



II. MASS PHASE OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT (1915-1947)

CHAPTER 6

Mahatma Gandhi and the National Movement

Syllabus

Mass Phase of the National Movement (1915-1947)

Mahatma Gandhi-Non-Cooperation Movement: causes (Khilafat Movement, Rowlatt Act, Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy), programme and suspension – Chauri Chaura incident and impact of the Movement; the **Civil Disobedience Movement:** causes (reaction to the Simon Commission (clauses will not be tested) Declaration of Poorna Swaraj at the Lahore Session of 1929), Dandi March, programme and impact of the Movement, Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the Second Round Table Conference; Reason for renewal of the Civil Disobedience Movement

Besides, in 1918-19 and 1920-21, crops failed in many parts of India and caused acute shortage of food. The outbreak of influenza pandemic between 1918 and 1920 which killed about 18 million people in India further increased the problems of the masses.

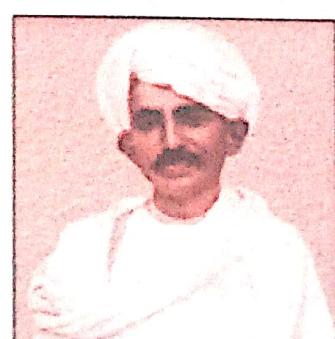
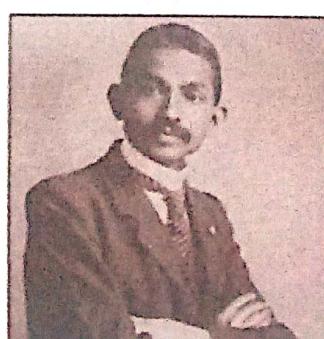
Amidst all these problems, there emerged a new leader on the horizon, who gave a new hope to the struggling masses. He was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as *Bapu* or *Mahatma Gandhi*, who completely dominated the Indian National Movement from 1915 to 1948. That is why, this period is known as the *Gandhian era* in Indian history.

EARLY LIFE

Mahatma Gandhi was born in 1869 at Porbanda in the Kathiawad district of Gujarat. His father was the Diwan of Rajkot State. In 1888, he went to England to study Law. On completing his studies, he came back to India and started practising Law at Rajkot. From 1893 to 1914 he practised Law in South Africa.

In South Africa, on a journey by train from Durban to Pretoria, he was forcibly thrown out of a first-class compartment, even though he

The period from the beginning of the First World War and after the War was marked by many hardships for the common people in India. This was largely because the War led to an enormous increase in defence expenditure that had to be maintained through war loans and increase in taxes. The common man had to pay increased custom duties and income tax. The prices of goods doubled between 1913 and 1918.



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to Bapu

had a valid ticket. Gandhiji was hurt by the racial injustice and discrimination to which Indians had to submit in South Africa. Indians could not travel with the Europeans and were not allowed to enter the hotels and clubs meant for the Europeans.

Gandhiji soon became the leader of the struggle for justice in South Africa. During 1893–1914 he was engaged in a heroic struggle against the racist authorities in South Africa. He formed the *Natal Indian Congress* and suffered imprisonment. He started his non-violent civil disobedience movement to protest against the discriminating treatment meted out to the Indians. The South African government had to listen to the voice of reason and in 1914 repealed most of the unjust acts against the Indians. Thus, it was during this struggle that Mahatma Gandhi evolved the technique of *satyagraha* (non-violent resistance) based on truth and non-violence.

Gandhiji returned to India in January 1915 and spent the next four years in studying the Indian situation. During the course of 1917 and early 1918 he was involved in three significant struggles—in Champaran (Bihar), in Ahmedabad and in Kheda (Gujarat).

Champaran Satyagraha (1917): Gandhiji's first great experiment in Satyagraha was accomplished in 1917 in Champaran, Bihar. It established the method of passive and non-violent resistance. The indigo cultivators of Champaran were greatly exploited by European planters. They were bound by law to grow indigo on 3/20th (*the tinkathia system*) of their land and sell it to the British planters at prices fixed by them. They invited Gandhiji to take up their cause but the district authorities banned his entry to the district. He offered satyagraha as a result of which an inquiry was conducted into the conditions of the peasants. This helped in giving the indigo cultivators some relief.

Ahmedabad Satyagraha (1918): Gandhiji led the mill-workers of Ahmedabad in a strike against the mill-owners who had refused to pay them higher wages. When the workers seemed to weaken, he provided them support by undertaking a fast (hunger strike). Afraid of the consequences, the mill-owners agreed



■ Gandhiji in Champaran

on the fourth day of Gandhiji's fast to give a 35 per cent increase in wages.

Kheda Satyagraha (1918): Crops failed in Kheda and the peasants were not in a position to pay land revenue. The government refused to forgo the land revenue. Gandhiji organised the peasants to offer Satyagraha. The peasants refused to pay the revenue and ultimately the government was forced to arrive at a settlement with the peasants. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel became Gandhiji's follower during this struggle.

These first experiments in Satyagraha brought Gandhiji in close contact with the masses, both the peasants in the rural areas and the workers in the urban areas.

NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

During the First World War, the Congress cooperated with the British. Even Gandhiji urged the Gujarati peasants to join the army, if they wanted to win Swaraj. But the events of 1919 like the Khilafat wrongs, passing of the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy greatly disillusioned Gandhiji. He turned from a cooperator to a non-cooperator and decided to start the Non-Cooperation Movement. Non-Cooperation is '*a way of protesting in which one does not cooperate with the evil-doer.*' Gandhiji asked the people not to assist the foreign government to rule over them. Gandhiji said, "*Non-Cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good.*"

Causes that led to the Non-Cooperation Movement

- 1. Rowlatt Act:** On receiving a report from the Sedition Committee headed by Justice



Gandhiji with his Charkha

Rowlatt, two Bills called the Rowlatt Bills, were introduced in the Central Legislature in February, 1919. The purpose of the Bills was to curb the growing upsurge in the country. In spite of opposition from the Indians, the Rowlatt Act was passed in March, 1919. This Act authorised the Government to imprison any person without trial and convict him in a court.

The Rowlatt Act implied:

- (i) Arrest of a person without warrant.
- (ii) In-camera trial (trial in seclusion).
- (iii) Restrictions on movements of individuals.
- (iv) Suspension of the Right of *Habeas Corpus*.

The Act came like a sudden blow to the Indians who were expecting self-governance. Gandhiji appealed to the Viceroy to withhold his consent to such measures. However his appeal was ignored. He started 'Satyagraha' as a challenge to the government.

The Rowlatt Satyagraha emerged as the first all India struggle against the British government. However, it was largely confined to cities only. In April 1919, there occurred a number of demonstrations and strikes in the country. The British government took brutal measures to suppress this anti-British struggle. In fact, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on the orders of General Dyer in Amritsar on April 13, 1919 was a part of this repression.

However, an important feature of the Rowlatt Satyagraha was Hindu-Muslim unity. This was the call given by Mahatma Gandhi, who always saw a unified India belonging to the people of all religions — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis.

GANDHI'S METHODS AND DIRECTIONS

The methods used by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle were the following:

Satyagraha: The term Satyagraha is made up of two Sanskrit words—*Satya* (truth) and *Agraha* (insistence to hold fast).

To Gandhiji, Satyagraha was a moral force born of truth and non-violence. It meant to be fearless, truthful as well as peaceful, suffering willingly while refusing to submit to what is wrong. But, even while resisting evil, it would not involve hatred towards the evil-doer.

Gandhiji's Satyagraha Movement was directed against the British system of exploitation and not the British people individually or collectively.

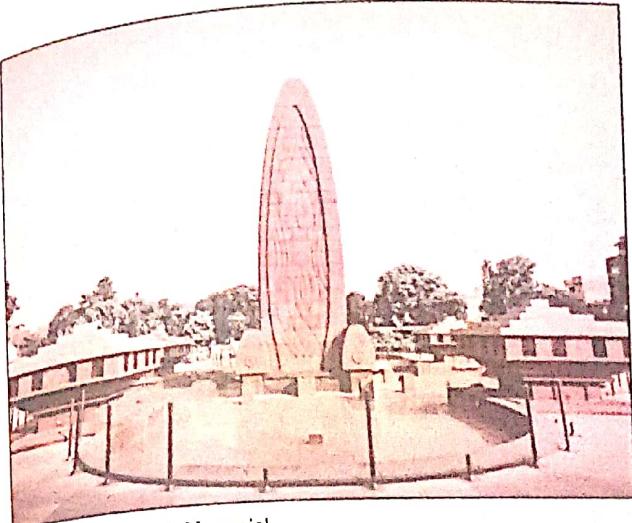
Gandhiji made a distinction between *Satyagraha* and *passive resistance*. Passive resistance does not exclude the use of physical force for the purpose of gaining one's end, whereas Satyagraha excludes the use of violence.

Doctrine of Non-Violence: Non-violence or *Ahimsa* means non-killing or avoiding injury, but for Gandhiji, it meant avoiding injury to anything by thought, word or deed.

According to Gandhiji, non-violence is not a negative but a positive and active force. It is the virtue of the strong which requires benevolence and sympathy. Mahatma Gandhi set an example before the whole world of achieving freedom from the mighty British power through a non-violent struggle.

Swadeshi: Swadeshi means producing necessary items in one's own country and using them for one's use without being dependent on imported goods. Gandhiji believed that the use of Swadeshi goods would make us self-sufficient and eliminate our dependence on imported goods. Gandhiji emphasised manual labour and the use of the Charkha and Khadi.

Mass Movement: The South African experiment gave Gandhiji the experience of leading Indians belonging to different religions, regions and social classes. South Africa built his faith in the ability of the Indian masses to participate in the freedom movement.



Jallianwala Bagh Memorial

He wanted that Hindus and Muslims should support each other in any just cause.

2. Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy: A large but peaceful crowd gathered at the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on April 13, 1919, to protest against the Rowlatt Act and the arrest of leaders like Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu and Dr. Satya Pal. Jallianwala Bagh had only one exit, its other three sides were enclosed by buildings. General Reginald Dyer, the military Commander of Amritsar surrounded the *Bagh* (garden) with a contingent of 50 troops. Without any warnings, after closing the exit with his troops, he ordered them to shoot at the crowd. The troops kept on firing till their ammunition was exhausted. About one thousand innocent demonstrators were killed and many more wounded. The conscience of the nation was shaken at the massacre of innocent people. On learning about this gruesome massacre, Rabindranath Tagore expressed the pain and anger of the country by renouncing his Knighthood, i.e., giving up the honour granted by the British Crown for exceptional personal achievement or public service.

After the massacre, the British government made a half-hearted attempt at constitutional reform. But it also made it clear that it had no intention of parting with political power or sharing it with Indians. The British government also refused to annul the Rowlatt Act and make amends for the atrocities in Punjab.

3. Khilafat Movement: In the First World War, Turkey was defeated and the Ottoman Empire was divided. The Sultan of Turkey, who

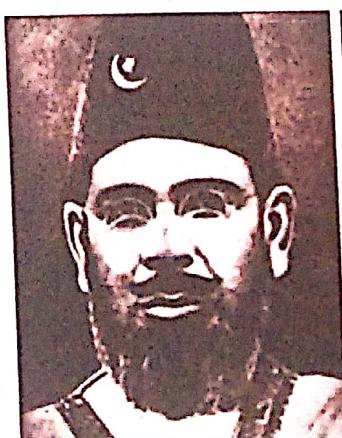
was the Caliph was deprived of all authority. The Caliph was looked upon by large sections of Muslims as their religious head. They felt that any weakening of the Caliph's position would adversely affect the position of the Muslims. In the First World War, the British fought against Turkey.

The Muslim population in India started a powerful agitation known as the *Khilafat Movement*, under the leadership of the Ali Brothers—Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali, Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Hasrat Mohani.

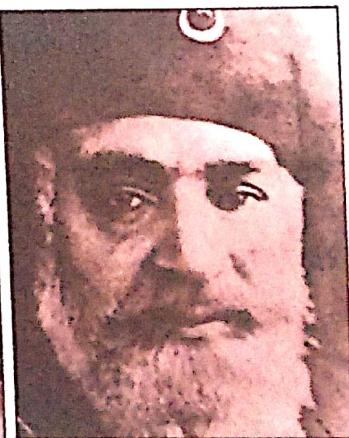
The Khilafatists formed a three-point programme (a) the Ottoman Caliph should retain his empire; (b) the Caliph must be left with sufficient territory to enable him to defend the Islamic faith; and (c) the Arab lands (Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Palestine) must remain under the Muslim rule. 'Khilafat Day' was observed on October 17, 1919 on an all-India scale.

Gandhiji saw in the Khilafat Movement an opportunity for uniting Hindus and Muslims. He said that the Congress plea for Hindu-Muslim unity "*would be an empty phrase if the Hindus hold aloof from the Muslims when their vital interests are at stake*". Mahatma Gandhi was elected as President of the All-India Khilafat Conference in November 1919. He advised the Khilafat Committee to adopt a policy of Non-Cooperation with the Government.

By August 31, 1920, the Khilafat Non-Cooperation Movement started. People resigned from government services; shops selling foreign goods were picketed; students



Mohammed Ali



Shaukat Ali

boycot schools and colleges; and 'hartals' and demonstrations were held. By the end of 1920, the Khilafat Movement and the Congress Non-Cooperation Movement merged into one nationwide movement.

In 1921, the Khilafat Committee appealed to all the Muslims not to join the police and armed forces and not to pay taxes. This enraged the government. The Ali Brothers were arrested on charges of sedition.

Objectives of the Non-Cooperation Movement

At a special session of the Congress held at Kolkata in September 1920 a special resolution was adopted accepting Non-Cooperation Movement as the only option left open for the people of India. The regular session of the Congress at Nagpur in December, 1920 ratified this resolution.

The Non-Cooperation Movement sought to achieve the following objectives:

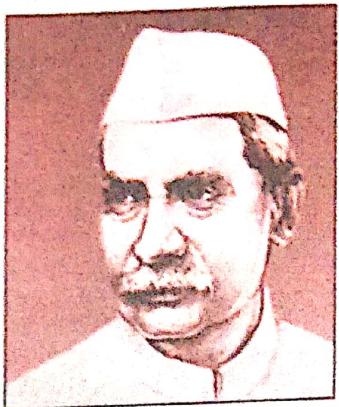
- (i) To attain self government within the British Empire if possible and outside if necessary.
- (ii) Annulment of the Rowlatt Act and remedying the 'Punjab wrong', i.e., the British Government should express its regret on the happenings in Punjab, particularly in Amritsar.
- (iii) Remedyng the 'Khilafat wrong', i.e., the British should adopt a lenient attitude towards Turkey, and restore the old status of the Sultan of Turkey.

Programmes

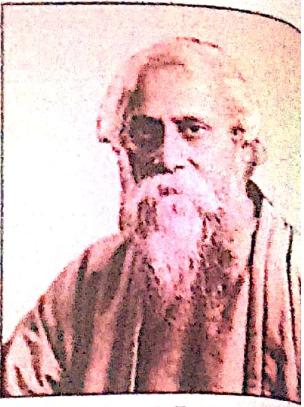
The movement included the following programmes:

Boycott programmes

- Boycott of government schools, colleges and courts.
- Boycott of foreign goods.
- Boycott of elections to be held for the Councils as suggested by the reforms of 1919.
- Resignation from nominated seats in local bodies.
- Surrender of titles and honorary offices.
- Refusal to attend government functions.



■ Dr. Rajendra Prasad



■ Rabindranath Tagore

Swadeshi programmes

- Popularisation of Swadeshi and Khadi by reviving hand-spinning and hand-weaving.
- Establishment of national schools and colleges and private arbitration courts known as *panchayats* all over India.
- Development of unity between Hindus and Muslims.
- Removal of untouchability and other measures for Harijan welfare.
- Emancipation and upliftment of women.

Activities During Non-Cooperation Movement

The nation enthusiastically responded to the call of Gandhiji. The people were ready to practise non-cooperation with the government in every field.

- Lawyers such as Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and many others gave up their legal practice.
- Students left schools and colleges.
- The Congress boycotted the elections to the legislatures by not putting up candidates for the first elections to the Councils.
- *Charkhas* were manufactured for the people to spin cloth. Gandhiji himself started spinning.
- The *Jamia Millia Islamia* was established as a national university. The *Bihar Vidyapith*, *Kashi Vidyapith* and the *Gujarat Vidyapith* were the other national universities that were established with teachers like Acharya Narendra Dev, Dr. Zakir Hussain and Lala Lajpat Rai.

- Rabindranath Tagore and many other distinguished citizens of India renounced their titles and awards. Gandhiji returned the medals that were awarded for his work in South Africa.
- People contributed generously to finance the movement.
- Shops selling foreign goods and liquor were picketed. Foreign cloth was burnt in market places.
- In Kheda, Gujarat, many peasants organised non-violent campaigns against the high land revenue.
- In many forest villages, peasants proclaimed 'Swaraj' and believed that 'Gandhi Raj' was about to be established.
- In Malabar, the Moplas rebelled against the authorities. This rebellion assumed a communal character when they killed many Hindus. This unfortunate incident gave a severe blow to the Hindu-Muslim unity.
- The Prince of Wales came to India in 1921. The people boycotted his visit at Mumbai, observed a hartal and arranged a meeting on the beach. The mob turned unruly and riots followed. The police opened fire. This turmoil of three days killed 59 people.

Repression by the Government

The Government took severe measures to suppress the movement. Under Gandhiji's inspiration, prison lost its terror and became a place of pilgrimage. All important leaders except Gandhiji were arrested and sent to jail.

Processions and public meetings were banned. The Khilafat and the Congress volunteer organisations were declared illegal. Unfortunately the whole movement was abruptly called off on February 12, 1922, at Gandhiji's insistence, following the news of the Chauri Chaura incident.

Suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement

Chauri Chaura : The tragedy at Chauri Chaura, a village in Gorakhpur district in Uttar Pradesh, occurred on February 5, 1922. A procession of about 3,000 peasants marched to the police



■ Memorial built at Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur

station to protest against the police officer who had beaten some volunteers picketing a liquor shop. The police fired at the peasants. This infuriated the demonstrators and they set the nearby police station on fire, killing 22 policemen who were inside the police station. There were a few violent incidents in other parts of the country. Gandhiji, a believer in 'Ahimsa' was greatly shocked at these incidents and he withdrew the Non-Cooperation Movement on February 12, 1922.

This action of Gandhiji of suspending the agitation was severely criticised by leaders like Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai. Subhas Chandra Bose called it a national calamity. Gandhiji assured Jawaharlal Nehru, "*If the thing had not been suspended we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle. The cause will prosper by this retreat.*" Nevertheless, everybody respected his decision in view of the great personal influence of Gandhiji.

Gandhiji suspended the law-breaking part of the movement and asked Congressmen to pay attention to the constructive programmes, i.e., removal of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and the popularisation of Swadeshi and khadi. Gandhiji was arrested for propagating sedition on March 10, 1922. He was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. Gandhiji was released after two years because of his ill health.

IMPACT OF THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

The movement failed to achieve any of its three main demands, namely : (i) obtaining Swaraj; (ii) obtaining an apology for the Jallianwala

Bagh massacre and (iii) solving the Khilafat problem. Gandhiji's promise to achieve Swaraj within one year of launching the movement was not fulfilled. But its ultimate gain outweighed the immediate losses.

It was a great step forward in the course of the Indian national movement in the following ways:

1. The National Movement Became a Mass Movement:

The Indian National Movement, for the first time in history, acquired a real *mass base* with the participation of different sections of Indian society such as peasants, workers, students, teachers and women. However, the big industrialists, capitalists and zamindars still remained hostile. Jawaharlal Nehru described Non-Cooperation as '*a peaceful rebellion, a most civilized form of warfare, and yet dangerous to the stability of the State (British) rule.*'

2. Instilled Confidence Among the People:

It generated a desire for freedom and inspired people to challenge the colonial rule. Renowned historian Bipin Chandra has rightly said, "*Out of the experience of this attempt to defy openly the foreign rulers and the Government they had set up, was born a new sense of self-confidence and self-esteem.*"

3. The Congress Became a Revolutionary Movement:

It transformed the Indian National Congress from a deliberative assembly into an organisation for action. It became the organiser and leader of the masses in their national struggle. Thus, the Congress became a force to reckon with.

4. Fostered Hindu-Muslim Unity:

It fostered Hindu-Muslim unity which could be seen in the merger of the Khilafat issue with this Movement. It provided an opportunity to the Congress to bring the urban Muslims into the National Movement by convincing them that the nation was equally concerned with the problems affecting them.

5. Promoted Social Reforms:

As a consequence of the Non-Cooperation Movement several steps were taken in the direction of prohibition and removal of *untouchability*. Many *national schools* and *colleges* were set up in different parts of the country. The boycott of the foreign goods led to *the promotion of Indian*

handicrafts and industries. 'Khadi' became the symbol of the National Movement.

6. Spread Nationalism to Every Part of the Country: The Movement gave a new boost to nationalism in India. At its annual session at Nagpur in December 1920, changes were made in the Constitution of the Congress. Provincial Congress Committees were reorganised on the basis of linguistic areas. The Congress was now to be led by a Working Committee of 15 members, including the President and the secretaries. This would enable the Congress to function as a continuous political organisation and would provide it with the machinery for implementing resolutions. The Congress organisation was able to *reach down to villages*. Its membership fee was reduced to four annas per year to enable the rural and urban poor to become its members.

7. Popularised the Cult of Swaraj: The goal of the Non-Cooperation Movement was to attain *Swaraj* within the British empire, if possible, and outside, if necessary. The Congress realised the nature and value of the popular support and though the movement failed immediately to attain *Swaraj*, it definitely came nearer to it.

FACTORS LEADING TO CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

Mahatma Gandhi gave the call for a Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930. This movement was to be different from the Non-Cooperation movement in the sense that the Non-Cooperation movement (1921-22) sought to bring the working of the government to a standstill by not cooperating with the administration, whereas the Civil Disobedience Movement was an attempt at paralysing the administration by breaking some specific rules and regulations. The circumstances that led to the Civil Disobedience Movement were the following:

1. Simon Commission: In November 1927, the British Government appointed the Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as the *Simon Commission*, (after the name of its Chairman Sir John Simon) to investigate the need for further constitutional reforms. The Commission was composed of seven British members of Parliament. It had no Indian member. This was seen as a violation of the principle of



Demonstration against Simon Commission

self-determination and a deliberate insult to the self-respect of the Indians.

At its Madras session in 1927, presided over by Dr. Ansari, the National Congress decided to boycott the commission 'at every stage and in every form'. The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha decided to support the Congress decision. In fact, the Simon Commission united, at least temporarily, different groups and parties in the country.

On February 3, the day the Commission reached Bombay, an *All India Hartal* was organised. Wherever the Commission went, it was greeted with hartals and black flag demonstrations under the slogan 'Simon Go Back'. The Government used brutal suppression and police attacks to break the popular opposition. On October 30, 1928 while leading a demonstration at Lahore railway station, Lala Lajpat Rai was grievously injured. He lost his life as a result of lathi blows from the police.

Recommendations of the Simon Commission:
The following were the recommendations of the commission:

1. Dyarchy should be abolished and there should be complete autonomy in the Provinces including the department of law and order, but the Governor should be given overriding powers in certain matters like the internal security.
2. Provincial Legislative Councils should be enlarged.
3. Federal government at the Centre, should embrace not only British India but also the Princely States.

4. The Governor-General should select and appoint members of his Cabinet.
5. British troops and British officers should stay on in Indian regiments for many more years.
6. High Courts should be under the administrative control of the Government of India.
7. The Communal representation was to continue.

Nehru Report* (1928)

Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, justified the exclusion of Indians in the Simon Commission by stating that the Indians were not united and could not arrive at an 'agreed scheme of reforms'. To refute this charge, an All Parties Conference was convened in 1928. Liberals and Assertive Nationalists, leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League and the Depressed Classes came together. Motilal Nehru was made chairman of the committee with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and N.C. Kelkar as his principal associates. The report submitted by the All Parties Conference is known as the *Nehru Report*. The Nehru Report proposed:

- Dominion Status for India;
- That the Parliament of India should consist of — (a) the Senate elected for 7 years, containing 200 members elected by the Provincial Councils and (b) the House of Representation with 500 members elected for five years through adult franchise;
- Joint electorates with reservation of seats for minorities (except in the Punjab and Bengal) on population basis with the right to contest additional seats;
- Creation of 'new provinces' on linguistic basis;
- 'Nineteen Fundamental Rights' including the right to vote, freedom from arbitrary arrest, searches and seizures and freedom of conscience.

2. Declaration of Poorna Swaraj: The Calcutta session of the Congress had served an ultimatum to the British Government to accept the Nehru Report by the end of 1929 or to face a mass movement. Since the one year time-limit

set at the Calcutta session passed without any positive response from the British Government, the Nehru Report was declared to have lapsed at the Lahore Session of the Congress in 1929. Jawaharlal Nehru was made the President of the Congress at the historic Lahore session of 1929. It passed a resolution declaring *Poorna Swaraj* (complete independence) to be the objective of the Congress.

On the midnight of December 31, 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru led a procession to the banks of the river Ravi at Lahore and hoisted the tricolour flag. He proclaimed that it was "a crime against man and God to submit any longer" to British rule. The Congress Working Committee met in January 1930, and decided the following programme:

- (i) Preparation for Civil Disobedience.
- (ii) As per the Poorna Swaraj resolution, the word *Swaraj* in the Congress Constitution would thenceforth mean Complete Independence or Poorna Swaraj which was set forth as the goal of the National Movement.
- (iii) Observance of 26th of January as the '*Poorna Swaraj*' day, all over the country with the hoisting of the tricolour flag.
- (iv) Resignations by members of the legislature.
- (v) Withdrawal from all possible association with the British Government.

It was decided to observe January 26, as the Day of Independence every year. Since then the day was celebrated as Independence Day up to 1947. On achieving independence on August 15, 1947, August 15 was designated as the Independence Day. Since 1950, January 26 is celebrated as the Republic Day as it was on this day in 1950 the Constitution came into existence.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-1934)

The Congress Working Committee met in February 1930 at Sabarmati Ashram and vested in Gandhiji, powers to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Before starting the movement, Gandhiji served on the British government an 'Eleven Point Ultimatum'. After waiting in vain for the government response to his ultimatum, Gandhiji started the movement with his famous Dandi March from the Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi on the Gujarat coast.

Dandi March

On 12th March, Mahatma Gandhi began the historic march from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, a village on the Gujarat sea coast. A number of people followed him. On the morning of 6th April, Gandhiji violated the Salt Law at Dandi by picking up some salt left by the sea waves. According to the Salt Law, the government had



Gandhiji leading the Dandi March

the monopoly to manufacture and sell salt. He had selected to attack the Salt Laws because the salt-tax affected all sections of society, especially the poor. Gandhiji's breaking of the Salt Laws marked the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

The Programme of the Movement

Civil Disobedience Movement involved:

- (i) Defiance of Salt Laws,
- (ii) Boycott of liquor,
- (iii) Boycott of foreign cloth and British goods of all kinds, and
- (iv) Non-payment of taxes and revenues.

Civil Disobedience Movement was different from the Non-Cooperation Movement. The former involved non-payment of taxes and land-revenue as well as violation of laws of different kinds in addition to Non-Cooperation activities.

The Progress of the Movement

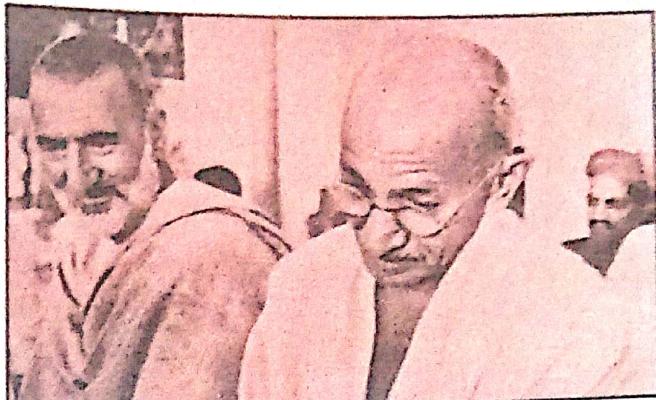
The movement spread rapidly. Violation of Salt Laws all over the country was soon followed by defiance of forest laws in Maharashtra, Karnataka and the Central Provinces and refusal to pay the rural *chaukidari tax* in Eastern India.

Everywhere in the country people joined hartals, demonstrations and the campaign to boycott foreign goods and refused to pay taxes. Lakhs of Indians offered Satyagraha. The boycott of British goods and the picketing of liquor shops were a part of the daily programme.

The movement reached the extreme north-western corner of India and stirred the brave Pathans. Under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as 'The Frontier Gandhi', the Pathans organised the society of *Khudai Khidmatgars* (or Servants of God), known popularly as *Red Shirts*. They were pledged to non-violence and the freedom struggle.

The movement also became popular in the easternmost part of the country where the Manipuris joined the movement with great enthusiasm. In Nagaland, Rani Gaidilieu, at the age of 13 responded to Gandhiji's call and raised the banner of revolt against the British rule.

Civil Disobedience Movement resulted in mass strikes and setting up of parallel governments in several places.



Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan with Gandhiji

Repression by the Government

The Government resorted to firing, lathi charges and large scale imprisonment. Over 90,000 Satyagrahis including Congress leaders and Gandhiji were imprisoned. The Congress was declared illegal and severe restrictions were imposed on the nationalist Press.

There were demonstrations at Peshawar to protest against the arrest of Ghaffar Khan. A platoon of Garhwal troops refused to open fire on the demonstrators. The Commander of the platoon, Thakur Chandra Singh and others were severely punished.

Protest meetings were held everywhere. The textile and railway workers of Mumbai went on strike. There were instances of firing at Delhi and Kolkata.

Round Table Conference

The Indian Round Table Conference held three sessions which are also referred to as the First, Second and Third Round Table Conferences.

First Round Table Conference (November 12, 1930 to January 19, 1931): The first Round Table Conference was held in London. The Congress, which was unhappy with the report of Simon Commission, boycotted the conference but other political parties and interest groups were well represented.

The British realised the futility of holding a conference on the question of constitutional reforms for India without the representatives of the Congress.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact

Since the Satyagraha could not be suppressed, the Government, through Tej Bahadur Sapru



■ Gandhiji at the Second Round Table Conference

and Jayakar, started negotiations with Gandhiji in jail. This resulted in the signing of a pact by Gandhiji and Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, in March 1931. This is known as the *Gandhi-Irwin Pact*. The government agreed to:

- (i) Withdraw all ordinances and end prosecutions.
- (ii) Release all political prisoners, except those guilty of violence.
- (iii) Permit peaceful picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops.
- (iv) Restore the confiscated properties of the satyagrahis.
- (v) Permit the free collection or manufacture of salt by persons near the sea coast.

The Congress, in its turn, consented to the following:

- (i) To suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- (ii) To participate in the second session of the Round Table Conference.
- (iii) Not to press for investigation into police excesses.

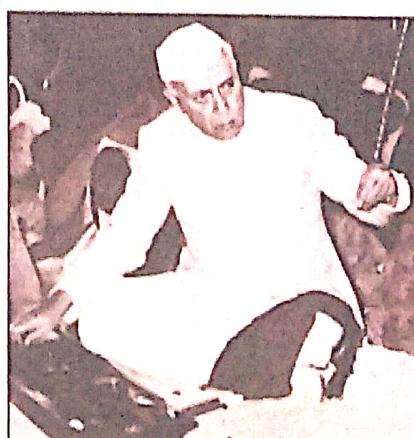
Second Round Table Conference (September 7 to December 1, 1931): It was attended by Gandhiji as a sole representative of the Congress, according to the terms of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. The conference was soon deadlocked on the minorities issue, with separate electorates being demanded now not only by Muslims but also by the Depressed Classes, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans. The question of Independence or setting up of a responsible

Government receded into the background. The British government refused to concede the immediate grant of dominion status. Gandhiji returned to India disappointed.

Third Round Table Conference (November 17, 1932 to December 24, 1932): It was attended by 46 delegates only. The Indian National Congress refused to attend the conference. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, who attended the conference demanded separate electorate for the Depressed Classes. Consequently, the then Prime Minister of Britain, Ramsay Macdonald announced an award known as the *Communal Award*. This award provided separate representation to the Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and the Depressed Classes.

Mahatma Gandhi strongly opposed this award on the grounds that it would disintegrate Indian society and started a fast in protest against it. On 24 September, 1932, the agreement known as Poona Pact was signed between Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and the Congress. The agreement provided reservation of seats for the depressed classes in the Provincial legislatures, within the general electorate and not by creating a separate electorate. Due to the pact, the depressed classes received 148 seats in the legislature, instead of the 71 as allocated in the Communal Award earlier proposed by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald.

Renewal of Civil Disobedience Movement: After the failure of the talks at the Second Session of the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji came back to India. Upon returning to India, Gandhiji found a new and severe wave of repression from the British government, including the imposition



■ Jawaharlal Nehru and Swadeshi

of strict laws to prevent public gatherings, demonstrations and boycotts, which directly contradicted the goals of the independence movement. The Great Depression of 1930s in the world had hit the farmers in India. Besides, the Congress Party was declared illegal and many prominent leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Abdul Ghaffar Khan were imprisoned. Gandhiji sought an interview with Viceroy Willingdon. The interview was refused.

The Congress passed a resolution for the renewal of the Civil Disobedience Movement. On January 4, 1932, Gandhiji was arrested.

Government resorted to repression, issued Ordinances and assumed special powers. The Congress was declared illegal. Congress leaders were arrested and their properties were seized. Communalism was fanned. Gradually the Civil Disobedience Movement lost its force. Congress called it off in 1934. Gandhiji withdrew himself from active politics for a year.

IMPACT OF THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

The Civil Disobedience did not succeed immediately in winning freedom. But it played a significant role by deepening the social roots of the freedom struggle. The importance of the Movement can be summed up as follows:

1. The Movement caused a tide of patriotic fervour in the country that would not leave the Government in peace. The Government

withdrew the ban on the Congress in June 1934. The suspension of the Movement did not mean that people had abandoned their struggle for freedom.

2. The Civil Disobedience Movement widened the base of the freedom struggle. A large number of social groups like merchants and shopkeepers, peasants, tribals and workers in different parts of the country were mobilised for the Indian national movement.
3. It made people understand the significance of the principles of non-violence. People could resist violence with tolerance and courage.
4. The movement also popularised new methods of propaganda. *Prabhat Pheris*, in which hundreds of men and women went around singing patriotic songs in the early morning became popular in towns and villages. Handwritten *Patrikas* or news-sheets were issued in large numbers. Even children were organised into *Vanara Sena* and girls had their own separate *Manjari Sena* or the cat army.
5. The Movement under the leadership of Birla and the 'Harijan Sevak Sangh' changed the social conditions. The depressed classes were given entry into temples and access to wells, which was earlier denied to them.
6. It brought women out of their homes to participate in politics and to make them equal partners in the freedom struggle.



■ Dr. Ambedkar being sworn in as Independent India's First Minister of Law in Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet

- The Government was convinced that basic Constitutional reforms were necessary. The Government of India Act, 1935, introduced the principle of a Federation and the principle of Provincial Autonomy; i.e., responsible Government in the Provinces.
- The movement revived the will to fight the elections. In 1937 the Congress achieved positive results in the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly and Provincial Legislative Assemblies.

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's Contribution

Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb was one of the architects of the Indian Constitution. He was a well-known economist, politician, social reformer and an eminent jurist. Babasaheb's efforts to eradicate the social evils like untouchability and caste restrictions were remarkable. Throughout his life, he fought for the rights of the dalits and other socially backward classes. He was appointed as India's first Law Minister in the Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna.

Bhimrao Ambedkar was born to Ramji Maloji Sakpal and Bhimabai Sakpal on April 14, 1891 in Mhow in Madhya Pradesh.

From his childhood days, Babasaheb had to face caste discrimination. Although he was able to attend school, he and other children due to their caste were segregated and given little attention by the teachers. In 1908 he entered Elphinstone College, which was affiliated to the Mumbai University (University of Bombay), becoming the first from his community to do so.

By 1912, he obtained his B.A. degree in Economics and Political Science from Mumbai University. In 1913, he moved to the United States on a scholarship awarded by the Gaekwad ruler of Baroda. He passed his M.A. Exam in June 1915, majoring in Economics. He received his PhD in Economics in 1927. At the London School of Economics, he took a Master's degree in 1921. In 1923, he finished his law studies and was admitted to the British Bar as a Barrister.

While practising law in the Bombay High Court, he tried to uplift the dalits in order to educate them. His first organised attempt to achieve this was the *Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha* to promote education and socio-economic improvement, as well as the welfare of depressed classes. For the protection of Dalit rights he started many periodicals like *Mook Nayak*, *Bahishkrit Bharat*, and *Equality Janta*.

Babasaheb was appointed as Independent India's first Law Minister, and also the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, set up by the Assembly to write India's new Constitution. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasised the need to establish harmonious relations between all the classes of the society. In 1950, Babasaheb converted to Buddhism. On October 14, 1956 Babasaheb organised a public ceremony to convert around five lakh of his supporters to Buddhism.

Babasaheb passed away at his home in Delhi on December 6, 1956. He made immense contribution in shaping modern India. He led millions of oppressed to a life of self-respect, dignity, and responsibility.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE ➤➤➤

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhiji dominated the Indian freedom struggle from 1919 to 1948 — the *Gandhian Era*.

During his stay in South Africa (1893 to 1914), Gandhiji evolved the technique of *Satyagraha*; to fight against the racial injustice and discrimination. He first experimented with Satyagraha in India in Champaran (Bihar) and in Ahmedabad and Kheda which brought him in close contact with the masses.

Non-Cooperation Movement: Mahatma Gandhi gave a call for 'Non-Cooperation' with the British in 1920. He asked the people not to assist the foreign government to rule over them.

Causes: (i) *Khilafat Movement* by Ali Brothers (August 1920) for the preservation of the office of Khalifa (Caliph); (ii) The *Rowlatt Act*, (March 1919) giving extraordinary powers to the British to imprison a person without trial; (iii) massacre at *Jallianwala Bagh*, Amritsar on April 13, 1919.

Demands: (i) the Khilafat issue; (ii) the redressal of the Punjab wrongs; and (iii) the attainment of *Swaraj*.

Response: Many Indians returned their degrees, titles, awards and honours—left their Government jobs—Popularisation of Swadeshi and Khadi;

Withdrawal: A violent incident occurred at Chauri-Chaura in which an infuriated mob set a police station on fire killing 22 policemen.

Importance (i) The National Movement became a mass movement; (ii) It instilled new confidence among the people; (iii) It transformed Congress from a deliberative assembly into a moral fighting force; (iv) It fostered Hindu-Muslim unity by merging the Khilafat Movement with this movement; (v) It shattered the myth that the British rule was for the betterment of the Indians; (vi) It promoted social reforms.

The Civil Disobedience Movement: It was started by Gandhiji with *Dandi March* in accordance with the decision taken at the Lahore Session of the Congress. The movement started on March 12, 1930.

Causes: Absence of Indians in the *Simon Commission* appointed to investigate the need for further constitutional reforms in India led to the boycott of the Commission at every stage and in every form.

Demand for Poorna Swaraj: The British government did not accept the Nehru Report and the Congress passed the *Poorna Swaraj* resolution at its Lahore session in 1929.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact: The British government agreed to release non-violent political prisoners and conceded the right to make salt for consumption. The Congress agreed to suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement and to take part in the Second Round Table Conference.

Round Table Conference: The First Round Table Conference (1930-31) in London. Congress did not participate. The Second Round Table Conference in London in September 1931 Mahatma Gandhi participated as the sole representative of the Congress. The Third Round Table Conference was attended by 46 delegates excluding the Congress.

Impact: (i) shattered people's faith in the British government; (ii) revived the will to fight the elections; (iii) deepened the social roots for the freedom struggle; (iv) popularised new methods of propaganda.

Renewal of the Civil Disobedience Movement: The Civil Disobedience Movement was revived in 1932 because of the failure of Second Round Table Conference; the declaration of the Congress as illegal; arrest of prominent Congress leaders; harsh measures imposed by the British government to suppress the Independence movement and the refusal of the Viceroy to meet Gandhiji.

EXERCISES

I. Multiple-Choice Questions

A. Select the correct option.

1. Arrange the following historical events in the chronological order of their occurrence.
 - (i) Non-Cooperation Movement
 - (ii) Civil Disobedience Movement
 - (iii) Chauri-Chaura Incident

(a) (i), (ii), (iii) (b) (i), (iii), (ii) (c) (ii), (i), (iii) (d) (iii), (ii), (i)
2. Champaran, the site of Gandhi's first experiment in Satyagraha, is located in
(a) Bihar (b) Kerala (c) Gujarat (d) Punjab
3. Complete the given analogy.
Mahatma Gandhi :?.... :: Dadabhai Naoroji : Indian Association.
(a) All India Congress (b) Indian Association
(c) Indian National Congress (d) Natal Indian Congress
4. What was the key objective of Gandhiji's Champaran Movement?
(a) The security of rights of harijans (b) Civil Disobedience Movement
(c) Maintaining the unity of society (d) Solving the problem of the indigo workers.

n Select the option that shows the correct relationship between Statements (I) and (II).

2. (I) The indigo cultivators of Champaran, Bihar were greatly exploited by European planters.
(II) They were bound by law to grow indigo on half of their land and sell it to the British.
(a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

3. (I) Gandhiji led the mill-workers of Ahmedabad in a strike against the mill-owners for not paying higher wages to the workers.
(II) The peasants at Kheda in Gujarat refused to pay the land revenue because of crop failure.
(a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

4. (I) In 1920, Gandhiji started the Non-Cooperation Movement.
(II) Gandhiji believed that non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good.
(a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

5. (I) Rabindranath Tagore expressed the pain and anger of the country by renouncing the knighthood conferred on him by the British in 1919.
(II) Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood in protest against the Partition of Bengal.
(a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

6. (I) The British government took severe steps to suppress the Non-Cooperation Movement.
(II) All important leaders who took part in the movement including Gandhiji were arrested.
(a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

7. (I) Gandhiji withdrew the Civil Disobedience Movement.
(II) An unruly crowd burnt down a police station at Chauri-Chaura.
(a) Both (I) and (II) are true, and (II) is the correct explanation of (I)
(b) Both (I) and (II) are true, but (II) is not the correct explanation of (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false
(d) (I) is false, but (II) is true.

8. (I) The Congress passed a resolution for the renewal of the Civil Disobedience Movement.
(II) Gandhiji sought a meeting with Viceroy Willingdon which was refused.
(a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

9. (I) The Communal Award announced by Ramsay Macdonald in 1932 provided separate representation to the Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Indian Christians and the Depressed Classes.
(II) The Poona Pact provided reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes in the Provincial Legislatures within the general electorate.
(a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

II. Short Answer Questions

1. Which period of Indian history is known as the Gandhian era and why?
2. Define Satyagraha. How does it differ from Passive Resistance?
3. How did Gandhiji involve Indian masses in the National Movement?
4. Why did Gandhiji launch satyagraha at Ahmedabad in 1918? What was the outcome of Gandhiji's satyagraha at Ahmedabad?
5. What was the Rowlatt Act of 1919? What was Gandhiji's reaction to the Rowlatt Act of 1919?
6. Name the leaders of the Khilafat Movement which was launched in India to champion the cause of the Caliph of Turkey. How did the Khilafat Movement come to an end?
7. Name three events which disillusioned Gandhiji and turned him into a non-cooperator from a cooperator with the British government.
8. The Manchester Guardian was the first to publish a report on the massacre, eight months later on December 13, 1919. The headline of this report read: "**An Astonishing Story From India.**"
Which massacre is being talked about in the above newspaper report? When and where did this massacre take place?
9. What were the steps taken by the people as a part of the Khilafat Non-Cooperation Movement?
10. Name the three components of the constructive programme adopted by Gandhiji after the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement.
11. Why was the Simon Commission boycotted everywhere in India? Name the national leader who succumbed to the lathi charge during the protest movement against the Simon Commission.
12. The Calcutta session of the Congress had given an ultimatum to the British Government to accept the Nehru Report or to face a mass movement. Did the British Government accept the Congress' demand? What was its consequence?
13. What did the programme of Civil Disobedience Movement consist of?
14. Why did Mahatma Gandhi start his historic march to Dandi?
15. Who took the leadership of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the extreme north-western part of the country? What was he popularly known as and what was the name of the organisation formed by him?
16. Mention any two terms (provisions) of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.
17. Which law was defied by Gandhiji's Dandi March? Why was this law selected to be defied?
18. Why did the Congress decide to resume the Civil Disobedience Movement in January 1932?

III. Structured Questions

1. Read the excerpt given below and answer the questions that follow:

"General Dyer's action at Jallianwala Bagh appears to have been entirely indefensible. He acted after open disorder had ceased in the city for two days; he gave no warning on the spot, but began firing within 30 seconds (of arriving); and he was responsible for grave and unnecessary slaughter. His plea is that he wanted to produce sufficient moral effect throughout the Punjab. Such was not his duty and the effect he has really produced is to create, not only in the Punjab, but throughout India, a bitterness that will take years to eradicate."

--Lovat Fraser (1871-1926) British journalist

- (a) The action of General Dyer mentioned in this article led to the launch of which movement? State briefly the other causes of the movement.
- (b) What was the impact of this movement on the Indian National Movement?
- (c) What led to the withdrawal of this movement? What was Gandhiji's view about the withdrawal?
2. Gandhiji introduced new ideas in politics and adopted new methods to give a new direction to the political movement. In this context, answer the following questions:
- What was Gandhiji's doctrine of Satyagraha?
 - Explain briefly Gandhiji's Social Ideals.
 - Which mass struggle was launched by him on non-violent lines in 1920? Explain in brief the programmes of such a campaign.

3. Read the excerpt given below and answer the questions that follow:

Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No. I of 1919 and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No. II of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary right of individuals on which the safety of the community, as a whole, and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civility to obey these laws and such other laws as a Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property. —The Bombay Chronicle, March 4, 1920

- What name was given to the two Indian Criminal Law Bills mentioned in the excerpt above? Why have they been described as unjust?
 - Which movement was started in 1920 after these Bills were passed in the Central Legislature? State any two objectives of this movement.
 - What was the British government's reaction to the movement? How did the movement end?
4. Study the picture given on the side and answer the following questions:
- What was symbolised by the Charkha and Khadi in the National Movement?
 - What is meant by *Swadeshi*? Why did Gandhiji lay emphasis on Swadeshi?
 - State how was the concept of *Swadeshi* promoted during the Non-Cooperation Movement.
- 
5. The Simon Commission was appointed in November 1927 by the British Government. Subsequently the Civil Disobedience Movement began. In this context answer the following questions:
- Why was the Simon Commission appointed by the British Government? Why did the Congress boycott the Commission?

- (b) The Civil Disobedience Movement was launched by Gandhiji with his famous Dandi March. Mention the significance of this historic event.
- (c) Why did Gandhiji suspend Civil Disobedience Movement in 1931 and later in 1934 call it off?
6. In 1930 Mahatma Gandhi's demands were rejected by the British, as a result of which he launched the Civil Disobedience Movement. In this context, explain the following:
- Name the famous march undertaken by Gandhiji. Where did he begin this march? State two of its features.
 - How was this Movement different from the Non-Cooperation Movement?
 - Explain briefly how did Mahatma Gandhi try to promote Hindu-Muslim unity from the Rowlatt Satyagraha to the Third Round Table conference.



IV. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

- Suppose you recently visited Jallianwala Bagh Memorial in Amritsar. While you were there, you could visualise what might have happened on that unfortunate day on April 13, 1919. Describe the scene of the tragedy as visualised by you.
- The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre which shook the British rule in India was reported in the British Press after eight months when the Hunter Committee of Inquiry formed to inquire into the matter gave its report. The Indian Press also took little note of the incident and buried it in the inside pages of the newspaper. Why, do you think, that such a gruesome massacre remained the most underplayed news stories of its time?
- Do you think that the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 marked the entry of women on the Indian political scene? Did it have any effect on the position of women?
- How did the Civil Disobedience Movement create a sense of collective belonging that resulted in the spread of nationalism?

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