CHAPTER I

INAUGURATION OF THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT
The non-violent Non-Co-operation Movement, which was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi, was a unique event in the history of our country. This movement was rightly described by its supporters as well as its opponents as a peaceful revolt against the bureaucracy in India. "Never before has the country witnessed such awakening, such activity, such unity and such determined effort on the part of the people to vindicate the honour and self respect of their motherland as during the eventful days of 1920-22."\(^1\) This was in fact an attempt to paralyse, one of the most powerful Governments of the world by non-violent means.

**The Background:**

It has been regarded in India from times immemorial as the highest duty of the people to refuse to assist a Government that will not listen to their grievances. It is this ancient practice which in the troublous times of the partition, of Bengal suggested the idea of withdrawing co-operation from the Government in certain directions. While presiding at the Benaras session of the Congress in 1905, Gopal Krishna Gokhale\(^2\) for the first time uttered the following prophetic words:


\(^{2}\) Gopal Krishna Gokhale: A great orator and political 'Guru' of Mahatma Gandhi in India's struggle for freedom. Founder of the Servants of India Society.
"If all Indians are to be treated as no better than dumb, driven cattle; if men whom any other country would delight to honour are to be thus made to realize the utter humiliation and helplessness of their position in their own country, then all I can say is: "Good-bye to all hope of co-operating in any way with the bureaucracy in the interest of the people."  

Two years later Lokmanya Tilak expounded the principle of Non-co-operation in a remarkable speech and was followed up by Gokhale in 1909, who, while moving the resolution at Lahore Congress explained the doctrine of "Passive Resistance" in these words, "It is essentially defensive in its nature and fights with moral and spiritual weapons. A passive resister resists tyranny by undergoing suffering in his own person. He pits soul-force against brute force; he pits the divine in man against the brute in man; he pits suffering against oppression, pits conscience against might; he pits faith against injustice; right against wrong."

India and the First World War:

Afterwards the First World War afforded a "remarkable stimulus ... to the spirit of Indian nationalism". The War


4. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920): One of the foremost Congress leaders of the late 19th and early 20th century. He created a strong national feeling among Indians by an appeal to their historic past. Edited the Kesari through which he preached self-help and national revival among the masses.


had been unexpectedly prolonged. It exercised a great strain upon tempers, and brought untold misery. The economic world order was completely upset, consequently, India had to undergo acute economic hardships. "Prices spiralled and the Indian agriculturist was impoverished." This increased the discontent of Indian masses and resulted in some labour strikes and occasional acts of violence in the form of "sporadic rioting accompanied by looting of markets." The war created utter disgust among the Indian people as Gandhiji expressed, "here in India we are faced with despair every-where. It was confidently hoped that, at the close of war, India would get something substantial, but the hope turned out to be false." At the end of the war India did receive some reforms in the form of the 'Government of India Act 1919', which further caused widespread disappointment.

The Rowlatt Acts Report and After:

On the top of it all came the Report of a Committee appointed under the Presidency of Sidney Rowlatt, to report on the growth of revolutionary movement in the country and to suggest remedies.

On the 6th of February, 1919, the Rowlatt Bills, embodying the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee, were placed before the Legislative Assembly. They sought to confer the extraordinary powers of arrest and search and of trial according to a procedure which was tantamount to denial of justice. On seeing the Rowlatt Committee's report, Mahatma Gandhi exclaimed: "Its recommendations startled me". This was the beginning of the transformation from a loyal citizen of the British Empire into an extreme rebel. As a result Gandhiji expressed: "The British Empire today represents satanism and they who love God can afford to have no love for Satan." The change in such a high-souled, scrupulously truth-loving person, marked the final stage in the destruction of the moral foundations of the British Empire in India. Gandhiji represented the conscience of India and the revolt in his mind was the starting-point in the revolution which culminated in the end of the Empire.

Gandhiji had implored the Viceroy from his sick-bed not to give his assent to the Rowlatt Bills, but that had gone unheeded. Therefore, on 24 February, 1919, Gandhiji declared that if these Bills became law, he would start Satyagraha.


He drafted a pledge which committed those who followed him and were convinced "that the bills were unjust, subversive of all principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual, to refuse civilly to obey those laws in the event of those bills becoming law and until they were withdrawn." 14-I

The whole country rose like one man against this most unwarranted encroachment on the ordinary rights of free citizens. A strong opponent of N.C.O. programme M.A. Jinnah, 14-II admonished the Government in these words: "The passage of the bill will create a discontent and agitation the like of which has never been witnessed before." 15 The Indian Press was unanimous in expressing its indignation at the proposed measure. It was in fact, according to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, "the beginning of an agitation throughout the country the like of which had never been witness. 16

Innumerable meetings were held in all parts of the vast peninsula 17 and in the Council itself not one single Indian was found to support its drastic provisions even with a silent vote. But all this was of no avail and the Government with the help of official votes passed one of the Bills into an Act in the third week of March, 1919. 18

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14-I. Bombay Chronicle, March 2, 1919; (P.C. Bamford, Histories of the Non-Co-operation & Khilafat Movements, Delhi, 1923, p. 4).

14-II. M.A. Jinnah (1876-1948); Barrister of the Bombay High Court; President of the Muslim League 1916, 1920, 1934-1948; Governor-General of Pakistan 1947-48.


16. Rajendra Prasad, Young India 1919-1922 (Madras, 1922),
The Rowlatt Satyagraha:

Immediately thereafter Mahatma Gandhi called upon the people to observe 6 April 1919 as a day of 'humiliation and prayer' (harfaal) in protest against the repressive law enacted by the Government of India. It was to be the day on which India opened the non-violent war against British imperialism.

The response to the call was amazing. 19 It was the first demonstration in which all, rich and poor, high and low, educated or uneducated, village folks and town people took part. It was observed with remarkable success in Madhya Pradesh also. 20


17. For protest meetings held in Madhya Pradesh please see, MPEM, pp. 284–85; NAI, Home Pol., April 1919, 48 deposit, CPB FR 1/March 1919, p. 17.


20. MPEM, p. 287;
Bombay Chronicle, 9 April 1919, pp. 7–8.
NAI, Home Pol., July 1919, 46, Deposit, CPB FR 1/ April 1919, p. 23.
**Jallianwala Massacre:**

In the meantime there took place another decisive event, the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar, on 13th of April, 1919 which further "embittered the Indian patriots."\(^{21}\) At Jallianwala Bagh General Dyer opened fire on an unarmed crowd of 15,000 people in which nearly 5 to 6 hundred people were killed outright and three times the number wounded.

According to one description: "having deployed his troops, General Dyer at once gave orders to fire. He gave no notice to the large crowd there assembled, and allowed no time for any one to get away. He continued a controlled fire on the dense crowd facing him in the enclosure, a crowd which according to his own estimate numbered five thousand persons. Continuous fire was directed wherever the crowd was densest. In the course of ten minutes 1,650 round of ammunition were fired, and even then the firing was only brought to an end because the supply of ammunition was on the point of exhaustion."\(^{23}\) Afterwards Martial law was declared in Amritsar, Lahore, Gujrat and Llyalpur districts.\(^{24}\) Large number of people were arrested and tried under Martial law. The action of General Dyer was bitterly criticised by the people of India and abroad. A Committee of enquiry was demanded and was ultimately appointed by the Government with Lord Hunter as its president.\(^{25}\)

\(^{21}\) Vincent Sheean: *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 119.

\(^{22}\) According to Percival Spear 379 people were killed in this firing and over 1200 were wounded. — Percival Spear, *A History of India* — Vol. II, (Great Britain, 1970), p. 191.


\(^{24}\) Punjab was put under the administration of Michael O'Dwyer.

\(^{25}\) The three Indian members of the Hunter Committee were:

(i) Sir Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad;

(ii) Pandit Jagat Narayan;

(iii) Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan.
The Indemnity Act & the Hunter Committee:

Before the Committee began its enquiry the Government of India passed an 'Indemnity Act' for the protection of its officers. There was a great deal of opposition to it in the Council, but Mahatma Gandhi, true to his principles of non-retaliation supported the bill. By this time the A.I.C.C. had appointed a sub-committee to lead evidence before the Hunter Committee. The Congress Committee asked the president of Hunter Committee to release the political prisoners for a short time, to enable them to collect the necessary evidence. But this request was refused, therefore, Congress Sub-Committee decided not to lead any evidence at all but to hold an independent enquiry and publish its report. A step in Non-Cooperation was thus taken. The Congress Sub-Committee published its report on 26 March 1920. Gandhi hoped that Britishers would do justice with the victims and punish the perpetrators of Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, which in the words of the Congress Enquiry Committee, was "a crime against humanity"—"a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent unarmed men including children and unparalleled for ferocity in the history of modern British administration." 26

But the Hunter Committee report proved to be a mere 'white wash' which belittled Dyer's crime as 'a grave error' of judgement based upon an honest but 'mistaken conception of duty'. 27


The report was regarded by Indians as a 'white washing document' full of suppressio-veni and suggestio falsae and completely shook public confidence in British justice.

The action of General Dyer was strongly criticised by the people of India and abroad. One of the members of British Parliament, while accusing the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, described it as "one of the worst outrages in the whole of our history." The Duke of Connaught also rightly commented that "the shadow of Amritsar ... (had) lengthened over the fair of India." The British press too criticised the incident. As The Nation of England commented: "We shall show ourselves as a nation unfit to rule if we pass this thing over lightly. To condone it, to minimise it is to court its repetition ... The British Empire will not survive many Amritsar massacres." Undoubtedly the Amritsar incident created a situation "blacker than the 'Black hole' of Calcutta."

In spite of great opposition the British Government appreciated the action of General Dyer and said, that "he was doing what was right ... his action at that time checked ———

31. Quoted from MPFM, p. 288.
the spread of the disturbances to an extent which it is difficult now to estimate."33

On seeing the Government's indifferent way, many loyalists like Mahatma Gandhi turned to be non-cooperators. The great poet Rabindra Nath Tagore34 renounced his knighthood in protest against the Jallianwala massacre. He, while writing to the King Emperor narrated the position of Indian people as follows: "The accounts of the insults and sufferings undergone by our brothers in the Punjab have tricked through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers."35

Towards Non-Co-operation:

The incident of the Jallianwala massacre became the turning point in the history of India. It was because of the report of Hunter Committee, that a loyalist like Gandhi was to turn into a rebel. Now Gandhiji made up his mind that, "Cooperation in any shape or form with this satanic government is sinful."36

On July 28, 1920, Gandhiji announced that non-cooperation would be inaugurated on August 1, 1920. He instructed that a day of fasting and prayer, be observed the

34. Rabindra Nath Tagore (1863-1941): One of the greatest poets and writers. Recipient of Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. Founded Shantiniketan, the International University.
day before. Lokmanya Tilak promised his support to the non-co-operation programme. Unfortunately he passed away at midnight preceding the dawn of August 1. The whole nation stood still, and a country-wide hartal was observed. Mammoth meetings were held at Nagpur, Raipur, Bilaspur, Jabalpur, Saugor, Balaghat, Khandwa and elsewhere in Madhya Pradesh, in which people paid their homage to the departed soul.

**Non-Co-operation Adopted:**

Finally Non-Violent Non-Co-operation Campaign started with a bang on August 1, 1920. On that day Gandhiji wrote to the Viceroy "... Your Excellency's light-hearted treatment of official crime, your exoneration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Mr. Montagu's despatch and above all the shameful ignorance of the Punjab events and the callous disregard of the feelings of Indians betrayed by the House of Lords, have filled me with the gravest misgivings regarding the future of the Empire, have estranged me completely from the present Government, and have disabled me from tendering as I have hitherto whole-heartedly tendered my loyal co-operation." He further explained the reasons for the adoption of non-violent non-cooperation.

"In my humble opinion, the ordinary method of agitating by way of petitions, deputations, and the like is no remedy for

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40. Secretary of State for India.
moving to repentance a Government so hopelessly indifferent to the welfare of its charge as the Government of India has proved to be. In European countries, condemnation of such grievous wrongs as the Khilafat and the Punjab events would have resulted in a bloody revolution by the people. They would have resisted at all costs, national emasculation such as the said wrongs imply. But one half of India is too weak to offer violent resistance, and the other half is unwilling to do so. I have therefore ventured to suggest the remedy of non-co-operation, which enables those who wish to dissociate themselves from the Government, and which, if attended by violence and undertaken in an ordered manner, must compel it to retract its steps and undo the wrongs committed. But whilst I pursue the policy of non-co-operation, in so far as I can carry the people with me, I shall not lose hope that you will yet see your way to do justice. Along with the letter Gandhiji returned all the medals which the Government had bestowed on him as marks of appreciation for his services and cooperation to the British Empire.

Nature of Non-Co-operation:

C.R. Das defined the policy of Non-co-operation in these words: It is the refusal to be a party to preventable evil; it is the refusal to accept or have any part in injustice; it is the refusal to acquiesce in wrongs that can be righted, or to submit to a state of affairs which is manifestly inconsistent with the dictates of righteousness. And as a consequence, it is the refusal to work with those who, on grounds of interest or expediency, insist upon committing or perpetuating

42. Ibid.

43. C.R. Das (1870-1925): Barrister of the Calcutta High Court; President of the Indian National Congress 1921; formed with Motilal Nehru, the Swaraj Party in 1923.
Principles:

It was not merely political but also spiritual and ethical. Though apparently it aimed at the attainment of political objectives but it was also based on Gandhiji’s conviction that religion and politics were inseparable. To Gandhi Non-Co-operation was a "matchless and powerful weapon", but a weapon "neither punitive nor vindictive nor based on malice ill will or hatred." All the systems of Government are carried on through willing or forced cooperation of the people. A Government can not depend solely on military or police force. This force can rule over the bodies of the governed, not their souls. It is the element of fear in them that compels them to obey the ruler. They suffer but they keep silent. But once they realise that their fear is a sign of their immunity they will rise. brute force can not rule for all times. Gandhiji said, "even the most despotic Government can not stand except for the consent of the governed, which consent often forcibly procured by the despot. Immediately the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, his power is gone." Good citizens are always law abiding. But non-violent non-cooperation advocates breaking

44. quoted by C.R. Das, in his Presidential address at Ahmedabad session of Congress. C.R. Das was in jail therefore he could not read this address in the Congress; afterwards it was published in Young India Dt. 12 Jan. 1922; Quoted in Congress Presidential Addresses (Madras, 1934), pp.550-51.

45. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, 4 August 1920.


47. Ibid., p. 205.
the law. According to Gandhiji "if the government runs against the wishes and interest of the people than its laws should be broken. The ruled or the governed should not be party to the misrule of the Government." 48

Towards Calcutta Congress:

The programme of M.C.O. was approved and accepted by the Central Provinces Congress Committee in its meeting held on 22 August, 1920. 49 On August 30, 1920, Mahatma Gandhi, Shaukat Ali and other important leaders passed through Raipur on way to attend the special session of Congress at Calcutta. Thousands were waiting to see Gandhiji at Bilaspur and Raipur railway stations. The C.P. delegates Thakur Chhedralal, Dr. E. Raghavendra Rao, Dr. Sheo Dularat Mishra and Sarvadutta Bajpai boarded the same train for Calcutta. 50 The special train carrying Mohemedan delegates halted for an hour at Nagpur, where speeches were made by the leaders including Shaukat Ali, before an audience of about 3000 people. 51

Calcutta Congress:

The special session of the Congress was organised at Calcutta from 4 to 9 of September 1920, under the presidentialship of Lala Lajpat Rai. 52 This Congress was called upon to


51. Shaukat Ali (1873-1937): Prominent leader of the Khilafat & Non-Co-operation Movement; Member, Legislative assembly,
consider the programme as well as the policy of Non-Co-operation. Here Gandhiji moved the momentous resolution of Non-Co-operation which was adopted by a large majority.53 All the provinces but the C.P. and Berar voted in favour of N.C.O. resolution.54

The resolution recited that, in view of the fact that in the matter of the Khilafat, Indian and Imperial Governments had signally failed in their duty towards the Muslims in India, that the Prime Minister had deliberately broken his pledged words and, further, in view of the fact that in the matter of the events of April, 1919, both the said Governments had grossly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab, punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them, and had exonerated Sir Michael O'Dwyer and that the debate in the House of Lords betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India and showed virtual support of the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in Punjab, the Congress was of opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs, and the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya.

1935; interned during the war; Muslim representative at Round Table Conference.

51. RAJ, Home Pol. Deposit F.70, 1920, p. 16. FR, 15 Sept. 1920 (Delhi Records)

52. Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928): A great leader and politician, was known as Lion of the Punjab. Editor of the Journal "Vande Mataram": took a leading part in freedom struggle; courted martyrdom in 1928 after being wounded in a Lathi-charge while protesting against arrival of Simon Commission in India.


The Congress was further of opinion that there was no course left open for the people of India, but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive Non-violent Non-Cooperation, until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established. It accordingly advised: (a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignations from nominated seats in local bodies, (b) Refusal to attend Government levies, Darbars etc; (c) Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Governments and the establishment of national schools and colleges in their place, (d) Gradual boycott of British Courts by lawyers and litigants, and establishment of private arbitration courts for the settlement of private disputes, (e) Refusal on the part of military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia, (f) Withdrawal by candidates of their candidacy from the Reformed Councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate, and, (g) Boycott of foreign goods. The Congress further advised adoption of Swadeshi in piece-goods on a vast scale and, to meet the requirements of the nation which could not be met by Indian Mills alone, it advised manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand spinning in every home and hand weaving on the part of millions of weavers who had abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement. 55

The adoption of the N.C.O. resolution by the Calcutta Congress gave a great fillip to the N.C.O. movement. "The seed was thus sown in Calcutta of new dynamic, an hitherto untried method of political agitation, which was to exercise a profound influence on the course of events in India after-

55. Young India 1919-1922, pp. xxxix-xl;
wards. The author of this dynamic programme was Mahatma Gandhi who had since then dominated the Indian political stage.

Towards Nagpur Congress:

The 35th session of Indian National Congress was fixed at Nagpur. The P.C.C. made all efforts to make it a success. The leaders of Hindi C.P. demanded to fix Jabalpur as the venue of the Congress, but A.I.C.C. voted in favour of Nagpur. 

Gandhiji wished Aurobindo Ghosh to be the President of Nagpur Congress, but he refused it on health ground. Afterwards C. Vijayaraghavachariar was requested to accept this responsibility. Jamnalal Bajaj of Wardha was made the Chairman of the reception committee. Bajaj was greatly influenced by the policy of N.C.O. and with the result of his efforts the government formed an opinion that the Marwari

56. C.V.R. Rao, Civil Disobedience Movements in India (Lahore, 1946), p. 12; Still, the N.C.O. resolution was to be confirmed by the annual session of the Congress which was to assemble at Nagpur in December, 1920. 
57. NML, AICC Papers, F-1/1920, Letter from Dr. B.S. Moonje, Gen. Sec. 35th session of I.N.C. to V.J. Patel, Sec. A.I.C.C., Dt. 5 Dec. 1920, Nagpur. 
59. Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950), Mystic, poet and political philosopher; settled at Pondicherry from 1910 onwards; [ChMG, xvii, p. 283]
traders and shopkeepers were the leading supporters of non-co-operation.\textsuperscript{62} He also sought the support from Lala Bhagwandin, and Arjun Lal Sethi of Jaipur.\textsuperscript{63} The preparations for the Congress and approaching N.C.O. agitation were specially felt in the Marathi than in Hindi region. Dr. B.S. Moonje took the lead in Marathi C.P.\textsuperscript{64} District Congress Committees were also formed to mobilise the public opinion.\textsuperscript{65} An intensive propaganda, through meetings, speeches, and personal persuasion, was launched throughout the Province.\textsuperscript{66}

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60. C. Vijayaraghavacharier (1852-1943): Leading lawyer and active Congress man; presided the Nagpur Congress (1920); In fact Vijayaraghavachari’s name was proposed by the leaders of Marathi C.P. to have a strong man who could oppose the N.C.O. resolution, see, N.I., B.S. Moonje papers, sub.f.10, letter 14 Sept. 1920.

61. First of all the offer was given to Pt. Vishnu Dutt Shukul, he refused it on health ground, Shri Sharda, 10 Jan. 1921, p. 251-52; CMAO, xviii, p. 296. Haribhau Upadhyaya, Shreyarathi Janaalal Balai, pp. 54-55.


By the time the Congress session opened, Gandhiji had won the sympathies of many people in Nagpur and elsewhere. Supported by number of merchants, students and general public, Gandhiji along with his party workers arrived in Nagpur on 18 December 1920, to be met by a crowd of 10,000 and subsequently to address students, ladies of all castes, and the All India weavers conference. His associates, the Ali brothers, sought additional support from Muslims in Nagpur, while in villages near the capital travellers constantly heard the cry 'Mahatma Ki Jai'.

After reaching Nagpur, Mahatma Gandhi addressed two public meetings on 18 and 19 December 1920. At the close of women's meeting on 19th, silver and gold ornaments worth about rupees 4,000 were offered to him as contribution (to Congress). Afterwards Gandhiji toured the Chhattisgarh region and returned back to Nagpur on 21 December 1920. Till then innumerable N.C.O. meetings were held throughout the province to mobilise the public opinion for the adoption of non-co-operation programme.


69. Ibid., Madhya Pradesh Aur Gandhi, p. 12.

NAGPUR CONGRESS:

The gospel of non-violent non-co-operation is Gandhiji’s unique gift to the Nation and to the world; and it was at Nagpur that it was finally and enthusiastically proclaimed.

Apart from the country wide support to the non-co-operation programme, a few radicals were still opposing the N.C.O. programme. In Madhya Pradesh too there was a school which was not in favour of it. On 10 December 1920, a few days before the Congress session was to begin, G.S. Khaparde published a memorandum pointing out how the Resolution sought to divert the energies of the Congress towards attaining soul force and moral excellence, losing sight of immediate political objects. Opposition to the new policy of the Congress also came from the members of the Imperial Legislative Council who, naturally, were unaccustomed to the rough and unpleasant realities of aggressive politics. They too, while disapproving the N.C.O. programme; issued a manifesto on the eve of the Nagpur Congress.

It was after great excitement, fear and enthusiasm that the Congress assembled at Nagpur to the historic decision.


72. [PPFM*], p. 300.

73. Ibid., pp. 300–301.
Writing on the selection of the venues of both the Congress sessions Pattabhi Sitaramayya commented, "It is by a strange irony of fate and of politics that the resolution of N.C.O. should have been accepted at two successive congresses held in the Headquarters of the two Provinces that strenuously opposed the new movement." The Congress session was held from 26 December, 1920, to 30 December, 1920. A record number of 16,000 delegates attended the Congress. Apart from the delegates, thousands of students, lawyers, merchants and government servants, from all over India witnessed the Congress proceedings. Hundreds of congress workers from Madhya Pradesh gathered at Nagpur to make the Congress a success. The prominent leaders of M.P. who attended the Nagpur Congress include, E. Raghvendra Rao, Thakur Chhedralal, Pt. Ravishanker Shukla, Sunderlal Sharma, Seth Govind Das, Shyam Sunder Bhargava, Keshav Ramchandra Khandekar, Vasudeo Rao Subedar, Makhanlal Chaturvedi, Pt. Vishnu Dutt Shukul, Dr. B.S. Moonje, Jamnalal Bajaj, G.S. Khaparde, M.S. Aney and many more from the host city.

74. *B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Op. Cit.,* p. 205; The possibility can not be ruled out that the choice of Calcutta and Nagpur as venues of a special session and the annual session of Congress, respectively, was dictated by the possible opposition to N.C.O. resolution by the Bengal and C.P. & Berar units. The leadership might have felt that the opposition could be blunted by holding a meet with the critics themselves as the hosts.

75. *M.P.F.M.,* p. 301.

76. *M.L., Seth Govind Das, MSS, F-8-74,* p. 245/6. Introduction of these leaders is given in the chapter, "The Biographical sketches of important leaders of N.C.O.M."
All India level leaders were also present at the session they include, Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, C.R. Das, M.A. Jinnah, the Ali brothers and Maulana Azad. The members of British parliament Benjamin Charles Spooner, Holford Knight and Colonel Wedgwood also attended the Congress as delegates. A magnificent pandal was erected at Craddock Town which from that date was renamed 'Congress-Nagar'. For the first time all delegates made it a point to come clad in swadeshi, and most of them donned on their heads the 'Gandhi Cap'.

Proceedings:

The 35th session of Indian National Congress was commenced with C. Vijayaraghavachariar's presidential address. It was a comprehensive and masterly survey of the major issues facing the country. C. Vijayaraghavachari himself was not a whole-hearted non-co-operator, and yet he presented the

77. Motilal Nehru (1861-1931): Leading advocate of Allahabad High Court; President of the Indian National Congress 1919 and 1918.

78. Madan Mohan Malviya (1861-1946): Famous nationalist, associated with Indian National Congress and was three times its President; founder of Benaras Hindu University.

79. WPFM, p. 301.

80. Benjamin Charles Spooner (1878-1928): Member of British Parliament since 1918, a member of the Executive Council of the Labour Party in 1919; Parliamentary Secretary to treasury 1924.

81. Lord Joseph Clement Wedgwood (1872-1943): Captain 1901-01; served European War 1914-16; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1924; Chairman Committee on House of Commons Records 1929; Vice Chairman of Labour Party 1921-24.

82. WPFM, p. 301.
issue in a clear balanced way. While supporting the N.C.O. resolution he firmly declared "we are entitled and bound to adopt such a principle without favour and without fear to consequences and guided solely by a consideration of it as a means to the end of our self-preservation as a people." Whereas the dissatisfied leaders of Calcutta were still making efforts to establish their majority in the Congress. Pattabhi Sitaramayya narrated the situation as follows:

"C.R. Das brought a contingent of about 250 delegates from East Bengal and Assam, bore their expenses to and fro, and spent Rs. 36,000 from his pocket to undo what was done in Calcutta." But at Nagpur, C.R. Das instead of opposing the resolution on Non-Co-operation actually moved it in the open session. Lala Lajpat Rai also supported it. The extremist leaders of Nagpur (Marathi C.P.) Dr. B.S. Moonje, and G.S. Khaparde were confident enough to get the support of Bengal and Punjab camp in opposing the N.C.O. resolution. But seeing the changed circumstances they had no choice except to support the N.C.O. resolution. G.S. Khaparde

83. By the persuasion of Gandhiji, he was forced to change the final draft of his presidential address, NAI, FR-2/ Dec. 1920 Home Pol., F. 77 Feb. 1921 (Delhi Records), p. 16.


narrated the scene on 28 December 1920, shortly before the
delgates voted for N.C.O. 1 "today the confusion was greater
than ever, Gandhi proposed his creed ... Jinnah opposed and
was very badly treated by the audience. I wished to speak.
Dr. Moonje asked me not to and recommended that I should not
even vote against the motion. This I would not submit to
and I went to the platform, when at last he said that he
would use physical force. The confusion was so great (how-
ever) that I also deemed it wise not to speak. In this
way all the opposition to Gandhiji's views had been overcome
without difficulty. Narrating the magic of Gandhi's persona-
ality, the government report stated," the moderates of Nagpur
were not heard; the extremist opponents under Khaparde and
Dr. Moonje were brushed aside; Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya's
effort was nugatory; Jinnah carried no influence; Lajpat Rai
wobbled and then became silent." In fact the eleventh hour
support of C.R. Das and Lajpat Rai assured the smooth passage
of the N.C.O. resolution. The official historian of the
Congress rightly pointed out: "The support that Gandhi

Gandhi. But he was pressed by the Punjabi delegates to
support Gandhi fully or forfeit his leadership of Punjab,
Statesman, 18 Nov. 1928, Obituary on Lajpat Rai.

1920, p. 16; Gandhi won over the delegates from
Bombay, Bengal & Punjab, leaving the extremist delegates
from C.P. & Berar without support.
J.M. Broomfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society:
Twentieth Century Bengal (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 167-68.

89. NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 28 Dec., 1920.

1920, p. 16; Till 1920, Mahatma Gandhi had become the
most important leader of the country; this fact was
admitted by C. Vijayaraghavachariar in his presidential
speech at Nagpur Congress, Congress Presidential
obtained at Nagpur was undoubtedly greater than that he had in Calcutta ... the stool of the N.C.O. (at Calcutta) was resting on but one leg. At Nagpur, it stood on all its four legs with perfect equipoise. Gandhi and Nehru, Das the Lalaji were all for it."

The Nagpur Congress reaffirmed the resolution on non-violent N.C.O., passed at the special session at Calcutta. By the magic of Gandhiji's persuasion C.R. Das himself agreed to move the resolution in the open session. In moving it C.R. Das said "I claim that this Resolution is stronger than the one passed at Calcutta. I claim that it is stronger, fuller and bolder, because this Nation is resolved to put into force the entire scheme of Non-cooperation down to the non-payment of taxes. The call is sounded that every student, every agriculturist, lawyer, trader, everybody in the country should do his bit. It means that India refuses to have anything to do with the tyrannical machinery of Government. Every Indian is resolved not to touch it. I call upon you all, in the name of all that is holy, to carry this Resolution without a dissenting voice." The text of the Resolution read thus:

92. MFP, p. 303.
Whereas in the opinion of the Congress the existing Government of India has forfeited the confidence of the country; and

Whereas the people of India are now determined to establish swaraj; and

Whereas all methods adopted by the people of India prior to the last special session of the Indian National Congress have failed to secure due recognition of their rights and liberties and the redress of their many and grievous wrongs, more specially with reference to the Khilafat and the Punjab;

Now this Congress while reaffirming the resolution on non-violent non-co-operation passed at the special session of the Congress at Calcutta declares that the entire or any part or parts of the scheme of non-violent non-co-operation, with the renunciation of voluntary association with the present Government at one end and the refusal to pay taxes at the other, should be put in force at a time to be determined by either the Indian National Congress or the All India Congress Committee, and that in the meanwhile, to prepare the country for it, effective steps should continue to be taken in that behalf:

(a) by calling upon the parents and guardians of school-children (and not the children themselves) under the age of 16 years to make greater efforts for the purpose of withdrawing them from such schools as are owned, aided or in any way controlled by Government and concurrently to provide for their training in national schools or by such other means as may be within their power in the absence of such schools;

(b) by calling upon students of the age of 16 and over to withdraw without delay, irrespective of consequences, from institutions owned, aided or in any way controlled by Government, if they feel that it is against their conscience to continue in institutions which are dominated by a system of government which the nation has solemnly resolved to bring to an end, and advising such students either to devote them-
selves to some special service in connection with the non-co-operation movement or to continue their education in national institutions;

(c) by calling upon trustees, managers and teachers of Government affiliated or aided schools and municipalities and local boards to help to nationalize them;

(d) by calling upon lawyers to make greater efforts to suspend their practice and to devote their attention to national service including boycott of law courts by litigants and fellow lawyers and the settlement of disputes by private arbitration;

(e) in order to make India economically independent and self-contained by calling upon merchants and traders to carry out a gradual boycott of foreign trade relations, to encourage hand-spinning and hand-weaving and in that behalf by having a scheme of economic boycott planned and formulated by a committee of experts to be nominated by the All India Congress Committee;

(f) and generally, in as much as self-sacrifice is essential to the success of non-co-operation, by calling upon every section and every man and woman in the country to make the utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to the national movement;

(g) by organizing Committees in each village or group of villages with a provincial central organization in the principal cities of each Province for the purpose of accelerating the progress of non-co-operation;

(h) by organizing a band of national workers for a service to be called the Indian National Service; and

(i) by taking effective steps to raise a national fund to be called the ALL-INDIA TILAK MEMORIAL SWARAJ FUND for the purpose of financing the foregoing National Service and the non-co-operation movement in general.
"This Congress congratulates the nation upon the progress made so far in working the programme of non-co-operation, specially with regard to the boycott of Councils by the voters, and claims in the circumstances in which they have been brought into existence, that the new Councils do not represent the country and trusts that those who have allowed themselves to be elected in spite of the deliberate abstention from the polls of an overwhelming majority of their constituents, will see their way to resign their seats in the Council, and that if they retain their seats in spite of the declared wish of their respective constituencies in direct negation of the principle of democracy, the electors will studiously refrain from asking for any political service from such Councillors.

This Congress recognizes the growing friendliness between the police and the soldiery and the people, and hopes that the former will refuse to subordinate their creed and country to the fulfilment of orders of their officers, and, by courteous and considerate behaviour towards the people, will remove the reproach hitherto levelled against them that they are devoid of any regard for the feelings and sentiments of their own people.

"And this Congress appeals to all people in Government employment pending the call of the nation for resignation of their service, to help the national cause by improving greater kindness and stricter honesty in their dealings with their people and fearlessly and openly to attend all popular gatherings whilst refraining from taking any active part therein and, more specially, by openly rendering financial assistance to the national movement.

"This Congress desires to lay special emphasis on NON-VIOLENCE being the integral part of the non-co-operation resolution and invites the attention of the people to the fact that NON-VIOLENCE in word and deed is as essential between people themselves as in respect of the Government,
and this Congress is of opinion that the spirit of violence is not only contrary to the growth of a true spirit of democracy but actually retards the enforcement (if necessary) of the other stages of non-co-operation.

Finally, in order that the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs may be redressed and Swaraj established within one year, this Congress urges upon all public bodies, whether affiliated to the Congress or otherwise, to devote their exclusive attention to the promotion of non-violence and non-co-operation with the Government and, in as much as the movement by non-co-operation can only succeed by complete co-operation amongst the people themselves, this Congress calls upon public associations to advance Hindu-Muslim unity and the Hindu delegates of this Congress call upon the leading Hindus to settle all disputes between Brahmans and non-Brahmans, wherever they may be existing, and to make a special effort to rid Hinduism of the reproach of untouchability, and respectfully urges the religious heads to help the growing desire to reform Hinduism in the matter of its treatment of the suppressed classes."  

After C.R. Das had moved the Resolution, Gandhiji rose to second it. He emphasised the principle of non-violence and said, "you will eschew violence in thought, deed and word, whether in connection with Government or with ourselves, and I would repeat the promise that I made that we do not require even one year to get Swaraj."  

Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal also supported the resolution.

93. MPPM, pp. 303-306.
94. Ibid., p. 306.
The resolution was carried with thunderous acclamations. Thousands of delegates stood up shouting "Gandhi ji Ke Jai". Flowers were showered upon Mahatma Gandhi where he sat. Thus the Nation had chosen its leader.95

Change in Congress Creed:

Another resolution passed by the Congress at Nagpur was regarding the change in its creed. Gandhi ji moved the resolution in the Subjects Committee. It read: "The object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of Swaraj by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means."96 N.R. Alekar, a pleader of Nagpur proposed some modifications. While moving the resolution Mahatma Gandhi alerted the delegates and said, "it is impossible for Hindus and Muslims to submit any longer to a Government which has perpetrated such naked injustice and refuses to repair it. We therefore, declare through this Resolution that we want Swaraj ... this Empire has been guilty of so many crimes that living under its flag is tantamount to being disloyal to God. It is, therefore, my humble prayer to you all to give your approval to this Resolution."97

Gandhi ji was not particular about the continuation of British connection with India just as he was not particular

95. Ibid.

96. Times of India, Dec. 29, 1920; C.F. Andrews was responsible for this doctrine, Gandhi Sangrahalaya, Gandhi Papers, C.F. Andrews to M.K. Gandhi, Dt. 11, S.No. 7284, Ibid., Dt. 4 Sept. 1920, S.No. 7241, Ibid., S.No. 7245 Dt. 8 Sept. 1920.

about breaking it. Explaining his view he said: I want my country to have swaraj whether with or without the British connection. I am not opposed to the connection by itself but I do not wish to make a fetish of it. I will not keep India for a single minute under slavery for the sake of that connection." 98 He further explained his position in these words: "What I say is that is derogatory to national dignity to think of permanence of British connection at any cost .... I do not for one moment suggest that we want to end British connection at all costs unconditionally. If the British connection is for the advancement of India, we do not want to destroy it. But if it is inconsistent with our national self-respect, then it is our bounden duty to destroy it." 99

Gandhi made it clear that, "there is room in this resolution for both; those who believe that by retaining the British connection we can purify ourselves and purify the British people and those who have no such belief." 100 The opposition by Jinnah, C.R. Das, B.C. Pal and Madan Mohan Malviya in favour of the retention in the creed of the British connection was overruled by the Congress. 101 Finally the Congress decided to follow Gandhiji. When his resolution was put to vote only two, out of the 14,582 delegates voted against it. 102

100. Ibid.
Gandhiji carried the day at the Nagpur Congress. He was now the undisputed leader of the congress. Now the people realized that their future lay in their own hands and not in the hands of the British.

This new spirit can be judged by an incident. Colonel Wedgwood, well known for his sympathies with Indian aspirations, begged at Nagpur Congress not to adopt a policy of non-co-operation which would alienate their friends in England. "Hardly had he resumed his seat", according to the official historian of the Congress, "when up rose a voice in reply ... "We have no friends outside India, let there be no mistake about that; our salvation lies in our own hands." 103 This was indeed the new spirit of India; self-government was something to be seized as a right and not accepted as a gift.

Importance of Nagpur Congress:

The Nagpur Congress constituted an important landmark in the history of freedom movement in India. It established finally the 'unquestionable leadership' of Gandhiji in the freedom struggle. 104 At Nagpur, the Congress broke definitely and decisively with the Moderates but Gandhiji "by virtue of


his tremendous influence and popularity was able to keep the left-wingers at bay.¹⁰⁵

Nagpur Congress was unique in all aspects. It was attended by 14,582 delegates,¹⁰⁶ a record number, unbeaten in the annals of the Congress.¹⁰⁷ The session was also marked by the entry of women into the Congress in larger numbers, 169 women attended as delegates.¹⁰⁸

The Congress passed a resolution which was destined to have far-reaching influence on the country in the years to come. It was at Nagpur, that Congress adopted the linguistic principle for the realignment of provinces. Accordingly India was divided in 21 provinces; each province having a Provincial Congress Committee, and, District, Subdivisional, Taluqa or Tahsil, Firka or other local (village or town) Congress Committees.¹⁰⁹ As a result the Central Provinces were grouped under three committees, the Berar, later called Vidarbha Provincial Committee, the Hindi C.P., later called Mahakoshal Provincial Committee, and the Marathi C.P. which later on became the Nagpur Provincial

¹⁰⁵ Subhash Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle 1920-34, p.34
Committee.\textsuperscript{110} This had an important consequence in the
growth of national movement in Madhya Pradesh. Formerly
all political activity was centered at Nagpur, but now,
Jabalpur and Amraoti which were the centres of the other
two provincial committees also became the centres of
political activities from where the movement spread out
into the districts and 'villages' later on these provinces
possessed their own leadership and the congress politicians
in each region became free to take their decisions
independently.

The Nagpur Congress also introduced fundamental
changes in the Congress constitution regarding its activi-
ties and performed an act of self-denial in voluntarily
restricting the number of delegates to one for every fifty
thousand of the population of India and insisted upon the
delegates being the real representatives of those who
wanted to take any part in the political life of the country.
And with a view to ensuring the representation of all
political parties it accepted the principle of the "single
transferable vote."\textsuperscript{111}

The Nagpur Congress helped to make the Congress
organisation vigorous, disciplined and purposeful, possess-
ing a vital programme and substantial financial resources.


\textsuperscript{111} \textit{CGMG}, xix, p. 199.
It gave to the non-co-operation movement a dynamic objective and a militant programme. From Nagpur onwards the masses rallied to the movement and swelled its strength. Now the old "feelings of impotent rage and importunate requests gave place to a new sense of responsibility and a spirit of self-reliance."112

Thus Nagpur Congress marks an important stage not only in India's fight for freedom but also in the technique of that fight.