

History

Lesson 1 of 4 lessons

Lesson 1: The bookshop

How did India achieve independence in 1947?

Mr Mastin



India in 1929

In 1929, Vishnu Shahani's father opened a bookshop in the city of Pune. *Some* parts of India had been given *some* freedom to govern themselves by the time Vishnu's bookshop opened. But most of India was ruled directly by the British, including Pune where Vishnu's bookshop was located. Vishnu's father believed all of India should be independent. Vishnu's father believed the British should leave India. Vishnu's father supported **Gandhi** and **Congress**.

Congress was an Indian organisation led by **Gandhi**. Congress and Gandhi argued that India should be independent. In 1929, Congress announced that India would be independent... but how? The British would not simply leave.



Nonviolent noncooperation

Gandhi believed in using **nonviolent noncooperation** to achieve independence for India.

Nonviolent, because Gandhi said only peaceful methods should be used.

Noncooperation with the British because Gandhi wanted to put pressure on the British to leave India. Gandhi's little spinning wheel became a sign of the noncooperation with the British. The spinning wheel could be folded up and easily carried. Gandhi could spin cloth wherever he went. Instead of buying British-made clothes and paying a British tax, Gandhi made his own cloth. Gandhi encouraged other Indians to make their own cloth and not pay the British tax. Millions of Indians copied Gandhi.



The Salt March in 1930

The Salt Law was a tax the Indians paid to the British every time they bought salt. Salt was used every day to cook food. Gandhi set off with 80 men to break the Salt Law. After walking 240 miles, Gandhi arrived at the sea-shore. Gandhi had been joined by thousands of men and women. The crowd stretched for two miles. Newspapers from around the world had sent reporters to take photographs. The photographs of the peaceful march were published all over the world. Gandhi was determined to put pressure on the British.

The next morning, Gandhi went into the sea to wash and pray. When he got out, Gandhi picked up a handful of salt and said, “With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire.”



The Salt March in 1930

Gandhi boiled the salt to make sea salt that could be used for cooking. Gandhi had broken the Salt Law and he encouraged other Indians to do the same. Millions of Indians began to make their own salt and break the Salt Law. Tens of thousands of Indians were arrested by the British, including Gandhi.

But Indians continued to make their own salt.



Gandhi invited to London in 1931

Gandhi was in prison in Pune. The little bookshop in Pune, run by Vishnu's father, would send books for Gandhi to read in prison.

All around the world, people were shocked at how the peaceful protesters, led by Gandhi, were treated in 1930. The British released Gandhi from jail. The next year, 1931, the British asked Gandhi to ask his supporters to stop their protests in exchange for a discussion with the British government. The British invited Gandhi to London in 1931, but the meeting disappointed Gandhi. Everything Gandhi did or said was reported around the world. While in London, Gandhi was invited to Buckingham Palace to meet the king. Gandhi was asked if he had felt he hadn't worn enough clothes to meet the king. Gandhi's reply was reported around the world. "The king had on enough for both of us."



Glossary

Congress: a group of Indians, led by Gandhi, who wanted the British to leave India and for India to be independent, ruled by Indians

Nonviolent: to use only peaceful ways of doing something; ways that do not physically hurt another person

Noncooperation: to refuse to do things the way someone else wants you to do them; to refuse to cooperate - to make life difficult for someone else

Salt Law: the British law in India that required Indians to pay tax when they bought salt; Indians used salt to cook every day so paid a lot of tax

