

# SECTION 3



A Hindu servant serves tea to his mistress in colonial India.

## WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

### Indian Frustration

In the early 1900s, many Indians were dissatisfied with British rule. An early leader of the Indian National Congress party expressed his frustration with an unpopular policy to divide the province of Bengal into smaller sections:

“The scheme [to divide Bengal] . . . will always stand as a complete illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule—its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, [and] its cool preference of [British civil service workers’] interests to those of the governed.”

—Gopal Krishna Gokhale, 1905

**Focus Question** How did Gandhi and the Congress party work for independence in India?

## India Seeks Self-Rule

### Objectives

- Explain what motivated the Indian independence movement after World War I.
- Analyze how Mohandas Gandhi influenced the independence movement.
- Describe the impact of the Salt March on the course of the Indian independence movement.

### Terms, People, and Places

Amritsar massacre

ahimsa

civil disobedience

untouchables

boycott

### Note Taking

#### Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects

Recognizing causes and effects can help you understand the significance of certain events. In a chart like the one below, record the causes and effects of Gandhi’s leadership of India’s independence movement.



Tensions were running high in Amritsar, a city in northern India. Protests against British rule had sparked riots and attacks on British residents. On April 13, 1919, a large but peaceful crowd of Indians jammed into an enclosed field. The British commander, General Reginald Dyer, had banned public meetings, but the crowd either ignored or had not heard the order. As Indian leaders spoke, Dyer and 50 soldiers opened fire on the unarmed crowd, killing nearly 400 people and wounding more than 1,100. The **Amritsar massacre** was a turning point for many Indians. It convinced them that India needed to govern itself.

### Calls for Independence

The tragedy at Amritsar was linked to broader Indian frustrations after World War I. During the war, more than a million Indians had served overseas. Under pressure from Indian nationalists, the British promised Indians greater self-government. But when the fighting ended, Britain proposed only a few minor reforms.

Since 1885, the Indian National Congress party, called the Congress party, had pressed for self-rule within the British empire. After Amritsar, it began to call for full independence. But party members were mostly middle-class, Western-educated elite who had little in common with the masses of Indian peasants. In the 1920s, a new leader named Mohandas Gandhi emerged and united Indians across class lines.

Gandhi came from a middle-class Hindu family. At age 19, he went to England to study law. Then, like many Indians, Gandhi



### The Salt March

Gandhi's march to the sea to collect forbidden salt started out with Gandhi and 78 followers, but gathered strength as it progressed. As he picked up the first lump of salt, he declared, "With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British empire."

*How do you think people in other countries would have reacted to British authorities using violence against this group?*

### Vocabulary Builder

**discriminated**—(dih SKRIM ih nayt ed)  
*vi.* treated differently because of a prejudice



went to South Africa. For 20 years, Gandhi fought laws that **discriminated** against Indians in South Africa. In 1914, Gandhi returned to India. Soon, he became the leader of the Congress party.

**Checkpoint** Why did Indians call for independence after World War I?

## The Power of Nonviolence

Gandhi's ideas inspired Indians of all religious and ethnic backgrounds. His nonviolent protests caught the attention of the British government and the world.

**Gandhi's Ideas** Gandhi's theories embraced Hindu traditions. He preached the ancient doctrine of **ahimsa** (uh HIM sah), or nonviolence and reverence for all life. By using the power of love, he believed, people could convert even the worst wrongdoer to the right course of action. To fight against injustice, he advocated the use of nonviolent resistance.

Gandhi's philosophy reflected Western as well as Indian influences. He admired Christian teachings about love. He believed in the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau's ideas about **civil disobedience**, the refusal to obey unjust laws. Gandhi was also influenced by Western ideas of democracy and nationalism. He urged equal rights for all Indians, women as well as men. He fought hard to end the harsh treatment of **untouchables**, who were members of the lowest caste, or class.

**Gandhi Sets an Example** During the 1920s and 1930s, Gandhi launched a series of nonviolent actions against British rule. He called for Indians to **boycott**, or refuse to buy, British goods, especially cotton textiles. He worked to restore pride in India's traditional industries, making the spinning wheel a symbol of the nationalist movement. Gandhi's campaigns of civil disobedience attracted wide support.

**Checkpoint** What methods did Indians under Gandhi use to resist British rule?



## Gandhi Takes a Stand: The Salt March

To mobilize mass support, Gandhi decided to take a stand against the British salt monopoly, which he saw as a symbol of British oppression. Natural salt was available in the sea, but the British government required Indians to buy only salt sold by the monopoly.

**Breaking the Law** On March 12, 1930, Gandhi set out with 78 followers on a 240-mile march to the sea. As the tiny band passed through villages, crowds responded to Gandhi's message. By the time they reached the sea, the marchers numbered in the thousands. On April 6, Gandhi waded into the surf and picked up a lump of sea salt. He was soon arrested and jailed. Still, Indians followed his lead. Coastal villages started collecting salt. Indians sold salt on city streets. As Gandhi's campaign gained force, tens of thousands of Indians were imprisoned.

**Steps Toward Freedom** All around the world, newspapers criticized Britain's harsh reaction to the protests. Stories revealed how police brutally clubbed peaceful marchers who tried to occupy a government saltworks. Slowly, Gandhi's campaign forced Britain to hand over some power to Indians. Britain also agreed to meet other demands of the Congress party.

 **Checkpoint** What did the Salt March symbolize?

## Looking Ahead

In 1939, a new world war exploded. Britain outraged Indian leaders by postponing independence and bringing Indians into the war without consulting them. Angry nationalists launched a campaign of noncooperation and were jailed. Millions of Indians, however, did help Britain during World War II.

When the war ended in 1945, India's independence could no longer be delayed. As it neared, Muslim fears of the Hindu majority increased. Conflict between Hindus and Muslims would trouble the new nation in the years to come.

### SECTION 3 Assessment

#### Terms, People, and Places

1. Place each of the key terms listed at the beginning of the section into one of the following categories: politics, culture, or economy. Write a sentence for each term explaining your choice.

#### Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects** Use your completed chart to answer the Focus Question: How did Gandhi and the Congress party work for independence in India?

#### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Identify Point of View** How did the Amritsar massacre affect the movement for Indian independence?
4. **Recognize Cause and Effect** Why do you think Gandhi was able to unite Indians when earlier attempts had not succeeded?
5. **Analyze Information** How did the Salt March force Britain to respond to Indian demands?

#### Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice  
Web Code: naa-2731

#### Writing About History

**Quick Write: Use Valid Logic** In a persuasive essay, you must back up your conclusions with valid logic. One common pattern of weak logic is circular reasoning, where a writer simply restates ideas instead of defending them. Bring in an example of weak logic from recent editorials in your local paper. Include a paragraph explaining the problems with the author's logic.