The Non-co-operation movement was formally launched on 1st August, 1920 after the expiry of the notice that Gandhiji had given to the Viceroy in this letter of 22nd June in which he had asserted the right recognised from time immemorial of the subject to refuse to assist a ruler who misrules.” Lokmanya Tilak passed away in the early hours of 1st Aug. and the day of mourning and of launching of the movement merged as people all over the country observed Hartal and took out processions.

The Indian Muslims were incensed when they discovered that their loyalty had been purchased during the war by assurance of generous treatment of Turkey after the war – a promise British Statesman had no intention of fulfilling. The Muslims regarded the caliph of Turkey as their spiritual head and were naturally upset when they found that he would retain no control over the holy places, it was his duty as caliph to protect. Even those who were willing to treat the happenings at Jallianwala Bagh and other places in Punjab as aberrations that would soon be “corrected” were disillusioned when they discovered that the Hunter Committee appointed by the Government to enquire into the Punjab disturbances was an eyewash and that the House of Lords had voted in favour of General Dyer’s action and that the British public had demonstrated its support by helping the morning post collect 30,000 ponds for General Dyer.

By the end of the first quarter of 1920, all the excuses in favour of the British Government were fast running out. The Khilafat leaders were told quite clearly that they should not expect anything more and the treaty of serves signed with Turkey in May 1920 made it clear that the
dismemberment of the Turkish Empire was complete. Gandhiji who had been in close touch with the Khilafat leaders for quite some time and was a special invitee to the Khilafat Conference in Nov. 1919 had all along been very sympathetic to their cause especially because he felt that the British had committed a breach of faith by making promises that they had no intention of keeping. In Feb. 1920 he suggested to the Khilafat committee that it adopt a programme of non-violent non-co-operation to protest the Government's behaviour. On 9th June 1920 the Khilafat Committee at Allahabad unanimously accepted the suggestion of non-co-operation and asked Gandhiji to lead the movement ¹.

**GANDHI, KHILAFAT AND THE CONGRESS**

With rumours about a harsh peace treaty to be imposed on the defeated Ottoman Empire fast becoming a certainty, the Khilafat movement was rapidly gaining momentum in 1919-1920. Its three demands presented by Mohammad Ali to diplomats in Paris in March 1920 were that the Turkish Sultan – Khalifa must retain control over the Muslim sacred places, must be left with sufficient territory to enable him to defend the Islamic faith and that the Jagirat-ul-Arab (Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Palestine) must remain under Muslim sovereignty. As was expected the movement developed a moderate and a radical strand. The radicals led by Ali brothers after their release from internment in early 1920 pressed for country wide hartals and it was from this group that the call for non-co-operation first came, at the Delhi all India khilafat Conference on 22-23 November, 1919.

¹. India's Struggle for Independence by Bipin Chandra Pal Pgs. 184-185.
Till May 1920 Gandhi on the whole sided with the Bombay group. Opposing for instance Hasrat Mohanis call for the boycott of British goods at the Khilafat conference of Nov. 1919 the bulk of Bombay Muslim merchants were importers and retailers of such goods. The turning point came with the publication of very harsh terms of the Treaty of serves with Turkey on 14th May 1920 followed on 28th May by the Hunter Commission Majority report on the Punjab disturbances - bitterly described by Gandhi as "page after page of thinly disguised official white wash."

The government of India had already protected its officers by an Indemnity Act and now O' dyer was acquitted of blame.

The Allahabad meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee (1-3 June) 1920 which was attended by a number of nationalist Hindu leaders saw the victory of radicals now backed by Gandhi.

A programme of four stages Non-co-operation was announced (boycott of titles, civil services, police and army, and finally non-payment of taxes. Gandhi began pressing the congress to adopt a similar plan of campaign around the three issues of the “Punjab Wrongs”, “Khilafat Wrong” and “Swaraj”.  

The central Khilafat Committee organised a general all – India hartal on 1st Aug. 1920, under the guidance of Gandhi. Gandhi wrote a letter to the Viceroy and returned all the war medals, which were awarded, to him by the British for his war services. “Valuable as these honour have been to me”, “I can not wear them with an conscience so long as my

Musalman countrymen have to labours under wrong done to their religious sentiment. I venture to return these medals, in pursuance of the scheme of non-co-operation inaugurated today in connection with Khilafat movement."

These italicised words of Gandhiji leave no doubt that the action of Gandhi in launching Non-co-operation on 1st Aug. 1920, was the direct outcome of the Khilafat movement. The Punjab incident was at best a secondary issue at the suggestion of Vijayaraghavachari endorsed by Motilal Nehru. Gandhi added a third issue i.e. independence of India as the ground of non-co-operation movement.

The special session of the congress was held in Calcutta on 4th Sept. 1920, under the shadow of a grave calamity for the great national leader Tilak had passed away on 1st Aug. 1920. It was presided over by Lal Lajpat Rai. The congress met in a tense atmosphere to decide upon the momentous but controversial issue of Non-co-operation.

The congress in its resolution earnestly advises: -

a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices, and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies.

b) Refusal to attend government offices, boycott of official and semi-official functions held by government officials or in their honour.

c) Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by government and in place of such schools and colleges establishment of National schools and colleges in various provinces.
d) Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and establishments of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of their private disputes.

e) Refusal on the part of the military clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia.

f) Withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for elections to the reformed councils and refusal on the part of voters to vote for any candidate who may offer himself for election.

g) Boycott of foreign goods.

Non-cooperation was conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice, without which no nation can make real progress. Congress also advised adoption of Swadeshi in piece goods. On a vast scale as the existing mills of India, with indigenous capital and control do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the nation and are not likely to do so for a long time to come. The congress advised immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand spinning in every home and hand weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient calling for want of encouragement.

Though sponsored by Gandhiji and backed by Ali brothers and nearly the whole of Muslim bloc, the resolution was strongly opposed by a large section.³

In the Amritsar session of the Congress in 1919, the goal of the congress was defined in the existing constitution as "self government
within the British Empire’. This kept out of the congress a radical section whose political ideal was complete independence. To accommodate this section the goal of the congress was declared to be “Swaraj”. It literally means self-rule. Gandhi defined ‘Swaraj’ to mean “self-government within the empire, if possible and outside if necessary.”

Gandhi thought: “The Muslims have adopted a very important resolution. If the peace terms are unfavourable to them they will stop all co-operation with government. It is an inalienable right of the people to withhold cooperation. We are bound not to retain government titles and honour or to continue in government service. If the government should betray us in a great cause like the Khilafat. We could not do otherwise than non-co-operate. We are therefore entitled to non-co-operate with government in case of betrayal.”

Right from the day he first used the word Satyagraha in South Africa, to his last days in Delhi. Gandhi not only tried to elucidate the term but also strove to understand and explain its implications as the technique evolved.

4. Struggle for freedom by Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, R.C. Majumdar Pgs. 337.
5. Mahatma by D.B. Tendulkar Pgs. 333 Vol I
The word Satyagraha, which originally meant passive resistance changed it's meaning with each successive experience.

Gandhi brought out the differences between closely connected notions of non-co-operation, civil disobedience and Satyagraha.

Non co-operation according to Gandhi chiefly implies the withdrawal of co-operation from a state that in the non-co-operator's view has become corrupt, civil, disobedience is of the laws and rules constituted by authorities. Thus Gandhi saw both civil disobedience and non-cooperation as non-violent methods of resolving conflicts as well as peaceful devices for producing positive changes in social and political life.

The method and procedure had to be changed from time to time to suit varied environment, circumstances causes and problems that needed to be tackled.

Gandhi returned to India in 1915. The political life of the country at the time was in limbo. The task of a national leader under such circumstances was to initiate a movement, which could be national in a real sense and the philosophy, which could assimilate the fundamental tenets of the various political groups inside the country thereby making it acceptable to a considerable section of the people. For the success of such a movement it was necessary that it should be so designed to satisfy diverse groups with conflicting ideas and clashing interests.

After the First World War the report of the Rowlett Committee was published which recommended an extension into peacetime of all wartime rigors. Gandhi studied the document with mounting indignation. If this
was India's reward in time of peace what hope could there be for home rule?

Gandhi now had to lead 300 million people. He realised that the time had come for large-scale application of the principles of Satyagraha in India.

He travelled throughout India in order to prepare the ground for such a movement. And when the Rowlett act became law on 18 March 1919 Gandhi hit upon the idea that the whole country should observe Hartal. The results were astonishing. The whole of India with a few exceptions observed the Hartal.

Gandhi's Satyagraha against Rowlett bills was successful in the sense that masses had responded to it in a big way. But it was marked by violence on a scale, which led Gandhi to confess that he had committed a "Himalayan Blunder" in assuming that the masses were not sufficiently educated in the principles of non-violence.

Gandhi chose to suspend the movement. He believed that the period of suspension would be for Satyagrahis "an opportunity for further discipline and promotion of "pure Swadeshi" and "Hindu-Muslim unity.

Soon after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the promulgation of martial law in the Punjab, general repression let loose on the people of Punjab resulting in the inflammation of popular sentiment throughout the country. The Hunter Commission which was set up to enquire into the Punjab events gave a pro-government report, causing further indignation among the Indian people. Finally the attempted dismemberment of the
Turkish Empire by the western powers at the end of the war infuriated Muslims throughout the world and led to the famous Khilafat agitation in India, which had the wholehearted support of Gandhi and provided the immediate occasion for the non-cooperation movement.

Significance of Non-cooperation when Gandhi found that the British Government instead of making amends for the Punjab wrongs was bent upon whitewashing the criminal acts of its responsible officers and that the British public had raised a handsome public purse for General Dyer his faith received a shattering blow with such a "satanic" rule it was the duty of every Indian to non-co-operate.

Gandhiji insisted, "I believe and everybody must grant that no government can exist for a single moment without the co-operation of the people, willing or forced and if people suddenly withdraw co-operation in every detail, the government will come to a standstill. Co-operation with a just government is duty non-cooperation with an unjust government is equally a duty.

Non-cooperation was regarded by Gandhi as a non-violent method of resolving conflicts as well as a peaceful device for producing positive changes in social and political life.

People will then realise their true power. They would have learnt the value of discipline, Self-control, joint action, non-violence, and organisation.

Gandhiji said non-cooperation could paralyse the government and bring it to a standstill.
Applying this theory of non-cooperation to the concrete situation before him in India, he observed “It is as amazing as it is humiliating that less than one hundred thousand white men should be able to rule three hundred and fifty million Indians. They do somewhat by force but more by securing our cooperation in a thousand ways and making us helpless and dependent on them. They want India’s billions and they want India’s manpower for their imperialistic greed. If we refuse to supply them with money and men, we will achieve our goal namely Swaraj, equality”.

Non-cooperation is nothing if it does not strike at the root and you strike at the root when you cease to water this deadly tree of the British Government by means of open and honourable non-cooperation. The root of course is economic. The prosperity of England depended too largely upon commercial advantages in the colonies.

Since the core of Satyagraha was self-suffering. Indians had to be made self-reliant and fearless and prepared for self-sacrifice. For this Gandhi wanted to free the Indians from the shackles of the western institutions introduced by the British.

Now the question was, how could one man reach the hearts of so many millions of people, Gandhi understood his people well enough, for this task. He went to them with single, simple ideas an idea so simple that even the humblest could understand – the spinning wheel. He told the masses that the spinning wheel would set them free and asked them to spin thread and weave cloth. He realised that if they would learn to spin their own thread and weave their own cloth, they could stop buying, British cotton goods.
The "Charkha' thus became the sign of Indian Independence and as Gandhi and his workers travelled around India from one village to another explaining non-cooperation, asking the people to spin, the idea caught on. Gandhi however pointed out, that was only the beginning and there was much to do in the great Satyagraha campaign.

**HINDU MUSLIM UNIT – A GOAL**

As he elaborated his programme, Gandhi distinguished and stressed more precisely defined goals the most notable of which was the involvement of both Muslims and Hindus in the campaign in addition to the reconciliation of the two communities.

Gandhiji tried to bring as many as possible of the numerous groups comprising Indian society into the movement he was leading. He wanted the Muslims to actively participate in the movement.

**UPLIFTMENT OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES – ANOTHER GOAL**

Apart from this issue, the emphasis was on the upliftment of socially and economically depressed groups and the attainment of Swaraj.

The depressed groups whose position was to be improved comprised primarily the untouchables and the impoverished particularly in the countryside but also included women folk.

Gandhi had already begun efforts to improve the status of untouchables and now focussed on the use of charkha and the wearing of
Swadeshi, Hand spun hand woven materials (Khadi) as a means of fostering cottage industry.

Swaraj was usually understood as meaning national self-government (without an imperial liner to Britain but while Gandhi used to mean any government responsible to the people and even to mean the acceptance of the non-violent non-cooperation which would give the nation self-confidence necessary for asserting its will power over the government. 6

**NON CO-OPERATION AT WORK**

The non-cooperation movement launched by Gandhi had two aspects, which may be called positive and negative or constructive and destructive. The former included the promotion of Swadeshi particularly the revival of hand spinning and weaving, removal of untouchability among the Hindus, promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, prohibition of the use of alcoholic drinks and the collection of a crore of rupees for the memorial of Tilak (in the shape of Swarajya fund).

The negative side is usually referred to as the triple boycott namely, boycott of legislatures, courts and educational institutions both schools and colleges maintained or aided by the government. By the reverse process, the boycotts of foreign goods particularly foreign cloth required the promotion of Swadeshi.

Immediately after the Nagpur session Gandhi made an extensive tour of the country in order to popularise the movement. At first

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6. Gandhi’s concept of civil disobedience by Harpinder Kaur Pgs. 52-63.
the constructive side was more emphasised than the destructive The All India Congress Committee Meeting at Bezwada on 31st March 1921 passed resolutions “calling upon all workers to concentrate their attention chiefly upon (1) collecting a core of rupees for the Tilak Memorial Swarajya fund. (2) Enlisting a crore of members, (3) introducing 20 lakhs of (Charkhas) spinning wheels into Indian households all this before 30th June, 1921.

The first item was successfully carried out, the fund being over-subscribed by 15 lakhs of rupees. The membership reached more than fifty lakhs and the number of charkhas almost reached the target. In its meeting at Bombay, on 28th July the All India congress committee sent detailed instructions to all congress organisations in order to attain “complete boycott of foreign cloth by the 30th September next,” and asked them to concentrate their attention upon manufacture of Khaddar by stimulating hand-spinning and hand weaving. It also approved the picketing of liquor shops, which had already begun.

The production and popularising of “Khaddar” made some progress but the production was slow and far behind the target.

As to the consumption of liquor, it underwent a marked decline due to the vigorous picketing of liquor shops and there was a substantial fall in the revenue of the government 7


7. Struggle for freedom by Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, R.C. Majumdar Pgs. 337-338.
"The real reform that India needs in Swadeshi. The immediate problem before us is not how to run the government of the country but how to feed and clothe ourselves. In 1918, we sent 60 crore of rupees out of India for buying cloth. If we continue to purchase foreign cloth at that rate, we deprive the Indian weaver and spinner of that amount from year to year without giving him any other work in exchange. No wonder a tenth at least of the population is cruelly half starved and majority of the rest underfed. Swadeshi can solve it now).

"If every educated Indian will realise his primary duty, he will straight way present the women of his household with a spinning wheel and provide facilities for learning the art of spinning. Millions of yards of yarn can be produced from day to day and if every Indian will descend to wear the cloth produced from such yarn, he will assist in rebuilding, the only possible cottage industry of India."

"Without the cottage industry the Indian peasant is doomed. He cannot maintain himself from the produce of the land only. He needs a supplementary industry. Spinning is the easiest, the cheapest and the best."

I claim that the way to Swaraj lies through Swadeshi. A nation that can save sixty crores of rupees per year and distribute that sum amongst its spinners and weavers in their own homes will have acquired powers of organization and industry that must enable it to do everything else necessary for its organic growth. 8

8. Mahatma by D.B.Tendulkar, Pg. 334-335 Vol-I
Gandhiji's plan of action was clearly embodied in his historic statement dated March 10.

Non-cooperation is the only remedy left open to us. If it the clearest remedy as it is most effective, when it is absolutely free from all violence. It becomes a duty when co-operation means degradation or humiliation or an injury to one’s cherished religious sentiment. England cannot expect a meek submission by us to an unjust usurpation of rights, which to Muslims mean a matter of life and death. Those who are holding offices of honour, or emoluments ought to give them up. Those who belong to the menial services under the government should do likewise. Non co-operation does not apply to service under private individuals. Every step with drawing co-operation has to be taken with the greatest deliberation. 9

On June 16th 1920, he wrote in “Young India” on the law of suffering –

“No country has been raised without being purified through the fire of suffering. The mother suffers so that her child may live. Life comes out of death, with India rise out of her slavery without fulfilling this law of purification through suffering?

... It is impossible to do away, with the law of suffering, which is the one indispensable condition of our being. The way to do better is to avoid violence from our side and thus quicken the rate of progress and to introduce grater purity in the methods of suffering.”

9. Mahatma by D.B.Tendulkar, Vol-I Pg. 345
"The purer the suffering, the greater is the progress. Hence did the sacrifice of Jesus suffice to free a sorrowing world."

"I have said that, I do not deplore the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, so much as I deplore the murders of Englishmen and destruction of property by ourselves."

"If India wishes to revive her ancient wisdom and to avoid the errors of Europe. If India wishes to see the kingdom of God established on earth instead of that of Satan which has enveloped Europe, then I would urge her sons and daughters not to be deceived by fine phrases, the feels of sufferings that India may have to undergo but to see what is happening today in Europe and from it understand that we must go through suffering but not the process of making others suffer."

Gandhiji further writes in the paper about non co-operation –

"What then is the meaning of non-co-operation in terms of the law of suffering? We must voluntarily put up with the losses and inconveniences that arise from having to withdraw our support from a government that is ruling against our will."

"It may be that in the transition state we may make mistakes, these may be avoidable suffering. These things are preferable to national emasculation."

"We must refuse to wait for the wrong to be righted till the wrong doer has been roused to a sense of his iniquity we must not fear of ourselves or others. But we must combat the wrong by ceasing to assist the wrong doer directly or indirectly."
"If a father does injustice, it is the duty of his children to leave the parental roof. If the headmaster of a school conducts his institution on an immoral basis, the pupils must leave the school. If the Chairman of a Corporation is corrupt, the members there of must wash their hands clean of his corruption by withdrawing from it, even so, if a government does a grave injustice, the subject must withdraw co-operation wholly or partially sufficiently to wean the ruler from wickedness. In each case conceived by me, there is an element of suffering whether physical or mental. Without such suffering, it is not possible to attain freedom".

"I have succeeded by patient reasoning in wearing the party of violence form its ways. I confess that I did not attempt to succeed in weaning them from violence on moral grounds but purely on utilitarian grounds. The result for the time being at any rate has been to stoop violence.

"I hold that no repression could have prevented a violent eruption, if the people had not had presented to them a form of direct action involving considerable sacrifice and ensuring success. Non-cooperation was the only dignified and constitutional form of such direct action. For it is the right recognised from times immemorial of the subject to refuse to assist a ruler who misrules.

In the Swadeshi programme Gandhi placed the main stress on Khaddar, His message had its effect and the "music of the spinning wheel" began to hum all over the land. In one of his lyrical notes, he wrote in "Young India" dated July 21, "Slowly but surely, the music of perhaps the most ancient machine of India, is once more permeating society. They have the example of Aurangzeb who made his own caps. A greater
emperor — Kabir, was himself a weaver and has immortalised the act in his poems.

The revival of her prosperity and true independence depends most largely upon re-introduction in every home of the music of the spinning wheel."

"I know that there are friends who laugh at this attempt to revive this great art. They remind me that in these days of mills, sewing machines or typewriters only a lunatic can hope to succeed in reviving the rusticated spinning wheel. These friends forget that the needle has not given place to the sewing machine nor has the hand lost its cunning in spite of the typewriter. There is not the slightest reason why the spinning wheel may not coexist with spinning wheel even as the domestic kitchen co-exists with the hotels. Indeed typewriters and sewing machines may go but the needle and the reed pen will survive. The mills may suffer destruction. The spinning wheel is a national necessity.

"I feel convinced that the revival of hand spinning and hand weaving will make the largest contribution to the economic and moral regeneration of India. The millions must have a simple industry to supplement agriculture. Spinning was the cottage industry years ago, and if millions are to be saved from starvation in their homes then every village must repossess its own weaver.

"Undoubtedly, a cause must be grave to warrant the drastic method of non-cooperation. I do say that affront such as has been put upon Islam cannot be repeated for a country. Islam must rise now or be fallen if not forever for a century. I can not imagine a graver wrong than the massacre of
Jallianwala Bagh and the barbarity the followed it the white wash of the Hunter Committee.

The despatch or the government of India Mr Montague’s little upholding the Viceroy and then the Lt. Governor of the Punjab, the refusal to move officials who made the lives of the Punjabis a hell during the martial law period. These acts constitute a complete series of continuing wrongs against India, which if India has any sense of honour, she must right at the sacrifice of all the material wealth she possesses. If she does not, she will have bartered her soul for a mess of pottage.

In an article entitled “Mr Montague on the Khilafat Agitation” Gandhi wrote—

“Non co-operation is not intended so far to paralyse the government as to compel justice from it. If it is carried to the extreme point it can surely bring the government to a stand still.”

“I must admit that I can pretend to no “affection” for the present government. My speeches are intended to create “disaffection such that the people might consider, it a shame to assist to co-operate with a government that had forfeited all title to confidence respect or support.”

“I draw no distinction between the Imperial and the Indian Government. The latter has accepted on the Khilafat, the policy imposed upon it by the former and in the Punjab case, the former has endorsed the policy of terrorism and emasculation of a brave people initiated by the latter. British ministers have broken their pledged word, and want only wounded the feeling of seventy million Muslims of India Innocent men and women were insulted by the insolent officers of a Punjab
Government. Their wrongs, not only remain unrighted but the very officers who so cruelly subjected them to barbarous humiliation retain office under the government.”

The negative or the destructive aspect of non-co-operation included the boycott of legislatures, law courts and educational institutions.

The minor items of boycott included surrender of titles, honours etc. some constructive work was directly necessitated by the destructive programme, such as setting up arbitration boards to take the place of courts and national schools and colleges where students leaving government schools and colleges might continue their education. By a reverse process the boycott of foreign goods, particularly foreign cloth required the promotion of Swadeshi.

The all India Congress Committee at Bombay while passing the resolution on the boycott of foreign cloth advised all congress organisations “to collect foreign cloth for destruction or use outside India at their option.”

This evoked a heated discussion and several amendments were moved against the burning of cloth. Many of them opposed the destruction of foreign cloth which they thought was valued roughly at hundred crores and which they described as national wealth, especially at a time when millions were either ill clad or naked. But Gandhiji vigorously supported the burning of cloth by the consumers though not by the cloth dealers.

Immediately after the session of the AICC the city of Bombay displayed great enthusiasm in this item and made a great spectacular demonstration of burning foreign cloth.

Similar bonfires were made in other towns and this became almost a regular feature of the programme of cloth boycott.

Though eminent men like Kelkar and Rabindranath Tagore were against this "insensate waste" of cloth when millions were going half-naked. Gandhi gave a spirited reply in his paper the "Young India", "Critics" he said, "have overwhelmed me with their rebuke regarding the burning of foreign cloth. After having considered every argument advanced against it, I can not but hold by saying that destruction is the best method of dealing with the foreign cloth."

Picketing was an essential feature in reducing the sale of liquor and foreign goods. The National volunteers mainly did this work — a body thoroughly re-organised for carrying out the programme of Non-co-operation. It was mainly this body of volunteers who put social and economic pressure to induce unwilling persons to follow the non-co-operative programme both constructive and destructive.

The movement for boycotting the councils was a complete failure. All the congress candidates had withdrawn from the contest in obedience to the mandate of the Calcutta Congress and non-congressmen filled up all the seats.

The boycott of legal profession was heralded by the sacrifice of Pandit Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das both of whom were leaders of the bar and enjoyed princely income. They gave up their practice and their
example was followed by a large number of lawyers. But here again the number of boycotting lawyers was not large enough in proportion to their total strength and hence could not make any impression upon the work of the British law courts. The attempt to dissuade the people from resorting to British Courts and settle their litigation by Boards of arbitration set up by the congress or village panchayats though partially successful in a few localities did not achieve any important result.

Men like Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das now devoted their whole time and energy to the service of the country. For the first time in the history of modern India there was a select band of whole time worker, both leaders and rank and file, all over the country, who made the freedom of India, their only goal in life. There were many who took to the service of the country as a whole time job rather than a part time of leisure time and their example had a profound influence over others. All this changed the entire outlook of the country and gave a new zeal and spirit to India’s struggle for freedom.

The programme of boycotting schools and colleges at first created great enthusiasm. It was foreshadowed by the All India college students’ conference held at Nagpur on 25 Dec. 1920 under the Chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Rai. A resolution was passed to the effect that the “conference whole heartedly supports the immediate and unconditional boycott of government and government aided colleges and advises the college students of India to respond to it. By another resolution national leaders were requested to establish National colleges, including provisions for technical education.
The student's conference and the almost unanimous adoption of the Non-co-operation resolution by the congress at Nagpur had great repercussions upon students all over the country.

The greatest upheaval took place in Calcutta on 12 January, 1921 as a large number of students left their colleges, marched through the streets in profession and gather in a meeting, addressed by congress leaders like C.R. Das and B.C. Pal. Other colleges followed the example of Calcutta. The boycotting students adopted a novel method of picketing for preventing others from entering the colleges. A number of them lay flat side by side on the pavements of the doorways blocking the entrance. The initial success of the boycott was mainly due to this practice. But the boycott of college did not in the long run prove very effective.

As regards the boycott of titles and honours as well as government offices, the number of persons who renounced honours and titles was very small compared to the total number. But it is an undeniable fact that these titles and honours henceforth ceased to be distinctions in the estimation of the people. At large and generally came to be regarded as badges of slavery.

The All India Congress committee, meeting at Bombay on 28th July 1921 decided to boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales. The leading politicians of the moderate party opposed the idea of the visit of the prince.

The Prince of Wales landed in Bombay on 17 Nov. The city observed Hartal and swelling crowds rushed into the streets. They joined the boycott meeting at the beach, which was addressed by Gandhi and a
huge bonfire was made of the pile of foreign cloth. This mob resorted to hooliganism. For full five days the riot went on.

Gandhiji was deeply mortified at the incidents of Bombay. He violently denounced the rioters and vowed to abstain from food till the violence stopped. As a result of this ugly riot Gandhi suspended the civil disobedience movement, which was to be launched at Bardoli on 23rd November.  

On August 1, 1920 Gandhi gave the signal for the non-co-operation campaign by a letter to Lord Chelmsford the Viceroy, surrendering his decorations and titles.

"It is not without pang that I return the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal granted to me by my predecessor for my humanitarian work in South Africa, the Zulu was medal granted in South Africa for my services as officer in charge of the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps in 1906 and the Boer war medal for my services as assistant Superintendent of the Indian Volunteers stretcher Bearer Corps during the Boer war of 1899-1900"

"Events that have happened during the past month have confirmed me in the opinion that the Imperial government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner and have been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend their immoral acts. I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a government."

11. Struggle for freedom by Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, R.C. Majumdar Pgs. 338-344
"The attitude of the imperial and your excellency's government on the Punjab question has given me additional cause for grave dissatisfaction."

By October the movement passed the stage of ridicule. Gandhi wrote, "Motilal Nehru's great renunciation of a legal practice is by there an even calculated to change the ridicule into respect. Postgraduate students have given up their fellowship. Medical students have refused to appear for their final examination. The Non-cooperation in these circumstances cannot be called an inane movement. Either the government must bend to the will of the people which is being expressed in no unsuitable terms through non-co-operation, or it must attempt to crush the movement by repression."

Gandhiji had full faith in the British fair play and justice but the events of Khilafat and Punjab changed his outlook radically.

While describing the basis of non-cooperation Gandhiji further says though my faith in your good intentions is gone, I recognise bravery and know, that what you will not yield to justice and reason you will gladly yield to bravery."

"See what this empire means to India, exploitation of India's resources for the benefit of Great Britain, an ever increasing military expenditure and a civil service, the most expensive in the world extravagant working of every department in disregard of India's poverty; the disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole nation lest on

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armed nation might imperil the lives of a handful of you in our midst; traffic in intoxicating liquors and drugs for the purpose of sustaining a top heavy administration; purposively repressive legislation in order to suppress an ever-growing agitation, seeking to give expression to a nation’s agony, degrading treatment of Indians residing in your dominos and you have shown total disregard of our feelings by glorifying the Punjab administration and flouting the Musalman sentiment.”

“I know that you would not mind if we could fight and wrest the sceptre from your hands. You know that we are powerless to do that, for you have ensured our incapacity to fight in an open and honourable battle. Bravery on the battle field is thus impossible for us.”

Bravery of the soul still remains open to us. I know you will respond to that also. I am engaged in reviving that bravery. Non-cooperation means noting less than training in self-sacrifice. Why should we co-operate with you when we know, that by your administration of this great country we are being daily enslaved in an increasing degree.”

A communique was issued that orders had been given to arrest any one who over stepped the limits and whose words might stir up revolt or in other ways incite people to violence.

Gandhiji considered the communiqué as the first triumph for the campaign. He issued instructions as to what people should do if he were arrested. He stated – “It would be disgracing me if the people lost their equilibrium on my arrest. The nation can achieve no progress merely by depending upon me. Progress is possible by their understanding and following the path suggested by me. For this reason I desire that the
people should maintain perfect self control and consider the day of my arrest as a day rejoicing.”

“If on the other hand people resort to violence, they will be playing into the hands of the government. Their aeroplanes will bomb the people, their dyers will shoot them down and their smiths will uncover the veils of our women. There will be other officers to make the people rub their noses against the ground, crawl on their bellies and undergo the scourge of whipping”.

Gandhiji asked the people to preserve peace and calmness and take full-fledged non co-operation combined with constructive programme of all embracing Swadeshi.

Gandhiji further wrote –

“If the people resolve and carry this programme of boycott and Swadeshi out they would not have to wait for Swaraj even for a year. 13

Gandhiji further explained non-cooperation –

“If we would be the equals of Englishmen we must cast off fear. We must learn to be self-reliant and independent of schools, court, protection and patronage of a government we seek to end if it will not mind.”

“Hence this non-violent non-cooperation. The people have understood he secret and value of non-violence, as they have never done before. We are trying to rid India of the curse of untouchability, we are

trying to throw off foreign tinsel splendour and by reverting to the spinning wheel reviving the ancient and poetic simplicity of life. 14

Gandhiji wrote that non-co-operation is a movement intended to invite the English to cooperate with us on honourable terms or retire from our land. It is a movement to place our relations on a pure basis, to define them in a manner consistent with our self respect and dignity.”

Everyone was called upon to use only hand woven cloth made from hand spun yarn. Everyone was called upon to subscribe to the Tilak Memorial Swaraj fund. This movement of non-violent non-co-operation is a searching of the heart. The worker must awaken people to a sense of their duty.

Gandhiji was determined to build the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund – “Every piece knowingly given will be a token of the determination of the giver to establish Swaraj.”

To fill the purse Gandhi suggested that the people should abandon their questionable habits and vices:

“If the women of India were to surrender their superfluous ornaments, if the wine-bibbers were to give up their drink and give to the movement half their savings, if the smokers were to suspend their smoke pending attainment of Swaraj and give to the cause half their savings, we

could get all the money we need for bringing the movement to a successful close.”

His message of non-cooperation bore fruit first in Bengal. As early as January Thousands of boys and girls deserted schools, 3000 college students went on strike in Calcutta. 15

Thousands of men and women were addressed by Gandhi and Azad. In other province by the Ali brothers, in another by C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Jawahar Lal. The response was phenomenal. A crore of rupees were collected in time. Announcing the collection Gandhi wrote – “The subscription is but a milestone on the journey. The crore cannot give us Swaraj, or the richness of the whole world. Before we can be wholly free, we must be economically independent.

Before India can think of freedom, she must feel economically independent. And this she cannot do, so long as she is almost wholly dependent upon the foreign market for her cloth. If then we want to achieve Swaraj during this year, we can not do so till we have brought about by self – renunciation a complete boycott of foreign cloth.”

Many of the new recruits who worked for the congress programme lived in a kind of intoxication. The feeling of fear, oppression and frustration completely disappeared. There was a strange mixture of nationalism, religion and mysticism.

15. Mahatma by D.B. Tendulkar Vol. II Pg. 43.
Gandhiji stressed upon the inner meaning of the campaign:-

"Non-co-operation is a test of our sincerity. It requires solid and silent self-sacrifice. It challenges our honesty and our capacity for national work. It is a movement that aims at translating ideas into action and the more we do the more we find that much more be done than we had expected."

As the people's morale grew that of the government went down. Repression started. But despite the repressive policy of the government Gandhiji advised patience. Gandhiji's insistence on the non-violence and the constructive programme was a regular feature of his writings and speeches. The secret of Swaraj he said lay in the constructive programme.

Gandhiji reverted the attention of his followers on cultivating the spirit of non-violence, setting up congress organisations in every village, introducing the spinning wheel in every house, promoting Hindu-Muslim unity and ridding Hinduism of the curse of untouchability and otherwise purifying themselves by avoiding intoxicating drinks and drugs. 16

Regarding Swadeshi propaganda Gandhiji wrote in Young India - "Swadeshi propaganda in its intensive and exclusive form had to come and it has come in its order. It was and is part in the non-cooperation programme. The country had to appreciate the futility of the boycott of British's goods merely, equally of all foreign goods. It had to see that it lost its liberty by giving up Swadeshi in cloth and that it could regain it by reverting to hand-spun and hand woven cloth. It had to see that it lost its artistic taste and talent, when it innocently ceased to spin and weave by

the hand. It had to see that it was not so much the military drain as the loss of this supplementary industry that sapped India's vitality and made famine and ever recurring event in Indian life. Men with faith in the wheel had to rise in every province and people had to appreciate the beauty and the use of Khaddar".

"All these things have now happened the crore men and women and the crore rupees are required to resuscitate this national dharma. The problem is not of a few charkhas but of putting charkhas in every one of the six crore homes. The problem is that of manufacturing and distributing the whole of the cloth required by India. If India gives one crore rupees and one crore men and women and introduces two million charkhas in working order in as many homes before the 30th June, she is nearly ready for Swaraj. Because the effort will have created in the nation as a whole, all the qualities that make a nation good, great self reliant and self contained when the nation has by a voluntary effort completed its boycott of foreign cloth, it will be ready for Swaraj”.

Gandhiji further wrote — “But call the movement by any other name call it “Swadehsni and temperance”. Assume that all these previous months have been a waste of effort. I invite the government and the moderate friends to co-operate with the nation in making hand spinning universal and in making drinking a crime.”

Despite the policy of non-violence there were signs of violence in certain parts of the country. To Gandhi it amounted to sabotage of his cherished campaign. The spirit of militancy spread among the workers. In May 12,000 labourers struck work in Assam Tea Gardens. Discontent spread all over India and the workers on the Eastern Bengal Railway
brought transport to a standstill in 1921 there were 400 strikes affecting half a millions workers

On May 4, 1921 Gandhi wrote —

"They have put back the hands of the clock of progress. Non-violence is the rock on which the whole structure of non-cooperation is built. Take that away and every act of renunciation comes to naught. Those who commit violence are the real co-operators with the government. The latter will gladly lose a few officers if there by they could bill non-cooperation; I am convinced that the people will not tolerate violence on our part. They are by nature peaceful, they have welcomed non cooperation because it is deliberately non-violent".

Tagore was against the non-cooperation. He wrote to Gandhi —

"The present age has been dominated by the occident because the occident has a mission to fulfil. We of the orient should learn from the occident. No nation can find its own salvation by breaking away form others."

To Tagore’s interpretation of India’s message, Gandhi’s reply was respectful but firm.

"Nor need the poet fear that non-cooperation is intended to erect a Chinese wall between India and the west. On the contrary non-cooperation is intended to pave the way to real, honourable and voluntary co-operation based on mutual respect and trust. The present struggle is being waged.

against compulsory cooperation against one-sided combination, against armed imposition of modern methods of exploitation masquerading under the name of civilisation.

"Non co-operation is a protest against on unwitting and unwilling participation in evil.

Criticising the literary training in government school's Gandhiji wrote — "The Government schools have unmanned us rendered us helpless and godless. They have filled us with discontent providing no remedy for the discontent, have made us despondent. They have made us what we were intended to become clerks and interpreters.

A government builds its prestige upon the apparently voluntary association of the governed and it is wrong to co-operate with the government in keeping us slaves. The youth of the nation are its hope. I hold, that as soon we discovered that the system of government was wholly or mainly evil, it become sinful for us to associate our children with it."

"Non co-operation with evil is as much as a duty as co-operation with good." We had lost the power of saying no. It had become disloyal, almost sacrilegious to say ‘no’ to the government. This deliberate refusal to co-operate is like necessary weeding process that a cultivator has to sort to before he sows. Weeding is as necessary to agriculture as sowing. The nation's non-cooperation is an invitation to the government to co-operate with it on its own terms as is every nation's right and every good government's duty. Non co-operation is the nation's notice that it is no longer satisfied to be in tutelage. The nation has taken to the harmless, natural and religious doctrine of non-cooperation in the place of the
unnatural and irreligious doctrine of violence. And if India is to attain the Swaraj she will do so only by non-violent non-cooperation.  

Explaining about Swadeshi Gandhiji says -

"I must confess that I do not draw a distinction between economic and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful.

Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral. It is sinful to eat American wheat, and let my neighbour the grain dealer starves for want of customer. Similarly it is sinful for me to wear the latest finery of Regent Street, when I know that if I had but worn the things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weaves, that would have clothed me and fed and clothed them. On the knowledge of my sin bursting upon me, I must consign the foreign garments to the flames and thus purify myself and rest content with the rough Khadi made by my neighbours."

"In burning the foreign clothes, I burn my shame."

"The scheme of non-cooperation or swadeshi is not an exclusive doctrine. My modesty has prevented me from delivering from the housetop that the message of non-cooperation, non-violence and swadeshi is a message to the world. It must fall flat, if it does not bear fruit in the soil where it has been delivered."

"Our non-cooperation is neither with the English nor with the west. Our non-cooperation is with the system the English have established in

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Indian with the material civilisation and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak. Our non-cooperation is a retirement within ourselves. Our non-cooperation is a refusal to co-operate with the English administrators on their own terms. We say to them, "come and co-operate with us on our terms and it will be well for us, for you and the world."

Indian Nationalism is not exclusive or aggressive, nor destructive. It is health giving, religious and therefore humanitarian.

"If we will take care of today, God will take care of morrow". Gandhi denied in the minds of the people. He defined Swaraj as "Abandonment of the fear, of Death" with the logic and moral force at his command, he tried to transform India from submissiveness to brave defiance.

When we attain Swaraj many of us will have given up the fear of death; or else we shall not have attained Swaraj 19

Gandhiji further writes, giving his views about non-violent non-cooperation."

"In my opinion non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good. But in the past, non-cooperation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil does. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen, that the violent non-cooperation only multiplies evil and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, with drawl of

support to evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-cooperation with evil.\textsuperscript{20}

The Non-cooperation Movement had other indirect effects as well. In the Avadh area of U.P. where “Kisan Sabhas” and Kisan movement had been gathering strength since 1918, Non-cooperation Movement helped to fan the already existing ferment and soon it became difficult to distinguish between a Non-cooperation meeting and a Kisan meeting. In Malabar, in Kerala Non cooperation and Khilafat propaganda helped to arouse the Muslims tenants against their landlords but the movement at times, took a communal colour.

In Assam labourers on tea plantations went on strike. There were strikes on steamer service and on Assam – Bengal railway as well. Defiance of forest laws became popular in Andhra, Peasant and tribunals in some of the Rajasthan states began movements for securing better conditions of life. In Punjab, the Akali Movement for wresting control of the Guardwaras from the corrupt Mahants (priests) was a part of the general movement of Non-Cooperation and the Akalis observed strict non-violence in the face of tremendous repression.\textsuperscript{21}

Peasant is content against established authority was a familiar feature of the nineteenth century. But in the twentieth century the movements that emerged out of this is content were deeply influenced by the on going struggle for national freedom.

\textsuperscript{20} Mahatma by D.B. Tendulkar Vol. II Pg.133

\textsuperscript{21} India’s Struggle for Independence by Bipin Chandra Pgs. 189-190.
I will illustrate some important peasant struggles that emerged in the second and third decade of the century. This shows how the peasants who were motivated by the feelings of Swadeshi and Swaraj to oppose and resist the government moves to enhance rents, illegal levies, renewal fees or nazrana and arbitrary ejectments or bedakhali.

It was the active members of the Home rule League in U.P. who initiated the process of the organisation of peasants of the province into Kisan Sabhas. The U.P. Kisan Sabha was set up in feels 1918 through the efforts of Gauri Shankar Mishra and Indra Narain Dwivedi and with the support of Madan Mohan Malviya.

By the summer of 1920 in the villagers of talugdari Avadh, Kisan meetings called by village pachayats became frequent. Baba Ramchandra emerged as the rallying point. Jawahar Lal Nehru made several visits to the rural areas and developed close contacts with the Kisan Sabha movement.

The Kisan Sabha at Pratapgarh district became the centre of activity and about one-lakh tenants was reported to have registered their complaints with this sabha.

However in August 1920, Mehta deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh went on leave and the taluqdars used the opportunity to strike at the growing kisan movement. They succeeded in getting Ramchandra and thirty two Kisans arrested on a trumped up charge of theft, incensed at this about 4000 to 5000 Kisans collected at Pratapgarh to see their leaders in jail. Generally their numbers swelled to sixty thousand. Mehta was called back form leave to deal with the situation and he quickly withdrew
the case of theft and attempted to put pressure on the landlords to change their ways. This easy victory gave a new confidence to the movement.

Meanwhile the congress at Calcutta had chosen the path of non-cooperation and many nationalists had committed themselves to a new political path. But there were others like Madan Mohan Malviya who preferred to stick to constitutional agitation.

The Non-co-operators set up an alternative Oudh Kisan Sabha at Pratapgarh. This new body succeeded in integrating under its banners all the grass roots kisan sabhas that had emerged in the districts of Avadh in the past few months, through the efforts of Mishra, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Baba Ramchandra the new organisation brought under its wing, 330 kisan sabhas.

The Oudh Kisan Sabha asked the Kisans to refuse to till bedakhali land not to offer hari and beggar (forms of unpaid labour) to boycott those who did not accept these conditions and to solve their disputes through Panhcayats.

The Centres of its activity were the districts of Rae Bareili, Faizabad and to a lesser extent Sultanpur. The pattern of activity was the looting of bazaar, houses, granaries and clashes with the police. A series of incidents occurred the movement however had little difficulty in suppressing these outbreaks of violence, crowds were fired upon and dispersed, leaders and activists arrested cases launched. In March 1921 the seditious meetings act was brought in to cover the affected districts and all political activity came to a stand still.
Towards the end of the year peasant discontent surfaced again in Avadh. This time the centres were the districts of Hardoi, Bahraich, Sitapur in the northern part of the province. Congress and Khilafat leaders provided the initial thrust and the movement grew under the name of the Ekta or unity movement. The main grievances here related to the extraction of a rent that was generally fifty percent higher than the recorded rent, the oppression of the kedars to whom the work of rent collection was entrusted.

The Ekta movement developed its own grass roots leadership in the form of Madari Pasi and other low-caste leaders who were not inclined to accept the disciple of non-violence that the congress and the Khilafat leaders urged.

Unlike the earlier Kisan Sabha movement that was based solely on tenants the Ekta movement included in its ranks many small Zamindars, who found themselves disenchanted with the government because of its heavy land revenue demand. By May 1922, however severe repression on the part of the authorities succeeded in bringing the Ekta movement to its end. 22

**Chauri Chaura**; This outbreak occurred at Chauri Charura a police station, 15 miles from Gorkahpur in U.P. A police officer is alleged to have beaten some volunteers engaged in peaceful picketing as a result all the volunteers of the neighbouring villages about 500, accompanied by a large crowd went to the Thana on 5th Feb. 1922 and asked for an explanation of the conduct of the police officer. The neutrals tried to

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22. India's Struggle for Independence by Bipin Chandra Pgs. 197-200.
pacify the whole party. The police roughly handled some of the men and the mob returned and began to throw brickbats. The police started firing on the mob. After sometime when the firing stopped, presumably because the police had exhausted their ammunition. The mob as soon as they realised rushed towards the Thana building. On their approach the policemen went inside and bolted the door. The mob then set fire to the building. The ones who tried to come out were thrown back into the fire.

This incident was condemned by all the leading nationalists of the country. It put a stop not only to the civil disobedience but also practically to the whole programme of non-cooperation, which involved defiance to the government, and the constructive programme.

The Government gauged the situation and took full advantage of the unpopularity of Gandhi. Gandhi was tried at Ahmadabad on 18th March, 1922 and was sentenced to six year's simple imprisonment. Thus ended the first phrase of non-cooperation Movement.

The Government brought serious charges against the National volunteers for inciting the masses to violence and disorder and held the Non-cooperation movement directly or indirectly responsible for all the disturbances in the country during 1921 including railway and industrial strikes.

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23. Struggle for Freedom by R.C. Majumdar, pg 358
24 Struggle for Freedom by R.C. Majumdar, pg 351
The Moplah Rebellion

The Moplahs are a band of fanatic Muslims, poor and ignorant about million in numbers. They are descended form the Arabs who settled in the Malabar Coasts about eights or ninth century A.D. and married mostly Indian wives. They had acquired an unenviable notoriety for crimes perpetuated under the impulse of religious frenzy. They were responsible for not less than thirty-five outbreaks of a minor nature. But their most terrible uprising took place in August 1921 in Malabar district of Kerala.

The violent speeches of the Ali brothers, the early approach of Swaraj and the July resolutions of the Khilafat conference all these combined to excite and fire the mophlahs. Knives swords and spears were secretly manufactured, hands of desperadoes collected and preparations were made to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of Islam. On August 20, when the District Magistrate of Eranad Taluga with the help of troops and police attempted to arrest certain leaders who were in possession of arms at Tirurangadi, a severe encounter took place, which was a signal for the immediate rebellions throughout the whole locality. Roads were blocked, telegraph lines cut, and the railway destroyed in a number of places. The machinery of Government was reduced to a number of isolated offices and police stations, which were attached by rebels. Some of the Europeans who did not succeed in escaping, Were murdered by bestial savagery. As soon as the administration had been paralysed, the Moplahs declared that “Swaraj” was established.

A certain Mr Ali Musaliar was proclaimed Raja, Khilafat flags were flown and Eranad and Walluvanand were declared Khilafat Kingdoms.
A great tragedy marked the end of the rebellion about 3,000 moplahs lost there lives The main brunt of Moplah ferocity was borne not by government but the luckless Hindus who constituted the majority of the population.

The Congress passed its resolution expressing its firm conviction that the Moplah disturbance was not due to the non co-operation or Khilafat Movement and that the out break would not have occurred had the message of non-violence been allowed to reach them, especially as the non-cooperation and the Khilafat preachers were denied access to the affected parts by the District Authorities for six months before the disturbance. 25

CONCLUSION

The peasant movements in U.P. and Malabar were thus closely linked with the politics at the National level. In U.P. the impetus had come from the Home Rule leagues and later form the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement.

In Avadh, in the early months of 1921, when peasant activity was at its peak, it was difficult to distinguish between a non-cooperation meeting and a peasant rally.

Similar situation arose in Malabar where Khilafat and tenant’s meetings merged into one. But in both places the recourse to violence by the peasants created a distance between them and the national leaders. In

U.P. and Malabar, the government launched a heavy repression in order to crush the movement. Peasants only wanted an end to ejectments, illegal levies and exorbitant rent-demands which the national leadership supported. 26

**BARDOTI MOVEMENT**

The non-tax movement was launched in Bardoli Taluq of Surat district in Gujarat in 1928 was also in many ways a child of the Non-cooperation days.

The local leaders such as the brothers Kalyanji and Kunveji Mehta had worked hard to spread the message of Non-cooperation. These leaders had set up many national schools, persuaded students to leave government schools, carried out the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.

The Bardoli congressmen had settled down to constructive work. Through the network of ashrams, they worked for the education of the tribals. These local leaders aroused the “Kalipraj” (dark people) against the Hali system under which they laboured as hereditary labourers for upper caste landowners and exhorted them to abjure intoxicating drinks and high marriage expenses, which led to financial ruin.

In January 1926 it became known that the officer charged with the duty of reassessment of the land revenue demand of the Taluq had recommended a thirty percent increase over the existing assessment, the congress leaders were quick to protest against the increase and set up the

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26. India’s Struggle for Independence by Bipin Chandra Pgs, 197-204
Bardoli inquire committee to go into the issue. Its report published in July 1926 came to the conclusion that that increase was unjustified. The constitutionalist leaders of the area, including members of the legislative council took up the issue.

In July 1927 the government reduce the enhancement to 21.97 per cent.

But the concessions were too meagre and came too late to satisfy any body.

The constitutionalist leaders now began to advise the peasants to resist by paying only the current amount and withholding the enhanced amount.

Patel reached Bardoli and immediately had a series of meeting with the representatives of the peasants and the constitutionalist leaders. He wrote a letter to the Governor of Bombay explaining the miscalculations into the settlements report and requesting him to appoint an independent enquiry else, he would have to advise the peasants to refuse to pay the land revenue and suffer the consequences.

Patel explained the situation including the governments’ curt reply, to the peasants’ representatives. Following this a meetings of the occupants of Bardoli Taluq passed a resolution advising all occupants of the land to refuse payment of the revised assessment until the government appointed an independent tribunal or accepted the current amount as full payment.
Peasants were asked to take oath that they would not pay the land revenue. The resolution was followed by the recitation of sacred texts from the Gita and the Koran and Songs from Kabir, who symbolised Hindu Muslim unity. The Satyagraha had begun.

Vallabhbhai Patel was ideally suited for leading the campaign. One hundred political workers were drawn from all over the province assisted by 1,500 volunteers many of whom were students. A publications bureau that brought out the daily Bardoli Satyagrah Patrika was set up. This Patrika contained reports about the movement, speeches of the leaders, pictures of the Jabti or confiscation proceedings and other news.

An army of volunteers distributed this to the farthest corners of the Taluq. The movement also had its own intelligence whose job was to find out who the indecisive peasants were. The members of the intelligence wing would shadow them to see that they did not pay their dues, secure information about government moves especially the likelihood of Jabti (confiscation) and then warn the villagers to lock up their houses or flee to neighbouring Baroda.

The mass mobilisation was done through extensive propaganda via meetings speeches, door to door persuasion.

Those who showed signs of weakness were brought into line by means of social pressure and threats of social boycott.

Sardar Patel and his colleagues also made constant efforts to see that they carried the constitutionalist and moderate leadership as well as public opinion with the. The result was that very soon the government
found even its supporters and sympathisers deserting them. By July 1928, the Viceroy, lord Irwin himself began to doubt the correctness of the Bombay Governments' stand and put pressure on Governor Wilson to find a way out.

Public opinion in the country was getting more and more restive and anti-government. Peasants in many parts of Bombay Presidency were threatening to agitate for revision of the revenue assessments in their areas. Workers in Bombay textile mills were on strike and there was a threat that Patel and Bombay communists would combine in bringing about a railway strike that would make movement of troops and supplies to Bardoli impossible.

All told a retreat, if it could be covered up by a face saving device seemed the best way out for the government.

The enquiry conducted by a judicial office and a revenue officer came to the conclusion that the increase had been unjustified and reduced the enhancement to 6.03 per cent.

The New Statesman of London summed up the whole affair on 5th May 1929. The report of the committee constitutes the worst rebuff, which any local government in India has received for many years and may have far reaching results... it would be difficult to find an incident quite comparable with this in the long and controversial annals of Indian land revenue.

The relationship of Bardoli and other peasant struggles with struggles for freedom can best be described in Gandhiji's pithy words:-
such effort as that of Bardoli will bring Swaraj nearer and may bring, it nearer even than any direct efforts is undoubtedly true.  

27. India’s Struggle for Independence by Bipin Chandra Pgs, 204-209.
THE IMPACT OF THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

The question now is did the movement fail then? Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya makes the point that the success or failure of the Non-Cooperation Movement can not sufficiently prove or disprove the efficacy of the technique of mass Satyagraha since the movement did not strictly adhere to the minimum condition laid down by Gandhi for its success namely a policy of complete non-violence. In so far as Gandhi called the movement off it may be said to have failed. The mutually antagonistic aspects of Muslims and Hindu Communalism submerged by the Khilafat Campaign reappeared.

Swaraj that Gandhi was talking about was not merely the transference of political power form British to Indian hands, but basically it is the “self realisation” or on awakening of the people to a sense of their moral power and the establishment of a certain type of society.

This was indeed achieved by the Indians even if it was to a limited extent People had imbibed a number of values preached by Gandhi. Non-violence had been practised to a remarkable degree, moral awakening was complete.

It would thus seem that the minimum objective aimed at by Gandhi was the awakening of the masses, socially of the Congressmen to political consciousness and a sense of their moral power and the realisation by them of the importance of the constructive programme. The minimum objective seems to have been attained by the Non-cooperation movement.
Gandhi was ridiculed by many for his assurance that Swaraj could be won in one year. They did not realise that for Gandhi freedom from fear was the soul of Swaraj. Indeed this was worked in a year.

Gandhi had himself said that freedom can be achieved as soon as we are ready to pay the price for it. The Indian apparently were ready to pay the price. They were prepared to forge ahead and grab what rightly belonged to the under the leadership of Gandhi.

The non-violent non-cooperation movement was an important landmark in the history of the theory and practise of Gandhi's concept of civil dis-obedience. During 1919-1921 Gandhiji took up specific grievances such as the Amritsar massacre Khilafat and Rowlatt Act but the concept of Satyagraha was experienced on a large scale and a large majority of politically conscious people were involved.

During the campaign, the fundamental issue of Swaraj - independence of the country - was raised and the political enemy was a mighty power.

Although it did not achieve any spectacular and successful result, it laid the foundation for the freedom movement of the nation.

After another ten years, it was raised to another level when the nationalist movement under Gandhi's leadership openly organised, the civil disobedience movement popularly known as the salt Satyagraha. 28