

16. Civil Disobedience Movement

Lead up to the movement:

1. Simon Commission:

- The **Indian Statutory Commission**, commonly referred to as the **Simon Commission**, was a group of seven British Members of Parliament under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon. The commission arrived in British India in 1928
- Objective:** the British government appointed the Simon Commission to report on **India's constitutional progress** for introducing constitutional reforms.
- The Commission was strongly opposed by many in India for a number of reasons. The commission was seen as racist and colonialist as it had seven British members of the British Parliament and no Indian members.

Groups / Persons	Response
Congress	Opposed the Commission.
Hindu Mahasabha	Opposed the Commission, siding with the Congress.
Muslim League	One faction under Jinnah (at Calcutta, 1927) opposed the Commission, another faction under Muhammad Shafi (at Lahore, 1927) supported the Government/ Commission.
Unionists (Punjab)	Supported the Commission.
Justice Party	Supported the Commission.
Ambedkar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On behalf of the Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha, he submitted a memorandum on the rights and safeguards he felt were required for the depressed classes. He argued for 'universal adult franchise' for both male.

Recommendations:

- It proposed the **abolition of dyarchy** and the establishment of representative government in the provinces.
- It rejected parliamentary responsibility at the centre. The governor-general was to have complete power to appoint the members of the cabinet.
- It recommended that **separate communal electorates** be retained.
- It accepted the idea of federalism but not in the near future.
- It suggested that a Consultative Council of Greater India should be established which should include representatives of both the British provinces as well as princely states.
- It also suggested that the Indian army should be Indianised though British forces must be retained.

2. Nehru Report:

- An answer to Lord Birkenhead's challenge, prepared by a committee headed by Motilal Nehru, the committee included Tej Bahadur Sapru, Subhash Bose, M.S. Aney, Mangal Singh, Ali Imam, Shuab Qureshi and G.R. Pradhan as its members

Recommendations:

- Dominion status** on lines of self-governing dominions.
- Rejection of separate electorates.** Joint electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims at the Centre and in provinces where they were in minority.
- Linguistic provinces.
- Nineteen fundamental rights including equal rights for women, right to form unions, and universal adult suffrage.
- Responsible government at the Centre and in provinces.
- Full protection to cultural and religious interests of Muslims.

- Complete dissociation of State from religion.
- The Nehru Report, along with that of the Simon Commission was available to participants in the three Indian Round Table Conferences (1930–1932)

Nehru and Subash Bose rejected the congress goal and set up Independence for India league.

Muslim's league reaction to the report:

In 1927, 4 proposals of Muslim league which was accepted by madras congress:

1. Joint electorate.
2. 1/3rd representation to Muslims in central legislative assembly.
3. Formation of three Muslim majority provinces.
4. Representation to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal in proportion to their population.

3. Madras session of congress 1927

- J.L. Nehru succeeded in getting passed a snap resolution declaring complete independence as goal of congress.

4. Calcutta session of congress (1928):

- Nehru report was approved at this session.
- Younger leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Satya Murthy expresses dissatisfaction at the goal of dominion status
- The government was given one-year period to accept this goal.
- If the government did not accept a constitution based on dominion status by the end of the year, the Congress would not only demand complete independence but would also launch a civil disobedience movement to attain its goal.

5. Jinnah's Fourteen Points-1929:

- Federal constitution with residual powers to provinces, provincial autonomy, no constitutional amendment without state concurrence, adequate representation in assembly and services, 1/3rd representation in central legislative assembly, 1/3rd representation in cabinet, separate electorates, no bills without 3/4th minority consideration, territorial distribution not to affect Muslim

majority, full religious freedom, protection of Muslim rights etc.

6. Irwin's Declaration - October 31, 1929:

- It is also known as deepavali declaration
- It restated the goal of dominion status for India, as was mentioned in August declaration of Montague, 1917.
- No timeframe was given for dominion status.
- Promised RTC after Simon Commission Report.

7. Delhi Manifesto - November 2, 1929:

- It was signed by all important leaders of congress except Subash Bose
- It was prepared at a conference of prominent political leaders of that time. It included three main demands:
 - a) The purpose of the Round Table Conferences should be to formulate a constitution for implementation of the dominion status.
 - b) The Congress should have a majority representation at the conference.
 - c) There should be a general amnesty for political prisoners and a policy of conciliation.
- Gandhi along with Motilal Nehru and other political leaders met Lord Irwin in December 1929.
- Viceroy Irwin rejected the demands put forward in the Delhi Manifesto.

8. Lahore Congress and Purna Swaraj:

- Jawaharlal Nehru was nominated the president for the Lahore session of the Congress (December 1929) mainly due to Gandhi's backing.

The following major decisions were taken at the Lahore session.

- a. The Round Table Conference was to be boycotted.
- b. Complete independence was declared as the aim of the Congress.
- c. Congress Working Committee was authorised to launch a programme of civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes and all members of legislatures were asked to resign their seats.
- d. January 26, 1930 was fixed as the first

Independence (Swarajya) Day, to be celebrated everywhere

December 31, 1929 - At midnight on the banks of River Ravi, the newly adopted tricolour flag of freedom was hoisted by Jawaharlal Nehru amidst slogans of **Inquilab Zindabad**.

▪ **Civil Disobedience Movement / Salt Satyagraha:**

Gandhi's Eleven Demands - Gandhi presented eleven demands to the government and gave an ultimatum of January 31, 1930 to accept or reject these demands,

11 Demands made by Mahatma Gandhi from Lord Irwin, which were opposed by Nehru:

1. Prohibited intoxicants, liquor
2. Change the ratio between the rupee and the sterling.
3. Reduce the rate land revenue,
4. Abolition of salt tax,
5. Reduce the military expenditure,
6. Reduce expenditure on civil administration,
7. Impose custom duty on foreign cloth,
8. Accept the Postal Reservation Bill,
9. Abolish the CID Department,
10. Release all Political prisoners, and
11. Issue licenses of arms to citizens for self protection.

With no positive response from the government, Gandhi decided to launch a civil disobedience movement, making salt Satyagraha his central theme.

▪ **Dandi March (March 12 - April 6, 1930):**

Gandhi, along with a band of seventy-eight members of Sabarmati Ashram, was to march from his headquarters in Ahmedabad through the villages of Gujarat for 240 miles.

On reaching the coast at Dandi, the salt law was to be violated by collecting salt from the beach.

Why Gandhi chose salt for such a great movement?

- Salt offered a very small but psychologically important income like khadi, for the poor through self-help.

- Salt lacked any divisive element based on class and religion.
- It was a tax which affected all Indians
- True to salt is a world that is traditionally linked to loyalty and nationalism, Gandhiji wanted to work on this imagination.

Gandhi gave the following directions for future action:

Wherever possible civil disobedience of the salt law should be started, Foreign liquor and cloth shops can be picketed, non-payment of tax, boycott court, resign from government service etc.

Spread of Civil disobedience:

Gandhi's arrest came on May 4, 1930 when he had announced that he would lead a raid on Dharasana Salt Works on the west coast.

After Gandhi's arrest, the CWC sanctioned.

1. Non-payment of revenue in ryotwari areas.
2. No-chowkidari-tax campaign in zamindari areas.
3. Violation of forest laws in the Central Provinces.

Satyagraha at different places:

- a. **Tamil Nadu:** C Rajagopalachari organised march from Thiruchinapalli to Vedaranniyam on Tanjore coast.
- b. **Malabar:** Kelappan known for Vaikom Satyagraha organized salt marches.
- c. **Andhra:** Sibirams were organized.
- d. **Orissa:** Gopal Bandhu Chaudhuri organized in Balasore, Cuttack etc.
- e. **Bihar:** Non-chowkidari tax was imposed.
- f. **Peshawar:** Badshah Khan/ Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan who organized Khudai Khidmatgars (red shirts) organized powerful march.
- g. **Sholapur:** Sarojinibai led the campaign.
- h. Defiance of forest laws in Karnataka, Maharashtra and central provinces.
- i. **Manipur and Nagaland:** Rani Gaidinliu at age of 13 years raised the banner against British.

Forms of mobilization:

Parbatpheries, vanarsenas, manjarisenas, secret patrikas and magic lantern show.

Extent of Participation:

Women and students participated in huge numbers, merchants and traders were enthusiastic, active participation of tribals,

workers and peasants. whereas muslim participation was nowhere near the 1920-22 level.

In July 1930 the viceroy, Lord Irwin, suggested a round table conference and reiterated the goal of dominion status.

In August 1930 Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru were taken to Yeravada Jail to meet Gandhi and discuss the possibility of a settlement.

The Nehrus and Gandhi unequivocally reiterated the demands of:

- Right of secession from Britain.
- Complete national government with control over defence and finance and an independent tribunal to settle Britain's financial claims.

▪ **Gandhi-Irwin Pact:**

February 14, 1931 pact was signed also called as Delhi Pact, placed the Congress on an equal footing with the government. Irwin on behalf of the government agreed on immediate release of prisoners, remission of fines, return of land, right to make salt etc.

The viceroy, however, turned down two of Gandhi's demands.

- 1) Public inquiry into police excesses.
- 2) Commutation of Bhagat Singh and his comrades' death sentence to life sentence.

Gandhi on behalf of the Congress agreed:

- To suspend the civil disobedience movement.
- To participate in the next Round Table Conference.

▪ **Karachi Congress Session—1931:**

- In March 1931, a special session of the Congress was held at Karachi to endorse the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Congress Resolutions at Karachi:

- Congress admired the 'bravery' and 'sacrifice' of the three martyrs (Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were executed on March 23, 1931)
- The Delhi Pact or Gandhi-Irwin Pact was endorsed.

- The goal of purnaswaraj was reiterated.
- Two resolutions were adopted—one on **Fundamental Rights** and the other on **National Economic Programme**.
- Sardar Patel was the president of Karachi congress

This was the first time the Congress spelt out what Swaraj would mean for the masses—"in order to end exploitation of masses, political freedom must include economic freedom of starving millions."

Round Table Conferences

Round conference	Participants	
1st Round	1. British representatives- Labour, conservative and Liberal. 2. Muslim league members- Jinnah, Aga Khan. 3. Indian state's representatives 4. British India representatives- Ambedkar, Sapru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All India Federation was accepted. • Responsible Government at provinces. • Internal sovereignty of the princely states. INC did not participate
2nd Round	1. Mahatma Gandhi, representative of INC. 2. Other participants who are involved in the first-round table were present. 3. Sarojini Naidu participated to represent women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gandhi claimed the congress alone represent political India. • Untouchables and Muslims should not be treated as minorities. • No separate electorate for minorities. • Ramsay MacDonald headed the national government in Britain.
3rd Round	1. Labour party and	The decisions taken are reflected in the form of

conference (November - December 1932).	INC refused to attend. 2. Ambedkar attended, Jinnah not attended.	Government of India act-1935.
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Second Phase of Civil Disobedience Movement:

Civil Disobedience was resumed after the failure of the Round Table Conferences, Viceroy Willingdon refused a meeting with Gandhi on December 31. On January 4, 1932, Gandhi was arrested.

- A series of repressive ordinances were issued which ushered in a virtual martial law, though under civilian control, or a '**Civil Martial Law**'.
- Congress organisations at all levels were banned.
- Repression was particularly harsh on women.
- Press was gagged and nationalist literature, banned.
- **April 1934**, Gandhi decided to **withdraw** the civil disobedience movement because,
- Gandhi and other leaders had no time to build up the tempo.
- The masses were not prepared.

▪ Communal Award:

- The Communal Award was announced by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, on August 16, 1932.
- The Communal Award, based on the findings of the Indian Franchise Committee (also called the Lothian Committee), established separate electorates and reserved seats for minorities, (Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians) including the depressed classes which were granted seventy-eight reserved seats.
- Gandhi saw the Communal Award as an attack on Indian unity and nationalism

Poona pact:

- Mahatma Gandhi went on an indefinite fast on September 20 1932 in Yeravada jail to get his demands fulfilled.
- Various leaders including B.R. Ambedkar, Madan Mohan Malviya and M.C. Rajah finally found out a compromise with Gandhi in the form of Poona pact.

- Ambedkar signed it on behalf of the depressed classes and Madan Mohan Malviya on behalf of the Upper Caste Hindus as a means to end the fast that Gandhi was undertaking in jail.
- The pact abandoned the idea of separate electorate but the seats reserved for the depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18 percent of the total in the Central Legislature.
- The Poona Pact was accepted by the government as an amendment to the Communal Award.

Major strategies that evolved Post Civil Disobedience Movement:

1. Gandhi:

- Emphasized constructive work in the villages, especially the revival of village crafts.
- 'Constructive work', said Gandhi, 'would lead to the consolidation of people's power, and open the way to the mobilization of millions in the next phase of mass struggle.'

2. Revival of Constitutional Methods:

- Revival of the constitutional method of struggle and participation in the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly to be held in 1934.
- Led this time by Dr. M.A. Ansari, Asaf Ali, Satyamurthy, Bhulabhai Desai and B.C. Roy and previous No Changers like Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, or Rajagopalachari.

3. Left:

- Critical of both & instead favoured the continuation of mass movement since they felt that the situation continued to be revolutionary because of the continuing economic crisis and the readiness of the masses to fight.
- **Nehru also attacked the notion of winning freedom through stages.** Real power could not be won gradually 'bit by bit' or by 'two annas and four annas.' **'Thus, to S-T-S' he counterposed the strategy of S-V ('V'- victory)**
Unlike the Surat split, Congress avoided such a division. Those who were willing to contest elections were allowed to do so.

- Congress Ministries were formed in Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces, Orissa, United Provinces, and Bihar and later in the NWFP and Assam also.
- **Work under Congress Ministries:** Ease curb on civil liberties, press restrictions were lifted, political prisoners were released, lift ban on several organisations etc.