate electorates under which all Muslims were grouped in separate constituencies from which Muslims alone could be elected. This was done in the name of protecting the Muslims minority. But in reality, this was a part of the policy of dividing Hindus and Muslims and thus maintaining British supremacy in India. The system of separate electorates was based on the notion that the political and economic interests of Hindus and Muslims were separate.

This nation was unscientific because religion can not be the basis of political and economic interests or of political groupings. What is even more important, this system proved extremely harmful in practice. It checked the progress of India's unification which had been a continuous historical process.

The moderate nationalists did not fully support the

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Morley-Minto Reforms. They soon realised that the Reforms had not really granted much. But they decided to cooperate with the Government in working for the reforms. This co-operation with the Government and their opposition to the programme of the militant nationalists proved very costly to them. They lost the respect and support of the public and were reduced to a small political group. The vast majority of the politically conscious Indians continued to support, though passively, Lokamanya Tilak and the militant nationalists.

When in the Delhi Durbar of December 1911, it was announced in the name of the King Emperor that the partition of Bengal would be annulled, it became clear to the Muslims that the British Government pressurized by Hindu agitation, Would not even leave the Muslim community as they were. Disestablishment of the province of East Bengal meant that the Muslims would lose their strong majority position and be once again dominated by the more advanced Hindu community.

In 1911 the Government announced the cancellation of the partition of Bengal. Western and eastern parts of Bengal were to be re-united while a new province consisting of Bihar and Orissa was to be created. At the same time, the seat of the central Government was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.

The effects of the annulment of the partition of Bengal were far reaching. The Muslims felt very much agitated and as a result, got disenfranchised with both the Britishers and the Government. Their objective became to forestall the National Congress.

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The war that broke out in 1914 brought about profound changes not only in the Indian politics, but also in Britain's position in the world and inside Britain herself. The declaration by Woodrow Wilson endorsed by the Allied powers in Europe that one of the aims of the war was to guarantee self-determination to all people compelling the British Government into promising representative institutions to India after the war was over, was some of the very significant developments which changed the tone and content of Indian national movement." The appearance of Mahatma Gandhi, a leader who was capable of rallying all the warring elements in Indian politics, on the political scene of India was an event of immense significance. Another important effect of the war on the Indian national movement was the growth of the Home Rule movement which aimed at the attainment by India of Home Rule or self-government on colonial lines within a short span of time. According to Tilak, it signified the replacement of the British bureaucracy by an administration responsible to the people. The Home Rule Movement can justly be regarded as making the beginning of a new phase in the country's struggle for freedom. It may also be added that for the first time the Home Rule Movement took the message of self-government to the people at large. Students also took an active part in popularising this movement.

Mrs. Besant saw India's opportunity in the hour of England's need. She conducted propaganda in England in favour of granting self government to India. On returning On

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returning to India, she decided to organise the Home Rule Movement and started two journals for this purpose The New India and the "Common Will." She made extensive tours and set up Home Rule organisations all over the country.

The moderates, who did not like her much, admitted that she stirred the country by her spoken as well as written words as scarcely any one else could do. She was arrested and interned along with her two co-workers-Wadia and Arundale.

There was great agitation in the country and also in Great Britain for securing her release.

Till 1941, Mrs. Basant had devoted all her energies to religion, education and social reform, which she now transferred to the political field. According to her own confession increasing repression, narrowing of liberty, the ill-treatment of students and the danger of revolution forced her into the field.<sup>28</sup> She started the "Common Will" in 1914 and the daily "New India" in August 1914 to press forward the coming changes in India and to claim steadily India's place in the Empire. The fate of the British Empire, she said, "hangs on the fate of India and therefore it is but wisdom and prudence to keep India contented by granting Home Rule to her."<sup>30</sup> Lokamanya Tilak also organised a Home Rule Movement of his own in Maharashtra, C.P. and Berar. He thought that the world war offered a fine opportunity to Indians to demand Home Rule or self government. About the middle of

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1916, he undertook an extensive tour of the country and instructed the masses on the meaning and necessity of Home rule. Even after being released from the Mandalay Jail after completing six years of transportation, Tilak thought of starting an agitation on the lines of the Irish Home Rule Movement. Before he could finalize his plans, Mrs. Besant announced the formation of a Home Rule League in the issue of New India of September 25, 1915. Tilak established his own Home Rule League on April 28, 1916.<sup>33</sup> It is thus clear that the Home Rule Movement, pioneered by Mrs. Annie Besant and supported strongly by Tilak, was a big and bold step forward in the direction of India's independence. Various experiments, which were made in the subsequent years and various events, which occurred later on, testify to the fact that India's freedom movement by this time had entered into a very important phase. The advent of Mahatma Gandhi introduced many new elements to our struggle for freedom. The leadership of freedom movement was gradually slipping into the hands of the Mahatma, who came to be the new hope of India.

It was precisely at this critical juncture that the Muslim League also felt constrained to alter its earlier course of confrontation with the National Congress. The policy adopted by British Government convinced League leaders that nothing tangible could be expected from them.

During the First World War a change was recorded in the attitude of the Muslim League towards the Government and the Congress. Turkey war considered to be the only living

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temporal power of Islam. Indian Muslims owed their allegiance to the Turkish Khalifa during the Turko-Italian

The War of 1911. England did not help the Turkish Sultan. The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 also convinced the Muslims that all Christian Powers were conspiring against Turkey. They took the campaign against Turkey as a struggle between the cross and crescent. Indian Muslims began to nurse a grudge against the British Government for its cold indifference towards the treachery against Turkey. The annulment of the partition of Bengal further irritated and disappointed them. Turkey's decision to enter into war on the side of Germany finally decided the direction of Muslim League's actions. German propaganda convinced the Muslims of India that Turkey was engaged in a holy war against England and as such, it was their religious duty to thwart and sabotage the war preparations of the Allies. All the aforesaid reasons brought about a schism in the unholy alliance between the League and the Government. The patronage given to the League was then transferred by Lord Hardinge to the Congress which was up to 1915 dominated by moderates. The Muslim League felt itself cornered and so came nearer its sister organisation, the Congress which also sympathised with Turkey. Nationalist Muslim leaders like Maulana Azad, Azad, Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Ansari, Hakim Azmal Khan and even Jinnah began to exhort their co-religionists to throw aside their distrust of the Hindus and join them in the struggle for freedom.

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The Muslim League at its Lucknow session in 1913 adopted a constitutional amendment to the effect that the League's aim was to secure self-government under the aegis of the British crown. Thus unity of interests and objects opened the doors for fresh Co-operation between the Congress and the League. Both the League and the Congress decided to co-operate with each other and at the same time not to co-operate with the British Government.

As soon as war broke out in Europe, the Indian Muslims became highly critical of the British Government. The authorities invoked the Seditious Meetings Act and arrested the important Muslims for their outspoken nationalism. Their arrests brought the League closer to the Congress. As a step towards strengthening the ties of comradeship, both the parties held their sessions side by side at Bombay in 1915. Prominent Congress leaders, namely, Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Malaviya and Sarojini Naidu, also spoke from the League's platform. Agha Khan, the stooge of the British Government, resigned from the presidentship of Muslim League. The League appointed a committee to prepare a scheme for India Constitution was released at Lucknow where a pact was signed between the Congress and the League.

The aforesaid pact had several clauses. The main political features of the Lucknow Pact or the Congress-League proposal were as follows.

That the existing structure of the Government needed

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radical changes in order to Win the approval of the people. "India must not be a dependency and be raised to the status of a self-governing state as an equal partner with equal rights and responsibilities as an independent unit of the Empire." Several provisions pertaining to constitutional and administrative measures were included in the Hindu-Muslim Pact of 1916. Space does not allow me to refer to full details of the aforesaid measures. We, however, wish to mention here that the political clauses of this pact proved extremely significant and channelized the forces of both the Congress and the League into one direction. The Lucknow Pact was the basis of the resolution on self-government. With one voice the united Congress told the Government that "it is of opinion that the time has come when His Majesty the King- Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer Self-government on India at an early date. the Khilafat Movement.

The Indian Muslims were in a state of transformation. The transformation of the Congress was precipitated by ferment since the outbreak of the Great War. There was a great conflict in their minds, for the war had created a serious religious dilemma for them. Germany surrendered November 11 and Turkey capitulated on October 31. The Ottoman Empire lay shattered.

The Arabs, incited by the British, revolted against their sovereign, the Caliph. Congress had met in Delhi. The Chairman of the Reception Committee December 1918 both the Muslim League and Committee of the League was Dr. Ansari. He

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## **Mahatma Gandhi & Non-Cooperation Movement** 25

denounced He denounced Sharif Husain of Mecca who had raised the banner of rebellion against his acknowledged sovereign. He demanded the maintenance of the integrity and independence of the Muslim states. During the period of the Punjab disturbances, Abdu Bari of Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, secured the support of a large number of Ulema to the Khilafat Movement and the All-India Khilafat Conference was formed. At Amritsar in December 1919, Gandhiji and other Congress leaders discussed with the Khilafat leaders the plan of work for the removal of Muslim grievances. In the Khilafat Conference held at Calcutta on February 20, 1920, under the presidency of Abdul Kalam Azad, a resolution was passed on the non cooperation movement and it was decided to send a delegation to London to present the Khilafat case before the British Government. On March 10, Gandhiji issued a manifesto in which he advocated the launching of a non-violent movement of non-co-operation.

The Indians had given whole-hearted support to the British Government during the First World War. They had helped in war efforts with men and money. They had suffered due to high prices, low wages, shortage of supplies, plague and influenza. The liberty of the people had been curtailed under the Defence of India Rules. In return for all this, the British Government announced Montague- Chelmsford Report in 1918 which was to form the basis of the forthcoming reforms. It greatly disappointed the Indians.

When such were the general feelings of the people,

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the Government of India passed the infamous Rowlatt Act in 1918. The Act provided for the speedy trial of offences without any right of appeal. A special court consisting of three Judges of a High Court was to be set up and it could meet at any place in camera. It was authorised to admit evidence which was otherwise not admissible under the Indian Evidence Act. Unanimity was required for passing death sentence but ordinary decisions could be taken by the majority vote of the judges. The Provincial Government could ask a person to furnish security of notify his residence or reside in a particular area or to report himself to the police. The Act provided for search of a place and the arrest of a suspected person without warrant. The period for such a detention was to be one year in the first instance and three years in all.

The Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi decided to start satyagraha. He declared 30th March 1919 as the day of hartal all over India. The date was later on changed to 6th of April. The hartal was observed at many places on both days. There were clashes between the people and the police at Delhi. Mahatma Gandhi decided to see the situation himself but was arrested at Palwal railway station and sent back to Bombay.

There was trouble in the Punjab. Hartal was observed on 30th of March and 6th of April at many places: The Government of the Punjab passed orders for the deportation of Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Kitchlew to Dharamsala on 9th of April. They were removed from Amritsar by the police on 10th of

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April. This led to a hartal in the city. Many unarmed people marched to the residence of the Deputy Commissioner to demand their release. They were checked and fired at by the police on the way. The infuriated mob started arson and assault on the Europeans. The troops were called out and the mob dispersed.

General O'Dyer issued proclamation that no meetings were to be held but no steps were taken to bring it to the notice of the general public. An announcement was made by the leaders of the public that a meeting would be held on 13th of April, the Baisakhi day, at 4.30 p.m. on the Jallianwala Bagh. General O'Dyer and the authorities took no action to stop the meeting at the right time and it was attended by people numbering between 6,000 and 10,000.

The garden was practically closed on all sides except one entrance. General O'Dyer came through the entrance with armoured cars and troops. He ordered firing without giving any warning to the people. One thousand, six hundred and fifty rounds were fired as a result of which 397 people were killed and even then all the people passing 2000 were wounded.

The thorough streets were made to crawl on the ground. The conveyances of the Indians were requisitioned for the use of the Europeans. Water and electric supply were cut off. Flogging was common. The administration of martial law was even more rigid at Lahore. Shopkeepers were made to open shops. Stern steps were taken at Gujranwala, Kasur

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and Sheikhpura.

The gruesome tale was repeated at numerous other places. The Punjab was treated more or less as an enemy country newly conquered. Its people were taught not to dare challenge or criticise the government.

The Punjab was isolated, cut off from the rest of India; a thick veil seemed to cover it and hide it from the outside eyes, exclaimed Jawaharlal Nehru.<sup>36</sup> But gradually the news percolated and India was convulsed. Jallianwala Bagh kindled conflagration throughout India." A debate was raised in Parliament concerning O'Dyer's case, Montagu defended the decision of the Government of India on the ground that Britain could not retain its hold upon India by terrorism. Churchill supported the Indian Government and repudiated the theory that O'Dyer had saved the Empire by his ruthlessness. He called the Jallianwala Bagh massacre a "a monstrous event, the greatest blot that has been placed upon it (English history) since the days gone by when we burned down Joan of Arc." Bonar Law condemned O'Dyer. Yet when votes were taken, as many as 129 voted in favour of O'Dyer against 230 who supported the Government." On August 6, 1919, Lord Sinha, Under Secretary of State for India, speaking in the House of Lords, repeated Montagu's promise of May 22, and stated, "you can not have disturbances of this kind and of this magnitude without an enquiry into the causes and into the measures taken to cope with these disturbances."<sup>42</sup> On O'Dyer's conduct the Indian members commented more

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severely than the Europeans. They compared his acts with the acts of frightfulness committed by the Germans in Belgium and France in 1914. They wrote, we feel that O'Dyer, by adopting an inhuman and un-British method of dealing with the subjects of His Majesty the King-Emperor has done great disservice to the interest of British rule in India,<sup>43</sup>

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent and unarmed men including children, and unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration."

The Government of India expressed its approval of the policy of O'Dyer and shut its eyes to the misdeeds of the officers. Even before the Commission of Enquiry had started work, an Indemnity Bill was passed to protect the officers who had been concerned in the administration and who might have been found guilty. The Committee of the Indian National Congress remarked, "Prussianism could go on further." Gandhiji was convinced of the rationale of the Muslim cause. He stated, "I am bound as an Indian to share the sufferings and trials of fellow-Indians. If I deem the Mohammedan to be my brother, it is my duty to help him in this hour of trial to the best of my ability, if his cause commends itself to me as just,"<sup>44</sup> On June 1, the Khilafat Committee met at Allahabad and proposed four stages of non-cooperation giving up of titles and honorary posts, resignation of posts in the civil services of Government, resignation of services in the police and the army and refusal to pay taxes. In July 1920, a Khilafat

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Conference was held in Sind and was attended by Gandhiji. He called upon the twenty three crore Hindus to help seven crore Muslims and to desist from helping the Government, meaning thereby non-cooperation with the Government.

A stage had arrived when it was necessary that a final decision must be taken. Gandhiji wrote: "To my amazement and dismay, I have discovered that the present representatives of the Empire have become dishonest and unscrupulous. I can no longer retain affection for a Government so evilly managed as it is now a days."

On July 28, Gandhiji announced that non-cooperation would be launched on August 1 with fasting and prayer and suspension of business. Tilak promised his support to the non-cooperation movement. But unfortunately he passed away at midnight, preceding the dawn of August 1.

The non-cooperation campaign started with a bang on August 1. Gandhiji wrote on that date to the Viceroy, "the Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner. I can retain neither respect, nor affection for such a government." And along with the letter, he returned all the medals which Government had bestowed on him as marks of appreciation for his services earlier.

The next step was to obtain the approval and ratification of the Congress for non-cooperation. A special session of the organisation was, therefore, summoned in Calcutta on September 4.

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In the meantime Gandhiji, Shaukat Ali, Mahomed Ali and other leaders toured extensively throughout India, rousing people's enthusiasm and putting stress upon Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Congress met under the Chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Rai. About 3,000 delegates attended and among them a large number were Muslims.

Gandhiji moved the following fateful resolution which in its preamble narrated the history of the Khilafat question and the failures of all efforts to secure a satisfactory solution. It was resolved, "This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of, and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation."

The resolution described the seven items of the programme of non-cooperation. The speech of Gandhiji was a most sincere request for action. He asked, "If the Congress can not bring justice from unwilling hands, how can it vindicate its existence and its honour?" He promised that if there was sufficient response to the plan, "you can gain Swaraj in the course of a year."<sup>50</sup>

After quite a long discussion, the resolution was passed on September 9, 1920 by a large majority. About 1,500 delegates attended the Nagpur session of the Congress in December that year and confirmed the non-cooperation resolution unanimously. Even those, who had opposed it at Calcutta, supported it at Nagpur, with the exception of Jinnah.

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The Congress resolution was strongly supported by a fatwa (religious decree) issued by the Jamiatul ulama-e-Hind calling upon the Muslims to boycott elections, Government schools and colleges and law-courts, and to renounce titles and ranks conferred by the Government. The decree was signed by nearly 900 Ulemas.

At Nagpur the new constitution of the Congress was adopted, thereby converting it into a dynamic working organisation for carrying on the struggle for independence.

The declaration of non-cooperation with the Government was, in fact, a revolutionary step tantamount to the proclamation of war, with this difference that the war was non-violent. This was a unique kind of war. It inflicted neither pain nor injury upon the opponent, reserving all suffering for the non-cooperators. This war, demanded greater discipline, greater bravery, greater endurance, greater sacrifice greater patience than the bloody war of weapons. It recognized no evil passion, anger or hatred even against the enemy. It required a burning faith in the righteousness of the cause and unflinching resolve in its pursuit whatever be the cost, good or ill. These requirements made its pursuit much more exacting tool.

Gandhi made it clear that the complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion-a refusal to obey every single state-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardships. It is

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based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficacy of innocent suffering.

The Congress and the Khilafat Committee had agreed upon the dual motives of non-cooperation, redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and establishment of Swaraj. Gandhi felt it necessary to explain the grounds on which he joined the Khilafat Movement. Essentially his reasons were humanitarian and moral. They were not political in the narrow sense, although undoubtedly aimed at securing national interests.



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