

INDIA'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE 1957-1947



Index of Tables

1957 – INDIA FIRST REVOLT OF INDEPENDENCE.....	3
1917 – Champaran Satyagraha.....	3
1920 – Non Corporation Movement.....	4
1929 – Purna Swaraj Declaration.....	4
1930 – Civil Disobedience Movement.....	5
1942 – Quit India Movement.....	6

India's Struggle for Independence

India became independent from the British Rule on the 15th August 1947. While attaining that goal, India had witnessed many struggles led by our great freedom fighters. Here we are discussing some of the major events/struggles against the British Rule.

1957 - India's First Revolt of Independence

It is also termed Sepoy Riots by the British was an attempt to unite India against the invading British.

The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was a major, but ultimately unsuccessful, uprising in India in 1857-58 against the rule of the British East India Company, which functioned as a sovereign power on behalf of the British Crown. The rebellion began on 10 May 1857 in the form of a mutiny of sepoys of the Company's army in the garrison town of Meerut, 40 mi (64 km) northeast of Delhi (now Old Delhi). It then erupted into other mutinies and civilian rebellions chiefly in the upper Gangetic plain and central India, though incidents of revolt also occurred farther north and east. The rebellion posed a considerable threat to British power in that region, and was contained only with the rebels' defeat in Gwalior on 20 June 1858. On



Pic 1: Rani Laxmibai

1 November 1858, the British granted amnesty to all rebels not involved in murder, though they did not declare the hostilities to have formally ended until 8 July 1859. Its name is contested, and it is variously described as the Sepoy Mutiny, the Indian Mutiny, the Great Rebellion, the Revolt of 1857, the Indian Insurrection, and the First War of Independence

The important leaders who took part in the revolt were Mangal Pandey (Barrackpore), Bahadur Shah II (Delhi), Begum Hazrat Mahal (Lucknow), Rani Laxmibai (Jhansi).

1917 - Champaran Satyagraha

The Champaran Satyagraha of 1917 was the first Satyagraha movement led by Gandhi in India and is considered a historically important revolt in the Indian Independence Movement. It was a farmer's uprising that took place in

Champaran district of Bihar, India, during the British colonial period. The farmers were protesting against having to grow indigo with barely any payment for it.

When Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915, and saw peasants in northern India oppressed by indigo planters, he tried to use the same methods that he had used in South Africa to organize mass uprisings by people to protest against injustice.

Champaran Satyagraha was the first popular satyagraha movement. The Champaran Satyagraha gave direction to India's youth and freedom struggle, which was tottering between moderates who prescribed Indian participation within the British colonial system, and the extremists from Bengal who advocated the use of violent methods to topple the British colonialists in India.



(Sitting L to R) **Rajendra Prasad** and **Anugrah Narayan Sinha**, with local vakils **Ramnavmi Prasad** and **Shambhusaran Varma** (Standing L to R) during **Mahatma Gandhi's 1917 Champaran movement**.

Under Colonial-era laws, many tenant farmers were forced to grow some indigo on a portion of their land as a condition of their tenancy. This indigo was used to make dye. The Germans had invented a cheaper artificial dye so the demand for indigo fell. Some tenants paid more rent in return for being let off having to grow indigo. However, during the First World War the German dye ceased to be available and so indigo became profitable again. Thus many tenants were once again forced to grow it on a portion of their land- as was required by their lease. Naturally, this created much anger and resentment.

1920 - Non Corporation Movement

The Non-cooperation movement was launched on 5th September, 1920 by Mahatma Gandhi with the aim of self-governance and obtaining full independence (Purna Swaraj) as the Indian National Congress (INC) withdrew its support for British reforms following the Rowlatt Act of 21 March 1919, and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 13 April 1919.

The Rowlatt Act of March 1919, which suspended the rights of political prisoners in seditious trials,[1] was seen as a "political awakening" by Indians and as a "threat" by the British. Although it was never invoked and declared void just a few years later, the act motivated Gandhi to conceive the idea of satyagraha (truth), which he saw as synonymous with independence. This idea

was also authorised the following month by Jawaharlal Nehru, for who the massacre also endorsed “the conviction that nothing short of independence was acceptable”.

Gandhi's planning of the non-cooperation movement included persuading all Indians to withdraw their labour from any activity that "sustained the British government and economy in India", including British industries and educational institutions. In addition to promoting “self-reliance” by spinning khadi, buying Indian-made goods only and boycotting British goods, Gandhi's non-cooperation movement called for the restoration of the Khilafat (Khilafat movement) in Turkey and the end to untouchability. This result in public held meetings and strikes (hartals) led to the first arrests of both Jawaharlal Nehru and his father, Motilal Nehru, on 6 December 1921.

1929 - Purna Swaraj Declaration

The Purna Swaraj declaration (Hindi: पूर्ण, Purna, meaning "complete", Hindi: स्व, Swa, meaning "self" and Hindi: राज, raj, meaning "rule"), or Declaration of the Independence of India, was promulgated by the Indian National Congress on 26 January 1930, resolving the Congress and Indian nationalists to fight for Purna Swaraj, or complete self-rule independent of the British Empire.



Pic 2: The flag adopted in 1931

The flag of India was hoisted by Jawaharlal Nehru on 31 December 1929 on the banks of Ravi river, in Lahore, modern-day Pakistan. The Congress asked the people of India to observe 26th of January as Independence Day (see Legacy). The flag of India was hoisted publicly across India by Congress volunteers, nationalists and the public.

1930 - Civil Disobedience Movement

Britain's Salt Acts prohibited Indians from collecting or selling salt, a staple in the Indian diet. Citizens were forced to buy the vital mineral from the British, who, in addition to exercising a monopoly over the manufacture and sale of salt, also exerted a heavy salt tax. Although India's poor suffered most under the tax, Indians required salt. Defying the Salt Acts,



Pic 3: Salt March

Gandhi reasoned, would be an ingeniously simple way for many Indians to break a British law non-violently. He declared resistance to British salt policies to be the unifying theme for his new campaign of satyagraha, or mass civil disobedience.

The Salt March, also known as the Salt Satyagraha, Dandi March and the Dandi Satyagraha, was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience in colonial India led by Mahatma Gandhi. The 24-day march lasted from 12 March 1930 to 5 April 1930 as a direct action campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against the British salt monopoly. Another reason for this march was that the Civil Disobedience Movement needed a strong inauguration that would inspire more people to follow Gandhi's example. Mahatma Gandhi started this march with 78 of his trusted volunteers. Walking about 18 km a day, the march spanned 390 km, from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, which was called Navsari at that time (now in the state of Gujarat). Growing numbers of Indians joined them along the way. When Gandhi broke the British Raj salt laws at 6:30 am on 6 April 1930, it sparked large scale acts of civil disobedience against the salt laws by millions of Indians.

After making the salt by evaporation at Dandi, Gandhi continued southward along the coast, making salt and addressing meetings on the way. The Congress Party planned to stage a satyagraha at the Dharasana Salt Works, 40 km south of Dandi. However, Gandhi was arrested on the midnight of 4-5 May 1930, just days before the planned action at Dharasana. The Dandi March and the ensuing Dharasana Satyagraha drew worldwide attention to the Indian independence movement through extensive newspaper and newsreel coverage. The satyagraha against the salt tax continued for almost a year, ending with Gandhi's release from jail and negotiations with Viceroy Lord Irwin at the Second Round Table Conference.[3] Although over 60,000 Indians were jailed as a result of the Salt Satyagraha, the British did not make immediate major concessions.

1942 - Quit India Movement

The Quit India Movement (translated into several Indian languages as the Leave India Movement), also known as the August Movement, was a movement launched at the Bombay session of the All-India Congress Committee by Mahatma Gandhi on 9 August 1942, during World War II, demanding an end to British rule in India.

After the failure of the Cripps Mission to secure Indian support for the British war effort, Gandhi made a call to Do or Die in his Quit India speech delivered in Bombay



Pic 4: Quit India Movement

on 8 August 1942 at the Gowalia Tank Maidan. The All-India Congress Committee launched a mass protest demanding what Gandhi called "An Orderly British Withdrawal" from India. Even though it was at war, the British were prepared to act. Almost the entire leadership of the Indian National Congress was imprisoned without trial within hours of Gandhi's speech. Most spent the rest of the war in prison and out of contact with the masses. The British had the support of the Viceroy's Council (which had a majority of Indians), of the All India Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the princely states, the Indian Imperial Police, the British Indian Army, and the Indian Civil Service. Many Indian businessmen profiting from heavy wartime spending did not support the Quit India Movement. Many students paid more attention to Subhas Chandra Bose, who was in exile and supporting the Axis Powers. The only outside support came from the Americans, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressured Prime Minister Winston Churchill to give in to some of the Indian demands. The Quit India campaign was effectively crushed. The British refused to grant immediate independence, saying it could happen only after the war had ended.
