# Gandhi: The Noncooperation Movement Hocus-Pocus

Hi, Everyone! Gandhi's famous year-long Noncooperation Movement was scheduled to begin from August 1, 1920. Contrary to popular misconception, the agenda for this movement was *not* Swaraj (self-rule). The main agenda was the Khilafat Movement and the Punjab Atrocities was tacked on as a subsidiary clause.

"On August 18, 1920, he [Gandhi] made a daring speech in Calicut: 'I am here to declare for the tenth time that by shaping and by becoming a predominant partner in the peace terms imposed on the helpless Turkey, the Imperial Government have intentionally flouted the cherished sentiments of the Muslim subjects of the Empire. What the Government did in the Punjab mercilessly was its double wrong. The people of India must, therefore, have a remedy to redress the double wrongs—the remedy of non-cooperation which I consider it perfectly harmless, absolutely constitutional and yet perfectly efficacious.'"[1]

Absolutely *no*mention of Swaraj. In fact, as yet, the Congress had not passed a resolution in favor of the Noncooperation Movement.

August 1, 1920, India was in mourning; her beloved national leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak had passed away that morning. Did Gandhi give Tilak his due on this day of his passing? No.

"Then came the first of August, 1920, and also the news of the sudden death of Tilak, the Hercules of Indian Nationalism. The nation bowed in mourning. 'Never before in the history of India was such nation-wide grief witnessed.' Gandhi felt a great personal loss; however, he did not postpone the programme of noncooperation. The movement was formally inaugurated on the 1st of August, 1920, by Gandhi with the return of the Kaiser-e-Hind gold medal and the Zulu war medal granted by the British Government to him for his humanitarian works in South Africa,"[2]

(On an aside, I wish to mention that the author Sinha is putting a misleading euphemism upon Gandhi's medals. These medal were actually bestowed upon "Sergeant" Gandhi and are specially given to people who rendered distinguished service in the advancement of the interests of the British Raj. It is more proof of Gandhi's loyalty to the British Raj.)

To continue, there is something *so* shabby about inaugurating a national movement—especially one which only purported to be for the cause of India's freedom—on the very day of the death of India's great and beloved national leader, Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

On September 4, 1920, a special session of the Congress met to pass a resolution on the Noncooperation Movement.

"The session started hot with discussions. In Gandhi's opinion non-cooperation was postulated only with a view to obtaining redressal of the wrongs done to the Turkish and Punjab. He did not like to include any more items in his programme of agitation. It, however, did not appeal to Sjt. Vijaya Raghavachari, supported by many others, who argued that if non-cooperation was to be declared, why should it be with reference to particular wrongs? The absence of Swaraj was the biggest wrong that the country was laboring under non-cooperation. How could an unfree India help a wronged Turkey?"[3]

This was the Congress position. But when the resolution for the Noncooperation Movement was passed it was unchanged in its essence and the word Swaraj tacked on as a sop to the conscience.

"The Congress is of the opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned [Khilafat cause and Punjab atrocities] wrongs and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honor and to prevent repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarjya. This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent Non-cooperation inaugurated by Mr. Gandhi until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established ;"[4]

It is *utterly*shameful that Swaraj should be added in this dismal way as an adjunct to the Khilafat cause in the Noncooperation Movement.

- Were the Indians aware what their Mahatma's real agenda was?

· Are they aware even today?

· No.

The Indians threw up their jobs, students gave up their schools, heart and soul they participated in the Noncooperation Movement with the one thought held close: their Mahatma will get them freedom in one year.

· How did the Mahatma—who couldn't bring himself to make an outright demand for Swaraj in his agenda—make an outright demand for freedom to the Viceroy?

He didn't!

One needs to look deeper into the nitty-gritty of the Noncooperation Movement to learn the truth behind the myth.
More on it tomorrow . . .

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Mahatma Gandhi Facts: Gandhi Revealed

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[1] *The Turkish Question: Mustafa Kemal and Mahatma Gandhi*, by R. K. Sinha; Adam publishers & Distributors, Delhi, 1994. The speech is in the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol XVIII, pp 177-79.

[2] *Ibid*, page 91.

[3] *Ibid*, page 95

[4] *History of Freedom movement in India, Volume III*, by R. C. Majumdar, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963; page 86.