GANDHI AS A POLITICAL ORGANISER

An Analysis of Local and National Campaigns in India

1915 - 1922

University of Bradford Postgraduate
School of Studies in Peace Studies

Bob Overy
Ph.D. Thesis

1982
MISSING PRINT
ABSTRACT

Bob Overy  GANDHI AS A POLITICAL ORGANISER: An Analysis of Local
and National Campaigns in India, 1915-1922, PhD Thesis,
University of Bradford, December 1932.

By examining Gandhi as a political organiser it may be possible to bridge
the gap between two interpretations of his importance -- one which focuses
on his propagation of nonviolence "as a way of life", the other which treats
him as a pioneer in the use of nonviolence "as a conflict technique."

Gandhi named his philosophy and his method of action, "satyagraha". Between
1915 and 1922 he emerged as the organiser of local satyagraha campaigns in
Bihar and Gujarat. He moved quickly, however, to leadership of further
struggles at a national level, in particular the Rowlatt Satyagraha in 1919
and Noncooperation eighteen months later. The thesis explores, through a
series of case studies, how Gandhi developed his methods as he moved over a
period of about five years from local to national scale.

At the national level, Gandhi failed to take India by storm as he had hoped
through organisations founded by himself to propagate his principles like
the Satyagraha Sabha and the Swadeshi Sabha. He therefore forged alliances
with political figures from other perspectives within the Chilafat movement
and the Indian National Congress who nonetheless were prepared to follow
his direction. A principal means which Gandhi developed for generating
solidarity between the nation's educated "classes" and the "masses" and for
mobilising people short of civil disobedience, was the promotion of campaigns
of constructive work. This is particularly clear in his planning and
leadership of the Noncooperation movement.

Presentation of nonviolent action in the West, by overstressing the "conflict"
aspect of satyagraha and neglecting the "constructive", has been one-sided.
The importance in Gandhi's method as an organiser of a concept of constructive
programme and its application in practice suggests that advocates of non-
violent action as a technique should look more closely at the balance between
the two aspects in his approach.

The thesis concludes with a review of the rules and stages in Gandhi's
satyagraha campaigns which have been proposed in the work of Joan Bondurant.
CONTENTS

Introduction

I. CASE STUDIES

1. Champaran, 1917: Notes on a "Classic" Satyagraha Struggle 1

2. Gujarat: Peasants and Workers Take Up Satyagraha, 1915-1918 28

3. Gujarat: A Base for National Leadership, 1918-1920 68

II. PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

4. The Place of Constructive Programme in Local and National Campaigns of Satyagraha 109

III. CASE STUDIES

5. Six Stepping-Stones to All-India Leadership 1917-1919 130
   (i) The Gujarat Sabha
   (ii) The Satyagraha Sabha

6. Six Stepping-Stones to All-India Leadership 1919-1920 185
   (iii) The Swadeshi Sabha
   (iv) The Khilafat Movement

7. Six Stepping-Stones to All-India Leadership 1920-1922 265
   (v) The All-India Home Rule League, or the Swarajya Sabha
   (vi) The Indian National Congress

8. Congress and Noncooperation, 1920-1922 308

IV. CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

9. Gandhi’s Method as a Political Organiser 333

Bibliography 369
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr Nigel Young, Reader in Peace Studies, first suggested that I come to Bradford to run the Commonweal Collection, a small library with a special emphasis on Gandhi. We agreed that I should take advantage of the resources in the Collection in conducting my research in the School of Peace Studies. His knowledge of the literature of nonviolence has been a great support.

I am also much indebted to Professor James O'Connell who helped me narrow down the scope of the project to manageable proportions.

Others who have helped in all sorts of capacities -- from offering advice and criticism, suggesting references, and providing library services, to giving me personal support -- include Rex Ambler, Adam Curle, Vivien Dixon, Baruch Hirson, David O'Flaherty, Geoffrey Ostergaard, Devi Prasad, Andrew Rigby, Ruth, and Marjorie Sykes.

I owe much to Christine Overy who did an excellent typing job in very little time.

Finally, I am grateful to the School of Peace Studies and to the Long Den Fund for financial support.
GANDHI AS AN ORGANISER: An Analysis of Local and National Campaigns in India, 1915-1922

Introduction

Historians in recent years have been at pains to cut the cult which surrounds India's national hero, "the Mahatma", down to size. A wealth of material has been published since 1920 in India and outside magnifying Gandhi into a politician and saint of genius whose every utterance is worthy of reverent attention. This has tended to get in the way of understanding what was going on in India in the years after the first world war and what was Gandhi's place in it.

With the publication of Gandhi's Collected Works, the release of British documents relating to the period and also the systematic studies now being undertaken of the part that many local areas played or failed to play in the Indian national struggle, it has been possible to gain a much clearer picture of what Gandhi's role and influence actually was. Historians like Judith Brown have begun to examine the Gandhian era in India with a detachment which probably few Indians would want to adopt. Others, notably those gathered around D.A. Low at the School of South Asian Studies in Melbourne, and linking up with Indian scholars, have brought to study of the period a variety of perspectives. These have not got in the way of the main task, which has been to dig beneath "nationalist mythology" and uncover what was actually going on during the Gandhi years. In my view, the best accounts of the Indian national struggle are still the broad studies written by authors who identify with the national movement and even with Gandhi himself. But the newer work, predominantly by western scholars, has provided a wealth of new facts and speculative arguments which must be reflected in new studies of Gandhi.
The object of this study is not to develop the work of these historians, nor to duplicate or summarise them. Rather, drawing on some of their specific information and insights, particularly the work of Judith Brown — to whom I am especially indebted — it is to go back to Gandhi himself and to re-examine the basis on which he was able to present his novel doctrine of satyagraha to the Indian national movement and to win widespread acceptance of it. The aim is to add to our understanding of Gandhian nonviolence by looking in detail at what Gandhi actually did in the years 1915 to 1922. How did the theory and practice of satyagraha evolve in those years as Gandhi sought to organise political and social movements which would have a major impact on Indian society?

Most non-biographical studies of Gandhi have tended to focus either on his philosophy or on his method of action. Interpreters of Gandhian nonviolence have tended to fall into two camps; those who embrace or describe the whole Gandhian philosophy of satyagraha and insist that Gandhian nonviolent action can only be understood from its roots in his religious and moral beliefs; and those who wish to separate the practice of nonviolent action from its philosophical background and to look at it purely as a technique in the political sphere for engaging in conflict. My own bias is unquestionably towards the first group — but in this study I want to look not at Gandhi's philosophy, but at how he applied his philosophy. It was as a more effective organiser than any of his contemporaries that Gandhi was able to capture the leadership of the Indian National Congress in 1920.
Part of Gandhi's appeal was as an expert practitioner in a technique of conflict which was well suited to the conditions in which the Indian national movement found itself at the time of the first world war. But if Gandhi had been simply a "general" able to command civilian troops in nonviolent action, he would never have been called on to reveal his skills. The point about Gandhian nonviolent action in India is that a political context to be created in which sections of the Indian political elite and large groups of the rural and urban "masses" were ready to take up nonviolent action and experiment with it under Gandhi's guidance. Gandhi did not make a distinction between his ability to plan and organise political campaigns and his ability to direct them. Although he frequently likened his leadership of civilians in nonviolent resistance to the generalship of an army, the political and "military" spheres, nor between he did not differentiate clearly between these and the conduct of social and economic life. For Gandhi, all of these were interlinked. This meant not only that Gandhi's task as an organiser included work to create a political climate in which the Indian national movement would give him the opportunity to lead it in nonviolent struggle. But the very method which he employed in struggle, satyagraha, itself expressed also his concern to reorganise social, economic and political life. Nonviolent action as pursued by Gandhi was not just a conflict technique. Simultaneously, it was a tool for transforming social, economic and political conditions. The two aspects, conflict and transformation, were combined.

Thus a principal thesis of this study is that attempts to abstract from Gandhi's activity in India (and South Africa) a technique of engaging in conflict called nonviolent action and to leave aside the rest of his activity have eliminated or made it hard to comprehend large areas of his practice. These need to be included if
we want to understand how Gandhi was effective. To put it more positively, Gandhi was an organiser of genius who had firm ideas on how to conduct political campaigns and build social movements. His success as an organiser of political and social movements was dependent on a certain set of principles and objectives which it is worth us trying to understand. This success provided him with the opportunity to experiment with nonviolent action in the field of conflict, and vice versa. Certainly, it would be misleading to argue that Gandhi's dramatic successes in leading nonviolent conflict were not the springboard which encouraged those impressed to accept his leadership and to take up his larger social and political programmes. Nonetheless, as this study will show, social and religious values, his idea of how society should be ordered, were always uppermost in Gandhi's mind as he planned his civil resistance campaigns.

It was, for example, out of his opposition to a nonviolent tactic like economic boycott that Gandhi formulated his concept and plan of Noncooperation. For Gandhi, Noncooperation was positive - where economic boycott was negative - because those who supported the campaign withdrew their support not into bitterness but into a movement to build alternative institutions. To him, the heart of the movement, the drive, was to build those alternative positive institutions, and after 1924 the promotion of the constructive programme became more important to him than the development of nonviolence as a conflict technique.

The key factors here are order, discipline and self-reliance. Gandhi is often described as a philosophical anarchist because he
favoured fundamental decentralisation of society and wished political workers to abandon representative democracy at the centre and go to work in the villages. Nevertheless, he was in favour of a moral order of society where those who were morally the most advanced accepted responsibility and exercised authority. In order to achieve this new political and social order, where the focus of political drive was not at the centres of power - as under the Raj - but in the villages and with the "masses", specific cultural changes were needed. The emphasis of his politics was on organising among the people to develop their capacity to solve their own problems, encouraging individuals and whole villages and districts to see themselves as models of social responsibility for others to emulate. In order to create a climate where this was possible, it was necessary to develop in the political workers and in the "masses" themselves a daily discipline, a notion of "good housekeeping", and a capacity to make sacrifices, which would sustain them personally and then fill out their lives and be assimilated by others.

This effort to work a social revolution, which was more important than the political revolution and was based in individuals making changes in their own lives, became fundamental to the Gandhian movement in India. Whenever Gandhi was invited to lead the Indian National Congress into nonviolent conflict, he always placed great emphasis on the need to develop the social programme of nonviolence if nonviolent discipline in conflict was to be sustained. Thus the constructive programme - building a new social order directly by working among the people - was not only a long-term goal for Gandhi. Constructive work was also, in his view, an immediate requirement in preparing the movement for nonviolent struggle. In particular, it was an essential precondition for a mass nonviolent
civil disobedience campaign where tens of thousands of people, in no way answerable to military discipline, might be expected to maintain nonviolent discipline under conditions of severe repression or provocation. 9

In practical terms, there are broadly two ways of looking at constructive programme. The first, emphasised by those who have studied and perhaps embraced Gandhi's philosophical approach to politics, is a moral imperative on individuals and groups who are concerned to live a way of life consistent with the values of nonviolence. People who have adopted this approach, as a demonstration of their disinterested commitment to the good of the community, engage in socially useful tasks known as "constructive programme". "Has the movement undertaken positive, constructive steps with a view to providing services to its own members and to the public, and even in some cases to the opponent?", asks Joan Bondurant, emphasising that constructive programme in this sense is an "earmark" of proper Gandian satyagraha. 10

A second use of the term refers to a specific set of campaigns launched in India by Gandhi. The "programme" comprised a list of initiatives devised by Gandhi to meet a number of important social questions. Each issue was attacked by his supporters as a nationwide campaign which had its own organisation; frequently there were targets for achievement which had to be achieved by a particular date. Over the years the number of these campaigns in the constructive programme was gradually expanded. In the 1920s, the chief emphasis was on production of Indian-made cloth, on Hindu-Muslim unity and on abolition of untouchability, but prohibition of liquor-selling and the uplift of women were soon added. By the 1940s, the programme consisted of 18 items. 11
Introduction: page 7

Unfortunately, the ambition of this study, to reveal in detail how Gandhi made his decisions as an organiser, has made it impossible for me to pursue the history of his activities in India beyond 1922. Even so, analysis of the eight years from 1915 to 1922 demonstrates that Gandhi was evolving the theory and practice of constructive programme in both the above senses as a specific response to setbacks and difficulties he experienced in pursuing his satyagraha campaigns at a national level. Gandhi's own conclusions in later years confirm that in this intensive period of struggle he developed a specific understanding and viewpoint, which was of the necessity to integrate a programme of social and economic transformation into his nonviolent civil resistance campaigns against the Raj. After 1924, this part of Gandhi's strategy came to be known by the title of constructive programme. But it was not seriously propagated under this name until the 1930s and 1940s. As a result my use of the term to cover projects which took place before 1924 may appear to be misleading in places. These campaigns -- for example, the establishment of national schools and arbitration courts, or again the spinning wheel campaign -- constitute strictly the origins of the constructive programme.

It would be misleading, however, to suggest that this thesis has attempted to describe in systematic fashion the origins of Gandhi's constructive programme in this early period. Some of the case-material does demonstrate the beginnings of this side of Gandhi's political work in, for example, the Swadeshi Sabha of 1919 and in the evolution of Noncooperation out of the programme of the Sabha. But the aim of the thesis is not to describe early indications of Gandhi's later constructive campaigns. Rather it is to demonstrate, as an explanation of Gandhi's method as an organiser, that in this period he discovered the necessity to complement and consolidate all his "negative" campaigns of nonviolent protest with "positive"
campaigns to improve social life. It is the balance between conflict and construction in Gandhi's method which is the concern of this thesis. I thus use the term "constructive programme" in a third sense as a generic concept which combines the two practical meanings mentioned above. Constructive programme is a broad concept within Gandhian satyagraha theory which can be used to distinguish efforts to promote greater social harmony and higher standards of popular self-reliance from political campaigns against acts of central authority. A number of authorities have followed Gandhi in presenting constructive programme in this way, as one branch of the satyagraha method. The thesis sets out to demonstrate that this "constructive" concept was an integral part of the way Gandhi developed his method during the years up to 1922 — a concept which was applied and consolidated in a specific programme of campaigns in later years.

Thus we argue, first, that the now well-established division between interpreters of Gandhian nonviolence — over whether nonviolence should be viewed as a philosophy of life or as a conflict technique — can be bridged by looking at Gandhi as an organiser of social and political movements. This focus on his work as an organiser does not mean, however, that we begin by examining his broad political objectives and end by assessing what he achieved, with an analysis in between of his methods of getting from A to B. Gandhi's political philosophy, on the one hand, and his achievements on the other, have been widely discussed elsewhere and are only indirectly the concern of this thesis which focuses entirely on his methods. From the point of view of the organiser, goals and ideals are interesting only in so far as they can be realised and made practical in a concrete situation. The genius of Gandhi as an organiser is his pragmatic spirit and inspiration which enabled him time and again to locate his high ideals in practical
forms of action which were accessible to vast numbers of people and were taken up by them. It is this process of visualising and shaping his ideals in practical proposals which is the concern of this study. The cleverness of Gandhi's choice of issues and of methods enabled his ideals to shine through again and again. Through examining his methods as an organiser, that is, his means, we shall discover in large measure what his goals, his ends, were — which is a good test of Gandhi's theory that ends and means are coincident.

It is also, in any case, misleading to see the process of organising as a linear one. Organising is above all a responsive art which requires that the organiser continually adjust to constantly changing situations. Gandhi lived by his wits, calculating and pitching his initiatives, frequently improvising, in order to build and sustain broad social movements which he could attempt to direct for social and political ends. Through the case-studies which form the bulk of this thesis, we see him applying and evolving certain formulae, certain consistent patterns or rules for engaging in this process of organising. Elucidating these rules, then, is the principal focus of the thesis. Our aim is to show that nonviolent action can better be seen in a broad perspective as a method of organising movements for social change than narrowly as a method of engaging in conflict.

This same approach has also governed our second aim, already mentioned, which is to show the balance between the "constructive" and "obstructive" in Gandhi's method. We are not studying constructive programme in itself. We are not looking at Gandhi's social programme as an ideal prescription, developed in South Africa and when he wrote Hind Swaraj, which he then tried to apply in India. It is not our aim to evaluate how far he succeeded in this endeavour. Our intention is to look at how far programmes of
constructive work proved to be necessary and indeed indispensable to his method as an organiser, that is, to his instrumental purpose of building and sustaining social movements. Thus we are again discussing method or process, rather than aim or content, when we emphasise the place of constructive programme as a concept in Gandhian nonviolent action.

Two further broad themes also emerge in the thesis. One is the observation that Gandhi's methods as an organiser necessarily adjusted as he moved from local to national scale actions. Scale is an important factor in the organising of any social movement, because approaches and techniques for confronting an issue which touches 80,000 people are inevitably different from those employed to reach tens of millions. As we shall see, there is a surprising consistency between Gandhi's methods at a local and national level. But there are also some significant differences. One of the reasons for focusing on Gandhi's emergence as a leader in the province of Gujarat is to emphasise the crucial importance to his emergence as a national leader of localised support in his home region. This he was to rely on not only in achieving national leadership, but also in adapting his methods at the national scale.

A further theme of the thesis derives, practically, out of a comparison between Gandhi's approach to organising two all-India satyagrahas, the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919 and Noncooperation of 1920 to 1922. It is expressed, theoretically, in an assessment of the balance between civil resistance and constructive programme in these two extraordinary adventures in nonviolent struggle. Our conclusion is that Gandhi was drawn to place so much emphasis on the constructive side of satyagraha because of his difficulties when he relied to heavily on civil resistance. This suggests
that the long, slow build-up of mobilisation through constructive action
in Gandhi's method has been neglected in theoretical accounts of nonviolent
action which focus arbitrarily on the symbolic impact of civil disobedience.

It is tempting to dismiss the relevance of Gandhi's experiments with
satyagraha because of their background in the Indian context and in Hindu
thought. The moralistic and religious basis of Gandhi's intervention in
politics is foreign to many of us in the west. It seems intellectually
unsophisticated to base a political movement, as Gandhi did, on the principle
of the unity of all that lives and the duty of those who are well-off to
identify with the poorest of their fellows and to serve them. In other
words, the idea of a single moral universe, where every action by anyone is
linked on a cosmic scale to the welfare of everyone else, may seem preposter-
erous or irrelevant to the business of politics. None-
the-less, Gandhi's attempt to find another basis for political authority and social power - not based in control of the central institutions of representative democracy, not based in command of the military and the police - needs to be understood. It was because he had a view of political authority and social responsibility which was different from most of his contemporaries that he made the political choices which he did. With this view, he was able to initiate controlled nonviolent struggles and mass campaigns which adopted, and succeeded in maintaining to an astonishing degree, nonviolent discipline.

But it is important not to present Gandhi as a moralist living strictly according to religious principles and refusing to bend them no matter what the circumstances or the emergency. This is a mistake which has been made by some who look on Gandhi as a moralist and who have then taken over his personal principles and sought to apply them in their own lives and in the groups to which they belong. What is so remarkable about Gandhi is that, with his view that there was only one human nature and one shared system of values, he was willing all the time to make compromises with present reality. He was a pragmatist, happy to make any accommodation as long as, within the agreement, was some principle which meant there would be moral progress. His view of progress was like Plato's - the ideal was hidden somewhere, but we could dimly see its shadow and we should move towards that.
It was because of this flexibility, his determination to gear even his most idealistic campaigns to what was realistically achievable, that Gandhi was able to operate as a remarkably successful politician in pre-Independence India. If we want to understand how he was able to develop a mass following for nonviolence and how he was able to draw hundreds of thousands into nonviolent struggle, it is important to examine carefully how he planned his campaigns. On what basis, for example, were the objectives for political struggles selected? Or what considerations persuaded him to seek alliances with other political figures who did not share his religiously-based political principles?

The greater part of this thesis is given over to a detailed examination of the principal campaigns in which Gandhi engaged between 1915 and 1922. Champaran, his first satyagraha struggle in India, took place in 1917, when he was far away from his base in Gujarat. It is treated first because it was so much an isolated campaign and relatively self-contained. The later struggles, particularly as Gandhi moved towards organising at a national level, are much harder to separate one from another. Thus the Ahmedabad and Kheda campaigns in Gujarat in 1918 took place simultaneously and within 30 miles of each other. They assured Gandhi's leadership of the nationalist movement in Gujarat and contributed directly to his next initiatives which were to organise satyagraha on a national scale.

Champaran, because it is a self-contained case-study, gives me the opportunity to construct a framework for analysis of organised satyagraha struggles. However, the later campaigns tend to merge into each other; also, in some instances, the historical material available and the issues raised have seemed to dictate a different structure. Therefore, I have not followed this framework rigidly.
Introduction: page 11

The first section of the thesis (Section I) focuses principally on case-studies of three local satyagrahas in Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda. But it also attempts a general survey of Gandhi's emergence as the principal Gujarati nationalist leader. And it outlines, too, the important part Gujarat was to play in his activities as a national leader.

The other main section (Section III) contains case-studies of the principal satyagraha campaigns in this period which Gandhi conducted at a national level, the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919 and Noncooperation from 1920 to 1922. However, to make sense of the range of political activities which Gandhi was involved in up to 1922, I have found it most useful to arrange the material in chapters describing successive organisations which he either joined or founded. Thus we move from the Gujarat Sabha to the Satyagraha Sabha, which conducted the Rowlatt Satyagraha in 1919; then from the Swadeshi Sabha to the Khilafat Movement which planned and launched Noncooperation in August 1920; finally, from the All-India Home Rule League (renamed the Swarajya Sabha) to the Indian National Congress. The Congress took over Noncooperation and conducted it in alliance with the Khilafat movement from 1920 to 1922.

The case-studies of the local satyagrahas (in Section I) are combined for analysis with the difficulties which Gandhi experienced from his Gujarat base of co-ordinating on a national scale the Rowlatt Satyagraha in 1919. This enables me to examine (in Section II) some of the circumstances which led Gandhi to insist on the development of constructive programme as a component of his organising at a national level.
Section IV, the concluding analysis of the thesis, compares Gandhi's techniques as an organizer at a local and at a national level. It also attempts to construct a broader definition of the satyagraha method than is usually made in the west. In particular, it shows how Gandhi promoted both civil resistance and constructive programme, the two sides of satyagraha, by the same organizing techniques.

Missing from this study is a full attempt to place Gandhi relative to all the other forces and actors present at the time. There is no detailed presentation of the changing and even chaotic economic, social and political conditions in India during and after the First World War. These created the possibility for a new type of political leader to emerge and, without such a combination, Gandhi's career would have evolved quite differently. A fuller historical perspective on this period, however, can be gained from many other sources.15

A more particular omission from this study is discussion of the response which Gandhi as an organizer evoked from the Indian people, both the educated and uneducated. At a general level, this has been done before by social scientists and historians who have explored the topic of charisma and also the religious themes from Hindu mythology which Gandhi employed in making his link with the peasantry.16 In a specific study of Gandhi as an organizer, however, there ought to be detailed examination of, for example, those groups in the Champaran peasantry which responded to Gandhi's appeal in 1917. Or how far Gandhi managed to reach and change the behaviour of Muslim peasants during his championship of the Khilafat issue in 1920. Again, in the study of Noncooperation, it would be interesting to know which sections of the educated classes and which groups among the peasantry
in which parts of the subcontinent took up the campaign to learn hand-spinning in 1921. I must leave such questions to others, however, with greater knowledge of Indian social history and anthropology.

The emphasis of this study will be on, for example, how he chose issues, how he made his judgements on what was politically wise or expedient, and how he managed to balance his campaigns between maintaining the initiative for his side while sustaining respectful dialogue with his opponents. We will also see how he achieved the position in Indian politics which enabled him to project his unconventional views to such a wide audience. The focus, then, is on Gandhi as an organiser — not exploring especially his philosophy and his principles, nor concentrating in particular on his methods of engaging in conflict. With this special attention to Gandhi himself, it may seem that I have fallen back into the trap of isolating Gandhi as a remarkable figure from the context in which he operated. In some respects this is true. By picking out Gandhi as a particular character to study, I am judging that he had a special viewpoint and role which make him interesting and even unique. It is not his personal qualities, though, remarkable as they were, which occupy me. It is the way he was able to take a set of unconventional and controversial political ideas — which his satyagraha creed and method always was — to the centre of political life in India.
References: Introduction: page 14


6. Iyer, op cit, p.285: "Gandhi envisaged both civil disobedience and noncooperation as nonviolent means of resolving conflicts as well as peaceful devices for producing positive changes in social and political life. In either case, he was more concerned to affect prevailing attitudes and values than with obstructing particular policies. A failure to grasp this fact would force us to regard the doctrine of satyagraha ... merely as an extravagant rationalisation of political expediency in the attainment of immediate ends. He clearly felt that his life was dedicated to the spread of the religious teaching of non-retaliation by showing its relevance to the handling of political and social conflicts and to the constructive transformation of the political and social order." See also, pp306-307


11A. Diwakar, op cit, pp 47-48, sees constructive programme as the least psychologically demanding at the lowest level of confrontation of three branches of the satyagraha method — namely, constructive programme, self-denying and purificatory activities, and aggressive actions. Iyer, op cit, p 301, adopts a similar classification. See also ibid pp 306-307 and Dhawan, op cit pp 126-127, 190ff.


CHAPTER 1
CHAMPARAN, 1917: NOTES ON A "CLASSIC" SATYAGRAHA STRUGGLE

It's common for commentators on Gandhi, allowing hindsight to colour their descriptions of his early years, to present him as a national political leader who emerged, as it were, complete, his destiny before him. Nonviolence his message and method, took the people by storm; his charismatic presence drew all to him. The reality is different. Gandhi had to promote and "sell his ideas to the nation. This was done through local campaigns which brought him to national attention — but also just as significantly by his development of a reputation and organisation in the Gujarat province of the Bombay Presidency. There is no work in English of which I am aware which surveys Gandhi's achievement as an organiser specifically in Gujarat, using his success there as a platform from which he launched initiatives at a national level. Yet such a theme would make a logical framework for a survey of his whole career.

It's also common for surveys of Gandhi's nonviolent campaigns to present his method as if there were no difference between his organising of campaigns at a local level in a limited geographical area and those struggles which were attempted on a vastly larger scale across the whole of India. It seems self-evident that mobilising on the vast scale of the Indian subcontinent posed immense problems for Gandhi, problems which were not so acute in struggles confined to a limited area.

These are broad themes which will be explored in the first two sections of this thesis: his promotion of satyagraha through local campaigns; the importance to Gandhi of his base in Gujarat; and the difficulties which he experienced in moving from organising at a local and regional level to a national level. We shall also hope to discover some of the consistent patterns in his organising method.
When Gandhi arrived back in India at the age of 46 in 1915, he had spent twenty years in South Africa as a legal advocate and political organiser on behalf of the Indian community there. After 1907, when he realised that the British Crown could not be relied upon to protect the rights of Indians in South Africa, he had begun to experiment with methods of "passive resistance" which he called "satyagraha". His achievements there brought him to the attention of the nationalist movement at home in India and earned some approval from the government of India, the British Raj.

Back in India, Gandhi received a guarded welcome from the British and from the nationalist movement. To them he was an unknown quantity; while outside the circles of India's educated he was scarcely known. For his first years back, he was under a vow not to engage in political activity and he restricted himself primarily to building an ashram of his personal followers' invited to address public meetings in different parts of the country on the position of Indians in South Africa. He used his trips as an opportunity to learn about India. His appearance at receptions given in his honour in the clothes of a peasant caused some controversy as did his insistence on some occasions on speaking in Gujarati or Hindi, rather than English. His main political achievement during his first eighteen months - an activity which did not break the terms of his vow - was to press successfully for the ending of the system of indentured labour under which Indians were sent to South Africa to work on terms close to slavery.
Gandhi's position in the spectrum of Indian nationalist politics at this time was precarious and uncertain. He called himself a disciple of Gokhale, the great "Moderate" political leader who had died in 1915. G.K. Gokhale had been the principal leader of the Indian National Congress for nearly a decade and had visited South Africa to support Gandhi's struggles there. He was particularly identified with progressive causes such as the spread of education and the abolition of child marriage. The great split with the "Extremists" which had left Gokhale and the Moderates at the helm of Congress in 1907 was principally over the question of political methods. B.G. Tilak, the most prominent of the Extremist leaders, had openly advocated terrorism as a means of ejecting the British from India. Gandhi sided with Gokhale on this issue and with the Moderates' general approach of having the relationship between Britain and India change gradually on all sorts of issues through incremental reform. He also shared their active concern to promote social reform in Indian society, causes which traditionalists like Tilak often opposed. Where Gandhi differed from the Moderates, however, was on two issues. First, their acceptance that the limits of political activity were set by the constitutional procedures established by the Raj, together with their unwillingness to risk popular campaigning. Second, their identification with British standards for economic development and cultural activity. Gandhi linked up with the Extremists as a populist and as a cultural nationalist who preferred the civilisation of India to that of the west.

What was he to do? The Extremists had returned to the Congress fold in 1916 and had seized the initiative from the Moderates in the economic and political turmoil which gripped India at this time. Gandhi saw the popular movements they had founded to agitate for Home Rule making strong progress in the Bombay Presidency and elsewhere in these years; yet he hated.
the opportunism and stridency as he saw it of their agitations.

When Gandhi arrived in the proximity of Champaran, a district of
Bihar in northern India, in April 1917, none of the nationalist activists in that part of Bihar knew he was coming and none of them was campaigning politically on the issue on which he chose to make a stand. Within hours, however, of his discovering from a hurriedly grouped gathering of local lawyers about the conditions of the peasants forced to grow indigo in the district, he had decided to spend up to two years there. And within days he had organised this group of lawyers into a band of helpers who worked with him for the seven months that his work actually took.\(^2\)

Gandhi had come at the insistence of a peasant leader from the Champaran district who had met him at the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in Lucknow four months earlier. He informed the local British administration of his intention to go to Champaran and pretty quickly gathered that he was not welcome there. This persuaded him to move into the district with all speed so that if he was arrested it would be in Champaran. The British were worried because there had been agitation for decades by the ryots (peasants) in Champaran forced to grow indigo on their land by local European planters. The planters leased whole villages and sub-let to the peasant cultivators. Since payments to the ryots were on the basis of the number of acres sown with indigo, it was in the planters' interests to have the peasants forced to grow indigo on their best land giving the highest yield. This doubly penalised the ryots since they could get a higher price for other cash-crops such as rice, sugar-cane and maize.\(^3\) All manner of quasi-legal agreements had been struck with the tenants about the use of their land, of irrigation canals and of roads; these agreements were often secured by threats and physical intimidation; and if the tenants broke them they were frequently taken to court and fined. Indigo, a vegetable dye used to colour
blue clothing, was processed by the planters in their local factories.

Within two days of arriving in Champaran, Gandhi was served with a notice externing him from the district, that is, instructing him to leave. Gandhi hurriedly organised his friends of less than a week into a team to carry on his inquiry into conditions in Champaran and offered himself in court. He made a defiant speech demanding the right to make the inquiry and insisting that we would not leave voluntarily. The magistrate had not expected this and did not know what to do because he did not want to jail Gandhi, so he postponed judgement. The local Champaran administration then was severely rebuked by the Bihar government for moving so precipitately; and Bihar was encouraged by direct attentions from the Viceroy himself, who was worried about Indian national opinion being roused against the British in India while British troops were fully stretched in the War in Europe. The case against Gandhi was dropped.

In the teeth of fierce political opposition from the planters, and unease verging on hostility from the local administration, Gandhi then organised a survey of peasant grievances, which involved the recording of 10,000 legal statements by the ryots. Pressure to get Gandhi out of Champaran before he had totally destroyed the planters' position and the authority of the local administration built up so much that the Bihar government began to think about externing him and summoned him to the Bihar capital to the south in Ranchi where he met the Lieutenant Governor. Under pressure from the Government of India, the Lieutenant Governor decided to appoint a commission of inquiry into the conditions of the tenants in Champaran with Gandhi as one of its members.
Gandhi was permitted to act as an advocate within the inquiry on the ryots' behalf while also serving as a member of the commission. He finally managed to negotiate an agreement with the planters through the process of the inquiry which met most of the tenants' main grievances. This agreement formed a part of the Commission's unanimous report which was accepted by the Bihar government and enacted into legislation a year later.

Gandhi then went back to his ashram but immediately got involved in fighting a labour dispute on behalf of textile workers in Ahmedabad and leading a civil disobedience campaign against high taxes in Theda (Zira) a rural area of Gujrat. Within a year he was also leading a markedly unsuccessful drive to recruit soldiers to fight with the British Empire in Europe and simultaneously campaigning to get a leading home rule fighter and two Muslim leaders released from internment.

How Gandhi Organised Support.

(i) The First Days

When Gandhi arrived in Patna en route for Champaran, he was in the company of the peasant representative of the ryots from Champaran who had none of the connections which Gandhi felt he needed if he was to establish himself in the area. Eventually, he remembered by chance to look up an old acquaintance from law school in London who was now a prominent member of the Muslim League, and this man gathered together a group of prominent Indian citizens to describe the situation in Champaran to Gandhi. Gandhi then decided immediately to go to Champaran and make an investigation. The Lucknow Congress had passed a resolution deploiring the situation in Champaran, a resolution which Gandhi had been asked to move. He had declined on grounds of lack of knowledge and this gave him some authority to begin his inquiry.
Gandhi was given a contact in Muzaffarpur, the nearest large town to Champaran, and went to stay with him. This man brought together another group to discuss Champaran with Gandhi. The latter recognised directly from the situation of effective planter control of the local administration that this was a situation which would probably lead to a nonviolent campaign to correct the injustice. Gandhi was apparently conscious that (i) he had no first hand knowledge of the situation, and (ii) that if he was to engage in Satyagraha against the administration he would need to be thoroughly identified with the cause of the peasants and have an indisputably established case; (iii) that the power of satyagraha rested in the support of the peasants for what he was doing and (iv) that to find out exactly what was happening among the peasants and to build up support for his struggle on their behalf he would need a group of full-time assistants.

Gandhi straight away asked the group gathered with him in Muzaffurour to help him, and a number of them agreed. The request was no small one because it meant abandoning for an indefinite period their families and established law practices and going to work in a subordinate capacity as clerks taking down statements. Gandhi also told the vakils (lawyers) that they should be prepared to go to jail. None of them agreed to this but they did agree to work with him and to think about the question of jail - which must have seemed absolutely outrageous to prosperous members of the legal profession, wondering what civil disobedience would mean for their legal careers. Gandhi offered no payment for their services. Presumably he was successful in persuading a number of them to agree to go with him: (i) because he was a relatively senior man, at 48; (ii) because the issue of Champaran had been raised nationally at the Indian National Congress and Gandhi had come as a direct result; (iii) because he had a reputation as a national hero because of his successful
struggles in similar situations in South Africa; (iv) because of Gandhi's obvious sincerity and his courage in being willing to go to jail on the issue when he was an outsider with no roots in the area at all and (v) because this was a time in India when changes in the alignments of Indian political figures were increasing as the British showed themselves amenable to limited political reform; thus there was some jockeying for future power and some openness to experiment if it looked promising.

The next day Gandhi went to inform the Commissioner for the neighbouring district to Champaran of his intentions. He very quickly got the impression that he would not be allowed to enter Champaran - and decided to get there as quickly as possible so that if he was arrested it would be on the spot. His intentions here are not recorded: but clearly the government's embarrassment in removing him from the area would be greater than preventing him going there, partly because his arrest there would pin-point the peasant grievances nationally and partly because it would help to focus local peasant opposition.

Gandhi had barely started his investigations from the town of Motihari in Champaran when he got an order from the local magistrate instructing him to leave the area. He immediately decided to disobey it and prepared instructions for his assistants of less than a week to follow in his absence.

From the start, Gandhi had fundamentally two objectives: (i) to secure the legal abolition of the "tinkathia" system, where peasant tenants were obliged to grow indigo on the best portions of their land for their landlords the planters who operated the indigo factories. (ii) To encourage in the peasants a spirit which would prevent the planters from re-establishing their grip on the area.
As we have seen, Gandhi chose educated, professional men to be his assistants; he also made a point of choosing Biharis, that is, local men. (Presumably on the view that they knew the local dialects, had a better general knowledge of the area and its grievances, would perhaps be more acceptable to local peasants, would be better able to carry out the work if he was removed, would be less vulnerable to attack as outside agitators.) The fact that the men were local, however, meant their reputation as legal advocates on behalf of the peasants and the involvement of some of them in Home Rule politics made them subject to criticism from the planters and the local administration as biased men and well-known agitators. Gandhi's response to this charge was that these men were for the purposes of this inquiry simply interpreters and clerks taking down statements, that they were entirely responsible to him and that if he felt that any of them were acting in an irresponsible way, he would instantly dismiss them.  

This assertion that he was master in his own camp seems to have been literally true. Gandhi set about organising his co-workers so that they became convinced (or pragmatic) followers of satyagraha and of his personal strategies and techniques. The first issue was to persuade them to come and work with him on a semi-permanent basis without money. This a number of them were persuaded to do. Second, he wanted them to agree to take over the work from him in the event of his being jailed and to be prepared to go to jail themselves. On the morning when Gandhi himself walked to the court house in the conviction that he would go to jail rather than accept his externment from Champaran, his two key workers said they too were now ready to go to jail. Gandhi is reported to have said "Now I know we shall succeed". A third major achievement of Gandhi's brief but intensive association with these men was in the area of life-style. These were high-caste professional men who brought with them their
servants and their cooks. This was obviously distasteful to Gandhi who had thrown off the trappings of westernised, expensive living and who felt it his moral duty to engage in physical labour and to live like a peasant. He says that he "ridiculed" the men for their habits; arguing partly on a pragmatic basis that they needed to reduce their expenses. At any rate, all the servants were sent home and one cook only was kept who prepared vegetarian meals. One important aspect of this simplification of life-style, which extended to dress too, of course, was that the gap between Gandhi's team and the peasants they were working with was reduced. Fourth, Gandhi, quite simply worked harder than any of his associates (or opponents) and overwhelmed them with his energy and constant initiative. 8

Gandhi also refused to allow his assistants to identify their activity with the struggle for Home Rule in India, saying that if they were successful in their campaign in Champaran, it would do more for Home Rule than any amount of rhetorical agitation. 9

(iii) Gandhi's Preparation for His Court Appearance

When Gandhi heard that he was to appear in court for disobeying an order to leave Champaran, he began a discussion with his assistants about what should be done and was later gratified by the undertaking that some of them were willing to follow him to jail. He then devised a list of names of those who would take over the direction of the campaign in succession as others were arrested. He also wrote out a list of detailed instructions to his co-workers. (See Appendix 'A')

He then spent the whole night writing letters to newspaper editors,
explaining what was happening and asking them not to publish anything unless he was jailed. He also wrote to a number of leading Indian politicians including one who served on the Viceroy’s legislative council and addressed himself directly to the Viceroy, complaining that he was only interested in doing humanitarian service in Champaran and sending back a medal that he had been awarded only a year previously for humanitarian work in South Africa.

He also prepared a statement for the court explaining why he was disobeying the order, which read as follows (see Appendix ‘B’).

(iv) Gandhi’s Relations with the Champaran Peasants

Gandhi was unknown to the ryots of Champaran, but by the time he was headed by train into the district word had got round that this man was coming to investigate/solve their grievances and numbers of people assembled at the stations to greet him and get a glimpse of him. Gandhi’s method of investigation at first was to go and visit a few villages and take depositions from peasants. When news of his court appearance came through more than a thousand peasants assembled at the court-house and the magistrate had to rely on Gandhi to control the crowds.

A major part of this theory of organising was that the peasant grievances would only disappear when they had the courage to stand up and insist that this be changed. The presence of an Indian in the district conducting an inquiry of his own initiative was an encouragement to the peasants to believe that planter tyranny and the inactivity and bias of the local administration could be challenged and corrected.
Each man who gave a statement about his position to Gandhi or his assistants (often in the presence of police officers) was confronting his own fear of the planters; and of course helping Gandhi build his case against the planters.

Ten thousand statements were taken by Gandhi's assistants. The people crowding round Gandhi's headquarters in Motihari or Bettiah to give their statements may have been recruited by another level of assistants, local uneducated men of some prominence such as shopkeepers, money-lenders, and so on. They are not mentioned in accounts by Gandhi and his assistants of what happened, nor by the planters, but by police reports now available. When a particularly bad situation was discovered in the land-holding of one planter, Gandhi himself or some of his assistants would go directly to investigate and confront the planter with their information. This was not done in the spirit of expose, however, so much as a genuine desire to hear the other side of the case. Naturally, these direct approaches to the planters further strengthened the reputation of the inquiry, which in some instances led to immediate and direct negotiations or proposals to resolve grievances.

Gandhi's concern with what he considered the ignorance and abject helplessness of the peasants, extended as far as work to found schools in the area and direct efforts to improve sanitation and personal hygiene. He was unable to find Biharis to take part in this work, however, and had to recruit on an all-India scale. This part of his activities failed to take root, however, and dissolved within a few months of his leaving the district.

With his triumph in the court-room, his later successes in maintaining his inquiry in the teeth of planter opposition and then securing a
provincial government inquiry on which he himself was to serve, Gandhi's reputation with the peasants as some kind of miracle-worker became established. Many of the peasants who came to the house where he was staying to give statements refused to leave till they had seen him. So Gandhi's assistants arranged certain times of the day when Gandhi's darshan would be given, that is, peasants could get a glimpse of him. So the Mahatma's ability to reach the peasants became established.

(v) Gandhi's Relations with the Press

Throughout his time in Champaran, Gandhi issued a series of background documents to the editors of newspapers. These were not for publication but were sent with the object of keeping them fully informed so that (i) they would not be tempted to publish ill-informed stories; (ii) in the event of his being arrested, they would have accurate information on which to base any editorials they might write. Through this tactic he was able to keep the press at bay at a time when he did not want anti-planter stories inflaming opinion.

How Gandhi Addressed His Opponents and Protected His Objectives

(i) The Planters

Before entering Champaran district, Gandhi went to see the secretary of the Bihar Planters Association (a group of Europeans) and told him what he was intending to do. By such an approach, which he maintained consistently throughout the inquiry, he: (i) confronted his opponents openly and personally; (ii) forewarned his opponents; (iii) suggested honest intentions and invited trust; (iv) implied a willingness to compromise; and (v) by separating himself from the security of his supporters indicated his own self-confidence and power suggesting not only "I am my own master", but also "Buy me if you can". Such an open fearless approach stretches the credulity of the opponent, who (i) knows that
there are entrenched attitudes and does not readily understand this flexibility; (ii) is tempted to talk to find out more, and (iii) has the distinct impression of someone in command. This particular man seems to have been unsettled by Gandhi’s courtesy, for he stated his personal willingness to assist Gandhi in his inquiry, but said he could not speak for his Association. (He later wrote to Gandhi and told him not to go to Champaran, and got the whole Planter network buzzing with the news.)

Gandhi’s principal objectives were to have the legal agreement whereby tenants were obliged to grow indigo abolished, to challenge a number of other unjust or legally doubtful obligations imposed on the tenants and to develop in the peasant cultivators a spirit which would prevent the planters from reimposing their tyranny. He had a further aim which was to secure the willing agreement of the planters to his plans and to invite their support for his aims of social improvement in the area, such as schools and sanitation.

Gandhi met with representatives of the planters on several occasions and with their full association twice. When statements from peasants indicated a particular injustice or abuse, he would visit the planter concerned or write to him detailing the complaints and inviting his comments. In some instances he offered immediate proposals for remedies. On one occasion a planter denied that any of his tenants were unhappy with their arrangements invited Gandhi to meet them in his company. In Gandhi’s presence large numbers of these tenants then complained against the planter to his face and Gandhi immediately organised them to take action for a more just arrangement.
CHAPTER 1. Page 13

These activities created apoplexy among the planter community in Champaran who used every type of pressure available to them to discredit Gandhi and have him expelled. The local and provincial administrations were saturated with complaints. European associations across India were activated to put pressure on the Viceroy; newspapers editorialised; biased press reports were published, as well as letters to the editor from planters. The main complaints were that the tenure system in Champaran had been in existence since "time immemorial" and so could not be challenged as unjust or illegal; that Gandhi had brought in Congress agitators; that Gandhi had established a parallel system of investigating grievances in Champaran which was undermining legitimate authority; and that the planters and their families were in fear of their lives from aroused peasants. Two small fires started in indigo factories were blamed by the planters on Gandhi's inquiry, though Gandhi denied that peasants were involved.15

When the Bihar Government appointed its own Commission to investigate peasant grievances, with Gandhi as a member, representatives of the planters on the Commission were persuaded to go along with major criticisms of the old system and recommendations to change it—they were later disowned by other planters. Gandhi and the Bihar Government were very anxious to achieve a unanimous report from the Commission so as to make it possible for the Government to get through reforming legislation quickly. Gandhi therefore made quite major concessions to the planters' case, particularly on the question of compensation for the loss of revenues. In order to avoid costly litigation in the courts for the peasants, Gandhi was anxious that the report should detail agreed compensation terms for certain planters and agreed reimbursements to
certain tenants of money already wrongly paid. After much fierce arguing with particular planters, terms were agreed, which were almost certainly generous to the planters. Gandhi was happy, once the principle of abolishing tinkathia was established, to concede on lesser issues. 

Gandhi was severely criticised by some of the tenants for this compromise. It appears, however, that within ten years of his campaign, all the planters had left Champaran.

(ii) The Local Administration

Gandhi made it clear at one point that his strategy was first to persuade the planters, then if that failed the local officials of the Raj, then if that failed the Bihar Government, then the Government of India and finally public opinion all over India.

The local officials worked closely with the planters and Gandhi was served with a notice to quit Champaran within two days of his arrival. When Gandhi appeared in court, refusing to obey the order because of his sense of public duty to remain with the tenants, but accepting any penalty the court might bestow on him, the magistrate did not know what to do. Gandhi had already won his respect (and undermined his authority) by helping to control the crowds round the courthouse. He postponed his sentence and released Gandhi without any recognisance except his word to appear when called, because Gandhi refused to offer any money.

Later, on the orders of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bihar, the case was withdrawn. The Bihar authorities were furious because they felt that they did not have a strong enough case against someone of Gandhi's reputation.
who had not actually done anything at that point except announce an inquiry. They instructed the local officers to offer their assistance to Gandhi's inquiry, and this was apparently done.

Gandhi met regularly with the local officials, informing them of what he was doing, sending them copies of some of the reports which local officials were sending to the Bihar government. These were uniformly negative, making the same arguments as the planters, that their authority was being undermined and serious trouble seemed likely. When Gandhi received letters from these officials marked "confidential" he refused to accept them unless he was permitted to share the contents with his assistants, (When other "confidential" documents arrived from sources in the Indian civil service who supported Gandhi, he refused to use them because they had not been acquired openly.)

Gandhi's relations with the local authorities seem on the whole to have been courteous and even friendly.

(iii) The Bihar Government and the Government of India

After two months of Gandhi's inquiry, pressure from the planters and local officials grew so intense that the Bihar government summoned Gandhi to Patna to meet with one of their senior members. This man asked Gandhi to dismiss his assistants who he considered to be agitators and to end his inquiry. Gandhi refused. The two then agreed that Gandhi should submit his preliminary conclusions to government in the form of a report and slightly modify the conduct of his inquiry so that he, Gandhi, had most responsibility for the taking of the depositions.

Gandhi's report was produced in a single day. In this way he retained
the initiative. He sent copies of it to the planters and to all the local officials, who were then given eight weeks to submit their comments on it to the government. This further angered the planters and local officials who now felt their power being usurped and argued that it appeared that Gandhi's activities had the blessing of the government. They called for the Government to appoint its own Commission to replace Gandhi's inquiry.

When Gandhi was summoned to Ranchi, the capital of Bihar, to meet the Lieutenant-Governor, a month later, he and his co-workers thought it likely that he might not be allowed to return because the government obviously was not waiting to receive all the comments on Gandhi's report. They therefore made contingency plans for replacements to take over the inquiry if Gandhi was arrested. 20

Apparently, the Governor had become frightened of what was happening in Champaran, but he had received a letter from the Viceroy instructing him to establish a Commission with Gandhi as one of its members. The Viceroy had "all-India reasons" for appeasing Gandhi, that is, his fear of a major public agitation while the First World War was in progress in Europe. Gandhi met with the Lieutenant-Governor for long sessions on three separate days. He insisted that if he were to be a member of the Commission, he must retain the right to act as advocate on behalf of the peasants and present the evidence that his inquiry had gathered and also call witnesses. This was agreed. 21

When the Commission was announced, the planters were delighted. When they heard that Gandhi was a member of it, announced ten days later, they felt utterly betrayed. Gandhi then ended his inquiry, but retained his team in being to prepare evidence already gathered for the
CHAPTER 1. Page 17

Commission and to provide an advisory service to tenants. 22

The Commission met in Ranchi, Patna, Motihari and Bettiah, visiting many of the villages directly. Its report was argued over for more than two months but was finally unanimous. It supported in most particulars the preliminary report that Gandhi had prepared three months earlier.

Planter reaction was predictably hostile, but the Bihar government piloted a bill closely based on this report through the legislative assembly and it became law within a year.

SUMMARY

1. Gandhi's aims were to abolish the "tinkathia" system whereby tenant cultivators were forced by their planter landlords to grow indigo; and to build up a spirit among the tenants which would mean that the old system of abuses against them could not be re-established. In this he succeeded.

2. This campaign, acting on a social grievance and organising the peasantry, moved Gandhi into an area of politics that had not been attempted by other contemporary Indian politicians.

3. Gandhi was able to assemble a strong team of local, educated men to work with him, who made considerable personal sacrifice to adopt his political methods and recognised his decisive authority.

4. Gandhi was able to reach the peasants with his campaign because:
   (i) no Indian figure of his standing had tried to approach them before;
   (ii) he publicly out-manoeuvred the attempt by the local administration to expel him by his willingness to go to jail;
   (iii) his inquiry method was exceedingly thorough and conscientious, enabling thousands to make their contribution and take the risk of
collectively speaking out;
(iv) he stood up fearlessly to the planters, visiting them
individually when necessary;
(v) his life-style was simple and inexpensive and indicated a desire
not to be vastly different from theirs.

5. Gandhi protected himself and was protected from government suppression
by:

(i) the neutral objective of his mission - an inquiry into conditions
in Champaran.
(ii) by keeping public officials fully informed of everything he
did, so he could not be accused of trickery.
(iii) by his willingness to go to jail which might create serious
all-India agitation at a time when Britain had few troops in India.
(iv) by the success of his mission in arousing peasant interest and
support, which appeared to threaten trouble if action was taken
against him.
(v) by his outspoken and clearly genuine opposition to violence, thus
neutralising charges that he was out to foment violence.
(vi) by his careful cultivation of all-India public opinion through
press releases and personal letters.
(vii) by his deliberate dissociation of the campaign from Congress
agitation for Home Rule.
(viii) by his links with higher levels of Government.
(ix) by his insistence that he was taking personal responsibility
for all aspects of the inquiry, thus forcing critics to debate with
him.
(x) by his energy and initiative which meant that the other parties
to the conflict were forced to react to him.
6. He was able to develop an excellent factual and legal case for reform in Champaran which he was capable of arguing with all-comers.

7. He was friendly and courteous at all times in his dealings and obviously sincere.

8. His conduct in obeying all the rules of propriety indicated that he was not fundamentally against civil order (however threatening some of his actions seemed). If he was persevering with an inquiry which others wanted stopped, this was because they were party to an unjust system in Champaran which, if they looked to their sense of truth and justice, they would have to admit must be changed.

9. He aimed to create social harmony between planter and cultivator in Champaran. In this he failed.

10. He aimed to develop his own idea of Swaraj (Home Rule) in Champaran through constructive work in education, sanitation and hygiene. In this he failed.

11. He showed a willingness to negotiate and to compromise on what he saw as inessentials, which demonstrated his complete personal authority and also invited criticism from some tenants later.

Champaran is in some respects an isolated example of Gandhi's political activities in India - not least because of its great distance from his base in Gujarat in west India. Apart from the one act of civil disobedience by Gandhi himself when he refused to leave the district after being ordered to do so, there was no direct confrontation with the British authorities, nor with the planters. Nor was there a campaign of public meetings and processions.

On the other hand, as the planters and local administrators were quick to point out, Gandhi's initial act of civil disobedience, followed by the
manner in which his inquiry was conducted and the response it drew from the peasantry, did constitute in practice a continuous demonstration which involved effectively a succession of public meetings across the whole district. It could be seen for what it certainly was felt to be by the planters, a carefully pitched strategy of confrontation, where Gandhi never quite lost his stance of outside impartial investigator and so was able to protect himself from charges of simply stirring up an agitation. Nationalist opinion also saw Champaran as a confrontation in which Gandhi won a "victory" by his novel technique of satyagraha.

Champaran has often been presented by Gandhians as a "classic" satyagraha because of the "purity" of its execution. A highly antagonistic confrontation between irreconcilable groups was turned creatively by Gandhi's intervention into an exercise where the provincial government of Bihar was forced - by defiant and respectful pressure - to address itself to a popular grievance and to respond to it positively. Moreover, as a result of the satyagraha, relations between the planters and their tenants were changed to the extent that the Champaran peasants were less afraid to stand up for themselves. We can see here Gandhi's argument that, in Champaran, he and his co-workers were doing the work of preparing India for Home Rule, even though he refused to allow it to be linked to other Home Rule agitation.

It is interesting to speculate on why Gandhi chose Champaran in remote Bihar for the first major demonstration of his new method of satyagraha. As we shall see in the next chapter, early in 1917 he had begun to take an active part in the politics of Gujarat. It may be that he was now
seeking to engage in an exemplary struggle and that Bihar seemed "riper" than areas nearer home. There were undoubtedly many other parts of India where peasants suffered grievously under cruel landlords. What was distinctive about Champaran was a similarity between the situation there and that of indentured labourers in South Africa whose cause Gandhi had consistently championed. It is reported that some of the Champaran peasants were returnees from South Africa who rallied to Gandhi. Moreover, these were peasants growing cash crops whose horizons had been stretched through buying and selling in the market-place. Also, their landlords were Europeans, mostly British. The symbolic value of a struggle against exploitative British landlords in India, at a time when India was being asked to support Britain by sending troops and money to assist the war in Europe, will not have escaped Gandhi.

It is relevant to note, too -- though Gandhi is unlikely to have known this at the outset — that the cultivation of indigo in this part of Bihar had gone into rapid decline at the turn of the century. From 96,000 acres under cultivation with indigo in Bihar and Orissa in 1899-1900, the figure had declined to 8,000 acres in 1914-1915. Production of a cheap synthetic dye in Germany had destroyed the market for natural indigo. War with Germany brought a renewed demand for the natural product, and the area under production increased to 22,000 acres in 1916-1917 and 26,000 in 1917-1918. It was during this period that Gandhi was in the district. After the War, demand collapsed again, and following attempts to switch from indigo to other cash crops, most of the European planters left the district. 23

In practice, the Champaran satyagraha had a number of all-India implications. It was seen as a victory for the nationalist cause; it showed the potential for drawing new social groups from a "backward" area, Bihar, into politics;
it showed a new method of engaging in struggles, satyagraha, whose potential was unknown; and it introduced a new nationalist leader to prominence. What it also did was to reveal Gandhi's highly individual approach to the British Raj.

For several years afterwards, Gandhi used to claim against arguments that it was disloyal and opportunist of him to organise such campaigns against the Raj while a bitter war was being fought in Europe, that his struggles were in fact of benefit to the Raj because they brought about a closer identity between the rulers and the ruled, they helped to clear up blots on the record of the Raj in India which would otherwise justify disloyalty. In a similar fashion, he used to argue that civil disobedience could only be used by those who respected the law and that, in fact, to break the law in a civil manner - the emphasis was important - when it offended one's conscience, constituted the highest form of respect for law and for the government. This was so, he argued, because one was willing to offer oneself in a spirit of civic sacrifice to one's belief that the law should be changed or was being used wrongly. Nonviolent, and especially violent, lawbreaking not carried out in this spirit, he considered to be "criminal disobedience", which he strongly deplored.

Only later, when Gandhi came to believe that the British must leave India altogether, did he come to present civil disobedience as a means of challenging the very authority of the Raj in India - though he still retained this stress on the civil character of civil disobedience. As his views on the value of the British connection changed, so he began to place more emphasis on constructing a political instrument which would replace the British as rulers of India and a social programme which would unify and prepare the nation for independence.

But in Champaran, Gandhi protested as someone who in his own unique fashion was a loyalist, and this accounted in part for the care with
which he was treated by the Raj. It helped also to define the gap between himself and the Home Rule agitators among the nationalist movement at the time, especially the Home Rule Leagues which were much more anti-British in temper. When he returned to Gujarat from Champaran and organised another peasant agitation, this time against the Raj's own land revenue system, Gandhi still remained "loyal". Before long he went so far as to start active recruiting on behalf of regiments serving with the Indian Army. But in Gujarat Gandhi came much more strongly into contact with a few experienced political activists who had been brought into nationalist politics by the activities of the Home Rule Leagues. He discovered here that his companions in struggle were not so "pure" as in Bihar and he was less satisfied with the exemplary quality of his satyagraha campaigns. In Gujarat, and more especially nearby Bombay City, Gandhi encountered the emerging mainstream of nationalist agitation in India. In coming to terms with it, he lost some of his isolation in politics and Gujarat became a power-base for him as an all-India nationalist leader.
APPENDIX 'A'

Instructions for Workers (April 16, 1917)

The programme of study should be gone through as if I was not imprisoned, that is:

1. Villages should be visited systematically and notes of evidence of everyone should be taken.

2. Where the party consents to sign notes, his signature or thumb impression should be taken.

3. Evidence should be taken even where parties decline to sign. Reason for refusal should be noted.

4. Evidence of pleaders who had anything to do with the case of the ryots should be requested and it should be after the pattern suggested for Gorakh Babu.

For this, evidence from as many workers as would come forward should be taken. It is to be wished that many workers who would come forward would not be deterred from pursuing their inquiry even though they may receive notice of removal.

They should quietly go to gaol if they are summoned and tried for disobedience. I suggest that no defence be offered.

The ryots should be instructed definitely not to use violence whether regarding their own grievances or regarding imprisonment of those who may come to assist them. But they can be and should be told that where they know they are being unjustly treated, that is, required to plant indigo when they need not, rather than go to law, they should simply refuse to plant indigo and if for so refusing they are imprisoned they should suffer imprisonment. This requires very careful explanation. Where the workers do not understand the working of this quiet resistance or do not appreciate the force of it, they may drop this point of the programme.

When the workers of this first class are exhausted or not found at all, second class workers should be enlisted to collect evidence at centres where their presence is not resented. Ryots may be quietly asked to come to such centres to give evidence. All documents should be collected and classified. The work ought not to take more than six weeks. At the end of the inquiry the whole of the evidence oral or documentary should be printed for private circulation. In the first instance if no one will print it, it should be typed. All the papers and evidence should be collected at one spot and sifted and marshalled under one man's direction. Babu Brijkishore Prasad should take it up unless Mr. Andrews arrives and does the marshalling.

Further action should be taken after consultation with a small all-India committee under Panditjee or Mr. Shastri. There should be a demand for an impartial inquiry containing a number (equal with that of the planters' representatives) of Indians representing the ryots. Our representatives must be of our choice.

Pending inquiry planters should institute no civil suits for damages, etc., and an impartial person should be present at the time of distribution of wages daily or otherwise.
Workers should be paid where necessary. If funds cannot be raised locally, the Imperial Citizenship Association should be asked.

APPENDIX 'B'

Statement before the Court (April 18, 1917)

With the permission of the Court, I would like to make a brief statement showing why I have taken the very serious step of seemingly disobeying the order made under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. In my humble opinion, it is a question of difference of opinion between the local administration and myself. I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the ryots, who urge they are not being fairly treated by the indigo planters. I could not render any help without studying the problem. I have, therefore, come to study it with the assistance, if possible, of the administration and the planters. I have no other motive and I cannot believe that my coming here can in any way disturb the public peace or cause loss of life. I claim to have considerable experience in such matters. The administration, however, have thought differently. I fully appreciate their difficulty, and I admit too, that they can only proceed upon information they receive. As a law-abiding citizen, my first instinct would be, as it was, to obey the order served on me. I could not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I have come. I feel that I could just now serve them only by remaining in their midst. I could not, therefore, voluntarily retire. Amid this conflict of duty, I could only throw the responsibility of removing me from them on the administration.

I am fully conscious of the fact that a person, holding in the public life of India a position such as I do, has to be most careful in setting examples. It is my firm belief that in the complex constitution under which we are living, the only safe and honourable course for a self-respecting man is, in the circumstances such as face me, to do what I have decided to do, that is, to submit without protest to the penalty of disobedience. I have ventured to make this statement not in any way in extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me, but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me, not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience of the higher law of our being - the voice of conscience.

(From Rajendra Prasad, Satyagraha in Champaran, Navajivan, 1949 pp. 115-116)
CHAPTER 1. Page 26

References


4. Brown, op cit, pp 67, 70-72, 92-93

5. Tendulkar, Gandhi in Champaran, p 29


7. Prasad, Satyagraha in Champaran, pp 133-134; Brown, op cit, pp 68-69, 77

8. Prasad, At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi, pp 36-37, 64-65; Prasad, Satyagraha in Champaran, pp 111, 113, 118; Tendulkar, Gandhi in Champaran, p 48.

9. Prasad, At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi, pp 27, 66; Prasad, "Since He Came to Champaran" in Shukla, op cit, p 274; and Tendulkar, Gandhi in Champaran, p 37

10. Both Prasad and Tendulkar report that 10,000 full-length statements were collected and, in addition, up to 15,000 shorter ones. One incentive for tenants to give statements was the belief that, if they did not come forward, they would be unable to benefit from any gains made by Gandhi's inquiry, see Prasad, At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi, p 49

11. Brown, op cit, pp 77-79


13. Ibid pp 101-102

References


17. Prasad, "Since He Came to Champaran" in Shukla, *op cit*, pp 270-271; Prasad, *At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi*, p 73

18. *Collected Works*, vol 13, p 572

19. Prasad, "Since He Came to Champaran" in Shukla, *op cit*, pp 273-274

20. ibid, p 270; Tendulkar, *Gandhi in Champaran*, p 73


23. Mishra, *op cit*, p 249
Prior to 1919 nationalist leaders did not seriously attempt to develop personal followings and political organisation much outside their own home provinces. India is after all a vast country with distinct religious, language and caste groups and wide regional differences. Politics at the centre was a matter of forging alliances with leaders of other regions.

Annie Besant, a British woman already in her sixties when she entered Indian politics as a Theosophist after 1910, was perhaps the first to try to organise on an all-India scale. Her All-India Home Rule League, formed in 1916, drew on the network of Theosophists established across India: it gathered strong support in Madras in the south and in Bombay City and Gujarat in the west, and to some extent elsewhere. The leader of the other Home Rule League, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, tended to confine his intensive organising to his home region of Maharashtra, also in the west. Tilak's organisation, known as the Indian Home Rule League, was founded in part as a means of preventing Mrs Besant from gaining too strong a following in Maharashtra.

Gandhi's first three years back in India, from 1915, coincided with the emergence of the Home Rule movement as a force in Indian politics. He saw at first hand in his home province of Gujarat and elsewhere the potential for nationwide organising in the response which the movement drew from previously unorganised regions. The Home Rule agitation demonstrated that the older "moderate" politicians who had played a careful game of diplomatic pressure in the central councils of the Raj could be outflanked in the foremost meeting-place of Indian nationalists, the Indian National Congress. For in 1917, the
the Home Rule Leagues captured Congress and Mrs Besant was elected Congress President for the following year. During 1918, for a variety of reasons, Mrs Besant lost control of the movement; but the possibilities opened up by the agitational politics of the Home Rule Leagues were obvious. It was clear, too, that if mass politics could be consolidated and brought under control by Indian nationalist politicians, then Congress would be transformed, and would have to be, into a quite different sort of political body.

The purpose of the next two chapters is to do three things. First, to show how important was the organising work which he undertook in his home state of Gujarat to Gandhi's triumph at the two sessions of the Indian National Congress held in 1920. Second, to suggest that even after he had established himself as the foremost all-India leader, Gandhi still relied on the support which he knew he could command in Gujarat. And, third, to examine in detail two of Gandhi's early satyagraha struggles, the Ahmedabad and Kheda satyagrahas of 1919.

This emphasis on his Gujarat origins may seem to belie the earlier argument that Gandhi was the first all-India politician to develop mass support outside his home region. But it was primarily through the work which he conducted in Gujarat that Gandhi was able to bring himself and his methods to the attention of a wider Indian public. His work in Gujarat was crucial and remained until the 1930s central to his success as an all-India leader; it is chiefly in Gujarat that Gandhi personally engaged in satyagraha struggles; and in Gujarat Gandhi found a base of support in the peasantry and, to some extent, in the industrial working class who together acted as exponents of his satyagraha method for the rest of the nation.

Gandhi gathers his "Entourage" (1915-1918)

When Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he looked to Gujarat as his home base because this was the province of his birth. In a typically symbolic
gesture, Gandhi met the reception committee assembled to greet him as he got off the boat at Bombay in the clothes of a Gujarati peasant. Later in 1915, he founded his Ashram just outside Ahmedabad, the leading city of Gujarat. The ashram was a living and working community of his most devoted companions and followers, some of whom had returned with him from South Africa. Much of the thinking behind Gandhi's choice of Gujarat had to do with language. He was a native speaking Gujarati and had developed the conviction that in making bonds between the educated classes in India and the common people, as he was determined to do, it was essential to use the common speech. But there was another calculation, too, Gandhi was a member of the bania caste, a trading not a warrior or a scholarly caste, and he reckoned that he was likely to win financial support from the bania merchants of Ahmedabad and Bombay. Also, Ahmedabad was a traditional centre for handloom weaving and Gandhi thought that he would be well-placed there to revive the craft of hand-spinning.

As a Gujarati who had achieved national prominence in the years 1906-1914 through news reports of his leadership of the satyagraha struggle in South Africa, Gandhi was the guest-of-honour at numerous public events held on his return throughout India, but especially in his home province and in the Bombay Presidency, of which Gujarat was a part. There were several opportunities open to him immediately to assume a position of leadership in Gujarat politics. But, Gandhi, to the perplexity of some of the young Gujarat Home Rulers who were looking to him to give a lead, did not take advantage of them. He appears to have passed over these opportunities for two reasons. First, because his view of politics was very different from most of the young nationalists who in 1915 and 1916 were coming under the influence of Annie Besant's propaganda for Home Rule. Gandhi felt it necessary to delay because he did not want to act until he had a group of capable co-workers who would follow his lead. Second, it is reasonably clear that Gandhi did not think of himself as...
a Gujarati leader in the usual political mould; he saw himself as a potential all-India leader whose mission was to lead a national movement according to the principles of satyagraha which he had developed in South Africa. Indulal Yajnik, one of the young Home Rulers who was looking to Gandhi to direct agitation in the province and was continually disappointed, got a glimpse of the "fire within" in 1915 when Gandhi told him flatly that he was destined to secure a large following in "due course". What worried Gandhi was whether he would be able to retain that following when they discovered how determined he was to maintain "strict adhesion to my principles - which they may fail to understand".  

Gandhi, it appears, needed time to develop his knowledge of the whole of India, not just Gujarat, and equally he needed to establish contact with individuals and groups across India to whom he was unknown. It is also true that Gandhi had made a vow at the request of a senior Indian politician, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who had befriended Gandhi and supported him in South Africa, that he would refrain from political involvement for his first year back in India. Within six weeks of Gandhi's return, Gokhale died and Gandhi, characteristically, took a further vow not to put on footwear for a year. Gokhale's memory was celebrated all over India and it is certain that Gandhi in his bare feet remained conscious of his friend's injunction.

While Gokhale was still alive, Gandhi was honoured by a reception organised by the Gujarat Sabha. The Sabha, founded in 1885, the same year as the Indian National Congress, was the principal nationalist organisation in Ahmedabad, though the reception was held in Bombay City which is 300 miles away. Gandhi was introduced by the leading Muslim Home Ruler in Bombay.
at that time, M.A. Jinnah, who was also a Gujarati. Jinnah, of course, was to become Gandhi's implacable opponent twenty years later when he was leading the separatist struggle to partition India; and the relationship between them was always cool. Jinnah and others made their welcoming speeches in English. Gandhi delivered an unambiguous rebuke to his hosts by replying in Gujarati, urging that the English language be discarded in national and political work, and that the provincial language or Hindustani be substituted for it "in order to appeal to the masses". 9

One of the main issues which Gandhi promoted during his first years of touring very widely throughout India was the spread of Hindi. In 1916 he presided over the All-Indian Common Script and Common Language Conference which was held in Lucknow simultaneously with the annual Congress session 10 and, in 1918, he was elected President of the Indore session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan "in recognition of his services to Hindi". Rajendra Prasad reports that while he was active in Champaran, Gandhi was also beginning to organise the propagation of Hindi in Tamil-speaking Southern India. 11 It was through this language work that Gandhi made contacts with likeminded individuals in many parts of India, some of whom would visit him at his Ahmedabad ashram to learn more about his methods.

At home in Gujarat, Gandhi held aloof from the Home Rule agitation during 1916 - though in his ashram his followers were reading and discussing Thoreau's classic text which Gandhi had translated into Gujarati, On the Duty of Civil Disobedience. 12 Gandhi did accept invitations to preside over a number of meetings of the Gujarat Sabha, which has been described at the time as "moribund" 13 and "quiescent", 14 but he did not get heavily involved and restricted himself to non-political topics. In June, in Poona, he spoke against Home Rule agitation which would embarrass the British Government while it was engaged in "a life and death struggle"
during the War in Europe, but he added that once the war was over he was quite prepared to start any movement he thought necessary to secure the people's rights to Home Rule.\footnote{15} By December 1916, however, when the Congress session was held in Lucknow, it may be that Gandhi was forced to recognize that the Home Rule movement had captured "a rising tide of political awakening" and that whatever his personal opinions about launching agitation, he now had to make up his mind on whether to move into the political arena or not. \footnote{16} Indulal Yajnik comments:

"I believe that he rightly read the signs of the times at the Lucknow session and it was practically about this time that he decided to lead the political tide that was then rising in the country in his own characteristic manner".

At a meeting in rural Gujarat, at Godhra in February 1917 - this was to commemorate the second anniversary of Gokhale's death - Gandhi spoke of "a tide of great political enthusiasm now running all over the country, nearly as big and wide as the Ganges in flood", which was "running" to waste for want of people's control. He also proposed at a second meeting a resolution which was adopted, that the Government be given a specific time limit to end the indentured labour system - by May 31, 1917. Under this system Indian labourers were induced to go to South Africa and other British Colonies to work virtually as slaves. It was a particular cause of Gandhi's to have the system abolished for he had seen its results in South Africa. Gandhi explained his resolution in these terms: "If Government does not take necessary measures within the appointed time, you must be prepared to suffer, to go to prison or even to die in order to redress the grievous wrong!" Similar resolutions were adopted by other bodies under Gandhi's influence. \footnote{17}

In April 1917, Gandhi became involved in Champaran, nearly a thousand miles away from Ahmedabad. When his successful defiance of the order
externing him from the district won him praise all over India, the repercussions back in Gujarat were immediate. Gandhi was invited to accept the Presidency of the Gujarat Sabha in June 1917, which he did. Having delayed accepting leadership for two years, he was now in a position to impose his own authority and programme on the organisation. His first action as President of the Sabha was to arrange a monster petition addressed to the Secretary of State for India in London, Edwin Montagu. The petition voiced support for the scheme of constitutional reform which had been jointly agreed by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League at their annual sessions at Lucknow. Signatures were collected all over rural Gujarat. It has been suggested that, like Tilak with his Indian Home Rule League in Maharashtra, one of Gandhi's motives was to counter the successes which Annie Besant's League was having in Gujarat. At the time, Gandhi is said not to have been much impressed with the Congress-League Scheme itself, but he favoured the petition because "this seemed a splendid opportunity to reach out into the villages and give the educated a chance to come into contact with the illiterate." Over a million signatures are reported to have been collected.

In June 1917, Annie Besant was served with a Government order restricting her to the area of Madras in the south where she lived. The All-India Home Rule League got a tremendous boost and new branches were opened in many parts of India, especially Gujarat. Gandhi was again approached to lead the Home Rule League in Bombay Presidency, but declined. However, he did offer advice to the militant young Home Rulers which impressed them. In Madras, Home Rule flags had been forcibly removed from some houses by the police. Besant was proposing to take legal action against this. Gandhi thought the proposal ridiculous:
"The matter could be settled in an incredibly simple manner. All you have to do is to make thousands of small Home Rule Flags and hoist them in thousands of houses in Madras. Surely Government will not send its police officers to remove all these flags, and thus you will win a decided moral victory against the Government".

The Bombay "youngsters" asked him what should be done about the restriction order itself. Gandhi apparently drew up a pledge offering Satyagraha, which he said was to be "signed solemnly and sincerely by all those who were really determined to take direct action in the matter". If a sufficient number of signatures could be collected, he proposed that the Satyagrahis should march the 1,000 miles from Bombay to Madras and there offer civil disobedience under Besant's leadership. Over 1,000 signatures were collected, but Besant rejected the proposal. She was by this time worried about the dangers of civil disobedience and as a result quickly lost the support of many of her followers. Yajnik says that at this time he and other Home Rulers "were trying to make our own synthesis between the political demand of Mrs Besant and the political method which was so dear to the heart of Mr Gandhi".

Gandhi, however, wanted the Home Rulers to adopt his "political demand", too. In November 1917, he was invited to preside over two important conferences held in Gujarat, the second Gujarat Educational Conference at Broach and the first Gujarat Political Conference at Godhra. Both Conferences were conducted in Gujarati, at Gandhi's insistence, to enable the non-English-educated to participate. At the Broach conference, Gandhi piloted through a programme dealing with mass education, women's education and the adoption of the vernacular. At the Godhra political conference, attended by over 9,000 people, a detailed programme to deal with local political, economic and social grievances was agreed.

At the Godhra conference, too, Gandhi was able to announce to the public
session that he had received that day a "communication" from the Government indicating that a particular local grievance, the Viramgam customs cordon, would be ended. Viramgam is a small town about 40 miles from Ahmedabad where railway passengers were subject to the humiliation of a customs search. In 1915 Gandhi had threatened to lead civil disobedience on the matter and had been in correspondence with the Bombay Governor and the Viceroy.\footnote{27} At the Godhra conference, the subjects committee had already agreed to put before the full session a resolution demanding the removal of the cordon. Gandhi had informed the Government that he would be forced "to begin public agitation on the subject at this political conference if he did not receive a satisfactory reply by then." When the Bombay government responded by removing the cordon, Yajnik comments that, in the eyes of the young Home Rulers, Gandhi had now won three victories against the Government: over indentured labour, the indigo workers in Champaran, and now Viramgam.\footnote{28}

After these two conferences, Yajnik asserts that Gandhi had "succeeded in placing himself at the head of the forces of political discontent in our province".\footnote{29} Gandhi himself in a letter to a friend in South Africa a few months later said that his activities in Gujarat were "multifarious" and consisted "in carrying out the programme set out in the Godhra and Broach addresses" - that is, the presidential speeches he had made at these sessions.\footnote{30} At the Broach and Godhra conferences Gandhi had made contact with a woman who scoured rural Gujarat and neighbouring Baroda for him till she discovered some disused spinning wheels. These he then used as a basis for his experiments with spinning at the ashram.\footnote{31} Gujarat at the end of 1917 was proving to be the base for his activities which Gandhi had been seeking. Over the three years he had discovered a number of co-workers who were now ready to follow
his direction in their political and social work, to experiment in
t heir own lives with satyagraha.

Kheda and Ahmedbad: Simultaneous Struggles in Gujarat (1918)

It was directly as a result of the Godhra conference that Gandhi became
involved in his first peasant agitation in Gujarat, the 'Kheda Satyagraha in 1913. Peasant agriculturalists and local political leaders
who had attended the conference contacted Gandhi about their problems
with the land revenue tax charged on their crops by the Bombay
Government. Efforts to raise these grievances through Indian representa-
tives of the Bombay Provincial Assembly had achieved nothing. Gandhi
began his investigation in rural 'Kheda in his capacity as president of
the Gujarat Sabha, and members of the Sabha worked alongside supporters
of the Home Rule League who were already involved, though in practice
these memberships overlapped.32

At the same time, Gandhi also became involved in a second satyagraha,
again through the Gujarat Sabha. The Sabha had been recruiting mill-
owners in the city of Ahmedabad to its membership during 1917. Early
in 1918, Gandhi was invited by representatives of the millowners and
millworkers to arbitrate in a dispute about the wage rates for weavers
in the city's factories. When the arbitration broke down, Gandhi felt
himself obliged to act on behalf of the workers.33

In most accounts, the 'Kheda (or 'Vaira) satyagraha is discussed separately
from the Ahmedabad satyagraha. This can be misleading, however,
because the two struggles, both personally directed by Gandhi, went on
simultaneously. It is also helpful to an understanding of how he
organised these campaigns to compare his methods in each directly.

To discuss the circumstances of the rural struggle, which began first
and continued longer, the 'Kheda District of Gujarat is often referred
to by its anglicised name, "Ahmedabad. Only thirty miles south-east of Ahmedabad, Theda, with a population of 700,000 had been by Indian standards a prosperous agricultural district. Peasant farmers, the Patidars, had acquired land-ownership rights under the British in the 19th Century and had experienced a "golden-age"—until a disastrous drought at the turn of the century had brought on famine, the death of cattle, consequent loss of soil fertility due to lack of manure, a lowering of the water table, and other calamities. Many of the peasants had been unable to recover from this disaster because of the high land revenue charges imposed by the Nizam. Beside the Patidars, the other main caste group in Theda consisted of landless labourers, the Baraiyas, many of whom were employed on Patidar holdings. In 1917, severe flooding during the monsoon had damaged the crops, and the Patidar farmers—who also suffered severely from an outbreak of plague which hit Ahmedabad—were agitating for remission of revenue.  

Ahmedabad was the scene of Gandhi's labour satyagraha. The second city in the Bombay Presidency, after Bombay City itself, Ahmedabad in 1913 had a population of nearly 300,000. Based on the cotton industry, the city experienced a boom during the war years as supplies of imported cloth dried up and India became dependent on home-produced cotton goods. Several millowners became millionaires and wages increased too—putting further pressure incidentally on the Patidar farmers in nearby Theda who had to increase wages for their labourers. Late in 1917, plague broke out in Ahmedabad causing the booming cotton mills to pay a special "plague" bonus to their workers to encourage them to stay in the city. This increased their wages by up to 75%, which helped the workers to meet the increase in prices brought on by wartime shortages. But early in 1918 demand for cloth dropped at the same time as the
plague epidemic eased. The employers then withdrew the "plague" bonus leaving the workers to cope as best they could with continuing shortages of consumer products and price inflation. As a result, 10,000 weavers out of the 70,000 workers employed in the mills in Ahmedabad went on strike. \(^35\) Quite apart from the particular grievance that led to this strike, the millworkers in Ahmedabad suffered from appalling poverty. A Government report on housing conditions in India published more than ten years later spoke of the "terrible squalor" in the areas occupied by the working classes in Ahmedabad. \(^36\)

In taking up satyagraha in India, Gandhi was faced with two particular difficulties. First, as we have seen, there was the need to train a band of reliable lieutenants who would organise actively on his behalf. Secondly, there was the problem of securing mass support for nonviolent action according to his theories, support which was strong enough to sustain nonviolent discipline through fierce struggle and in circumstances of great sacrifice. Gandhi's conception in both struggles, Theda and Ahmedabad, was not simply pragmatic, to win the victory; he also wanted the struggle to be exemplary in the sense (i) that it demonstrated the effectiveness of his method and (ii) that the participants were strengthened in their self-image as people who would stand up for their rights and their dignity, whatever the cost to themselves.

1. The Team of Helpers

In Gujarat, Gandhi had acquired the team of helpers which he needed, but having been blooded in the Home Rule agitations, which were not controlled by Gandhi, several of them were more independently-minded than the recruits he had made in Bihar. Gandhi was less satisfied with them. \(^37\) Mrhadev Desai, who had been recruited by Gandhi in 1917, to act
as his secretary, reports in his diary on a revealing conversation at the time. He was talking with one of Gandhi's chief co-workers about their leader's method of attracting new followers:

"In loving admiration for Bapuji (an affectionate name for Gandhi), I gave him the epithet 'The Slave Hunter' in my talks with PandyaJu. He (Gandhi) goes on, I explained, catching some one or other, and yokes him to the national work, a passion of his life, which he pursues day and night." 38

Initially, in Ahmedabad, organising work among 10,000 striking millhands was done by a team of volunteers. As the struggle moved quickly to confrontation when the employers began a lockout, Gandhi himself assumed direct command of the strikers and, with the help of his most trusted associates, like Shankerlal Banker and Anasuya, addressed nightly meetings of the millhands. Gandhi decided that their advice to the strikers would be superficial and would fail "without intimate knowledge of the outer and inner life of the workers". They therefore paid daily visits to the workers in their homes, gathering information about their conditions, discussing the strike with them, finding temporary work for those who wanted it, dealing with health problems, and so on. Mahadev Desai, in his pamphlet on the Ahmedabad struggle, emphasises that, as a result, the advisers could "feel the pulse" of the entire labour community, and Gandhi "knew exactly what steps to take at the critical moments in the struggle". In addition to the nightly meetings with the strikers, which were switched to the mornings when the employers ended their lockout, Gandhi and his advisers prepared daily leaflets for distribution among them, discussing the conduct of the workers during the strike, the behaviour of the employers, and so on. Mahadev Desai stresses the results that these speeches and leaflets had on "the inner life of the people" - and notes that, as in Champaran, to avoid polarisation, these speeches were deliberately not supplied to the press. 39
In rural Kheda, thirty miles from Ahmedabad, a first group of workers associated with the Gujarat Sabha carried out an assessment of the value of the crops in a few villages, led by two representatives on the Bombay Legislative Council who were also Ahmedabad lawyers. When their findings were questioned by the government, Gandhi himself led a much fuller investigation "with the assistance of over 20 capable experienced and impartial men of influence and status." Gandhi personally visited over 30 villages, engaging in "a searching cross-examination of the villagers". By these methods, 400 villages out of the 600 in the district were investigated. Indulal Yajnik, who was one of Gandhi's volunteers in Kheda, describes what happened:

"Some of us had already gone round a few villages in the course of the Home Rule agitation. But Mr Gandhi for the first time put us to the test of covering every one of the 600 big and small villages of the district - some having a population of nearly 10,000 and others consisting only of a few homesteads. He ruled us with the iron rod of discipline. The inquiry had to be finished within ten days. The workers therefore were divided into ten or twelve groups, and each group had to cover four or five villages a day. And yet we were all forbidden the use of carts or any other vehicles."

Gandhi also suggested that one particular village be assessed as a test-case by the responsible local official with himself present. But this suggestion was rejected by the government, as was Gandhi's report of his team's investigation, and his proposal for an independent committee of inquiry. The Gujarat Sabha then decided on "satyagraha", in this case, civil disobedience, which was commenced on March 22, 1918, with the taking of an oath by villagers refusing to pay the revenue. By the end of April over 2,000 villagers had taken the pledge not to pay. Organisation of the struggle was conducted through regular public meetings, Gandhi himself engaging in several speaking tours through the area, and after initial reluctance to publicise the dispute, by statements in the press. Volunteers went on foot through the villages eating only simple foods.
Gandhi himself commented later:

"It was the Kheda campaign that compelled the public workers to establish contact with the actual life of the peasants. They learnt to identify themselves with the latter. They found their proper sphere of work, their capacity for sacrifice increased." 43

To give a brief timetable of the two satyagraha struggles, Gandhi first became involved in arbitration between millowners and workers in Ahmedabad in February 1918, two months after the Kheda agitation had started. Events moved to a head much more quickly in Ahmedabad, though. The millhands’ strike began on February 22 and lasted 25 days until March 18. Only four days after the Ahmedabad satyagraha was over, Gandhi launched civil disobedience in Kheda, which continued there for nearly three months.

2. The Satyagraha Pledges.
At the beginning of the Ahmedabad strike, which went on significantly longer than Gandhi’s side had expected, the workers were invited to take a pledge, which they apparently did unanimously. This pledge was repeated at the nightly meetings. It committed the workers, first, to remain on strike until their demand, which was a moderate one, had been met; and second, to conduct themselves with dignity and restraint throughout the dispute. This oath took the form of a religious vow and Gandhi consistently stressed its seriousness. On the fifth day he discussed in his speech people’s hopes that the strike would soon be over:

"I repeat that even though we may hope that our struggle will soon end early, we must remain firm if that hope is not realised, and not resume work even if we have to die." 44

Later, when after three weeks the strike began to weaken, Gandhi realised that the workers had been tested by their commitment to maintain the vow beyond their capacity. He then took his decision to fast:

"I cannot tolerate for a minute that you break your pledge. I shall not take any food nor use a car till you get 35 per cent
increase or all of you die in the fight for it."

The effect on the millworkers was electric. Gandhi claimed that the workers experienced a moment of sublime religious awareness as he announced his decision and they regained the confidence that they could keep their vow.\(^45\)

Gandhi's action, though spontaneous, was the product of a highly self-conscious project which he had set himself. As he told the millhands later that day:

"I was not unmindful of what I had realised during my widespread travels in India that hundreds of persons take an oath and break it at the very next moment. I also knew that the best among us have just a feeble and irresolute faith in God. I felt that it was a golden opportunity for me, that my faith was being tested." \(^46\)

Two days later at a prayer meeting at his ashram, Gandhi was even more explicit:

"... I saw in the fast a good opportunity to give out to the world one sublime principle of action ... From the mine of our ancient culture and civilization, a gem has come into my possession, i.e. I have learnt a principle of life, which, if thoroughly assimilated, can enable even the very few of us who are here to rule the world ..."

Gandhi then went on to compare the "gem" he had to offer India with the contributions being made by Tilak, the leading nationalist figure of the time, and by Madan Mohan Malaviya, the most prominent orthodox Hindu in politics. He continued:

"... deep down in me, the feeling persists that (Tilak) has not imbibed the true spirit of Mother India, viz. her age-old pursuit after soul force. And that is why the country still welters in its present plight...

"Were Tilak's object in his sufferings spiritual and not political, our condition to-day would have been far better, because astounding benefits might have come out from them.

"It is this central point - the spiritual background behind my suffering through the fast - that I want him to understand ..."

Gandhi then claimed that Malaviya, too ...

"... does not quite understand, I am sorry to say, what India really stands for ... To both these great men I must show the
true spirit that has been animating India since ages past ... It appeared to me as the victory of Satan, if a vow, taken in my presence, could be broken so easily and if the people’s faith in God faded away ... My fast had an electric effect, beyond my wildest hope ... a wave of conversion - an awareness of the Soul - swept them ... The sight convinced me beyond doubt that the light of Dharma in India is not yet extinct, that Indians are still their true selves, capable of realizing the Self within and knowing this power. If Tilak Maharaj and Malaviyaji open themselves to this, the true spirit of India, we can achieve miracles."

He concluded:

"And if ten thousand labourers went back upon their solemn resolve, the country would head straight for disaster. It would become impossible to raise again the question of the amelioration of labour conditions. Everywhere the disgraceful precedent of Ahmedabad would be cited and they would say, ‘Ten thousand labourers suffered for 20 long days - and with such a leader as Gandhi - and yet they failed’..." 47

Thus Gandhi quite self-consciously saw himself at Ahmedabad as giving a lead to the Indian nation and a lesson to its senior nationalist leaders. At the time, he was 48, and only three years back in India. Malaviya was 57; Tilak, 62. Annie Beant was 71.

Gandhi entered the Kheda Satyagraha with the same conception and the same suggested means of binding the Kheda peasants together, a religious vow not to pay their revenue unless certain conditions were met. 48 By April 21, 2,337 signatures to the pledge had been gathered. Gandhi was again thoroughly aware of the national implications of this action. He wrote to an acquaintance in April 1918:

"You have only to come and see with what perfect good humour the fight is being carried on, how the people are stealing their hearts for any kind of loss, and how elderly men and women too are taking part in the demonstration. You, at least, ought to see that this self-inflicted suffering must exalt the nation, whereas the same suffering unwillingly undergone hitherto, has only degraded the nation." 49

As he wrote to the Kheda satyagrahis two weeks later:

"Lest we weaken in our resolve, we have bound ourselves down with a solemn vow. No nation ever rises without taking resolves and a vow is nothing more than an inflexible resolve. The man who cannot be resolute is like a rulerless boat tossed hither and thither in an ocean till it meets its doom". 50
When, however, despite all Gandhi's exhortations and those of his co-workers, the resolve of the Kheda satyagrahis did weaken, he adopted a quite different method of restoring their determination than he had taken in Ahmedabad. This time he escalated the struggle from non-cooperation to nonviolent intervention. Five volunteers went out to reclaim a crop of onions which had been confiscated by the government in lieu of revenue payment. These civil disobedients, when arrested and jailed, became local heroes, and peasant morale was boosted. 51

3. Refusal of Outside Support

In both places Gandhi also adopted a novel, many would say perverse, method of sustaining the morale of the strikers, and of demonstrating their integrity and determination to their opponents and to the country at large. In Ahmedabad, he refused to allow a strike fund to be started for the workers. At their daily meetings he told the striking workers that it was beneath them to ask for financial aid — "the world will ridicule you by saying that you fought on the strength of others' money." 52

Gandhi tried to stiffen the workers' resolve in this regard by finding alternative employment for them, including hand-spinning among the women. In an exultant letter to a Bombay businessman, he commented:

"That 10,000 workmen are observing a strike quite peacefully without a rupee being spent after them, is by no means a small achievement and yet it is a fact. People have realized the truth of the principle: 'Self-help is the best help'. The strikers have been given these two key-notes for success: 'On you, not on others, depends your success' and 'No victory without voluntary self-suffering'. " 53

In Kheda he took exactly the same attitude. He thought that collecting thousands of rupees to pay the peasants' assessment could easily be done and might make an effective agitation, but it would make no impression on the Government; whereas, "it will be a serious headache for the Government to impound and sell the peasants' cattle. The object behind
the idea of offering satyagraha is to make the people fearless and free, and not to maintain our own reputation anyhow." Gandhi claimed later that he had accepted only two or three thousand rupees as travelling expenses for his workers in Kheda, but had returned 25,000 rupees to their donors and declined many other offers.

"If I accepted contributions, the spirit of the fight would be vitiated, immorality would creep in, and the people instead of rising higher would sink lower. Refusal to take any amount from outside has saved me from all those dire consequences and enabled me to keep the battle on a high moral plane. The whole of India understands and backs the struggle ..." 

It was in this way that Gandhi advanced his principle of self-suffering, a method designed simultaneously to enoble the sufferer and convert the opponent. He also developed his principle that Indians to be free must not be afraid to rely on their own efforts and not to look for support from outside. Mahadev Desai notes Gandhi's pleasure after one public meeting in April with the English Commissioner in Kheda, Mr Pratt, who tried to make the peasants back down, but failed to overawe them.

4. Pitching the Demands Low, and the Principle of Arbitration

Yet the sacrifices demanded of the millhands and peasants were very great. Here were unsophisticated people being directed by a man whom many of them viewed as a saint - and so they could not easily speak out against him - to risk starvation and death or the loss of property and their rights of ownership to hereditary farms. Gandhi has frequently been criticised because the extreme methods which he advocated produced so little by way of direct result.

In Ahmedabad, for example, the millhands had suffered a cut in wages at a time when prices were rising rapidly. High wages (75% higher than the normal rate) had been paid to those who were prepared to carry on working during a period of plague in the city. When this epidemic ended, the management withdrew the "plague bonus". The workers demanded a 50% increase in their basic wage to meet the higher cost of living; the
employers offered 20% and Gandhi was called in as an arbitrator. When arbitration broke down, the employers staged a lock-out and Gandhi felt obliged to side with the workers. He then recommended the workers to concentrate on the demands of the weaving section, and waive the question of the spinning workers for the time being; advised them to reduce their demand to a minimum increase of 35% and also to maintain the demand for arbitration. Thus when, after Gandhi's fast was begun, a settlement was quickly reached; the major direct result was the appointment of a new arbitrator. This decision the workers agreed to accept even if the award was less than 35%. In the event, the arbitrator found that several companies were already paying 35% and 50% increases - there was a breakdown in employer solidarity - and his verdict went in favour of the strikers. But even after their victory in the strike, the workers were still receiving less in wages than they had been during the plague bonus period.

In Khera, Gandhi's demands were equally moderate. Many of those calling for relief in the district were reasonably prosperous. Their contention, as drafted by Gandhi, was that even though they might be able to afford to pay the revenue assessed on their crops, the assessment itself had been calculated unfairly and should be re-examined by an independent inquiry. If, on this re-examination, the crops were found to have been valued too highly, the richer peasants would still be willing to pay their full assessment, on condition that the obligations of the poorer peasants were cancelled. Gandhi was quite explicit that the reason why those able to pay were withholding payment was to protect those unable to afford the revenue from being isolated and forced into panic selling, or into debt. After nearly three months of tax refusal and six months agitation in all, the government granted no independent inquiry; but Gandhi advised most of the satyagrahis to pay the assessment when eventually it became clear that the government would not proceed against those unable to pay. He himself called this an unsatisfactory solution because the government
showed no conciliatory spirit whatsoever and the satyagrahis were
left without a clearcut sense of victory. 60

Thus what Gandhi aimed for in both these desperately fierce struggles,
as in Champaran, was simply arbitration or an independent inquiry. In
the nine "Steps in a Satyagraha Campaign" which Joan Bondurant lists
in her analysis of Gandhian satyagraha, negotiation and arbitration
are itemised as the first stage in an escalating series of actions
leading up to "usurping the functions of government" or "parallel
government". 61 But as Bondurant herself makes clear in her discussion
of the Ahmedabad satyagraha, arbitration was generally not only the
first step, but also the last, in these Gandhian satyagrahas. 62

In fact, Gandhi stated on several occasions that he was fighting the
Ahmedabad satyagraha for the principle of arbitration between management
and labour; and the Kheda satyagraha for the principle that the
government should call an independent inquiry where its decisions
were frankly and sincerely called into question by the citizens most
affected. 63

While neither of these would seem on the face of it to be radical
demands they were extremely important in the Indian context at the time.
By insisting on the principle of arbitration in the Ahmedabad dispute,
Gandhi was able to construct the basis of peaceful industrial
relations in that city which were maintained for several decades; more-
over, both millowners and millhands were drawn into support for Gandhi's
later campaigns, the links between the Bombay Presidency factory owners
and the peasantry being a significant factor in Gandhi's later
achievements. 64 In Kheda, what Gandhi had orchestrated was a major
challenge to the presumption of the Raj that it could undertake the
assessment and collection of revenue from the peasantry without being
subject to democratic control. No-tax campaigns, as they were called, continued in this part of Gujarat for almost the next twenty years, until finally in the 1935 government reforms, Indians were granted some political control over the gathering of revenue. 65

Nevertheless, as Bondurant points out, making a principle out of arbitration - that is, the good faith of an independent third party - was a risky business. 66 And the powerful long-term forces which these struggles set in motion could not have been predicted - though Gandhi might have argued that an alliance between workers and employers in Ahmedabad and sustained militancy in rural Gujarat were implicit ends to be gained from the means he adopted in these struggles. What Gandhi was doing by pitching his demands so low was seeking to establish an unassailable case, so that in the event of arbitration or an independent inquiry, the findings could not but be in favour of his side. Thus the extreme test to which the satyagrahis were put in Ahmedabad and Kheda was likely to end in victory and without them having to pay the ultimate penalty. Moreover, his opponents, the millowners and the revenue officials of Bombay Presidency, because of the basic unreasonableness of their position and the obvious reasonableness of the satyagrahis they were fighting, would find it relatively easy to reach a conciliatory position.

Gandhi, in a sense, was trying to eat his cake and have it. He wanted the millhands and the peasants to be immeasurably strengthened by staking their lives, their property, their honour and their religious conviction on a fierce struggle against entrenched power which they would win. And, on the other hand, he wanted relations between the competing parties at the end of the struggle to be
immeasurably improved. In Gandhi's conception, however, there was no contradiction. By setting his demands so low, he ensured that there was no "victory" in the conventional sense for his side or the other. By insisting that the millowners and the revenue officials of the Raj learn to respect the Ahmedabad workers and the Kheda peasants he was, in his own eyes, establishing the only true basis for partnership between capital and labour in industry and the British Raj and the Indian people in public affairs. This was the "victory" Gandhi wanted. In Ahmedabad, he was in many ways successful; in Kheda, he discovered just how intransigent the British Raj was to be, but the Kheda peasants played the part that he wanted.

Kheda and Ahmedabad: A General Survey and Summary.

1. How Gandhi Organised Support for his Activities

If we examine these two satyagraha struggles by the same criteria which we used in analysing the Champaran satyagraha, we can see Gandhi organising in the following way. First, he brought his team of workers together and gave them instructions, in both instances setting them tests which would be educational for them and which would demonstrate their sincerity to the labourers and the peasants with whom they were working. In Ahmedabad they were to go daily into the workers' homes and render them services much as a social worker would do. When Gandhi himself came under criticism from workers who were starving for continuing to eat and to ride in one of the millowner's cars while they suffered, he then took his vow that he would share their conditions until the dispute was ended and began his fast. In Kheda Gandhi had had his volunteers walking as much as 20 miles a day in the scorching sun, eating only peasant food. Later some of them undertook direct action on behalf of the peasants and re-possessed a confiscated field of onions.
What Gandhi was doing, of course, was training workers who would identify with the common people and he was trying to make that identification as deep and as practical as possible: a psychological experience for the worker and a visible, or symbolic, action to those observing the worker. 69

Second, in Ahmedabad, the millhands he organised by calling regular meetings and processions through the town. Leaflets were circulated daily discussing the progress of the struggle. It has been suggested that the men's foremen constituted an intermediate leadership, who looked directly to Anasuya Sarabhai, Shakerlal Banker and Gandhi himself as their figureheads. 69 Gandhi was clearly worried from the start about the millhands' likely behaviour during the strike. He tried to maintain discipline by getting the workers to take a vow which was repeated daily at the meetings; "Keep the Pledge" was a slogan chanted on the processions. A large proportion of the vow was concerned with the strikers' conduct during the struggle. The morale of the strike began to suffer when Gandhi strongly criticised some of the leading activists who were intimidating fellow-strikers who wanted to return to work. In order to restore morale, Gandhi then announced his fast. He also organised the payment of work-parties to help in the construction of his ashram, which was then being moved from one part of Ahmedabad, at Kochrab, to the river bank at Sabarmati. In 1919, Gandhi was invited to lead Bombay millworkers in a major strike. He seriously considered getting involved, but eventually withdrew, on the grounds that the majority of the Bombay millworkers were from Maharashtra and he thought that, as a Gujarati leader, he would have great difficulty in controlling them. 70
In Kheda, the peasant farmers were also disciplined by a vow. Meetings were held throughout the district. At first, the police were detaining only "movable" property from the farmers who refused to pay their revenue. A system was devised where the local volunteers would warn a village by runners when the officials were coming. They would then lock their houses so the officials couldn't get in and allow their cattle to wander off their property so they couldn't be identified. Later, as the struggle intensified, police were given warrants to break into the houses, to remove standing crops and to forfeit land from those refusing revenue and sell it at auction. Gandhi escalated the conflict in return by sending volunteers to remove a confiscated crop. They became heroes when they were jailed for a month. Gandhi also made defiant speeches in which he denied absolutely that the Government would be bold enough to sell the farmers' hereditary lands.

In both Ahmedabad and Kheda, Gandhi vastly increased the sacrificial element in the struggle by denying to the labourers and the farmers a strike fund. In Ahmedabad, to avoid polarization, he kept the struggle out of the press, but once he announced his fast, telegrams poured in from all over India pressing the millowners to settle. In Kheda, he restricted publicity prior to the declaration of "satyagraha", but once the revenue refusal was launched, he invited the support of public opinion across India while still refusing donations.

2. How Gandhi Approached his Opponents and What Resulted
Gandhi's leadership of Satyagraha in Ahmedabad was complicated by the fact that his opponents, the millowners, included as their principal representative a young man, Ambalal Sarabhai, who though only 25 was a personal friend and benefactor of the ashram. Throughout the strike they continued to meet socially and maintained cordial relations.
Also, Gandhi's principal co-worker was Anasuya Sarabhai, Ambalal's 23-year-old sister and it was through his friendship with them both that he first became involved in the dispute. When this arbitration broke down, Gandhi and Anasuya sided with the workers. Erik Erikson, in his book on the Ahmedabad strike suggests that this conflict with Ambalal Sarabhai set off an intense personal crisis in Gandhi which, six months later, resulted in a severe illness which brought him close to death. 

As we have seen, Gandhi's objectives in Ahmedabad were pitched extremely low. His chief goal - as in all his struggles - was to develop the character of the millhands by helping them to discover depths of courage and self-sacrifice of which they did not know themselves capable. If by intense suffering they could win a victory, then their self-respect and the respect in which they were held by their employers would immeasurably improve. The Ahmedabad satyagraha was, in this respect, an exercise in industrial relations for Gandhi - not based on anti-employer polarisation and the build up of independent worker-power to compel a settlement. If Gandhi had sought this he would have launched a strike fund so as to prolong the strike and compel the employers to submit. Gandhi's concept - similar to his concept of caste in which, with specific strong reservations, he was a firm believer at this time - was of the mutual rights and obligations of employers and employees, both of which deserved recognition. He therefore favoured the principle of arbitration, rather than what we today know as "collective bargaining", as a way of balancing the scale. But he also believed that the workers were much weaker than the employers and deserved his support, not least because of the appalling conditions in which they were living.

Ambalal Sarabhai was like Gandhi a religious man and appears to have convinced Gandhi that he was sincere in his principal argument.
This was that the employers were unwilling to give way, not because the workers' claim was unjust, but because if they did, power would swing to the workers, whose demands in future would become unreasonable. To complicate matters, some of the employers, including Sarabhai, bound themselves by a religious vow not to pay more than a 20% increase. This, of course, was a direct counter to the workers' vow not to accept less than 35%. When Gandhi undertook his fast in order to sustain the workers in their vow, the employers capitulated quickly with some bitterness. Gandhi confessed to feeling guilty, partly because his fast had put undue pressure on them, but also because it was his act which "won" the strike, rather than the sufferings of the workers.

Eventually, the fresh arbitrator appointed as a result of the settlement found in favour of the millhands. But the remarkable result was the development of a unique system of industrial relations in Ahmedabad. Under the leadership of Anasuya Sarabhai and Shankerlal Banker, the Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad was formed as a means of protecting and educating its members. By the 1930s, it was running 23 schools for 1,600 children; a hospital with 30 beds, and two dispensaries; restaurants; a grain shop; a savings bank; a credit union; a cinema; a library; choirs; and five gymnasiums. With over 50,000 members it exercised a strong influence at municipal elections and had imposed on the Town Council "a relatively ambitious housing programme." In addition it had won for its officers the right of access to the mills to investigate complaints, and where disputes remained unresolved, Gandhi stepped in as mediator. After 1923, there was no general stoppage of all the mills in the city. By 1940, the Textile Labour Association had established as its goal co-ownership of the mills "on a footing of equality with the so-called owners." Indulal Yajnik commented that "Mr Gandhi and his lieutenants have succeeded in turning
Ahmedabad labour into their own special preserve".  

In Kheda, Gandhi's principal opponents were officials of the British Raj, though he also encountered some opposition from local nationalist representatives on the Bombay provincial council who disapproved of civil disobedience. The British commissioner for the Northern District, Mr Pratt, was the responsible official for Kheda and he had gone on record in Ahmedabad, at the public celebrations to mark the end of the strike, advising labourers to continue to follow Mr Gandhi. However, in Kheda, he was defending the British system of revenue collection and his attitude was quite different. Revenue assessment was frequently arbitrary and unfair, but the British could not afford to have the system undermined by agitation. As Hardiman says, "The British were always afraid that if they yielded an inch, peasants throughout India would refuse their revenue." Democratic control of the revenue collection system by the Indian electorate was not secured until 1935.

In Kheda, Gandhi maintained regular contact with Mr Pratt. Again, his demands were pitched extremely low, but, as with the Ahmedabad mill-owners, Pratt clearly felt he could not afford to concede. Gandhi used all his skills as an advocate to argue that the British must base their rule on consent rather than fear, but to no avail. Pratt had the support of both the Bombay Government and the Government of India in refusing to budge. In the end, Gandhi discovered that the British were not exacting sanctions against those strikers least able to pay. He decided that this was a concession which met his original objectives as set out in the vow taken at the beginning of the struggle. The British, however, made no public statement of the concession and no negotiation had taken place. So Gandhi felt extremely disappointed with this "victory".
Nevertheless, refusal of revenue became a consistent tactic as a weapon against the Raj adopted by peasants in this part of Gujarat over the next 15 years up to 1934. They clearly saw it as an effective weapon. And Hardiman points out that while assessment was increased in many areas surrounding Kheda in subsequent years, in Kheda the rate remained the same until a new increase was made in 1924 and this contributed directly to the pivotal Bardoli revenue refusal in 1928. Kheda peasants remained strong supporters of the Gandhian campaigns subsequently, including especially the 1930-31 movement. 

Interestingly, one of the Bombay councillors who spoke openly against Gandhi while the Kheda struggle was continuing, later wrote to him as follows:

"I must admit that I considerably under-rated the power of combination of the Kaira agriculturalists under the leadership of a gentleman of your high magnetic influence. The result valued in money may not be big, but to my knowledge there was hardly any district in which the icon of authority was venerated and respected as much as in Kaira (Kheda), and you have done the greater service to the country by smashing the icon within its own temple and exposing all its internal deformities. One can do nothing better than let the people perceive where is the real source of authority. I believe that the Government and the people will not easily forget the lessons you have taught." 84

Also, in 1920, Gandhi received a letter from Mr Pratt, the British Commissioner, who had then returned on leave to England. Pratt admitted that "there have been hard thoughts and hard words against you, which were not justified", and added that in future "I wish to grasp the hand of fellowship and cooperation". Pratt had been impressed by the pro-government stance which Gandhi took at the 1918 Amritsar Congress. 85

Indulal Yajnik, who parted company with Gandhi in 1920, reviewed the Ahmedabad and Kheda campaigns some years later having been on the edge of the first and participated in the second. By the time of writing he was a convert to Marxism and he concluded that in Ahmedabad, Gandhi had
virtually starved the workers into submission to the employers, but that they were "so thoroughly hypnotised" by Gandhi's fast, that they thought they had won "victory". 86 While, in Kheda, the campaign "achieved practically nothing". He adds a comment about Kheda which has remained a standard criticism of Gandhi's methods from many other political radicals: "The end of the struggle ... showed Mr Gandhi after leading a revolutionary struggle up to a certain stage could console himself and others with the achievement of success when none had really been obtained ..." Yajnik found himself forced to admit, nonetheless, that the Kheda struggle "at least served to awaken a new spirit among the peasants, not only of the district and the Province, but of the whole of India". 87 Even if he had achieved nothing for the peasants, at least Gandhi had awoken the peasantry across the whole of India! - though this is an exaggeration.

We see, though, how Gandhi's methods had more to do with changing consciousness, than with winning specific material concessions from opponents. This made him vulnerable to criticisms from conventional political standpoints of left, centre and right, which examined objectively what he had "won" for his side in these and other struggles. It is a criticism which cannot be ignored and which may be decisive in the end. But Gandhi had other and larger objectives than the specific grievance at hand, as we have seen. In this respect his battles in Ahmedabad and Kheda had many of the results he wanted. Erik Erikson doubts, at one point, "whether this wily little man ever was drawn into a decision which he did not choose for long- (very long) range reasons." 88
CHAPTER 2. Page 58

Summary

1. Gandhi kept aloof from the activities of the Home Rule Leagues and the Gujarat Sabha on his return from South Africa, but after his success in Chanparan he felt able to accept an invitation to take charge of the Gujarat Sabha.

2. Immediately, he placed his stamp on the organisation by directing its members into political and social work projects among the peasantry.

3. Over three years, he had recruited a team of co-workers who worked under his direction during the refusal of land revenue by peasants in rural Kheda and a strike against reduction in their wages by millhands in Ahmedabad.

4. Features of both campaigns were:
   (i) the taking of religious vows by peasants and workers to maintain their struggle until their minimum demands were met;
   (ii) the pitching of low demands so as not to go beyond the strength of the satyagrahis;
   (iii) a demand for third-party arbitration, or a public inquiry, as a way of resolving the conflict.
   (iv) the refusal of outside support for the struggle as a demonstration of self-reliance;
   (v) Gandhi's sense that the struggles must set an example in integrity and fortitude to the whole nation; and
   (vi) a weakening of morale which led Gandhi to improvise an escalation of the conflict.

5. Gandhi's fast was designed to identify himself with the weakening millhands who were starving. It had an electrifying impact on
Summary

all parties to the conflict and across India. The employers quickly capitulated and claimed that Gandhi had used unfair pressure.

6. The intransigence of the Raj in a struggle affecting its land revenue system prevented any public inquiry in Kheda - But Gandhi found that there had been a concession which secured the position of the poorest peasants; so he called off the campaign.
REFERENCES


2. Yajnik, Indulal, Gandhi as I Know Him, Bombay: Mr G. G. Bhat, 1933, p 2.


4. Yajnik, op cit Chapter 11. "A Wet Blanket", pp 4-6; see also pp 1-2, 8, 13, 16, 25, 27, 28. Yajnik, although a critic of Gandhi, provides by far the most persuasive account of his first years back in Gujarat and I have followed it extensively. (See Owen, op cit pp 169-170, 190, on other members of the group around Yajnik at this time.)

5. This is Yajnik's interpretation, which I share: "I was convinced that he would start his fight as soon as he was sure of a sufficient number of people who would follow him unflinchingly on the path of political resistance tempered with spiritual love." (Yajnik, op cit p 14)

6. Yajnik op cit p 9


8. Tendulkar, op cit p 160


REFERENCES

12. Yajnik, op cit p 14

13. ibid p 30


15. Yajnik, op cit pp 14-15

16. ibid pp 17-18

17. ibid pp 18-19; Tendulkar, op cit pp 198-199


19. Yajnik, op cit p 30


24. Yajnik, op cit pp 25-27

25. ibid, p 27


27. Tendulkar, op cit pp 159-160

28. Yajnik, op cit pp 27-29

30. M.K. Gandhi to Mrs West, February 12 1918, in Desai, Mahadev, Day-to-Day with Gandhi, (Secretary's Diary) Vol 1, Nov. 1917-March 1919, Rajghat: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1968, p 33

31. Tendulkar, op cit pp 174-175
REFERENCES

32. Yajnik, op cit pp 35-36; Hardiman, op cit p 57; M.K. Gandhi to Mr Natarajan, in Desai, Mahadev, op cit p 75-76; Brown, op cit pp 94-95. Judith Brown seems unreasonably to favour police reports which accused Gandhi of acting as an "outside" agitator in Yheda, rather than responding to a local grievance. Hardiman (op cit p 47) has, however, criticised her account in general and demonstrated the genuine nature of peasant unrest.

33. Brown, op cit p 113, 115-116

34. Hardiman, op cit pp 47-59

35. Brown, op cit pp 114-116; Gillion, op cit pp 129-132

36. Brailsford, Henry Noel, Rebel India, London: Leonard Stein, 1931 pp 59-60; Yajnik, op cit p 30

37. Gandhi's morning prayer speech, February 27 1918, in Desai, Mahadev, op cit p 52; Gandhi in conversation with C.F. Andrews, March 21, 1918, ibid p 72

38. ibid, p 74


41. Gandhi, in conversation with Annie Besant, March 12, 1918, ibid p 63; but see the change of plan by March 28, in Brown op cit p 101

42. See the account in Brown Judith, op cit pp 100-103


44. Desai, A Righteous Struggle pp 10-13

45. ibid, pp 24-29; Gandhi's prayer speech in the ashram March 17 1918, in Desai, Day-to-Day with Gandhi pp 67-68; "For the last twenty days,
REFERENCES

I have been moving among ten thousand millworkers. In my presence they took a solemn oath with Ishwara or Khuda ... as their witness. And they took it with great fervour. Whatever they be in other respects, these labourers are believers in their God.

"They had supposed that God was sure to rush to their rescue as they had strictly kept the vow for full 20 days, but when God did not help them even then, and chose to put them to a severer test, their faith in him weakened. They felt 'Trusting the word of this one man, we suffered so long and gained nothing. Instead of listening to his advice to remain peaceful, had we indulged in violence we would have got within quite a few days, not merely the 3½% increment we demanded but even more.' That was their changed outlook after 20 days. It was impossible for me to put up with this mentality. It appeared to me as the victory of Satan, if a vow, taken in my presence, could be so easily broken and if the people's faith in God faded away, Life would become intolerable to me if I remained a passive witness to the extinction of dharma even in a matter in which I was participating. I realised I must make the millworkers understand the seriousness of a vow and show them how far I would go to honour it. If I did not do that, I was a coward, I felt. If a man who claims to jump over a length of a pole, fails to jump over even the little span of 9 inches, he betrays himself a braggart and a coward. I had to save those ten thousand persons from a moral fall and I took the only possible step for it. My fast had an electric effect, beyond my wildest hope. Thousands of men were present there and streams of tears flowed through their eyes. A wave of conversion - an awareness of the Soul - swept them. Life pulsated where men had become
but sticks and stones. Their spirits rose high and they regained the confidence that they could keep the vow. The sight convinced me beyond doubt that the light of dharma in India is not yet extinct, that Indians are still their true selves, capable of realizing the Self within and knowing its power."

See also, Gandhi to Esther Faering, April 8 1918, in ibid, p 73

"The Ahmedabad strike provided the richest lessons of life. The power of love was never so effectively demonstrated to me, as it was during the lock-out. The existence of God was realized by the mass of men before me, as soon as the fast was declared."

46. Desai, A Righteous Struggle, p 25

47. Gandhi's prayer speech in the ashram, March 17 1918, in Desai, Day-to-Day with Gandhi pp 64-68. (For a fuller version of the latter part of this speech, see footnote 45 above)

48. "Letter to the people of Kaira", June 6 1918, ibid p 345. This contains the full text of the March 22 pledge.

49. M.K. Gandhi to Mr Natarajan, April 5 1913 in ibid p 76

50. "Message of Kaira Satyagraha", April 17 1918, in ibid p 336

51. Brown, op cit p 101

52. Desai, A Righteous Struggle, p 20

52A M.K. Gandhi to Dr Mehta July 7 1918, in Desai, Day to Day with Gandhi p 162, "The strike at Ahmedabad has brought me in contact with many members of the weavers' communities. Nearly 300 women have already begun to spin. Yarn production will come to two maunds (80 lbs) per day I suppose within a short time. All these women were totally unemployed so long, but now they are getting their bread."

53. M.K. Gandhi to Pranjivan, March 7 1918, in ibid p 59

54. M.K. Gandhi to Mavlankar, January 31 1918 in ibid p 18

55. M.K. Gandhi to Dr Pranjivandas Mehta May 15 1918 in ibid p 127
64. ibid pp 119-121; Bondurant, op cit pp 70-71, 73; Gillion, op cit, pp 143-144.

REFERENCES

66. Bondurant, op cit p 73

67. See Desai, A Righteous Struggle, pp 14-16, 44-50; "Reply to the Commissioner Mr Pratt", April 15 1918, and "Message to the Kaira Satyagraha", April 17 1918, in Desai, Day-to-Day with Gandhi, pp 331-338

68. Yajnik, op cit p 36


70. Gillion, op cit p 133

71. Hasselos, James, "Some aspects of Bombay City Politics in 1919", in Kumar, op cit pp 171-172


73. "I have a far greater faith in British political good sense than has the Commissioner. And I will repeat what I said to you before, that I consider it impossible that you should lose your lands for action undertaken with such pure motives". ("Message to the Kaira Satyagrahis", April 17, 1918, in Desai, Day-to-Day with Gandhi, p 338).


75. Gandhi, M.K. An Autobiography, p 319

76. Desai, A Righteous Struggle, p 14

77. Brailsford, op cit pp 86-90

78. Desai, A Righteous Struggle, pp v-vi

79. Yajnik, op cit p 34

80. ibid pp 35-36

81. Hardiman, op cit p 71

82. Brown, op cit pp 96-103
REFERENCES

83. Hardiman, op cit pp 58-59, 70-72
84. Parekh, Gokuldas. "Kahandas to Gandhi, June 1918, in Desai, Day-to-day with Gandhi, pp 229-230 (The letter was not received until August 17)
85. Pratt, F., to Gandhi, February 18 1920, in ibid pp 54-55
86. Yajnik, op cit p 33
87. ibid, p 39
88. Erikson, op cit p 45
CHAPTER 3: page 68

GUJARAT: A BASE FOR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, 1918-1920

Gandhi's promotion of satyagraha in Ahmedabad and Kheda in 1918 transformed politics in Gujarat. "By mid-May", says Judith Brown, "when the Ahmedabad satyagraha drove home the implication of the Kaira campaign, Gandhi was the most powerful leader in the region's public life." As a result he began to receive invitations from nationalist leaders prominent in other provinces and from the Government of India itself to play a part in some of the great decisions facing the nation at the end of the First World War.

From this point, Gandhi began to operate increasingly as an all-India politics figure and his activities, even when confined to Gujarat, had direct implications and repercussions outside the province. The period between 1918 and 1920, during which Gandhi launched the Rowlatt Satyagraha as a first attempt to organise on a national scale, was a time when he attempted to rely on Gujarat as a base which would take up his activities while he mobilised new support for his efforts elsewhere. This is especially clear in the build-up to Noncooperation in 1920. After 1920, as a principal figure in the National Congress, Gandhi sought to become a politician whose programme and appeal touched all parts of the subcontinent. Nonetheless, he was always able to look to Gujarat for that exemplary first step, the leading role, which would encourage the rest of the nation.

Thus Gujarat first helped Gandhi to prominence and then remained loyal to him when he became a pre-eminent national figure. By focusing on his activities in Gujarat we can see the importance to him as a national leader of his regional base. We can also begin to explore the relationship between local and national action. On the one hand, there is a dynamic relationship illustrated here -- Gandhi's activities in Gujarat propelling
him to national prominence. On the other, there are strategic questions for the organiser — how to deal with the different demands imposed by a local campaign in a defined area as against those of a national campaign over a vast subcontinent.

**Recruiting in Rural Gujarat**

Throughout the Champaran and Kheda struggles, Gandhi had been protesting his loyalty to the Raj, while simultaneously he organised civil disobedience against it. In the spring of 1918, only six months before the Armistice, the Secretary of State for India in London began to put pressure on the Viceroy in Delhi to raise more money and troops for the War.\(^2\) Gandhi was among a number of national leaders whom the Viceroy invited to a War Conference in Delhi in April 1918.\(^3\) Gandhi attended but only very reluctantly when he discovered that Tilak and other major
nationalist figures had been excluded. He made it clear publicly that he opposed more funds being raised in India for the War ("India has already donated to the Imperial Exchequer beyond her capacity"). Nevertheless even more decisively he supported the British call for men throughout India to enlist. He also created a mild sensation in the Conference by speaking only in Hindi.

Few Hone Rulers actively supported recruiting for the Indian Army because they had no love for the British Raj - but they did not speak out openly against it for fear of charges of sedition. Their principal argument was that support by them as nationalist leaders for recruiting must be conditional on the British promising to bring forward major constitutional reforms towards Home Rule. Gandhi utterly rejected this argument, which he saw as immoral. Until the Indian nation was ready to throw off British rule in its entirety, which he didn't think it was - and neither, he believed, did the Home Rulers - they should support Britain in its hour of danger unconditionally. If they did this wholeheartedly, he added, he believed the British would be much more willing to grant the Indian nation Home Rule.

As a follow-up to the Delhi war conference, the provincial governors were asked to call regional war conferences. Tilak and the other nationalist leaders were invited, along with Gandhi, to the conference in Bombay in June for the Bombay Presidency. When Tilak was stopped by the Governor of Bombay from presenting his argument - that nationalist India would be willing to cooperate in recruiting if specific reform proposals were announced, but not otherwise - the Maharashtrian political leader walked out with his supporters. Gandhi, as a protest at the insult to Tilak, declined to second a resolution moved in support of recruitment and remained silently in his seat.
He then, however, threw himself wholeheartedly into recruitment. From his own accounts and others, the work became an obsession with him. Inevitably, the district where he chose to concentrate his recruiting effort was the Kheda district of Gujarat where he had just organised a partially successful six months' campaign involving mass peasant participation. Most of Gandhi's co-workers, despite doubts which some of them had about how Gandhi could square recruiting work with his faith in ahimsa or nonviolence, took up the campaign with him. The Kheda peasants, however, fresh from their perilous confrontation with the British revenue system, were not impressed by the campaign and Gandhi gained few recruits and little cooperation from the Kheda district. Gandhi, nevertheless, spent seven weeks of intensive work in the district, moving from village to village with his team of workers, until in August, he fell seriously ill.

Gandhi, as we have seen, was opposed to raising money for the War. He also argued strongly that one of the greatest crimes of the British in India had been to weaken the ability of the nation to fight by depriving the citizen of the right to bear arms. Nonviolence, according to Gandhi, was rooted in the voluntary renunciation of weapons, rather than in an imposed and compulsory disarmament which was humiliating. Enlisting in the Army, he argued, would give Indians training in the use of weapons and encourage the development of a fighting spirit which he felt was essential for the attainment of independence or Swaraj. 6 This surprising argument was the one which appealed most to Gandhi's young Home Rule co-workers in Gujarat. 7

Part of Gandhi's appeal in Kheda was his religious asceticism. Gandhi followed very much in the bhakti tradition of Hinduism which was strong in Kheda. In the early 19th century an ascetic bhakti saint
called Swaminarayan had won many converts in the area stressing good works and the doctrine of ahimsa or nonviolence, in contrast to the emphasis of an earlier bhakti sect in the area associated with Vallabhacharya. The British had actively encouraged the Swaminarayan sect because of its emphasis on quiescence before authority. Gandhi's religious programme and ashram life was very similar to the Swaminarayan doctrine and someone like Vallabhbhai Patel, a native of Kheda district, who had been brought up in a strict Swaminarayan household and had then rejected the doctrine, initially scorned Gandhi because he thought he was promoting the same message. When, however, Vallabhbhai saw, after Champaran, that Gandhi was an activist, he became an active supporter of his.

In 1918, during his recruiting work, Gandhi came up directly against the influence of these two sects in Kheda. He wrote to his son in July 1918:

"What has cut me to the quick is the perception that the teachings of Swaminarayan and Vallabhacharya have made us completely unmanly ... The love taught by Swaminarayan and Vallabhacharya is effeminate sentimentality. True love cannot grow out of it. They have not even an inkling of the true spirit of Ahimsa ... Their influence has spread most widely in Gujarat ..."

In another letter written at the time, Gandhi explained this further:

"I find great difficulties in recruiting, but do you know that not one man has yet objected because he would not kill? They object because they fear to die. The unnatural fear of death is ruining the nation."

In his discussion of the influence of Swaminarayan and Vallabhacharya, he went on to announce "the great change in my thinking". This had nothing to do with abandoning his faith in the superiority of Indian Culture over "Western Civilisation", but he now distinguished between the letter of nonviolence and the spirit of nonviolence. He had decided that the spirit of nonviolence (ahimsa) could be contained in a violent act (himsa) as for example in killing a rabid dog. In the same way, he speculated children should be trained in fighting techniques so that they would be physically strong enough to practise true ahimsa or nonviolence.

The results of his recruiting work in Kheda forced him to question what should be done "when we discard the old royal road in Ahimsa of turning the other cheek". He wondered whether children in the ashram could be
trained to hit back when attacked "without their becoming aggressive and insolent"? 11

Much of this thinking stayed with Gandhi when his recruiting work was over. As we have seen, his first question to prospective satyagrahis had often been "Are you prepared to die?" After his 1918 recruiting experience he began to place more emphasis on "manliness" and physical courage and to see even more strongly in martial qualities the potential for ahimsa or non-violence. But, ironically, it was during this time that Gandhi's own physical health collapsed. While in Kheda, Gandhi had come to realise that the diet he developed in South Africa, of fruit and nuts, was beyond the means of most Indian peasants. He therefore was in the process of transferring to the local peasant diet based on vegetables, including beans and grains. This harsher regime appears to have caused him great problems, for in August 1918 he fell seriously ill with dysentery and believed he was going to die. 12 He was confined to bed for three months. During this time, the Armistice was signed ending the war. Gandhi's recruiting team turned its efforts to work on famine relief in several parts of Gujarat.

April 1919: Ahmedabad Sets the Wrong Example

If Gandhi's recruiting efforts in Ahmedabad were unsuccessful, they do not appear to have damaged his standing in Gujarat. Relations with the Raj were profoundly uncertain as the First World War drew to an end, and nationalist politicians had no clearcut position on the recruitment question. A second issue was preoccupying Indian nationalism at this time. While he was still recruiting in Gujarat and, later, when confined to his sickbed, Gandhi began to receive attentions from leading nationalists anxious to know where he stood in a fresh controversy. Proposals for constitutional reform had been introduced by the Raj as a direct response to changes in political conditions stemming from the war. Opinion was divided on whether
to welcome or reject these proposals.

One group of Indian politicians, the Moderates, who had been until 1917 in control of the Indian National Congress, favoured collaboration with the Raj.
The other group, the "Extremists", were the Home Rulers, led by Tilak and Eesant, who as we have seen had gathered an active following in the country and had captured Congress in December 1917. Pressed by the Moderates to support the reforms and by the Extremists to oppose them, Gandhi refused to become involved and developed his own position critical of both sides. Broadly, Gandhi supported the Moderates in their arguments in favour of reforms, but felt that they were not prepared to press with enough determination—that is, go to the length of civil disobedience—to ensure that the limited modifications which they did wish to see were actually carried out.

Early in 1919, a third issue became an equally important focus of nationalist opinion. During the War, the Raj had faced a terrorist movement in Bengal. As the War ended, the Government of India felt that in addition to a political gesture toward Indian nationalism, such as the constitutional reforms, some extension of emergency powers was needed to protect the state against further terrorist outbreaks throughout India, not just Bengal. Thus the Rowlatt Bills were drawn up to fill this purpose. The Bills provoked an uproar throughout India, including the unprecedented unanimous opposition of all Indian representatives on the Viceroy's Council. Gandhi, in choosing the Rowlatt Bills as the first issue on which to organise an all-Indian satyagraha, selected an issue which united all nationalist opinion in outrage, as opposition to the reforms did not.

However, Gandhi had not yet played a leading role in any of the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress. Nor had the Congress yet established itself as an organisation capable of launching mass political
agitation, despite efforts by Besant and Tilak in that direction since 1914. Also, Gandhi was not in control of any other national body capable of organising satyagraha. He was by this time more complimentary of the work of Annie Besant's League, but still resisted pressure from his Gujarati colleagues to join the organisation ("one scabbard cannot hold two swords").

Thus when the group of young Bombay and Ahmedabad Home Rulers, several of whom had worked with him in Ahmedabad and Kheda, approached him in February 1919 with the request that he lead a nationwide satyagraha struggle against the Rowlatt Bills, they jointly agreed to form a new organisation, the Satyagraha Sabha, to conduct the agitation.

We shall describe the way in which the Satyagraha Sabha was organised more fully in Chapter 6 and also how the Rowlatt Satyagraha was conducted. Here we will examine simply the role that Gujarat played with Bombay City in this key experiment for Gandhi in launching his method on a national scale.

The 24-member executive of the Satyagraha Sabha established at a meeting in Gandhi's ashram on February 24, 1919, was composed almost entirely of members of the two Home Rule Leagues drawn from Bombay City and Ahmedabad. They envisaged semi-autonomous branches of the Sabha being established in other parts of India, and this did happen in a few cases; but Gujarat, together with the City of Bombay, remained the driving force and supplied most of the active workers.

Despite allowing themselves only two weeks to plan the major Rowlatt event, the April 6 hartal, the Satyagraha Sabha succeeded in promoting simultaneous demonstrations in many parts of India, several of them massively supported. The hartal was an attempted closing-down of all commercial businesses, accompanied by prayers, fasting, public meetings and processions. One
extraordinary feature was its almost entirely peaceful character throughout the country. Subsequently, of course, serious violence did break out in a number of places, causing Gandhi to suspend and finally abandon, the Sabha's programme of civil disobedience. Even so, these events prompted Gandhi to do no more than hesitate in promoting his method of satyagraha and his claims as a national leader.

Gujarat and Bombay City played a key part in the Rowlatt events. The Satyagraha Sabha circulated a pledge to be signed by those willing to offer civil disobedience at its direction. By mid-March 1919, across the whole of India, 982 signatures had been collected -- of these, over 80% were from Gujarat and Bombay. By April 7, the day after the hartal, it is reported that 1,645 signatures had been collected in Bombay.17 Much of the organising for the April 6 hartal was done through contacts and membership lists across India to which the Bombay and Ahmedabad members of Annie Besant's League had access.

Gandhi spent April 6 in Bombay. At the beach over one hundred Home Rulers
and Satyagrahis assembled with him early in the morning and bathed in
the customary purification ceremony for holy days. They were joined
by a crowd variously estimated at 5,000 by the police and 150,000 by
the nationalists, which listened to a speech by Gandhi read by a
prominent Bombay Home Ruler, and to a Muslim religious leader. The
crowd then went in silent procession to a Hindu temple bearing banners
saying "mourn for justice" in Gujarati and English, and then on to
another meeting in a mosque which Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu had the
rare experience as Hindus of being permitted to address. Muslim
support for the Rowlatt agitation had been won by their recognition
that the Rowlatt Act might be used against their own leaders. 18

It has been estimated that 80% of shops closed in Bombay on April 6.
Gandhi had requested workers to attend work unless given permission not
to do so by their employers. Eleven mills out of 82 in Bombay closed
during the day. Most of the support for the hartal came from
Gujaratis, though there was a noticeable participation too from the
Maharashtrian community and from Muslims. One commentator notes
cautiously, "Larger numbers were involved in the hartal than had
perhaps ever previously participated in any Bombay political demon-
stration". Even so support did not go much beyond the educated classes
already mobilised - "the working class and masses" had not yet moved
in Bombay in a decisive way to support Gandhi. 19

In Ahmedabad, Indulal Yajnik was one of those who addressed a crowd
estimated by him at "almost a hundred thousand" 20 and elsewhere at
well over 80,000. 21 Meetings were held in Viramgam and other towns in
Gujarat.
On the evening of April 6, when the day's fast was broken, workers from the Satyagraha Sabha committed civil disobedience in Bombay and Ahmedabad by selling several banned books and an unauthorised newspaper. Since these were available only in the Gujarati language, this action was confined to the Bombay Presidency; but the Bombay Government quickly decided not to prosecute. The following day, as a means of preparing individuals for satyagraha struggle on a national scale, the Sabha invited people to take two new pledges drawn up by Gandhi. One, the Swadeshi Pledge, committed the signatory to wearing only clothing manufactured in India; the other was a pledge to observe Hindu-Muslim Unity. Neither pledge drew much support in Bombay.22

Delhi, 900 miles from Bombay, had observed the Rowlatt hartal one week earlier on March 30.

Police shootings led to serious rioting and Gandhi was pressed strongly to come to Delhi and help.13 In the Punjab, supporters of the Rowlatt hartal were also confronted by an obdur ate provincial government and appealed to Gandhi for assistance.

Thus Gandhi left Bombay for Delhi by train on April 8th, intending to visit both places. However, as he neared Delhi on April 9th, he was served with a government order restricting him to Bombay Presidency, which he refused to obey. He was then returned under police escort to Bombay City, which he did not reach until two days later. When the news of Gandhi's arrest reached Ahmedabad and Bombay on April 10th, the result was angry demonstrations which took the form of hartal in Bombay, but quickly developed into severe rioting in Ahmedabad.
Gandhi arrived in Bombay on the afternoon of April 11 and was able to help bring the crowds under control. In Ahmedabad, 51 government and several municipal buildings were burnt down and a European police sergeant murdered. Twenty-eight people were killed and 132 wounded as the police and military restored order under martial law. In Viramgam, near Ahmedabad, six rioters were shot and, in retaliation, an Indian official burnt alive. In Rheda district, two houses were burnt down, telegraph wires cut, and a train carrying troop reinforcements to Ahmedabad was derailed, though without injury to the 200 British soldiers on board.

Gandhi had hoped to go to Delhi and the Punjab to restore calm. In Delhi, following news of his arrest, more demonstrators were shot by police. In the Punjab, martial law was declared and a regime of repression imposed which became notorious internationally as a symbol of British imperial domination in India. The "Punjab Wrongs" of April 1919 were later taken up by the nationalist movement as a main grievance behind the non-cooperation struggle of 1920-22.

Under the terms of his banning order, which restricted him to the Bombay Presidency, Gandhi returned to Ahmedabad from Bombay on April 13 and was allowed to hold a public meeting the following day at which he denounced the violence. Martial law was shortly afterwards withdrawn. Gandhi's view, characteristically, was that his supporters should not have been angered by his arrest and they should not have reacted violently to the further arrest of demonstrators or to the fatal shootings. He spoke of his shock that in a community in which he was well-known and had gone some way to explaining his principles of satyagraha, the people should have so little understanding of these principles and should riot in his name. He announced that just as he intended to maintain his satyagraha against the Rowlatt Acts, as he had vowed to do, he now thought
it was his duty to exercise satyagraha against his own supporters. What pained him most was having to forego his pledge to commit civil disobedience, since he had intended to return to Delhi in contravention of his restriction order. But he would also undertake a further penance - Gandhi was still very weak after his illness - of a three day fast.  

At subsequent meetings Gandhi went on to make a distinction between civil disobedience conducted in a spirit of lawlessness and civil disobedience undertaken as a branch of satyagraha. He thought that to continue civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Acts in the prevailing atmosphere of lawlessness would harm the satyagraha movement. In order to encourage the respect of the government and to reduce the enmity between Europeans and Indians, he thought that satyagrahis should now support the government wholeheartedly in seeking to restore law and order. Gandhi seems not to have been angered by the shootings in Ahmedabad which he considered a necessary and heroic sacrifice in a satyagraha struggle. He did organise a fund for the families of the victims, however. Nationalist opinion in Ahmedabad appears broadly to have accepted that the police and military acted "properly" in the imposition of their authority, though they did object to the maintenance of martial law, and to the subsequent trial and sentencing of people arrested and to the levying of a punitive tax on the city for the reconstruction for the property destroyed. Yajnik recounts that when he and other satyagraha workers went round in fulfillment of Gandhi's campaign to develop the principles of satyagraha in the people, he found them cowed and terrorised by the heavy military and police action. But, in the long run, K.L. Gillion, a scholar who has written a history of Ahmedabad, concludes:
"The events of April 1919 marked the transfer of moral authority in Ahmedabad from the British to the Indian National Congress ... The government’s formal authority was restored without difficulty, but the Congress went from strength to strength and soon turned the city into a moral and financial base for the freedom movement ... Gandhi always regretted the violence that had taken place and it showed him the dangers inherent in mass political action. But it was the violence of April 1919 that broke the spell of the Raj." 29

If the violence of April 10 and 11 was cathartic for Ahmedabad, the events in the Punjab, as we shall see, had the same effect for the Indian nation as a whole. The violence of the masses shocked the educated classes in Ahmedabad; but they were also alienated by the Rowlatt Act itself, the arrest of Gandhi and by the punitive reaction of the government in the city. Instead of causing disillusionment with Gandhi, therefore, the events of 1919 strengthened their alliance with him. Despite the immediate damage to the satyagraha movement caused by the outbreak of violence, Gillion notes that these events 'paved the way for Gandhi's constructive political work - the development of the Ahmedabad Textile Workers Association, the support of the millowners for Congress, and the struggle for control of the Ahmedabad municipal authority waged under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel.' 30 Gandhi, he implies, offered an alternative path to the educated classes from that of violence.
1. Following his "successes" in Ahmedabad and Kheda, Gandhi had become a regional and national political figure, though not attached to any political grouping.

2. Gandhi was approached by the Raj to undertake a recruiting campaign of Indians to serve with the Indian Army in the Middle East.

3. Gandhi was approached by nationalist leaders in Congress to take a stand on the constitutional reforms being proposed by the Raj for India.

4. On the principle that one should support the "opponent" in time of difficulty rather than exploit the opportunity to one's own advantage, Gandhi began a recruiting drive for the Indian Army in Kheda. His striking lack of success illustrates the fact that, however great his personal charisma and ability as an organizer, he could not mobilise the Kheda peasants against what they saw as their best interests.

5. Gandhi's support for the Raj in the War effort:
   (i) increased his standing with the British
   (ii) lent credibility to his argument that in undertaking civil disobedience against the Raj in Champaran and Kheda he was doing the Raj a service; and
   (iii) increased his standing with Indian "moderate" politicians who wished to collaborate with the British.

But it also:
   (iv) confused his satyagraha supporters in Gujarat; and
   (v) alienated anti-British Home Rulers who found perverse his refusal to use Britain's need for troops as a bargaining counter to secure more substantial constitutional advances. (Gandhi consistently rejected political "quid pro quos" - which struck him as having no moral basis.)
SUMMARY

6. Gandhi refused to support the "moderate" politicians in their favourable response to Britain's constitutional reform proposals. He broadly agreed with their aims, but deplored their unwillingness to contemplate civil disobedience to enforce the minor changes they wanted. This is a good example of his policy of favouring "extreme" methods to support "moderate" demands, as in Ahmedabad and Kheda.

7. Gandhi's continuing effort to identify himself with the Gujarati peasantry led to experiments with the local diet which damaged his health. While still sick, Gandhi was approached by local Home Rulers anxious to initiate a national campaign against the Raj's proposed repressive Rowlatt Bills. Without approaching the Indian National Congress for approval, he launched the Satyagraha Sabha, made up predominantly of Home Rulers from Bombay City and Gujarat. With the move:
   (i) he made a bold attempt to launch satyagraha on a national scale, in the process bypassing the established politicians;
   (ii) demonstrated his de facto leadership of the Home Rule Leaguers in Bombay and Gujarat; and
   (iii) continued his serious attempt to educate these Home Rulers in the principles of satyagraha.

9. Most of those pledging support on a national basis for the Satyagraha Sabha were from Bombay City and Gujarat: the April 6 hartals there were highly successful.

10. The prohibited literature distributed by the Satyagraha Sabha as an act of civil disobedience was in the Gujarati language and therefore not suitable for other areas.

11. Rioting which broke out in Bombay and Gujarat following Gandhi's arrest on the train to Delhi:
   (i) demonstrated that, despite his reputation, Gandhi was not in control of the forces in these areas which his movement was attempting to liberate and harness;
(ii) but his sincere remorse and active participation in bringing order back to the area, linked Gandhi to the educated classes in Bombay Presidency who were afraid of violence and it helped to preserve his uneasy relationship with the Raj:

(iii) on the other hand, the violence also effectively broke the authority of the British in Ahmedabad and opened the door for Gandhian constructive workers.
Chapter 3: page 84

After Rowlatt: Picking Up the Pieces

The period after Rowlatt sees Gandhi not in retreat but consolidating his position in Gujarat. Immediately after the violence, there was some fear among his co-workers that the government would arrest them and their leader and even execute Gandhi. But the Government of India was anxious to promote its reform package and had no desire to make a martyr of Gandhi.

On April 26, however, the Governor of Bombay had the vice-president of the Satyagraha Sabha, B.G. Horniman, deported to England. Horniman, an Englishman and strong Home Rule supporter, was the editor of a daily newspaper, the Bombay Chronicle, where his editorials and reporting were causing offence to the Raj. Immediately, Gandhi came under strong pressure to organise a fresh hartal against this affront to nationalist opinion. Ironically, Horniman had been one of the first members of the Sabha to press Gandhi to suspend civil disobedience after what the English journalist called "the recent deplorable revolutionary outbreaks."

Gandhi, at this time, appears to have been deeply frustrated by his inability to act on his pledge of civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Act. Instead, he was pursuing his campaign of educating the public of Bombay and Gujarat in the principles of satyagraha, prior to resuming civil disobedience at an opportune moment. He and his co-workers were distributing leaflets explaining satyagraha and developing their swadeshi campaign by taking up and teaching hand-spinning and weaving and persuading people to take the Swadeshi Vow. On April 30 1919, he wrote to the Governor of Bombay, and on May 5 to the Viceroy, inviting them to take the Swadeshi pledge.

For about a week, Gandhi resisted the pressure to stage a protest demonstration against the Horniman deportation, issuing daily satyagraha bulletins arguing his case. He put particular emphasis on the
difference between a "satyagraha strike" and the normal types of political agitation, fearing that another hartal would be accompanied by intimidation and violence. When, by May 4, there had been no unrest in Bombay, yet the pressure to stage some demonstration was still intense, the Satyagraha Sabha agreed to observe a 24-hour hartal on Sunday, May 11, 1919. The hartal was to be observed only in Bombay and only by "independent businessmen". Employed people were not to take part unless given permission. The rest of India could show support by fasting and religious contemplation in their own houses.

When the May 11 hartal passed off peacefully, Gandhi was obviously very relieved, paying high tribute to his volunteers who had helped him to set the tenor for the demonstration. When the Bombay police commissioner "boasted" to him that Horniman had little support, Gandhi retorted:

"But for Satyagraha ... (there) would have been violent outbursts in Bombay, mammoth meetings of protest all over the country and for one full year you would have known no peace. It is only due to Satyagraha that all this commotion has been kept down." 37

Shocked by events of only a month previously, Gandhi was already experimenting in the May 11 hartal with new methods of controlling mass agitation. He was anxious as ever to distinguish his approach from that of the Home Rule League, and to have this distinction understood by the people and recognised by the British.

Horniman had edited a daily paper, the Bombay Chronicle. Gandhi was approached and agreed to take over as editor, but was prevented from doing so by government censorship. He was then offered and accepted a Bombay-based English-language weekly, Young India, and, in July, a Gujarati monthly, Navajivan. Eventually, because government censorship was making printers nervous, the Navajivan Press was established in Ahmedabad as a publishing and printing house under Gandhi's control.
and in October 1919, both papers were published as weeklies from there. Gandhi professed to be embarrassed by this association with an English language paper, but said that it was only through the use of English that he could make his ideas available to people in the Tamil-speaking south. He particularly pressed readers in the Madras Presidency to support the paper. In October 1919, Young India had just over 1,200 subscribers; Navajivan had 12,000, and could have sold more. Both later reached 40,000 circulation for a time.38

Navajivan, the Gujarati-language paper, became Gandhi's mouthpiece in rural Gujarat. David Hardiman, in his illuminating paper on the peasant districts of Gujarat between 1915 and 1934, stresses the importance which Navajivan came to have for Gandhi's following in the province:

"His word reached his devotees through the Gujarat weekly, Navajivan. Through this the literate Patider could each week escape his tedious rustic life to become the companion of his beloved Gandhiji as he travelled the length and breadth of India, humbling the proud British, battling with injustice and preaching salvation for mankind. Through Navajivan Gandhi became each reader's personal guru. His dictates ranged from the mundane matters of village drains to soaring eternal truths."

Hardiman likens the Gandhian movement in Kheda to a bhakti sect; many seeing him as an incarnation of Vishnu, or God. Some within a few years were to follow the Gandhian way of life exclusively, wearing the white hand-spun cloth (Khadi) cap as a "sect-mark", looking to him and his devotees at their Ahmedabad ashram; the word being spread by trained workers who were "the travelling sadhus of the sect". Hardiman adds:

"Gandhi was able to bring modern politics to the villages through this sectarian form ... By appearing as a modern form of sadhu, (the Gandhian leaders in Kheda) could break down village parochialism and convert the villagers to the new religion of Indian Nationalism". 39

Gandhi began to develop this relationship through the columns of Navajivan in 1919 when his overriding purpose was to inculcate in his supporters the principles of satyagraha which had been so
grievously misunderstood or abandoned in the rioting after his arrest.

Now that he was editing two weekly journals, Gandhi was no longer dependent on preparing his "satyagraha leaflets" or on getting press statements and letters published in other newspapers. "Armed with the press and these two papers", says Yajnik,

"Mr Gandhi now began every week to broadcast his novel doctrine of civil disobedience and his views on political problems to thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, not only in Gujarat and the rest of India, but to the whole world,". 40

The importance to his work of Gandhi's journalism can hardly be exaggerated. As he moved into a position of all-India prominence he was able through Young India and later, Harijan, to maintain a continuing commentary on public events which was followed by the nationalist movement all over India and, at times, seen virtually as a set of instructions to supporters of Congress. 41

Even before he acquired these newspapers, Gandhi had made it quite clear in the satyagraha leaflets that, despite the temporary suspension of civil disobedience, he thought the principles of satyagraha would spread quickly through his propaganda work and he would be able to launch civil disobedience again against the Rowlatt Act within a "month or two", that is, by July 1919. 42 He went ahead with preparations for this, planning again to restrict participation to his followers in Bombay Presidency. Eventually, however, in response to a firm warning from the Viceroy about the dangers which the renewal of civil disobedience might bring, Gandhi suspended civil disobedience indefinitely on July 21. He had, he said, received two "indications of good will" from the government which he thought made it wise for him to listen to its warnings. 43
Many members of the Sabha were deeply critical of this further climb-down, however, and the Sabha, which had already lost a lot of support, effectively broke up at this point.

Gujarat Takes up Noncooperation

The collapse of the Satyagraha Sabha posed major problems for Gandhi's effort to introduce his ideas and methods to Indian political life. Confined as he was to the Bombay Presidency, he relied considerably on his newly-established weekly journal, Young India, to communicate his views across the nation on two new issues which he took up. These were the questions of martial law in the Punjab following the Rowlatt events and the British treatment in the Middle East of Muslim holy places and religious institutions. They were to catapult him to national prominence -- yet still his home-base in Gujarat and connections with Bombay City were to prove vitally important.

Gandhi's immediate involvement in the Punjab question as soon as his banning order was lifted in October 1919 will be dealt with fully in Chapter 7. Also in October he took up a call from Muslim critics of the Government of India who were planning a Khilafat Day for October 17. Gandhi helped to structure this demonstration on an all-India scale much like the Bombay hartal of May 11 -- that is, with people remaining at home for a day of prayer, but without engaging in the public processions and meetings which had caused trouble in April. This was followed by a less successful boycott of the official peace celebrations on December 19, 1919, to mark the end of the War, and then a further all-India hartal on the second Khilafat Day on March 19, 1920.

The Khilafat question is a complicated one which we will discuss more fully in Chapter 6. Essentially it signified the disaffection of Muslim
fundamentalists in India from the Raj because of the lack of respect shown by Britain for Islamic religious institutions in the Middle East when Turkey was defeated at the end of the First World War. Khilafat Committees were established in many parts of the country, the overall campaign being directed by an alliance of Muslims predominantly from Bombay City and the United Provinces. Several of the Bombay Muslims were wealthy merchants who provided the main funding for the agitation. Gandhi, who was the only Hindu invited to join the highest councils of the movement, provided a key bridging role between the more moderate Bombay Khilafatists and more extreme members from elsewhere. The two groups were able to unite behind Gandhi's policy of nonviolence as the only practical method of demonstrating their disaffection.

At an all-India Khilafat Conference in November 1919, Gandhi first formulated his idea of "noncooperation". Over the following months, the proposals was adapted and sophisticated until in June 1920 Gandhi announced that the Khilafat movement in India would begin noncooperation against the government from August 1, 1920. It was with the support of the Khilafatists that he was able to win approval for noncooperation at the two Indian National Congress sessions held late in 1920 at Calcutta and Nagpur.

In Gujarat and Bombay the Khilafat Days were well supported. Gandhi's followers from the Satyagraha Sabha and the Home Rule organisation cooperated with the Khilafat committee to make Bombay the "driving force" behind the October 17 observance. Nevertheless, it seems that many Gujarati Muslims were "apathetic" in October 1919, and Gandhi's own supporters were confused for many months as to whether they should support Indian Muslims on a religious issue which was controversial and far from clearcut. Yajnik describes how Gandhi's political co-workers from the Satyagraha Sabha were
Chapter 3: page 90

"swept headlong into the Khilafat agitation" and preparations for the Amritsar Congress at the end of the year. As a result, they drifted away from the programme of spinning which they were promoting through the Swadeshi Sabha.51

Yet as late as June 1920, when leading workers from all districts of Gujarat met with Gandhi at his ashram to discuss the Khilafat agitation and noncooperation, they were unconvinced by the political and religious basis of his support for the Muslim position:

"The gathering... dispersed without coming to any conclusion, and eventually all my old friends, who constituted, so to say, Mr Gandhi's old guard in the province, told me: "We do not

(continued on page 93)
understood all these complicated questions, and we are not convinced about the Noncooperation Movement. Tell us, however, when you think it is right to plunge into it, and we shall then do everything in our power to make the Movement a glowing success."

Gandhi it seems had developed among his Gujarat co-workers the discipline which he was later to demand from supporters of Congress as a whole. They were to follow the instructions of their leader even when they disagreed with him, unless they had a strong conscientious objection, in which case they should resign. Yajnik, who was working as the sub-editor of the paper Navajivan, which he had founded and then transferred to Gandhi's editorship, found himself in just this position in the summer of 1920. He was responsible for translating Gandhi's articles on the Khilafat from Young India into the Gujarati language for publication in Navajivan, yet finding himself totally unconvinced by the Khilafat campaign. He eventually did resign.

What restored this uncertainty among Gandhi's Gujarat supporters was two factors. First, Gandhi's decision in June 1920 to link the Khilafat issue with the Punjab issue so as to make common cause on the two principal questions offending nationalist opinion. Second, the working-out in the summer of 1920 of a comprehensive programme of noncooperation which seemed to the political workers, including the disaffected Yajnik, to amount to a practical revolutionary programme. These questions will be taken up in more detail later. What is relevant here is to see how the growing conviction among Gujarat co-workers that noncooperation did constitute a viable programme for confronting the Raj on an all-India scale, led them to play a leading role in preparations for the Special Congress in Calcutta. At the Special Session Gandhi won the support of Congress for his programme. Subsequently, Gujarat again took the lead in the prosecution of the Congress programme of non-cooperation.

Before July 1920, Gandhi had been campaigning on the Khilafat issue and for Noncooperation through local khilafat committees but had no formal organisational support of his own. On July 11, in Nadiad in the Kheda district, the Working Committee of the Gujarat Political Conference agreed to support the entire programme of noncooperation as outlined by Gandhi. They also decided to forward their resolutions "as the will and wishes of the people of Gujarat" to the Special Session of Congress to be held in Calcutta in September. Yajnik comments: "We thus took the
lead in organising national opinion as a purely political body"—meaning that previous support for noncooperation had come from Khilafat groups which were religious bodies and solely supported by Muslims. Encouraged by this support, Gandhi persuaded the Working Committee to call a special public session of the full Gujarat Political Conference so that this endorsement could be ratified in open session.

Normally, organisation of the Gujarat Political Conference was a task taking several months. This time the conference was held from August 27-29, giving the organisers only a few weeks for preparation. Under the Presidency of Gandhi's co-worker Vallabhbhai Patel, the conference did adopt the Noncooperation resolution, moved by Gandhi himself, by an overwhelming majority. This was the first time that the Gujarat Political Conference had acted as a Provincial Congress Committee, sending delegates and proposing resolutions directly to the Indian National Congress. Previously Gujarati political workers had attended as representatives of the Bombay Presidency Congress Committee. It was almost unprecedented for a Provincial Congress Committee to anticipate the National Congress by deciding to act on a resolution without waiting for the decision of the national body. In his autobiography, Gandhi explains how he answered this procedural objection raised by his critics:

"The preliminary contention raised by the opposition was that it was not competent to a provincial conference to adopt a resolution in advance of the Congress. As against this, I suggested that the restriction could apply only to a backward movement; but as for going forward, the subordinate organisations were not only fully competent, but were in duty bound to do so, if they had in them the necessary grit and confidence. No permission, I argued, was needed to try to enhance the prestige of the parent institution, provided one did it at one's own risk."

Thus the Gujarat Political Conference pre-empted Congress by its tactics, or as Yajnik puts it, in a chapter heading in his book quoted from Gandhi, "Gujarat Burns its Boats." 54

Just over a week after their Ahmedabad conference, several hundred Gujarat delegates made their way triumphally by train across India in one of the "Khilafat Specials" to Calcutta, to the special session of the Congress held from September 4 to 7. At the Conference, after fierce debate and some substantial compromises by both Gandhi and his opponents, the Non-
cooperation Programme was adopted as the policy of the Indian National Congress. The Gujarat delegates constituted only one bloc in the large but far from conclusive majority which Gandhi won at Calcutta. But as Yajnik reports, the Gujarat delegates returned to their province "jubilant that we in Gujarat had already inaugurated the Non-Violent War which the Nation as represented at the Congress, eventually adopted ..."55

After Calcutta, Congress leaders throughout India faithfully carried out the boycott of the new Provincial Legislative Councils which was one of the policies in the noncooperation programme. But they showed much less support, and indeed many expressed outright opposition, to two other aspects of the programme, the boycott of courts of law and the boycott of government schools. These three strands in the first stage of the Non-cooperation Programme became known as "The Triple Boycott".

Here again, Gujarat took the lead. At the Gujarat Political Conference in August, a resolution had been passed authorising the Working Committee to organise a programme of national education throughout Gujarat. The schools boycott gave Congress a marvellous opportunity for engaging in propaganda among young people and because many of the schools and colleges were privately run but receiving government grants, Gandhi soon extended the campaign to call for the "nationalisation" of private educational institutions throughout India by refusing these grants. Stiff opposition was encountered outside Gujarat from the governing bodies of most of these institutions, including the principal Muslim and Hindu universities, in Aligarh and Benares. In Ahmedabad and Gujarat, however, Gandhi had striking success in "nationalising" existing schools; and throughout Gujarat new "national schools" were started as well. In November 1920, the National College and Gujarat National University were founded. Gandhi was installed as the first Chancellor of the University which began with 300 students. Shortly
afterwards, National Colleges were started outside Gujarat in Poona, where Gandhi had strong links with the Servants of India Society, and in Patna in Bihar.

Thus in December 1920 the Gujarat delegates set off by train for the annual Congress Session - which was to confirm or reject the support for for Noncooperation given at Calcutta - in what Yajnik calls "a holiday mood"; and at the Congress Session itself held in Nagpur they found their optimism justified. Careful pre-conference bargaining resulted in a genuine compromise between Gandhi's critics and himself; and a newfound national unity was reached behind the programme of the Triple Boycott itself. At the Nagpur Congress in December 1920, Gandhi achieved the unchallenged leadership of the Indian National Congress. He proceeded to transform the Congress organisation so as to make it a political body capable of sustaining the type of campaign which he now had the authority to coordinate across the country. In the process, he achieved political links and a mass following in many parts of the country. But no region of India ever reached the same degree of widespread support for his programme as did Gujarat, and Gujarat continued to play a catalytic role in several of Gandhi's later campaigns. It remained the province to which he would look first for support when he planned to initiate all-India ventures in future.
1. Following the collapse of the Rowlatt Satyagraha in the rioting which followed his arrest, Gandhi never quite lost the initiative:

(i) he started a campaign to inform the people of Bombay City and Gujarat about the principles of satyagraha;
(ii) he launched a swadeshi campaign attempting to get his supporters to spin and weave and to buy Indian-made cloth;
(iii) he announced that individual civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Act would be resumed by himself personally and then by selected followers, but would be restricted to the Bombay Presidency;
(iv) with great reluctance, he permitted a second - in the event, successful - hartal to be organised only in Bombay City in protest against the expulsion by the Raj of an English journalist who supported Home Rule;
(v) he assumed the editorship of two weekly papers, one in the Gujarati language, the other in English, the offices of which were moved to Ahmedabad;
(vi) he supported calls for a government inquiry into the martial law excesses in the Punjab - and linked his second suspension of civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Act to the government's decision to establish this inquiry;
(vii) at the first opportunity, he joined an independent inquiry by the Indian National Congress into the Punjab events; and
(viii) he took up the grievances of Indian Muslims on the Khilafat issue and began to play a key role in directing their campaign.

2. This shift of involvements and variety of activities caused some confusion and dissension among Gandhi's Bombay and Gujarat supporters:

(i) the swadeshi work did not gain widespread support;
(ii) the Satyagraha Sabha broke up amidst dissension about the failure to renew civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Acts; and
(iii) many supporters disagreed with his championing of the Khilafat Cause.

3. Gujarat political workers moved solidly behind Gandhi, however, in the summer of 1920 when he called on the Indian National Congress, at a special session, to launch a programme of noncooperation against the
Summary

Raj on the joint issues of the Khilafat and the Punjab:

(i) the Gujarat Political Conference was the first Provincial Congress Committee to support noncooperation and sent several hundred delegates to the Special Congress in Calcutta and the Annual Congress in Nagpur; and
(ii) the Gujarat Political Conference proceeded to implement the programme of the Triple Boycott—especially the schools boycott—before it had been endorsed by Congress.
Chapter 3: page 99

Gujarat Follows the "Father of the Nation"

After 1920 the Indian National Congress was transformed into an organisation with mass support in many parts of the subcontinent. Gandhi, as the principal architect of this achievement, was established as a national political leader, whose reputation subsequently has earned him the title "Father of the Nation".

Gujarat, the province of his birth, had provided him with a home for his ashram of supporters and the leadership of its main civic organisation, the Gujarat Sabha, which he had directed into a programme of activities in the villages and into two exemplary satyagraha struggles in the capital city of Ahmedabad and in the rural district of Veda. Local nationalists from nearby Bombay City had invited him to lead a co-ordinated all-India protest against the Rowlatt Bills. The Rowlatt Satyagraha drew its strongest support within the Bombay Presidency, but broke down in rioting and government repression in several parts of the subcontinent.

Violent insurrection in Ahmedabad failed to damage Gandhi's reputation in the city, however, but greatly dented British prestige. Through the Swadeshi Sabha and his acquisition of a Gujarati-language newspaper, Navajivan, Gandhi redoubled his efforts to promote his satyagraha principles in the province; and with growing confidence he repeated his tactic of the hartal on several occasions. His friendship with Muslim businessmen in Bombay City helped him to achieve a key position in a major campaign of Indian Muslims against the Raj, the Ahilafat alliance. This led directly to an all-India movement of noncooperation against the government. Gujarati political activists played a leading role in having noncooperation adopted by the Indian National Congress late in 1920 and they made sure that the programme was implemented first in their province as an example to the
rest of the nation.

From his position of prominence in the national movement after 1920, Gandhi continued to rely on the support which had been built up in Gujarat. There is no single volume published in English which examines his career specifically as a Gujarati leader rather than as an all-India figure — and such a theme goes beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, it will be useful to summarise some of the more noteworthy episodes in later years which demonstrate the value of his support in the province.

(continued on page 102)
Some of the main campaigns undertaken in Gujarat after 1920 which played a part in Gandhi's development of satyagraha as an all-India leader, can be summarised as follows:

1. Gujarat in Noncooperation, 1920-1922
Bardoli, a rural "taluka" of 80,000 people in Surat district, adjoining Kheoda, was selected by Gandhi for the final stage in the Noncooperation struggle, mass civil disobedience, in 1921. Intensive preparations went on throughout the whole area, as Gujarati nationalists prepared to engage the British Raj in a symbolic fight on behalf of the nation. But the struggle was called off.

2. Noncooperation by the Ahmedabad Municipality, 1921-1922
One anomaly of the Noncooperation movement was that because, under the Raj's constitutional reforms, Indians had been granted democratic control of local government, the boycott of legislative councils was concentrated at a provincial level and not at a municipal level. The Ahmedabad Municipality, of which Vallabhbhai Patel had been elected leader, began a sustained campaign of obstruction against the provincial government; its most successful stratagem involved the refusal of government grants in education and the "nationalisation" of government schools.

3. The Ahmedabad Congress, 1921
Ahmedabad staged the first annual Congress session after the introduction of the new constitution. This was during Noncooperation when many of the principal leaders were in jail. The organisation of the session, under Patel's leadership, which included exhibitions of swadeshi and village sanitation, was considered to be a "landmark and a model".

4. The Borsad Satyagraha, 1924
Borsad is a "taluka" in the Kheoda district. Vallabhbhai led a successful refusal of a government levy imposed on peasants to pay for a special policing operation. The police were shown to be in collusion with a band of "dacoits" who were terrorising the area.

5. The Bardoli Satyagraha, 1928
Patel again led a successful tax refusal in the area which had been
chosen for mass civil disobedience in 1921. The disciplined organisation which he constructed enabled the peasants to withstand forfeiture and auctioning of their lands and property. This successful satyagraha is generally recognised as the campaign which encouraged the Indian nationalist movement to attempt satyagraha again on a national scale under Gandhi's leadership. 65

6. The Salt March, 1930
Gandhi launched Civil Disobedience, the second great all-India satyagraha movement under the Congress banner, with a march that journeyed through the rural areas of Gujarat in which he had greatest personal support. Numerous local officials of the Raj resigned. He left the Sabarmati ashram at the start of the march vowing that he would not return until swaraj was won. When the march arrived at Dandi, north of Bombay City, the salt satyagraha was commenced across India. 66

7. The Rajkot Satyagraha, 1938
One quarter of the population of India lived outside the provinces ruled directly by the British Raj. They resided in the Indian princely states, which had not been included in the areas where the Congress organisation was build up. In 1938, as national independence grew near, pressure grew for the Congress movement to establish "representative government" inside the princely states. In 1933, all Congress agitation was suspended while satyagraha led by Patel, Gandhi and Gandhi's wife, Kasturbhai, was conducted in the state of Rajkot. Rajkot, north of Bombay, was the state where Gandhi's father had been prime minister and he had been brought up. This "symbolic" struggle, focussing the attention of the nation, ended in a victory for Congress, and served to undermine the position of the princely rulers throughout India. 67

These key struggles, staged by the Gandhian movement in Gujarat, merely hint at the role which Gujarat played in the independence struggle. A proper survey would reveal a much more subtle relationship between local, regional and national issues and campaigns. It would also clarify the balance between political struggles and the "constructive" economic and social work.
One commentator on Indian rural development, Kusum Nair, gives a stirring account of life in the Kheda district of Gujarat in the late 1950s, forty years after Gandhi first began to work in the district. She notes the area's prosperity and credits this to the impact of the nationalist movement under Gandhi's guidance:

"This movement seems to have provided the inspiration, the new norms and values, and the necessary purposeful direction which made this degree of rural development possible."

A proper assessment of the impact and effect of the constructive programme side of Gandhi's method could probably start in these areas of rural Gujarat where his links were greatest.

From our examination of Gandhi's base in Gujarat we have seen how important was the activism of this province to his standing as a national leader. We have also seen how crucial was the specific support he was able to call forth from the province to the dynamic which swept him to national leadership in 1920. Within this case-material, too — if we include the early Bihar satyagraha in Champaran, together with Ahmedabad, Kheda and our preliminary outline of the Rowlatt satyagraha — there is a basis for taking a first look at one of the key questions for a political organiser: how methods tried and tested at a local level have to be modified or adapted when applied on the vastly different scale of a subcontinent.
REFERENCES


5. Gandhi’s appeal to Congress Committee, May 3, 1918, in ibid pp 118-119; Gandhi to Dabholker, May 15, 1918, in ibid, p 123; Gandhi to Mrs Besant, Mr Jinnah, July 4, 1918, in ibid p 169; Gandhi to Srinivasa Sastri, July 17, 1918, in ibid pp 185-186; Gandhi to Mr Polak, July 22, 1918, in ibid pp 191-192; etc. (P.H.H. Van Den Dungen argues in his “Gandhi in 1919: Loyalist or Rebel?” in Kumar, R. Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Revolt of Satyagraha of 1919, Oxford University Press 1971, pp 43-63, that after his experiences in South Africa between 1906-9, Gandhi was not strictly a loyalist; when he was engaged in recruiting in 1913 he was following the satyagraha principle of “helping the opponent in a time of trouble in order to secure a sympathetic response.” (p 61). This is surely correct; but Van Den Dungen does not explore Gandhi’s belief that India in 1913 was not yet ready for Home Rule, nor his assertion at this time that the disarmed Indian nation had been “emasculated”.)

6. Recruiting speech in Has, June 26, 1918, in Desai, Day-to-Day with Gandhi, pp 156-157; Gandhi to Esther Faering, July 3, 1918 in ibid pp 166-167; Gandhi to C.F. Andrews, June 6, 1918, in ibid pp 172-178; Gandhi to Manumanto, July 17, 1918, in ibid pp 186-187; Gandhi to Viceroy, August 9, 1918, in ibid p 217.


REFERENCES

10. Gandhi to Maganlal Gandhi, July 25, 1918, in ibid pp 197-200
11. Gandhi to Kichorilal, July 29, 1918, in ibid pp 206-207.
13. Brown, op cit p 161
15. Yajnik, op cit p 27.
17. ibid p 81, 83n
18. Masselos, James, "Some aspects of Bombay City Politics in 1919" in Kumar, op cit pp 174-181
19. ibid pp 179-181
20. Yajnik op cit p 66
22. Yajnik, op cit pp 63-64, 67.
23. Ferrell, Donald W. "The Rowlatt Satyagraha in Delhi" in Kumar op cit p 192.
24. Gillion, op cit pp 136-138, 142
26. Gillion, op cit pp 133-141
27. Yajnik, op cit pp 79-80
28. Gillion, op cit pp 143-144.
29. ibid
32. Horniman, B.G. to the Executive Committee of Satyagraha Sabha April 17, 1919, quoted in ibid, p 181.
33. Yajnik, op cit pp 73-74, 80-84; Gandhi, Autobiography, p 347.
34. Dalal, op cit p 23.
36. See "Sunday's Hartal, it's Religious Spirit", May 6 1919, in Tendulkar, _op cit_, illustration facing p 257 (This was the 16th satyagraha leaflet issued in Bombay from April 16 onwards) Gandhi devoted eleven satyagraha leaflets to discussing the Horniman deportation; see Desai, _op cit_ Vol II pp 328-357.

37. _ibid_ p 37. Gandhi has often been accused by left critics of doing a policing job for the government. It is more accurate to see him as attempting to discipline and control movements he organised so that he could lead them as he thought necessary and desirable. The full quotation ends as follows: "Yes, it's true that it is Satyagraha which has kindled the conflagration in the country. But would it not have broken out even without Satyagraha sooner or later?"

38. Tendulkar, _op cit_ pp 265-268; Gandhi, _Autobiography_ pp 348-350. Yajnik, _op cit_ pp 74-75 (Yajnik had been the founding editor of _Navajivan_ in 1915; when he offered the paper to Gandhi in 1919, he was asked to continue as sub-editor, which he did until 1920.)

39. Horniman, _op cit_ p 61


44. Brown, _op cit_ p 233; see also _ibid_ pp 177-179

49. Brown, _op cit_ pp 190-229, 268-269, 291-293

50. _ibid_, pp 198-200.

51. Yajnik, _op cit_ p 84


54. _ibid_ pp 115-117; Brown, _op cit_ pp 258-259; Gandhi _Autobiography_ p 366

55. Yajnik, _op cit_ p 121, 130; Brown, _op cit_ pp 270-271
References

56. Yajnik, op cit, p 117, pp 130-139.


64. Gokhale, B.G. in Park and Tinker, op cit, pp 89-90.


THE PLACE OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME IN LOCAL AND NATIONAL SATYAGRAHA CAMPAIGNS

With the collapse of the Rowlatt Satyagraha in the violence which followed his arrest on the train to Delhi, Gandhi was faced with the problem which remained with him for the rest of his life — how to organise nonviolence successfully on a mass scale.

His immediate reaction was to direct his co-workers into a campaign to promote hand-spinning. This seeming diversion provoked much bemusement at the time, a state of incomprehension which persisted in varying degrees through all the years which followed as Gandhi acted to consolidate his programmes of constructive work. In 1941, Gandhi was told by some of his co-workers that they felt "the want of something from my pen showing the connection between the constructive programme and civil disobedience."

In response he wrote his pamphlet called *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning And Place*, which was thoroughly revised in 1945.

This pamphlet is basically a presentation of the different campaigns which constituted the constructive programme in the early forties. By that time, the programme had developed far beyond the early swadeshi efforts we have noted and included a list of eighteen items. These ranged from the long-established campaigns to promote Hindu-Muslim unity, the removal of untouchability and production of khadi, to newer organising initiatives around education for village children and adults, together with campaigns to improve village sanitation and health education and projects to set up new village industries. The pamphlet also includes a summarised analysis of the relationship between civil disobedience and constructive programme which makes specific reference to the Champaran campaign and to local satyagrahas, such as the campaigns in Sheda, Borsad and Bardoli. It is
this relationship with which we are concerned because of the light it throws on Gandhi's organising methods as he moved to a national scale.

Under the heading, "Place of Civil Disobedience", Gandhi writes as follows:

"I have said in these pages that Civil Disobedience is not absolutely necessary to win freedom through purely non-violent effort, if the co-operation of the whole nation is secured in the constructive programme. But such good luck rarely favours nations or individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to know the place of Civil Disobedience in a nation-wide non-violent effort.

"It has three definite functions:
1. It can be effectively offered for the redress of a local wrong.
2. It can be offered without regard to effect, though aimed at a particular wrong or evil, by way of self-immolation in order to rouse local consciousness or conscience. Such was the case in Champaran when I offered Civil Disobedience without any regard to the effect and well knowing that even the people might remain apathetic. That it proved otherwise may be taken, according to taste, as God's grace or a stroke of good luck.
3. In the place of full response to constructive effort, it can be offered as it was in 1941. Though it was a contribution to and part of the battle for freedom, it was purposely centred round a particular issue, i.e. free speech. Civil disobedience can never be directed for a general cause such as for Independence. The issue must be definite and capable of being clearly understood and within the power of the opponent to yield. This method properly applied must lead to the final goal.

"I have not examined here the full scope and possibilities of Civil Disobedience. I have touched enough of it to enable the reader to understand the connection between constructive programme and Civil Disobedience. In the first two cases, no elaborate constructive programme was or could be necessary. But when Civil Disobedience is itself devised to the attainment of Independence, previous preparation is necessary, and it has to be backed by the visible and conscious effort of those who are engaged in the battle. Civil Disobedience is thus a stimulation to the fighters and a challenge to the opponent. It should be clear to the reader that Civil Disobedience in terms of Independence without the cooperation of the millions by way of constructive effort is mere bravado and worse than useless." (italics added)

We should note two broad distinctions which Gandhi makes here — concerning the scale of the campaign, whether local or national, and the choice or scope of the issue, whether particular or general. Dhawan quotes Gandhi making the same distinctions in more summarised form more than ten years earlier, writing in Young India in 1930:

"Constructive programme is not essential for civil disobedience for specific relief, as in the case of Bardoli. A tangible common
grievance restricted to a particular locality is enough. But for such
an indefinable thing as Swaraj people must have previous training in
doing things of All-India interest."

In the long extract quoted from Gandhi's pamphlet, he lists only three
categories in placing civil disobedience in the context of "a nationwide
non-violent effort". I think, however, that the passage can be systematised
into five related propositions:

1. Civil disobedience can be offered effectively in a local struggle
   without constructive programme.

2. Civil disobedience can be offered at a local level without con-
   structive programme in the form of sacrificial action -- "self-immolation"
   by which Gandhi does not mean burning, but perhaps "burning one's bridges"
   denying oneself the possibility of retreat -- which takes no thought
   of the consequences and therefore may or may not be effective.

3. Where constructive programme has not been taken up at a satisfactory
   level across the nation, civil disobedience can be offered effectively
   at a national level only on a subsidiary issue -- as "a contribution
   to" the larger struggle -- but not on the main issue itself.

4. When civil disobedience is offered on the main issue -- in this case,
   national independence -- then a full programme of constructive work
   must have been taken up by the people.
5. In theory, if the nation as a whole has taken up constructive programme to the fullest level possible, then independence could be won without the use of civil disobedience at all.

These five propositions can be expressed in the following table:

**GANDHI'S FIVE PROPOSITIONS ON COMBINING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME IN NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Constructive Programme</th>
<th>Civil Disobedience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>not essential</td>
<td>effective on its own at a local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>not essential</td>
<td>&quot;self-immolation&quot; may or may not be effective on its own at local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>partially taken up at national level</td>
<td>effective at a national level on a subsidiary issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>almost fully taken up at national level</td>
<td>effective at a national level on main issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>effective on its own if fully taken up at national level</td>
<td>not essential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we look at these propositions in turn, it will be possible to suggest some of the thinking about the practicalities of organising nonviolence which Gandhi developed over the years.

1. **Local Civil Disobedience. With Constructive Programme Not Essential**

Examples where civil disobedience was "effectively offered for the redress of a local wrong" are easy to identify. The Mehsana struggle in 1918, Borsad in 1924 and Bardoli in 1928 are the most obvious. All of these were in rural Gujarat. What was common to them was the leading role taken by a group of "public workers" associated with Gandhi who devoted themselves full-time to organising peasant farmers in resistance to an imposition of an unreasonably high tax; the basis of the organising was a solemn pledge taken by the peasants not to pay this tax whatever the consequences; and the object of the organising was to maintain peasant morale so that they could sustain their commitment to the pledge until
government concessions were made. The specific aims of these campaigns were moderate and the moderation of the satyagrahis was underlined by their willingness to respect the findings of an independent inquiry, the demand for which became one of the principal issues in the campaigns.

According to Gandhi, in these campaigns, "no elaborate constructive programme was or could be necessary". However, Joan Bondurant, in her analysis of the Bardoli satyagraha, indicates that constructive programme, by which she means spinning, the wearing of Thadi cloth and the conduct of social work activities, did play a part in the organisation for civil disobedience. There is no doubt that Thadi propaganda was important in maintaining morale. Nonetheless, Gandhi suggests that an "elaborate" programme was not strictly necessary because of the "tangible common grievance".

All of these actions are civil disobedience actions involving the refusal to comply with the legally-sanctioned demands of the government revenue department. Another civil disobedience action of this type would be the Vaikom temple satyagraha of 1924 to 1925, when satyagrahis attempting to secure untouchables the right to use a road passing a Hindu temple were first arrested and later camped in front of a police barricade. Bondurant again points out that constructive programme, that is, the maintenance in good order of their camp, hand-spinning and the building of a school, constituted an important discipline for the satyagrahis. But these were a relatively small group; the campaign did not rely much on mass action.

Another similar campaign was the Ahmedabad labour strike of 1918, though this was not a civil disobedience action since it did not involve the breaking of a law. The Ahmedabad Satyagraha, according to Gandhi's
a specific concept, was a local campaign of civil resistance to injustice. Constructive programme - visiting the millhands in their homes, providing paid spinning work for some of the women and paid construction work for some of the men - was a factor in Ahmedabad, but the decisive leadership role played by Gandhi in the daily meetings and then, his assumption that it was his duty to fast, indicates what is common to all these local satyagras - the direction of the campaign by an absolutely determined and resourceful leadership, sincerely committed to nonviolence as a way of life and commanding widespread local and national support.

2. Local Civil Disobedience as Self-immolation, with Constructive Programme Not Essential.

Gandhi himself quotes Champaran as an example of this type of civil disobedience - "aimed at a particular wrong", "without regard to effect" "by way of self-immolation in order to rouse local consciousness" - referring to his action in 1917 in refusing to obey the order exterminating him from this district of Bihar. There are no other examples of which I am aware which exactly match the Champaran case and it is surprising perhaps that Gandhi should isolate it in this way. The use of aggressive civil disobedience in recovering confiscated crops during the Heda struggle (1918) and ploughing confiscated farm land in Bardoli (1928) constitute similar actions - which might be called "self-immolation" - though these were hardly spontaneous and the effect was reasonably predictable.

The Ahmedabad Fast, on the other hand, during the 1918 labour struggle, was a spontaneous action, "aimed at a particular wrong or evil" (the refusal to pay workers a just wage) "by way of self-immolation" (the fast) in order to rouse local consciousness or conscience (help the workers stick to their pledge). Gandhi could not really calculate
the effect it would have and took the action as a matter of conscience. But it was not civil disobedience.

At a national level, though, there is a striking example of Gandhi’s trying to repeat the Champaran tactic. In 1919, on the train to Delhi following the Rowlatt hartal, Gandhi refused to obey the order confining him to the Bombay Presidency. This was “self-immolation” “in order to rouse consciousness or conscience” “without any regard to the effect” and without prior preparation of the people by way of constructive programme. It failed disastrously. Major rioting was set off in Ahmedabad and parts of Gujarat and the Punjab. We can see why, after this disastrous experiment at a national level, Gandhi specified twenty years later, that this type of civil disobedience should be confined to a “local” level: All Gandhi’s later attempts at aggressive civil disobedience of this type were very carefully prepared in advance, as for example, the Salt Satyagraha in 1930 and Individual Civil Disobedience in 1941.

However, Gandhi did attempt a number of other acts of “self-immolation” on national issues. These, though, constituted acts of civil resistance to what he saw as injustice, rather than civil disobedience to law. Such would be his public fasts – the Communal Award Fast of 1932 when he fasted in protest against the government decision to introduce a separate electorate for untouchables; the Hindu-Muslim Unity Fasts of 1947 in which he attempted with startling success to bring the rioting between Hindus and Muslims under control at the time of partition between India and Pakistan. Gandhi could not know what “aimed at a particular wrong” and the results of these acts would be, they were moral gestures designed “to rouse consciousness or conscience” – but they were not aggressive acts against constituted authority. In fact, interestingly, these
fasts were related directly to two of the principal and most long-standing campaigns in the constructive programme - the campaign against untouchability and for Hindu-Muslim Unity. When these central facets of the constructive programme came under threat, then Gandhi's whole concept of how India must prepare itself for swaraj was threatened, and he resorted to "self-immolation". But it should be emphasised that this was not civil disobedience.

3. Civil Disobedience on a National Scale on a Subsidiary Issue with Partial Constructive Programme.

Gandhi indicates that a third function of civil disobedience is at the national level; the first two functions he confines to the local level. At the national level it can be used effectively on a "particular issue" as a substitute for full response to constructive effort. He gives as an example the Individual Civil Disobedience Campaign of 1941, when chosen satyagrahis went out individually to commit civil disobedience by speaking against India's involvement in the second world war. These were the same tactics which Gandhi had chosen in 1919 for the Satyagraha Sabha to use against the Rowlatt Act, though the campaign was never launched.

In fact, virtually all Gandhi's nationally organised civil disobedience campaigns were of this type. The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919 was addressed to a "particular issue" rather than Home Rule. Non-cooperation, from 1920 to 1922, though not in its early stages a civil disobedience movement, became that when the government declared the Congress volunteer organisation illegal - the "particular issues" chosen were the 'Hilafat question' and the Punjab inquiry, though at one point Gandhi suspended both these objectives in order to fight simply for the rights of freedom of association and free speech. The Civil Disobedience Movement
of 1930 to 1933 again was focused by Gandhi on a whole set of economic and political grievances, most famously the Salt Tax, which were far short of the "general cause" of independence. As far as Gandhi was concerned in planning the strategic objectives of these campaigns:

"the issue must be definite and capable of being clearly understood and within the power of the opponent to yield. This method properly applied must lead to the final goal."

4. Civil Disobedience on a National Scale on the Main Issue with Full Constructive Programme.

Civil disobedience for the "general cause" of Independence was never seriously attempted by Gandhi because he was never able to secure "the co-operation of the millions by way of constructive effort" to the requisite level.

However, when he launched the Quit India movement in 1942, this was civil disobedience on the main issue of Independence. But Gandhi was well aware that from his own perspective the adoption of constructive programme had not gone deep enough in the nation to develop the level of discipline necessary. He therefore launched civil disobedience with the expectation that it would break down into violence - because he felt he had no alternative - and this is what happened.

Similarly, one of the principal slogans of the Noncooperation campaign (1920-1921) was "Swaraj in One Year", and Civil Disobedience from 1930-33 was fought with the objective of achieving Independence. Nonetheless, when Gandhi was drawn into negotiations with the Raj, these were not his demands. He considered that the constructive programme had not been taken up to an adequate level to make these fundamental goals achievable; and preferred to focus on "particular" issues which "must lead on to the final goal".
5. Constructive Programme on a National Scale without Civil Disobedience

The assertion that "if the co-operation of the whole nation is secured in the constructive programme", then swaraj would be achieved automatically and "Civil Disobedience is not absolutely necessary", was advanced consistently by Gandhi from 1920 onwards. It is an almost mystical view, which he adapted to most of the items in the constructive programme. That is, if the nation could achieve perfection in Hindu-Muslim Unity, or hand-spinning, or the abolition of untouchability, and so on, then it would achieve such moral strength and practical vigour that the British would be compelled to recognise the stature of the people and would introduce Home Rule, quite possibly without the necessity for a struggle. This was the basis of Gandhi's promise in 1921 of "Swaraj in one Year", if the nation fully adopted his constructive programme.5

In practice, this level of commitment to the constructive programme was never approached during Gandhi's lifetime or since, though in the 1930s as it became clear that the time was approaching when the British would grant Independence, he made a major effort to institutionalise the constructive programme with a series of all-India boards to direct the work and a great deal of discussion within and outside Congress. It would have been consistent for Gandhi to argue that the shift in British opinion in favour of granting Independence during the 1930s was, at least in part, a product of the consolidation of the constructive programme across the nation - but I have not seen any statement by him or his followers arguing this.

After Independence, however, Vinoba Bhave adopted this viewpoint. Civil disobedience was not necessary to the achievement of "non-violent revolution" in India. As the successor to Gandhi leading the
Gandhian workers after 1949, Vinoba used this perspective as his strategic concept in planning the Bhoomi and later the Gramdan movement for land revolution.6

Civil Disobedience at the Local and National Scale

We have explored these five propositions in some detail to see what Gandhi saw as the relationship between civil disobedience and constructive programme. To go further, however, it is useful to simplify them down to two:

1. Constructive programme is not essential before civil disobedience is conducted as a local level.
2. Constructive programme is essential before civil disobedience is conducted at a national level.

As an all-India leader Gandhi had the utmost difficulty in persuading his fellow Congressmen to accept that, if they wanted him to organise civil disobedience, they must also adopt his ideas on constructive programme. It will be useful therefore to examine more closely why Gandhi reached this conclusion.

Returning again to the long passage from his pamphlet on Constructive Programme, we found Gandhi making two key distinctions. The first is the question of scale, whether civil disobedience is conducted at a local or a national level. The second concerns the choice of issue, whether it is a main or a subsidiary issue; or in Gandhi's terminology, whether it is a "general" or a "particular" issue.

In general we would expect that the larger the scale of the campaign:

i) the more difficult it was for the leader to maintain personal supervision of the campaign,
ii) the more difficult to establish an organisation of co-workers knowledgeable in satyagraha principles and techniques,
iii) the more difficult to maintain the morale and discipline of the organisation under the stress of conflict,
iv) the more vulnerable was the campaign to being undermined by a particular locality breaking ranks and showing indiscipline.

As a corollary of the above, however, the smaller the scale of the campaign:

i) the easier for the leader to maintain personal supervision,

ii) the easier for the leader to train and supervise a team of co-workers,

iii) the easier to maintain discipline and morale,

iv) the easier to deal with local breakdowns or indiscipline.

On the face of it, all these points are confirmed by our discussion of local satyagrahas in Bihar and Gujarat. These campaigns were distinguished first by the highly visible and directive leadership roles assumed by Gandhi himself and, later, by his chief lieutenant Vallabhbhai Patel. Second, Gandhi delayed for two years his activities in Gujarat in order to draw people from the Home Rule Leagues and elsewhere who would accept his authority and follow his satyagraha principles. Third, the fast in Ahmedabad is the best example of Gandhi using his personal position to maintain discipline and morale. Fourth, in Theda, it was possible for Gandhi to go personally to parts of this district where peasants were wavering in their resolution.

On the other hand, as soon as the context shifted to the national scale with the Rowlatt satyagraha, Gandhi encountered all sorts of difficulties. First he was unable to maintain personal supervision in Delhi and the Punjab of the activities of the Satyagraha Sabha and people outside the Sabha. Second, one explanation he gave for the outbreak of violence following his arrest on the train to Delhi, was that his co-workers had not sufficiently grasped the principles of satyagraha. Third, under the stress of his arrest, the popular movement erupted in violence at various places causing the Sabha eventually to collapse. Fourth, Gandhi's trip to Delhi was prompted by the difficulties the Sabha was having in controlling the crowds there; his arrest en route led to the loss of control in a number of centres across India.

If we turn to the second distinction which Gandhi emphasised in the passage quoted - the selection of the issue round which to centre a campaign - a similar analysis can be made. The broader, or more general the issue under which the campaign was fought:

i) the more difficult to reach a settlement,

ii) the more people's expectations would be aroused unrealistically,
ii) the more groups operating from different political perspectives could offer a different analysis and campaigning programme and so divert the movement.

It will be remembered that one of Gandhi's criticisms of the Home Rule Leagues was that their demand could not be realised in the short term, therefore they were rousing peoples' expectations unrealistically and contributing to a general negative spirit in the people.

The corollary of this perspective, again, is that, the more limited, or more particular, the issue:

i) the more likelihood of reaching a settlement,

ii) the more realistic are the peoples' expectations of success,

iii) the less easy is it for other groups to take over the campaign.

Our discussion in earlier chapters illustrates the first two of these points: at least. Gandhi's reputation in India prior to 1920 was achieved on the basis of his tacit particular grievances and winning. For example, his successes with the abolition of indentured labour, the Viramgar customs cordon, the Chintaran indigo question, the Ahmedabad labour strike and the head tax campaign gave him the reputation as a leader who could take on the British or local vested-interests and win, and the fact that these were mass campaigns or were potentially so, had important effects on national morale.

In his presentation and analysis of Gandhi's early years, Indulal Yajnik places great emphasis on what he calls Gandhi's "particularist ideology" in politics, which he contrasts unfavourably with Tilak's concentration on the "central demand", the "fundamental issue of transfer of political power from Government to the people":

"Mr. Gandhi would busy himself chopping off innumerable heads of the multi-headed monster of foreign oppression that sucked the life-blood of India, while Mr. Tilak concentrated his attention and energy on the sovereign method of destroying the monster itself." 7

Yajnik, however, admits Gandhi's "initial" success with this method:

"While Mr. Tilak dominated like a giant the whole scene with his single slogan of "Home Rule" and "Self-government" as a panacea for all evils, humble workers sought comfort and solace in the advice of Gandhi, who had been trained by his past experiences to act as a suitable mediator for the redress of..."
special wrongs between the people and the Government. As Mr Gandhi went on settling one question after another ... he commanded increasing faith and following among the people."

Yajnik goes on to add that Gandhi, by securing redress for grievances, "really helped the Government partially to reinstate itself in the affections and confidence of the people". He continues: "modern militant fighters would have no hesitation in defining all such activities - however militant they might appear at a certain stage - as distinctly counter-revolutionary in as much as they would end ... by securing only a few crumbs from the rich table of Government."

Yajnik calls Gandhi "essentially a reformer" who had been habituated by his experiences in South Africa "to study and grapple with the various symptoms of a disease rather than to work for the eradication of the disease itself." Really, he says, Gandhi retained the method of the political Moderates in India, "of tackling separate grievances - local, provincial and national", and stresses Gandhi's ability throughout his political career to retain his links with the political moderates who collaborated with the British Raj.

Gandhi, however, would probably have rejected this analysis as superficial. He would have accepted some of the criticisms of his "particularist" method as tributes to its success. But ultimately there are two aspects of Gandhi's approach with which Yajnik's criticisms here do not deal. First, as Gandhi was well aware and was quick to argue in his book Hind Swaraj, published in 1909 and subsequently, the Indian nation really had little choice but to follow his non-violent programme for achieving independence because it had been disarmed and could not win by Tilak's methods. Second, Gandhi was not "essentially a reformer". He would deny that the "central demand", "the monster itself", "the disease itself", was as Tilak presented it. Gandhi's view of the central issue went beyond and deeper than what
he saw as the superficial question of the transfer of power into Indian hands. In this he is a political leader of great originality.

Another writer who has noted both Gandhi’s concentration on particular issues and his sensitivity to the question of scale, is Indira Rothermund. In her book, significantly titled *The Philosophy of Restraint, Mahatma Gandhi’s Strategy and Indian Politics*, she argues that Gandhi evolved a method of “strategic” and “stylized” answers to political problems. The aim of this method was to restrain the use of power by both sides in the national dispute; his political approach involved the “restraint of power”. He experienced two particular problems in developing this method. One was the problem of mass participation, how to discipline participants—this is the problem of scale. The other was the problem of the definition of the issue, or the scope of the action—what we have called the choice of the issue. Rothermund does not make the distinction between local and national campaigns as we have. In considering the scale of participation she discusses only national campaigns. Her classification indicating Gandhi’s response to the problems of scale and choice of issues is as follows. He might organise: (i) a national campaign involving mass participation; or (ii) a national campaign involving participation by a selected local area or group; or (iii) a national campaign involving individual action by the leader only. Similarly, in dealing with the problem of the scope of the action, he might organise a national campaign around (i) a general issue (for example, Independence); or (ii) a specific issue (e.g. No-tax campaigns); or (iii) a definite point (e.g. the Communal Award).

This analysis is extremely helpful, but Rothermund goes on to argue that the problems which Gandhi experienced in organising mass civil disobedience led him over a period of 25 years to evolve his method
progressively to the point where he could control mass campaigns by inviting the nation to identify with action undertaken by himself alone. Thus the importance in Gandhi's political method, she suggests, of the symbolic action, where the individual leader only participated, focusing his action on a definite point, or specific issue, which the watching nation could clearly understand:

"...millions would refrain from action so that one man could act under complete control of the action: because of this, the action of this one man assumed million-fold importance. The action was symbolic because millions watched and listened, and these millions watched and listened because they knew that the action would be a symbol. Gandhi arrived at this method because he had recognised that it was impossible to train large numbers of participants for disciplined satyagraha." 9

This argument is elegant and obviously describes well the conception behind Gandhi's political fasts and explains their impact; so too it gives a helpful perspective on the drama of a symbolic action like the Salt March in 1930. But Rothermund is mistaken when she says that Gandhi progressively abandoned organising around general issues and also wrong when she says that he gave up the possibility of organising mass action.

Gandhi's own view, stated in December 1945 when he wrote the introduction to the Constructive Programme pamphlet, was as follows:

"Civil disobedience, mass or individual, is an aid to constructive effort and is a full substitute for armed revolt. Training is necessary as well for civil disobedience as for armed revolt. Only the ways are different. Action in either case takes place only when occasion demands. Training for military revolt means learning the use of arms ending perhaps in the atomic bomb. For Civil Disobedience it means the Constructive Programme.

"Therefore, workers will never be on the look-out for civil resistance. They will hold themselves in readiness, if the constructive effort is sought to be defeated." 10

Thus Rothermund's analysis is one to which we will return when we examine Gandhi's organising efforts on a national scale in more detail. But for the present we remain with the points already
established. It was easier for Gandhi to organise and maintain non-violent discipline at a local level than at a national level. He insisted on directing campaigns on particular rather than general issues. And because it was extremely difficult to maintain discipline for civil disobedience on a national scale, he devised programmes of constructive work which would prepare people for it, or supplement it, or act as a substitute for it.

The Connection Between Constructive Programme and Civil Disobedience

But how did Gandhi imagine that a programme of constructive work would "train" a people for civil disobedience? In what way does constructive programme prepare people for campaigns of civil resistance? How can it act as a support for those engaging in civil disobedience, or even as a substitute for it? How did the great movements to challenge the British help forward the campaigns of constructive work?

To answer these questions we must return to the two practical ways of looking at constructive programme suggested earlier. First, it can be seen as a moral imperative on individuals who wish to live a way of life which expresses the values of nonviolence. By examining constructive programme in this sense, as a discipline for the individual or committed group, we can suggest the impact it may have on the behaviour of individuals who take it up. Second, the term also describes a set of specific campaigns organised in India to change society. By looking at constructive programme in this second way, we can suggest its function and effect as a means of mobilising the Indian nation for struggle.

Looking at its effect on the individual, Gandhi made great claims for
constructive programme in his pamphlet. Independence was to be not the nominal transfer of power to an Indian government but "the independence of every unit, be it the humblest of the nation". Communal unity was to be achieved not by an accord between Hindu and Muslim politicians, but by "an unbreakable heart unity" among the people. Power does not come down to a people when they achieve parliamentary self-government, but resides in them already if they will recognise this and find a means of exercising it. Thus "swadeshi mentality" meant "a determination to find all the necessaries of life in India and that too through the labour and intellect of the villagers." Such a reversal -- throwing off the exploitation of "half a dozen" cities in India and Britain --

"vitaly touches the life of every single Indian, makes him feel aglow with the possession of a power that has lain hidden within himself, and makes him proud of his identity with every drop of the ocean of Indian humanity." Gandhi made further claims. Basic education, the educational programme promoted by him in the late thirties to develop standards and skills related to Indian village life, was "meant to transform village children into model villagers". Adult education was not to be satisfied with combating illiteracy but "true political education of the adult by word of mouth":

"They do not know that the foreigner's presence is due to their own weaknesses and their ignorance of the power they possess to rid themselves of the foreign rule." It was essential to work in provincial languages in order to give the masses the opportunity to make their solid contribution to the construction of swaraj. Because of the neglect of the great languages "the mass mind" remained "imprisoned".

"The languages of India have suffered impoverishment. We flounder when we make the vain attempt to express abstruse thought in the mother tongue. There are no equivalents for scientific terms. The result has been disastrous. The masses remain cut off from the modern mind."
Tribal peoples must be brought into the political nation through constructive programme. "Unless every unit has a living consciousness of being one with every other", India could not make good its claim to be one nation. So too should lepers — "For what the leper is in India, that we are, if we will but look about, for the modern civilised world." 16

These are some of the broad moral arguments used by Gandhi when seeking to inspire his readers to take up the mature constructive programme in the 1940s, engaging in what today we might call consciousness-raising. Constructive programme is presented as a method by which individuals and groups can achieve personal self-confidence and self-reliance and a national self-consciousness through serving each other. These provide a basis for national unity and the exercise of political power, and hence a realistic background and complement to the campaigns of civil disobedience.

In 1941, the American Gandhian Richard Gregg published a pamphlet which attempted systematically to demonstrate for a Western reader the value of physical labour as a discipline for nonviolence. 17 Manual work was to constitute one first essential part of a "fourfold discipline" of body, emotion, mind and spirit, which would prepare people both for nonviolent resistance and for "a better civilisation, a nonviolent world." 18

Gregg argued from military authorities that the key to success in war, beyond questions of weaponry and fire-power, was organisation, discipline and morale. Just as military training relied considerably on physical drills and discipline, so training for nonviolence could be obtained through manual work. Gregg explores a list of qualities engendered by military training — the habit of obedience; self-respect, self-reliance and self-control; tenacity of will; sense of unity with others; endurance of common
hardship; sense of order and co-operation; protection of community; energy; and courage. He then argues that each of these can be achieved through the discipline of manual work and lists further qualities necessary for "pacific resistance" which can also be developed — equanimity and poise; patience and humility; love of truth; faith in human nature; satisfactions; and relief from moral strain. In one intriguing passage he addresses the difficulty that "war provides a wide channel and allows people to vent all the energy of their accumulated resentments... (which) explains in part why many men get such satisfaction from war". His response is predictable enough, but entirely relevant to our discussion:

"It is that huge reservoir of unconscious, suppressed energy of resentments of long ago which is so unmanageable and takes us off our guard. A wise discipline will find ways to drain off that energy into creative channels. By so doing it will enable its followers to develop more poise and equanimity. The nature of this manual work and of its organisation is similar to that of much of the causes of the original frustrations, namely social, economic and natural. Also the deep evolutionary connection between mind and hand, and between emotion and physical action, makes sublimation by means of manual activities peculiarly effective and complete."

Gregg does not make the simple error of arguing that manual workers are by nature nonviolent. But he insists that they do display many of the qualities necessary for disciplined nonviolent action which can be drawn out and cultivated if linked to a self-conscious nonviolent movement. In the concluding section of the pamphlet, he searches for a manual activity which, first, produces something beneficial to the community, especially to the poor and unemployed, and second, which the poor themselves can take up as a form of "self-respecting" self-help. He thinks that if "one kind of work could be found which exemplifies the discipline with special power and which could be universally practised, it would be especially valuable." It should also be "elemental", concerned with either food, shelter or clothing.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Gregg reaches the conclusion that this
"universal physical disciplinary activity for nonviolence" should be the making of yarn and cloth by hand. In summarising, we may have made his argument sound trite, but it is in my opinion a well-worked out thesis. Gandhi approved of the pamphlet and had it printed in India with a foreword by himself. We may therefore assume that Gregg was expressing some of the linkages between constructive work and civil resistance which Gandhi himself envisaged. Twenty years earlier, in the period with which we are concerned in this study, it is unlikely that Gandhi would have permitted anything so ambitious to be published drawing on his experiments with constructive work. Nonetheless he had already developed a general view which he was acting on, that campaigns of nonviolent civil resistance needed to be supported and complemented by programmes of constructive work. Gregg concentrates narrowly, however, in this pamphlet on manual work, whereas Gandhi, building from the core activity of the swadeshi campaign which was indeed the manual activity of spinning, developed constructive programme quite widely into social and cultural activities as well.

We have explored, then, one relationship between constructive work and civil resistance in the individual political consciousness, moral awareness and discipline which the former can develop as preparation and support for the latter. In particular, Gregg suggests that manual work such as spinning promotes personal qualities which can substitute in satyagraha for military drilling.

Constructive programme was, however, also a specific set of campaigns launched to have a direct impact on Indian culture and society, especially the character of its villages and the activities carried on there. In our discussion of the Swadeshi Sabha in Chapter 7 and also of Noncooperation we will find that Gandhi saw in the swadeshi cloth campaign a means of
developing organisation at village and district level which would help to
draw people into the national movement. Such organisation in itself would
make good the Congress claim to be an effective and representative national
political movement, he maintained. It would also give it a network which
could be employed to build up support for civil resistance campaigns. It
is this factor of developing, testing and demonstrating effective organisation
which is emphatically claimed by J.B. Kripalani in his defence of
constructive programme, Politics of Charkha, published in 1946.23 "The
capacity to organise", he states flatly, "is the one quality the nation sadly
lacks and which it must cultivate if it is to assert its dignity and achieve
its independence". Comparing centralised organisation "imposed from above"
with "small decentralised cottage industry organisation... of a voluntary
and democratic character", Kripalani saw individuals mobilised by the
second approach better educated for "united, co-operative, disciplined and
self-regulated activity." Examining the spinning and weaving centres
established across India, together with the procedures for supplying tools
to the workers, on the one hand, and for marketing the finished cloth, on
the other, Kripalani claimed that "Charkha (the spinning wheel) can
organise the country-side". In terms of organisation, he said, it
involved a tremendous voluntary and co-operative effort towards the mitigation
of the poverty and unemployment of the nation. Moreover,

"The organisers of village and cottage industry are a body of
disciplined volunteers from whose ranks, if need be, satyagrahis can
always be recruited. As a matter of fact, constructive workers
constitute a standing army of Satyagrahis."

Gandhi too saw in decentralisation of the swadeshi cloth movement its
greatest strength:

"... centralised khadi can be defeated by government, but no power can
defeat individual manufacture and use of khadi." 25

This factor, of developing effective decentralised organisation capable
of resisting central government -- in this case, the Raj -- is another expression of the relationship between constructive programme and civil resistance. Such resistance is after all a popular civilian activity and therefore organisation needs to be developed among the people on a wide scale in order to sustain the movement.

A further factor is the effort to offer all citizens, however poor, a means of playing their part in the national struggle. This we saw was one of the factors guiding Gregg in his search for a universal manual activity suitable for developing nonviolent discipline. But an important consideration which Gregg does not mention is that citizens who are not engaged in civil resistance can still make their contribution by engaging in constructive programme, by for example wearing swadeshi clothing or undertaking some other aspect. The national struggle, the assertion of the nation's identity and determination, can be reinforced by the effort to reclaim a key area of essential production for itself, in this case clothing, Thus the cloth campaign came to be identified by both sides with the national movement, and producers, sellers and wearers of swadeshi cloth all became liable to sanctions from the Raj.

Gandhi saw too in the spinning campaign a link between the educated classes and the masses of India:

"Consider the levelling effect of the bond of common labour between the rich and the poor!"

One of his perpetual themes was of the "divorce between labour and intelligence" in India. The reluctance of the educated classes to employ their talents on behalf of their fellow Indians had resulted in "stagnation". Discussing village sanitation, another item in the later constructive programme, he writes, "Divorce between intelligence and labour has
resulted in criminal negligence of the villages". Constructive programme was designed to express in practical terms a unity across class lines which would prepare the nation for struggle and for independence.

There are also links in the other direction, too. Campaigns of civil resistance provided Gandhi with the opportunity to launch new constructive campaigns which would help to sustain the struggle. As we shall see when discussing Noncooperation in Chapter 7, boycotts of government schools were launched quite deliberately before national schools had been established. The schools boycott provided constructive workers with a pressing incentive to establish their own "national" alternative. So too lawyers and litigants were pressed to boycott the law courts before arbitration courts had been set up; and the failure of the movement to establish widely these constructive alternatives greatly limited the impact of that particular boycott. Boycott of the legislatures took politicians who previously had been oriented towards the Raj's elite forums, out into rural areas where they worked for the first time to build up the Congress organisation. Boycott of foreign cloth automatically gave strong support to the swadeshi campaign as an effort to substitute for imported goods through home production. Inevitably, the success or failure of these constructive campaigns helped to determine whether the boycotts could be sustained or not.

To sum up, what the constructive programme did was to provide, on the one hand, a basic moral or patriotic training and orientation, together with some practical discipline, for individuals who might join campaigns of civil disobedience. On the other, it also provided part of the infrastructure of support for these national campaigns and a training in establishing all-India organisations, particularly in the rural areas. It vastly improved the moral case for civil disobedience, since those involved
as leaders and organisers were devoting their lives in a spirit of service to a programme of social and spiritual improvement for the nation. Since what Gandhi was looking for was a basis on which to invite mass participation in civil disobedience across India, the constructive programme, made up as it was of a number of simultaneous all-India campaigns involving mass participation on a daily basis, provided exactly the means of preparation he was seeking.

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to re-emphasise what has been neglected by most commentators on Gandhi's methods in the west: that he developed programmes of constructive work as a means of preparing ordinary people for participation in mass civil disobedience campaigns. Mass commitment to constructive work was he felt essential before campaigns of mass civil disobedience could be launched at a national level. But at a local level, where there was a "tangible common grievance" and where the direct influence of a leader and co-workers thoroughly immersed in the principles of satyagraha could be used to exercise direct control over the direction of the struggle, mass civil disobedience could be undertaken without constructive programme being essential.27
Chapter 4: Page 129

REFERENCES


2. ibid, pp 35-36.


5. Tendulkar, D.G., Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, vol 2, 1920-1929, pp 19-21; p 63, "The attainment of this swaraj is possible within a short time, and it is so possible only by the revival of the spinning wheel"; pp 73-74, 35, 239-240 etc.


7. Yajnik, Indulal, Gandhi As I Know Him, Bombay: Mr G.C. Bhat (n.d. 1933?), p 55.

8. ibid, chapter 12, "Tilak, Moderates and Mohammedans", pp 45-50.


12. Gandhi, Constructive Programme, p 9, 10, 11.

13. ibid, pp 14-15.

14. ibid, pp 19-21.

15. ibid, p 24

16. ibid, pp 30-31.


18. ibid, p 32.

19. ibid, pp 1-6, 9-27.

20. ibid, pp 20-21.
21. ibid, pp 6-9.  
22. ibid, pp 28-36.


24. ibid, pp 16-25.


26. ibid, pp 17-19.

27 See Bondurant, op cit, pp 36-104. In her classic interpretation of the method of satyagraha, Bondurant neglects this distinction which is important to an understanding of how Gandhi organised his campaigns of civil disobedience. She tends on the contrary to emphasise the importance of constructive programme at the local rather than the national level.
SIX STEPPING STONES TO ALL-INDIA LEADERSHIP

How did Gandhi achieve a position in December 1920 where he was able, with the authority of the Indian National Congress behind him, to direct an unprecedented campaign of satyagraha against the British organised across the whole of the country?

We have emphasised so far the importance to him of his base in Gujarat. Gandhi's local campaigns in Gujarat in 1918 had served as a sign to the political nation that a highly original leader was emerging who was not identified with either of the main nationalist camps, the Moderates or the Extremists. His launching of the Rowlatt Satyagraha in 1919 had demonstrated that from the organisational centre of Bombay City and a core of support in Gujarat, he could inspire an all-India campaign capable of drawing support from all parts of India. Later he took up the affront to Indian Muslims, the Khilafat question. When he combined this with the principal nationalist grievance, the demand for the Raj to make amends for its excesses in the Punjab, Gandhi's supporters again rallied to him and spearheaded his successful drive to capture Congress.

Prior to 1920, all of Gandhi's initiatives were conducted outside the framework of the Indian National Congress and in splendid isolation from the established leaders of the national movement. Judith Brown, in her pioneering study, Gandhi's Rise to Power, Indian Politics 1915-1922, explains Gandhi's move into the centre of Indian politics during 1920, with some of the following points:

(1) Gandhi's isolation from the main political factions enabled him to establish an independent political position and when the time came to deal directly with other national leaders;
(ii) he was successful in mobilising social classes and geographic regions which had previously been politically dormant, and in bringing them into the arena of Congress politics;

(iii) he was able to forge a (temporary) political alliance between Muslims and Hindus on a key political issue, the Wilafat question, bringing Muslims for the first time in significant numbers into Congress politics, with himself as the indispensable bridging leader, the "lynch-pin", holding the alliance together;

(iv) he had a method of political agitation to offer - civil resistance, or satyagraha - which went beyond the limitations of parliamentary collaboration adopted by previous nationalist leaders, but stopped short of violent insurrection, which was felt to be unrealistic by most contemporaries.

These points are extremely helpful to an understanding of how Gandhi as a leader of regional importance early in 1919 was able to take over the direction of the national struggle in 1920. We may also add a fifth observation. Gandhi had a practical political programme to offer, which demanded personal sacrifice and dedicated service to the nation, a scheme which met the mood of a nationalist movement unable to proceed directly to its long-term goal of Home Rule.

There is a major point of interpretation in Judith Brown's analysis, however, which seems to misrepresent Gandhi's behaviour during this period. Thus she states:

"The First World War transformed Gandhi into a political leader in his native land. If India had not felt the repercussions of the European conflict it is possible that Gandhi would have remained a public worker in the small world of the district and the market town, only occasionally participating in the activities of the political nation. But the war was a watershed in Gandhi's career and in Indian politics ..."

"This was the situation in which Gandhi felt forced into public action, but he was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word. He seems to have had no clear plan for a career or ambition for power, but to have visualised himself as a religious devotee and a public worker, whose duty it was to forward his ideal of Swaraj in his ashram and through the constructive work of his assistants in Champaran; while the 'wrongs' he had discovered were local ones, felt more sharply because of the effects of the
CHAPTER 5: Page 132

war. The incentive to work on a larger scale, and so come face
to face with the politicians and the raj in the political area,
only came when 'wrongs' occurred which were not confined to a
particular locality and yet appeared to be within his compass or
when opportunity offered to spread his vision of true Swaraj
before a wider audience." 2

Brown makes the same point on a number of occasions, stating that his
proposal to organise satyagraha against Annie Besant's internment in
1918 "showed where Gandhi stood when he turned outwards from the tiny
worlds of particular districts and took up 'wrongs' which had all-India
implications." On another occasion, she remarks, "The policies of the
raj at war had forced him out of the restricted world of local
grievances into the all-India political arena." 3 And again:

"Before 1919 Gandhi was only a peripheral figure in the politics
of nationalism. He joined the ranks of the politicians to forward
a few well-defined causes, and because he was not prompted by any
conventional political ambition he was content with local and
sectional leadership and made no attempt to challenge the existing
political leaders when he disagreed with them. However, by mid-
1919 the Mahatma had broken out of these limits ...

"The occasion for this transition from peripheral to committed
participation in politics, from local to continental leadership,
was satyagraha against the Rowlatt Bills ... Few causes could
have been further from those for which Gandhi had launched
satyagraha in 1917 and 1918 ..." 4

Now it is true that there was a particular combination of circumstances
at the end of the First World War which made India ripe for the type of
struggle which Gandhi launched, and it follows that if these circum-
stances hadn't occurred then Gandhi might never have achieved national
prominence. It is also true that Gandhi's ambitions were not those of
a conventional politician. He strongly deprecated the views of people
like Tilak and Besant that politics had its own rules and could not
be governed by the dictates of religion. He did indeed devote his
life to social service of individuals and local groups and would
almost certainly have been 'content' to have remained at this level
if his understanding of the national question and the nature of
political power had not told him that many of the smaller or more
local issues could only finally be resolved in the context of tackling
larger ones. And, as we have seen, it was his political method to select particular issues to organise around, what Brown calls "wrongs to be righted".

But Brown is mistaken in suggesting (i) that there was such a discontinuity between Gandhi's local and national campaigns, (ii) that Gandhi had not thought of moving into the national political arena before 1919, and (iii) that his selection of particular wrongs as the focus for his campaigns was piecemeal, and not informed by a deeper political ideology, long-term objectives and a sophisticated sense of strategy and tactics. It is surely much more accurate to see Gandhi in the years between 1915 and 1919 as a mature figure, biding his time (as he said on many occasions) before he made his move into the national arena, content to wait precisely because his ambitions were different from those of other political leaders and therefore the ground had to be thoroughly prepared in advance.

Gandhi, first, did not move with the Rowlatt Satyagraha direct from the "market town" and the "tiny worlds of particular districts" to a national campaign. Through his local campaigns he had established himself, as Brown herself states, as the leading political figure in Gujarat; he was a regional or provincial leader of national importance. Moreover, the Rowlatt issue was not much different from the concern which prompted his first act of civil disobedience in Champaran and the campaign in Kheda. Gandhi believed that the Raj should accord to its Indian citizens the respect owed to a nation of equal status. The Rowlatt Bills did, as Brown suggests, affect directly only the nation's political elite, whereas Champaran and the other campaigns took up the struggles of peasants and workers, but Gandhi's objection in principle to the Bills was the same as when he refused to obey his externment order from Champaran; the emergency powers of the Raj were being used in his eyes
to suppress legitimate national activity. There seems to be no reason why Gandhi should have viewed an insult to the nation's political leaders, as he considered the Rowlatt Bills to be, as essentially different from the failure of British officials in Bihar and Gujarat to protect the peasantry from the unjust behaviour of indigo factory-owners and local revenue officers.

We have seen, second, that at the time of the Ahmedabad strike in 1918, Gandhi was directly comparing himself with Tilak and Malaviya, suggesting that his spiritual approach to politics was more appropriate to the Indian nation than theirs. Moreover, the local struggles were not directed, as Brown suggests, at "wrongs" confined to a particular locality", nor at issues that were without "all-India implications". Especially in the case of Kheda, the campaign addressed itself to a grievance against the revenue officials which was felt widely in different parts of India. Even in Champaran and Ahmedabad, the particular struggles symbolised Gandhi's identification with peasants and workers across India and his ability to suggest a dramatic new weapon of struggle; thus they had an impact way beyond the particular locality. Later, when Gandhi was organising national struggles, he would, on several occasions, select a local area within which to conduct a struggle on a national issue because he understood the importance of local symbolic struggles in focusing the attention of the nation and raising consciousness and morale. Again, Gandhi had formulated his views on the national question in India in his pamphlet, *Hind Swaraj*, published in 1909, which were very different from those of other Indian political figures. It does not go against the evidence to suggest that from 1909 onwards and when he returned to India in 1915, Gandhi was holding himself in readiness for a possible all-India role in politics.
We have also noted, third, that Gandhi's distinctive political method, formulated in South Africa and maintained by him subsequently, was distinguished by what Yajnik called a "particularist" approach to politics. His selection of issues, or wrongs to be righted, was not as haphazard as Brown (and Yajnik) imply. Gandhi believed from experience that tackling particular issues successfully would demonstrate the effectiveness of his methods, commend himself and those associated with him to the nation as leaders to be taken seriously, and build popular confidence that the problems of British India could be tackled and changed. At the same time, he was critical of organising on remote issues like Home Rule, which called forth fiery speeches and antagonistic feelings against the British, but produced no direct political results or immediate benefits. Thus, moving from a particular local issue to a particular national issue marked no change in Gandhi's analysis, method or ambition. In 1919, a particular affront to nationalist opinion occurred with the publication of the Rowlatt Bills and Gandhi, by this time, felt he was ready to take the initiative on the issue, as he would probably not have been able to do earlier.

The general point that Gandhi was not a religiously-minded humanitarian worker who rather fortuitously got swept up into national politics as a result of the First World War, is important because his career prior to 1920 should be seen as a period when he was experimenting with methods of inserting himself into Indian political life. Brown is right that Gandhi did not concern himself with the day-to-day politics of the nationalist leaders who were wondering in 1918 how to formulate proposals for a reformed Indian constitution and, in 1919, how they should react to the British response made in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Gandhi wasn't interested in these matters not because national
politics didn't interest him but because he believed that little could be achieved until the basic relationship between the Indian people and the British rulers had been changed, and this demanded in his eyes the organisation of a popular movement which was different in its character and objectives from the popular agitation started by the Home Rule leagues. Gandhi was also aware that since his political principles were markedly different from the other nationalist leaders he would not be able to make headway amongst them until he had established his credentials and authority by his achievements, by the "results" he was able to secure in his local campaigns and then his first all-India campaigns. It is true that Gandhi was undecided about which organisations to work through during this period; hence his hesitation about joining the Gujarat Sabha, his refusal to join but chose collaboration with the All-India Home Rule League of Annie Besant, and his bold step in bypassing the Indian National Congress when he formed the Satyagraha Sabha and launched the Rowlatt Satyagraha. But these hesitations do not show a reluctance to enter nationalist politics; rather they indicate an understandable uncertainty over tactics and an underlying determination to define for himself an independent position and base of support before he made his entry.

In this connection, the main purpose of this chapter is to examine how Gandhi worked within the principal political organisations which he formed or joined between his arrival in India in 1915 and the consolidation of his leadership of Congress following the annual session held in Nagpur in December 1920. This discussion will aim to show how, in addition to the base of support which he built in Gujarat which helped him to all-India leadership, Gandhi developed a particular approach to organisation. This prepared him and his supporters first for the capture of Congress and, second, enabled them thereafter to consolidate
his leadership and to attempt with some success to direct the nation
in a campaign of nonviolent struggle.

**Six stepping stones**

In earlier chapters, a number of organisations which played a part
in Gandhi's rise to the leadership of the national movement in 1920,
have been mentioned. These are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Founded by Gandhi</th>
<th>Commencement of Gandhi's Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gujarat Sabha</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>May 1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Satyagraha Sabha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>February 1919</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Swadeshi Sabha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>June 1919</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Central Khilafat Committee</td>
<td>July 1919</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>November 1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. All-India Home Rule League</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>April 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Indian National Congress</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>September 1920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these, the Swadeshi Sabha is much the least important as part of
the route by which Gandhi achieved prominence in the Congress. Yet it
is a first example of his trying to develop constructive programme as
a complement to direct action and a substitute for it. The programme
of activities which Gandhi proposed for the Swadeshi Sabha, he later
had taken over and developed both by the All-India Home Rule League and
the Congress itself. Another of these six organisations, the Gujarat
Sabha, was one of a number of nationalist bodies undertaking political
activities in Gujarat during 1917 — including local branches of Annie
Besant's Home Rule League and the executive of the Gujarat Political
Conference — but the membership of these groups was overlapping and,
once he assumed the presidency of the Sabha, Gandhi directed a loose
coalition.
Many commentators have noted how soon after his return to India, Gandhi attempted to join the Servants of India Society, founded by his mentor Gokhale. His application for membership remained on the table for a year, but eventually Gandhi withdrew it in 1916, much to the relief apparently of a section of the membership who feared (probably rightly) that he would attempt to use the organisation and shape it to his own principles. Brown, in particular, remarks that Gandhi’s failure on his return from South Africa to find a home even in such a congenial organisation as the Servants of India Society – which was a religiously-motivated social service organisation directing the nation’s educated but was more favourable to Western influence than Gandhi into full-time work with the poor/- demonstrated his complete isolation from the institutions of Indian nationalism. She adds that “in retrospect this isolation appears to have been the foundation of much of his later strength”.7

We have also noted Gandhi’s early association, through his support for Hindi and the vernacular languages, with the All-India Common Script and Common Language Conference held in Lucknow in 1916 and with an important session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held in Indore in 1918. It is possible that his connections with these organisations gave Gandhi links with a network across India which was important to him later, but there is little in the published records of this period to substantiate this.

Thus it is not until 1917, when the Gujarat Sabha invited Gandhi to become its president in direct appreciation of his first satyagraha campaign in Champaran, that he formally joined a nationalist organisation. We have discussed this period in detail already in an earlier chapter.8 Here we will merely summarise the main points.
1. The Gujarat Sabha

Though he attended a number of its meetings and accepted the honour of presiding over some of them, Gandhi appears to have remained aloof from the Gujarat Sabha for over two years. He was invited on more than one occasion to involve himself in the organisation, but declined. Gandhi was extremely critical of the activities of the Home Rule Leagues which he felt were negative in spirit and unconstructive in practice. He did not want to lend his support within the Sabha to this type of nationalist politics nor to have to speak out against it. But, after his success in Champaran, the Gujarati nationalists were willing to accept his direction; and so Gandhi took up the presidency in June 1917.

The Gujarat Sabha was founded in 1885, the same year as the Indian National Congress. As the principal association or club for nationalists in Gujarat, it was virtually moribund in 1917. Gandhi's first action as President was to organise a massive petition throughout Gujarat in support of the Congress-League proposals for constitutional reform. As he wrote privately, "For me the value of it lies in the education that the masses will receive and the opportunity that the educated men and women will have of coming in close touch with the people." This perspective he followed through in presiding over the Broach Educational Conference and the Godhra Political Conference later in 1917, both of which were conducted in the Gujarati language rather than English. At both conferences Gandhi spelled out a programme of activity for the organisation which went beyond the usual practice of passing resolutions demanding actions by others. And, as with the Sabha itself, an executive was established to carry out the programme. The Godhra conference led to the involvement of the Sabha in the campaign of Kheda agriculturists against their land revenue taxes.

It was a secretary of the Sabha who first informed Gandhi late in 1917.
of the problems of the millhands in Ahmedabad when the employers withdrew the plague bonus. 10

Gandhi's co-workers in Ahmedabad and Kheda were drawn from members of the Sabha and participants in the Broach and Godhra conferences. In Ahmedabad he directed his co-workers to visit the homes of the millhands daily and investigate their conditions. In Kheda, they were organised into teams and instructed to survey every one of the 600 villages in the district in ten days. They were permitted to travel only on foot, which meant they had to walk 15 to 20 miles a day in the hot sun and, where they could not obtain local food, were to eat only dry fruits and nuts. These co-workers later helped form the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association and undertook social service work throughout rural Gujarat; and they made up a core of support for the Satyagraha Sabha which launched the Rowlatt campaign in 1919 and organised the Gujarat Political Conference to support Gandhi at the two Congress sessions in 1920. Later they played a leading role in Noncooperation itself from 1920 to 1922, the Bardoli satyagraha in 1928 and Civil Disobedience from 1930 to 1933.

Thus the Gujarat Sabha, as a linking body drawing together nationalists in Gujarat, was a key organisation in Gandhi's rise to all-India political leadership.

2. The Satyagraha Sabha

We have already given attention to the role played by the Satyagraha Sabha in Gujarat during the period of just over six months in 1919 while Gandhi maintained his campaign against the Rowlatt Bills and the Rowlatt Act. 11 The greatest support for the Rowlatt agitation was obtained in Gujarat and in nearby Bombay City which was the head-
quarters for this first nationwide satyagraha. However, the Rowlatt Satyagraha did call forth support from many parts of the Indian sub-continent, which posed problems of co-ordination for the Satyagraha Sabha in Bombay. After the successful hartal across India on April 6, 1919, the Rowlatt Satyagraha also contributed to major rioting in a number of Indian cities and to vicious reprisals by the British in the Punjab, which became a principal focus for nationalist agitation against the Raj in subsequent years. Here, therefore, we shall examine the issues and problems for Gandhi and for the Satyagraha Sabha of organising the Rowlatt agitation on an all-India scale.

1. Organising for the Rowlatt Satyagraha

This is exactly the theme of a paper by Hugh Owen, "Organising for the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919". According to Owen, the Rowlatt Satyagraha "posed new problems of organisation; of communication of ideas; of mobilization of a wide array of social groups; and last, but not the least, of exercise of control and restraint over the social groups thus mobilized under conditions of excitement, provocation, or repression." It was, of course, members of the Home Rule Leagues who had approached Gandhi to form the Satyagraha Sabha, and it was through the Leagues that Gandhi was able to draw on pre-existing networks of support across India. Owen notes that branches of the Leagues were re-activated in different parts of India in the run-up to the April 6 hartal; but in two regions where the Home Rule Leagues had been weak, in Bengal and in the Punjab, communications were more difficult. Gandhi himself went on a speaking tour north to Delhi, Allahabad and Lucknow in the United Provinces and south to Madras City, Tamilnad and Andhra, as well as making special efforts in Bombay City itself. Owen comments:

"This tour of Gandhi's amounted, in a sense, to a substitute for organisation: by personal contact he communicated his ideas to people scattered over much of India, mobilized lieutenants and a broader following, and strove to co-ordinate, to control, and to restrain them. Having hitherto directed campaigns in more-or-less limited areas, Gandhi was trying to direct this all-India campaign in the same personal manner. Indeed, he was nervous about
the conduct of the campaign in Bengal, and disowned responsibility for the violence in the Punjab, since he had been unable to visit either province personally. But India was clearly too vast for effective face-to-face leadership on a country-wide scale by Gandhi himself; more elaborate organisation and preparation were obviously needed."

Branches of the Satyagraha Sabha were established in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Allahabad, Madras and Karachi. In Delhi and Lucknow, Gandhi secured the support for the Rowlatt Satyagraha of the leaders of a section of Muslim opinion, the Pan-Islamists, who were already agitating about the Khilafat question. But in the province of Madras, Annie Besant was able to exercise strong pressure against members of her All-India Home Rule League supporting the hartal call, and major support was confined to Madras City and to parts of Andhra which Gandhi had visited.

Within this loose framework, there was even among the branches of the Satyagraha Sabha, disagreement about how far they should follow Gandhi's ideas and philosophy, a lack of clarity about decision-making and poor co-ordination. Gandhi commented in his *Autobiography*, written nearly 10 years later, about early signs of disunity in the Bombay branch of the Sabha:

"I soon found that there was not likely to be much chance of agreement between myself and the intelligentsia composing this Sabha. My insistence on the use of Gujarati in the Sabha, as also some of my other methods of work that would appear to be peculiar, caused them no small worry and embarrassment... (From) the very beginning it seemed clear to me that the Sabha was not likely to live long. I could see that already my emphasis on truth and Ahimsa had begun to be disliked by some of its members..."

Owen comments that "while Gandhi had a clearer conception of the organisational needs of agitational politics than any of his predecessors or rivals for power in the Indian movement, he remained fundamentally anarchist in temperament". Thus early in March Gandhi informed the Allahabad Sabha that they could either recognise the Bombay Committee as a central committee co-ordinating activities across the whole of India, or they could form their own independent committee,
if they wished. By mid-March he had decided that the Bombay Committee would have its jurisdiction limited to the Bombay Presidency; and later in the month he confirmed that each province should have its own independent autonomous organisation. Yet at the same time, he assumed that the Sabhas would follow his lead as President on the strategy and even the tactics of the campaign, refusing to allow provincial Sabhas to adapt the wording of the Pledge for use in their own areas, or to permit one province to extend the grounds for civil disobedience to the refusal of land revenue tax. When he personally conceived of the idea of an all-India hartal, Gandhi announced this to the press before consulting the Sabhas. Later, when violence broke out, he sent instructions to the Sabhas without discovering what were the local conditions.17

This imperious quality of Gandhi's leadership, he justified by his claim, which was true, that he had superior experience and understanding of satyagraha. The formation of the Satyagraha Sabha itself was at his suggestion, because, as he admitted, "all hope of the existing institutions adopting a novel weapon like Satyagraha seemed to me to be in vain."18 The Congress itself at this time was not geared to political agitation and even if it had been, Gandhi would not have been in a position to direct the campaign. But Gandhi went ahead with the Rowlatt Satyagraha without any reference to the working committees of the national Congress or the Bombay Provincial Congress. As Owen suggests, the campaign seems in many respects to have been a personal tour de force. In areas where Gandhi was known, he was able to exert direct personal influence. In provinces like the Punjab, Bengal or the Central Provinces, where his reputation was slight, whether the Rowlatt agitation was taken up or not depended on the particular local conditions. In Punjab, the end of wartime restrictions contributed to a massive upsurge of political activity in the province,
which took up the Rowlatt agitation without any individuals signing the Satyagraha Pledge or forming a branch of the Sabha. In Calcutta, in Bengal, the radical wing of Congress opinion supported the hartal, but without enthusiasm for the religious aspects of satyagraha. In the Central Provinces, there was little response at all.

(ii) Civil Disobedience, the pledge and the hartal

Gandhi conceived of the Rowlatt Satyagraha much like his earlier campaigns in Gujarat. The basis of the Satyagraha was a pledge to be signed by people willing to disobey the Rowlatt Bills if they became law or some other laws to be declared by a committee of the Satyagraha Sabha. Only those who had signed the pledge were entitled to commit Civil Disobedience; only signatories to the pledge could be members of a branch of the Sabha. It was when support for civil disobedience across India registered by the number of pledges signed seemed to be confined to little over a thousand, that Gandhi literally dreamed of the idea of an all-India hartal, a day of purification and prayer when all businesses would be closed across India. Hartal had traditionally been applied as a form of protest in India, when all the markets in a town or province closed in protest against the activities of a ruler. But this was the first time it had been suggested on an all-India scale. Thus a two-tier level of commitment was created in the Rowlatt agitation; first those who had signed the Satyagraha Pledge who were ready to engage in civil disobedience, and second, those who took part in the hartal, which was not an act of civil disobedience at all. Gandhi tried to link the two by defining the hartal as a day of preparation for civil disobedience. He also introduced a lesser pledge for those who were willing to commit themselves to "the truth part" of the Satyagraha Pledge but not to the civil disobedience. This meant that in the areas where a Sabha had been formed, the members of the Sabha became - without much consultation or planning - the organisers of a massive programme of purificatory
bathing, fasting, religious services, processions and public meetings which constituted the April 6 hartal. Yajnik claims:

"The 6th April was observed as a day of national penance and mourning - of fast and prayer - millions of people following the custom of centuries went in the morning bare-foot to tanks or rivers, or to the seas, to purify themselves by bathing in the holy waters. And after finishing the bath, the crowds formed themselves into monster processions ..." 23

The terms of the pledge, which was an individual vow to disobey laws selected at some future date by a committee, caused some problems for the Sabha. Some critics argued that they were willing to disobey only the Rowlatt Act itself and they objected to the extension of civil disobedience to other laws; another criticism came from those who felt that they could not be bound by the unspecified dictates of a committee.24 Gandhi put a great deal of thought into these questions, distinguishing between "good" or "moral" laws, which should never be disobeyed, and laws without moral content, which could.25 It was impractical to organise a mass campaign against the Rowlatt Act itself because it was an emergency measure and in fact was never used. He considered selecting both the Salt Act and the land revenue system for disobedience; but in the event restricted his choice to the Press Laws governing journalists, a system of censorship, which he had been complaining about for some time.26 The idea was that the pledged satyagrahis would circulate selected illegal texts banned by the government and print newspapers without an official permit. The committee of the Sabha designated in the Pledge did not issue its "Statement on Laws for Civil Disobedience" until the day after the Rowlatt hartal on April 7. Gandhi had imagined the sale and circulation of dissenting literature, much like the Russian samizdat movement of today, though not in secret. He envisaged both books and newspapers being sold openly, and as they were confiscated and the publishers and sellers arrested, copies being made by hand and reading clubs started. Ultimately satyagrahis should remember "that we have in
in India the tradition of imparting instruction by oral teaching. In selecting the Press Laws and making their choice of prohibited literature to be circulated, the Sabha were guided by the following considerations:

"(1) To cause as little disturbance as possible among the governors and the governed;
(2) Until satyagrahists have become seasoned, disciplined and capable of handling delicately organised movements, to select such laws only as can be disobeyed individually;
(3) To select, as a first step, laws that have evoked popular disapproval and that from the satyagraha standpoint, are the most open to attack;
(4) To select laws whose civil breach would constitute an education for people, showing them a clear way out of the difficulties that lie in the path of honest men desiring to do public work;
(5) Regarding prohibited literature, to select such books and pamphlets as are not inconsistent with satyagraha, and which are, therefore, of a clean type and which do not, either directly or indirectly, approve of or encourage violence." 27

Thus a particular tactical decision was to engage only in individual rather than mass civil disobedience. As he stated more clearly in his speech on the Bombay sandi on the morning of the April 6 hartal:

"When we have acquired habits of discipline, self-control, qualities of leadership and obedience, we shall be better able to offer collective civil disobedience, but until we have developed these qualities, I have advised that we should select for disobedience only such laws as can be disobeyed by individuals." 28

Moreover, distinguishing as ever his activities from those of the Home Rule Leagues under Tilak and Besant, Gandhi declared in the first issue of his hand-produced paper, Satyagrah, published in Bombay on April 7, that the business of the paper itself was to secure the withdrawal of the Rowlatt legislation by means of civil disobedience:

"This publication ... is ... committing civil disobedience in the very act of publishing ... In other forms of public activity, the speaker is not obliged to act as he preaches. The object (of this paper) is to draw attention to this contradiction as a fault. The method of satyagraha is unique. In it example alone is precept." 29

Though this particular campaign of civil disobedience did not develop as planned, we see here the subtlety of Gandhi's method. His hand-written newspaper could be copied - and others were to be independently edited and produced "in every satyagraha centre" - and circulated indefinitely
among literate sympathisers, and read and then passed on by word of mouth among the illiterate ("It need not occupy more than one side of half a foolscap"), until "at last the process of multiplication is made to cover, if necessary, the whole of the masses of India." Preaching civil disobedience, the production of these papers would itself constitute an act of civil disobedience.  

In practice, though, this civil disobedience campaign did not get off the ground. The violence in different parts of India which followed Gandhi's arrest on his way to Delhi, caused him to suspend the programme after a few days. But in any case the prohibited books - which were mainly works written or translated by Gandhi himself - and the newspaper, Satyagrahi, available only in the Gujarati language, and so not suitable for all-India distribution. I have seen no evidence as to whether branches of the Sabha and supporters of the campaign in other linguistic areas of India published their own versions of Satyagrahi. Also, the government of the Bombay Presidency decided not to prosecute either the sale of the prohibited books or the unregistered newspaper. The prohibited books, they judged, such as Gandhi's political testament Hind Swaraj, had been published in South Africa in 1909; and the new edition published in Ahmedabad in 1919 was not prohibited! Similarly, a hand-written unregistered newspaper was considered not to contravene the law since this applied only to printed newspapers. Thus Gandhi's campaign of civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Act, such as it was, caused even less "disturbance among the governors" than he had intended. If, on the other hand, the campaign had not been suspended so quickly, it is clear that Gandhi would have widened the programme of civil disobedience to the point when arrests would have been made.
Returning to the second objection against the Rowlatt Pledge, that signatories could not agree to be bound by unspecified dictates of a committee, Gandhi made two responses. First, he said that permitting the satyagrahi to commit civil disobedience only against the laws chosen by the committee was a useful restraint against indiscriminate and unco-ordinated law-breaking. But, second, if individual satyagrahis did not agree with the choice of law to be broken made by the committee, then they had the right to refrain from civil disobedience. As he wrote to C.F. Andrews who was one of the critics:

"... as a check upon individual extravagance, (the signatory) surrenders his judgement to that of experts as to the selection of ... breakable laws and the order in which they are to be broken. That surely is not a matter of conscience. If the committee which is bound by the same Pledge that binds the individual satyagrahi commits an error and selects laws whose breach will be inconsistent with satyagraha, naturally, the individual signatory who conscientiously thinks so refrains from breaking such a law. In all satyagraha organisations, this final liberty is understood." 32

In this passage we see again Gandhi's clear conception of his role within the Satyagraha Sabha as an expert in Satyagraha. In his view, he had a right and a duty to direct and control the behaviour of those he was leading into civil disobedience and other forms of nonviolent activity. Having voluntarily surrendered their judgement to him, or more exactly to a committee, the individual satyagrahis nonetheless retained a prior and overriding commitment to truth and nonviolence, to the dictates of their own consciences, and could choose not to follow him if they wished. Moreover, this was stated in the part of the vow which committed the satyagrahi to follow truth. 33

(iii) The religious basis of the Rowlatt Pledge and the April 6 hartal. This overriding emphasis on individual conscience draws us into another aspect of the Rowlatt satyagraha which deserves consideration. During the Ahmedabad labour strike, as we have seen, Gandhi spelled out his
CHAPTER 5: Page 149
conception of his personal mission. This was to draw upon the
spiritual resources of the Indian nation and turn them into a
political weapon. The Rowlatt Satyagraha was Gandhi's first attempt
to apply this novel approach to politics on an all-India scale and he
was quite explicit on many occasions that this is what he was doing.

On March 14, 1919, in a speech in Bombay, Gandhi said:
"We may expect to be told ... that the government will not
yield to any threat of passive resistance, Satyagraha
is not a threat, it is a fact; and even such a mighty
government as the Government of India will have to yield if
we are true to our Pledge. For, the Pledge is not a small
thing. It means a change of heart. It is an attempt to introd-
the religious spirit into politics. We may no longer believe in
the doctrine of tit for tat; we may not meet hatred by hatred,
violence by violence, evil by evil; but we have to make a con-
tinuous and persistent effort to return good for evil." 35

By this Gandhi meant that the Rowlatt Pledge constituted a change of heart
for the Indian nationalists who had signed it. Through the Rowlatt Satya-
graha, and through the Pledge in particular, Gandhi was organizing directly
to counter and supersede the agitational methods of the Home Rule Leagues -
"tit for tat" - with which he so disagreed. At a public meeting in Madras
six days later, Gandhi said:

"(The movement) constitutes an attempt to revolutionize politi-
c and to restore moral force to its original station ... The
message of the West ... is succinctly put by President Wilson in
his speech delivered to the Peace Conference at the time of
introducing the League of Nations Covenant:
'Armed force is in the background in this programme,
but it is in the background and if the moral
force of the world will not suffice, physical force of the world
shall.'

"We hope to reverse this process, and by our action show that
physical force is nothing compared to the moral force, and that
moral force never fails. It is my firm belief that this is the
fundamental difference between the modern civilization and the
ancient, of which India, fall-n though it is, I venture to claim
is a living representa. 'We, her educated children, seem to
have lost faith in the supremacy of moral force; we shall have
made a priceless contribution to the British Empire and we shall
without fail, obtain the reforms we desire and to which we may
be entitled." 35

We can understand why so few branches of the Satyagraha Sabha were formed!
Gandhi was asking the nation's political radicals to pledge themselves
to follow a quite different kind of politics from what they were
used to, based not on the power to intimidate and overwhelm, but in
moral authority. Of course, Gandhi's nonviolent method, because of its appeal to the masses, did prove itself capable of building power close to the conventional sort for those who joined the movement. This helps to explain why a great many nationalist political figures later worked with Gandhi and were greatly influenced by him - even though they never fully accepted that they were "revolutionising" politics by introducing into it the religious spirit. But this was what Gandhi intended and what he thought he was doing.

At a public meeting in Tamilnad on March 28, 1919, Gandhi showed again how much closer he felt himself to be to the spirit of the people than were the conventional politicians:

"(The temples of south India) demonstrate to me as nothing else does that we are a people deeply religious and that the people of India will be best appealed to by religion. I have come to say to you a religious sentiment. Many of us think that in the political life, we need not bring out the religious element at all. Some even go so far as to say that politics should have nothing to do with religion. Our past shows that we have rejected that doctrine, and we have always touched every form of activity with the religious spirit ... We have seen that all our meetings, all our resolutions and all the speeches of our councillors in the Imperial Legislative Council have proved to be of practically no avail ... There are two ways and only two ways open to us (to remove the Rowlatt legislation). One is the modern or the Western method of violence upon the wrongdoers. I hold that India will reject that proposition. The vast masses of India have never been taught by our religious preceptors to resort to violence. The other method is the method known to us of old. And that is of not giving obedience to the wrongful things of the rulers but to suffer the consequences. The way of so suffering is satyagraha." 37

Gandhi saw the ancient civilisation of the East as superior to that of the West and he was trying by the method of satyagraha to mobilise the residual confidence of the Indians in their own heritage as a weapon against their Western rulers and as a guide to their future development as a nation.

In the Rowlatt Satyagraha, Gandhi used two principal methods to promote this fundamental strategy. The first was the Pledge. We have noted in
our discussion of the Ahmedabad and Kheda pledges, Gandhi's identification of the vow with religious faith, his belief that in the keeping of a sacred vow was the presence of God. He laid down strict and detailed instructions to Sabha volunteers on the procedure for ensuring that signatories fully understood the nature of their vow—"a single intelligent recruit to satyagraha is worth a hundred signatories who have not realised their responsibility". 38 In his speech on March 28, he added in typical fashion:

"The taking of the Pledge is a sacred act undertaken in the name of the Almighty. Whilst therefore I invite every man and woman to sign the Pledge, I beseech them also to consider it deeply and a number of times before signing it ... But if you do decide to sign the Pledge, you will see to it ... to observe it at the sacrifice of your lives. The satyagrahi when he signs the Pledge changes his very nature. He relies solely upon the truth which is another word for love. Before he signs the Pledge, he might get irritated against those who differ from him but not so afterwards." 39

Moreover, on the day of the Rowlatt hartal, April 6, Gandhi introduced two further pledges which were to be taken up and promoted by the Sabhas in addition to their civil disobedience against the Press Laws. The first was the Swadeshi vow—pledging the signatory to wear only Indian-made clothing—and the second, the vow of Hindu-Muslim unity. 40 "A vow", said Gandhi in a leaflet published on April 8 while he was on the way to Delhi, "is a purely religious act which cannot be taken in a fit of passion. It can only be taken with a mind purified and composed and with God as witness", 41 But it partial contradiction of this, he stated in two messages to the press sent on the same day:

"This is the right time for (the foundation of swadeshi) as I have found that when a purifying movement like satyagraha is going on allied activities have an easy chance of success." 42

And again, in another leaflet prepared on April 8, Gandhi proposed the vow of Hindu-Muslim unity:
CHAPTER 5: Page 152

"I hope that on this auspicious occasion and surely the occasion must be auspicious when a wave of satyagraha is sweeping over the whole country - we could all take this vow of unity." 44

Gandhi was attempting to seize the opportunity which the hartal and the launching of civil disobedience gave him to consolidate a wider programme of activity and to do this by means of further pledges.

However, in addition to the use of pledges, Gandhi adopted a second method during the Rowlatt Satyagraha to promote his idea of a "purified" politics. This was the all-India hartal itself. The hartal was not, of course, an act of civil disobedience because it did not involve challenging any laws. But, for Gandhi, because he saw the Rowlatt civil disobedience as the moment when a religious spirit was entering politics, the hartal constituted both a means of preparation of members of the Sabha for civil disobedience, and a way of preparing the masses to understand the nature of civil disobedience and in the long run to take it up themselves. The civil disobedience against the Press Laws, it will be remembered, was to be undertaken by individual members of the Sabha only, whereas the hartal was intended as a mass activity.

The core of the hartal on April 6 as Gandhi conceived it was a 24-hour fast. He gave this pride of place, rather than the suspension of business and the holding of processions. 45 He saw the fast as "an expression of grief, an act of self-denial, a process of purification". 46

As he said in a speech in South India on March 25:

"My first suggestion is that ... we shall all observe a 24-hour fast. It is a fitting preliminary for satyagrahis before they commence civil disobedience of the laws. For all others, it will be an expression of their deep grief over the wrong committed by the Government. I have regarded this movement as a purely religious movement and fast is an ancient institution amongst us ... It is a measure of self-discipline, it will be an expression of anguish of the soul ... I have also suggested that on that Sunday all work should be suspended, all markets and all business places should be closed. Apart from the spiritual value of these two acts, they will form an education of first-class value for the masses." 47
Two weeks later the idea of the hartal developed and was described in the directions issued to demonstrators on April 6 as "a day of humiliation and prayer and also of mourning by reason of the Delhi tragedy." Demonstrations began with a purificatory bath; the processions were to be carried out in complete silence; no pressure of any kind was to be put on those who ignored the hartal. In a number of centres, religious services constituted part of the programme, and breakthroughs occurred with joint Muslim-Hindu services, with Hindus being invited to address Muslim services inside the mosques.

It is hard to understand some of these ideas from a secular standpoint. An expression of mourning for the 14 people who had been shot by the Raj in Delhi on March 10 is reasonably familiar to us. So too is the idea that grief and even anguish should be expressed at the damage done to the nation's pride by the imposition of the Rowlatt Bills against the wishes of the whole people. This helps explain a "day of humiliation". But beyond this Gandhi was seeking to do two things. First, he wanted to signify, by this religious demonstration on a political issue, a major break with the methods of political agitation pursued previously and the arrival of a new method. The hartal signified this not only as a public manifestation visible to outsiders, but also as a statement to themselves by the individuals who took part in it—hence the notions of penance and purification, that they themselves would in future act differently. Second, by promoting these acts of self-denial and religious devotion in a political setting, Gandhi was attempting to lead the people of India to grasp and accept his perspective as a religiously-motivated political activist. The answer to their problems lay within themselves. They should throw off all those practices which prevented their community and the nation as a whole from rising to its proper stature, which would compel respect from the British. They should find within their own religious culture a means for doing this.

By implication Gandhi, in particular, was blaming the Indian people for
their own condition, at the same time as he showed them a way to change it. If they would change themselves, they could change their own condition. Thus the hartal was intended to promote for the individual quiet reflection, penance, purification and discipline for the struggle ahead.

(iv) Gandhi's use of Religion as a Means of Organising

In the editorial introduction to his Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919, R. Kumar suggests that Gandhi "intuitively realised that India could be united only through issues which affected the emotions instead of touching the purse-strings of the common people." Kumar is struck by the absence of class-rhetoric in Gandhi's appeals to the Indian people to support the Rowlatt campaign. Gandhi assumed, says Kumar, that Indian loyalties were to their community and their religion rather than their class or profession. There was an influential argument among the apologists for British rule in India that the divisions between different castes, religions, language groups, classes and communities made progress to democratic government in the sub-continent unrealistic. Gandhi, says Kumar, had no illusions about the nature of political society in his country, but was able to unite it because of his belief that "religion provided the fundamental basis for political action in India." Kumar continues:

"A community embraced a number of castes with comparable hierarchical status and related cultural values. Gandhi realised and herein lay the great reason for his success, that only a 'romantic' issue could persuade different communities and religious groups to participate in an agitation against the British government, because only a romantic issue could give them the freedom to voice their grievances on a common platform without surrendering their distinct identities. Gandhi's 'romanticism' rested upon his attempt to relate political aspirations to moral instead of material objectives; to the flowering of the character and personality of his countrymen rather than to the achievement of economic and social goals ... By drawing different castes, communities and religious groups into the penumbra of romantic politics, Gandhi sought to transform
social groups which were loosely held together into a cohesive, articulate and creative political society. The support which the Rowlatt Satyagraha won in different parts of the country, and the wide range of classes and communities which participated in the movement, are measures of Gandhi's success in transforming the peoples of India into such a society."

It is not altogether true that Gandhi was uninterested in economic and social goals; rather he looked at these goals within the context of a religiously-based ideal of society. In some respects, Kumar is re-stating the well-established observation that nationalism, as a "romantic" ideal, can triumph over class-politics. Kumar also points out that Gandhi's religiously-based political appeal could draw together Indians of different religions and castes because he recognised each one as a "distinct community" of equal status and dignity. Mutual aid between these groups was the basis for action against the Raj. Equally, as we have seen, constructive programme was necessary to correct abuses within Indian society which were a blot on its reputation and a barrier to unity.

Kumar in common with many other critics, however, goes on to point out that while Gandhi's romanticism "was conspicuously successful in mobilising new classes and communities", it was inadequate to exercise control over these groups once they had been drawn into political agitation. In particular, he makes the common charge that Gandhi's "religious idiom ... widened the gulf between the two major communities of the sub-continent" and probably contributed to Partition in 1947. It is a fundamental criticism of Gandhi's political method which I have not seen satisfactorily answered.

(v) Gandhi's "Himalayan Blunder"

Gandhi stated that he made a "Himalayan miscalculation" during the Rowlatt Satyagraha when he decided to launch upon civil disobedience.
prematurely". This famous phrase has been reproduced many times to illustrate Gandhi's sense of shock when his elaborately conceived assault upon the nation's political life, through the new weapon of satyagraha, collapsed in the rioting in Ahmedabad, Bombay and rural Gujarat and the repression in Delhi and the Punjab. Gandhi suggests in his Autobiography that he first used the expression at Nadiad in the Kheda district of Gujarat when he went there a few days after the Ahmedabad riots (on April 24, 1919) and "saw the actual state of things there". But other records make it seem clear that he made the remark almost three months after the riots, on July 6, 1919, when he visited Nadiad again and was inviting the citizens to support him in a resumption of civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Acts.

According to Gandhi in his Nadiad speech in July 1919, his error lay "in trying to let civil disobedience take the people by storm. While in his Autobiography, he gives a fuller explanation:

"... willing and spontaneous obedience (of the law) is required of a Satyagrahi. A Satyagrahi obeys the laws of society intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular rules are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him of civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined circumstances. My error lay in my failure to observe this necessary limitation. I had called on the people to launch upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified themselves for it, and this mistake seemed to me of Himalyan magnitude." 

Gandhi is here making the same distinction between passive resistance and satyagraha as he made throughout his career in politics.

Immediately after the April rioting, he made the point in a slightly less abstruse way, talking about the difference between civil disobedience carried out in a spirit of lawlessness and civil disobedience as a branch of satyagraha. This again was the distinction which he used when he wrote the Report of the Congress Inquiry into events in the
Punjab, it is the same criticism that he made of the agitational methods of the Home Rule Leagues, that they carried out legitimate radical activity in the wrong spirit, thus undermining and invalidating their actions. Gandhi obviously reached the conclusion after the Rowlatt rioting that he had overestimated the extent to which satyagraha had superseded the old methods of nationalist agitation.

In his Autobiography he goes on:

"As soon as I entered the Kheda district, all the old recollections of the Kheda struggle came back to me, and I wondered how I could have failed to perceive what was so obvious. I realised that before a people could be fit for offering civil disobedience, they should thoroughly understand its deeper implications. That being so, before restarting civil disobedience on a mass scale, it would be necessary to create a band of well-tried, pure-hearted volunteers who thoroughly understood the strict conditions of Satyagraha. They could explain these to the people, and by sleepless vigilance keep them on the right path." 57

This was indeed Gandhi's principal conclusion from the breakdown of the Rowlatt Satyagraha and he continued for the rest of his life to try to build that core of convinced supporters of satyagraha who could explain its precepts to the people.

But Gandhi's own assessment of his "Himalayan miscalculation" in the Rowlatt Satyagraha seems to be highly suspect. Despite what he says the Rowlatt Satyagraha did not constitute civil disobedience "on a mass scale". The civil disobedience actions proposed by Gandhi during the Rowlatt Satyagraha were limited to breaking the Press Laws and specifically restricted to a type of action, publishing and selling a newspaper or book, which was to be carried out only by individuals. Gandhi, in his speech on the morning of the April 6 hartal, had explicitly excluded "collective civil disobedience" from his programme of action - until "we have acquired habits of discipline, self-control, qualities of leadership and obedience." 56 On the other hand, the Rowlatt hartal itself was a mass action, but it was not in any sense
civil disobedience, and Gandhi always claimed subsequently that the hartal itself had been a complete success.

As we have seen no-one was arrested for civil disobedience against the Press Laws. Gandhi had taken enormous pains in devising his plan of civil disobedience to guard against the breakdown into lawlessness, which nevertheless happened. He had inserted into the Satyagraha Pledge a condition that only those laws could be broken which had been selected by a committee of the Sabha which included himself. This, he admitted, was specifically designed to check "individual extravagance". During the March 1919 build-up to the April 6 hartal, a procession of satyagrahis in Sindh had been prohibited. Gandhi was delighted that the protesters obeyed this police order even though the procession was "innocent", "because they are bound by the Pledge not to commit disobedience except where authorised by the committee." When he was called upon to make an assessment of the March 30 hartal in Delhi when 14 people were killed, the principal criticism of the participants which Gandhi made was that a crowd had assembled at the railway station demanding the release of some men who had been arrested. As he wrote on April 3:

"... the conduct was premature, because the committee contemplated in the Pledge had not decided upon the disobedience of order that might be issued by Magistrates under the Riot Act ... The essence of the Pledge is to invite imprisonment and until the committee decides upon the breach of the Riot Act, it is the duty of satyagrahis to obey, without making the slightest ado, magisterial order: to disperse, etc., and thus to demonstrate their law-abiding nature." 61

Three days later, on April 5, when Gandhi wrote his "Directions to Demonstrators" taking part in the April 6 hartal, one paragraph stated:

"It is the duty of the demonstrators to obey and carry out all police instructions as it is as yet no part of the movement to offer civil disobedience against police orders that may be given in connection with demonstrations, processions organised by Satyagraha Associations". 62

It is ironic that the one clear breach of these instructions by a member of the Sabha was that by Gandhi himself when he refused on the
train to Delhi on April 9 to obey an order issued by the police restricting him to the Bombay Presidency. Gandhi commented in a statement released the same day, "I had no hesitation in saying to the officer who served the order on me that I was bound in virtue of my Pledge to disregard it which I have done ... It was galling for me to remain free whilst the Rowlatt legislation disfigured the Statute-book."

But while this assertion that he was bound by his Pledge to refuse to obey the order was repeated by him subsequently, and I have not seen it challenged by any commentator, Gandhi was bound by his Pledge, as we have seen, not to disobey any police instructions or orders until authorised to do so by the Satyagraha committee. Was not this the impulsive breaking of his own carefully constructed rules for the conduct of the Rowlatt Satyagraha - Gandhi's "Himalayan miscalculation"?

If their leader, who of course was the author of the instructions coming from the committee of the Satyagraha Sabha, felt free to extend the grounds for civil disobedience suddenly and arbitrarily on April 9, no wonder this sowed confusion in the minds of his immediate supporters, and gave the impression to a wider public that now was the moment for general collective civil disobedience to take place. As Gandhi had clearly stated, the people were in no measure ready for general disobedience according to the rules of satyagraha. This was why he had restricted civil disobedience to individuals. It seems, then, that Gandhi's "Himalayan miscalculation" was not, as he said, that he launched civil disobedience prematurely, but that he implied by offering himself for arrest on April 9 and breaking the careful restriction on the grounds for civil disobedience which he himself had inspired, that the time for general or mass civil disobedience had arrived. This was certainly premature.

In Chapter 4, we noted Gandhi's attempted classification of the functions
of civil disobedience which he made in 1941. The second function, he
said, had been demonstrated at Champaran in 1917, when he disobeyed an
order externing him from this district of Bihar:

"It (civil disobedience) can be offered without regard to effect,
though aimed at a particular wrong or evil, by way of self-
immolation in order to rouse local consciousness or conscience.
Such was the case in Champaran when I offered Civil Disobedience
without any regard to the effect and well knowing that even the
people might remain apathetic." 64

In my view, Gandhi attempted to repeat the tactic in 1919 on a national
scale, with disastrous results. He seems to have taken on the hero's
part in a moment of impetuosity which caused him to throw over all his
earlier careful calculations.

Gandhi also said that his "Himalayan miscalculation" lay "in trying
to let civil disobedience take the people by storm". 65 This seems to
reflect in a general way what happened. He had been talking in his
swadeshi leaflet and his Hindu-Muslim Unity leaflet, both published
on April 8, the day before his arrest, about people's thoughts under-
going "a revolution in a single moment" when their religious sense is
awakened; and also about "a wave of satyagraha ... sweeping over the
whole country". It appears that he may have been deceived by his own
rhetoric into believing that satyagraha had taken root more deeply
than it had. In addition, in planning the April 6 hartal he had
prescribed three forms of action. The first was the 24-hour fast;
the second was the closing of businesses; and the third was to hold
public meetings and processions all over India.

"The third suggestion is to hold in every hamlet of India
public meetings, protesting against the Rowlatt legislation
and asking the Secretary of State for India to repeal that
legislation." 66

These meetings and processions did take place on the day of the Rowlatt
hartal mainly in the urban areas of India, and after Gandhi's arrest
the closing of businesses and staging of marches and protest meetings
continued, leading in some places to the breakdown of nonviolent
discipline which so appalled Gandhi. On the other hand, in the hartals
against the arrest of Horniman which Gandhi called in May 1919 and sub-
sequently against British policy towards the Khilafat in November 1919
and March 1920, he specifically excluded all public demonstrations as
part of the action, and restricted it to the closing of businesses and
to religious observances in people's private homes, including fasting.67
Thus, in practical terms, Gandhi also concluded from the Rowlett
Satyagraha that he had miscalculated in staging public meetings and
processions as part of the hartal. Possibly these traditional political
activities would not have lead to violence if he had obeyed the order
restricting him to Bombay; but having decided in so precipitate a
manner to go ahead with individual civil disobedience himself, a
programme of public street demonstrations was disastrous. Gandhi did
not repeat the mistake when Horniman was deported a month later, and
successfully forbade street demonstrations. Later, in July, when he
was planning to resume individual civil disobedience against the Row-
latt Act by offering himself as the first to be imprisoned, he again
explicitly forbade public demonstrations to be staged in protest.63
Later still, between 1920-22, when Noncooperation was launched against
the British government by the Indian National Congress under Gandhi's
leadership, the movement avoided aggressive civil disobedience for
well over a year—Gandhi tried to keep civil disobedience separate
from a programme of street demonstrations.

Thus Gandhi's "Himalayan miscalculation" in 1919 was not that he mis-
judged the mood of the Indian people and launched mass or individual
civil disobedience prematurely. The elaborate restrictions which he
had placed on the conduct of a civil disobedience campaign by confining
it to laws which could be broken only by individuals at the direction
of a committee, show that he was well aware of the dangers. What seems
to have happened is that a miscalculation on his part by offering
personal civil disobedience against a police restriction order, served to precipitate mass rioting in a number of centres by people who had been aroused and prepared by the mass demonstrations staged during the Rowlatt hartal on April 6.

(vi) The second phase of the Rowlatt Satyagraha, April 9 - July 21, 1919

Another misconception about the Rowlatt Satyagraha is that it ended when Gandhi suspended individual civil disobedience on April 18. It is true that mass participation in the campaign against the Rowlatt Act did end as the protests set off by Gandhi's arrest gradually petered out, but Gandhi and the Satyagraha Sabha carried out a revised programme of activities during April, May and June. On June 18, 1919, Gandhi announced that individual civil disobedience would be resumed in July, and he proceeded with preparations for this - including the speech at Nadiad in Kheda district on July 6 where he made his remarks about his earlier "Himalayan miscalculation". Detailed arrangements for this renewal of civil disobedience were made, but after negotiations with the Governor of the Bombay Presidency and the Viceroy, it was suspended on July 21, 1919 before any act of civil disobedience had taken place. Even then the Rowlatt Satyagraha was not entirely over.

To review the main events across the subcontinent which dictated the course of the Rowlatt Satyagraha; on April 14, immediately following the riots in Ahmedabad, Gandhi insisted that the duty of satyagrahis was to help the authorities restore order. Over subsequent days, he deliberately resisted the temptation to criticise the military for their excesses during the period of martial law in the city because he felt he had a higher duty to support the authorities at such a moment. He also placed a strong emphasis on the Swadeshi and Hindu-Muslim Unity constructive campaigns which he had launched on April 3 and issued a series of leaflets explaining the principles of satyagraha.
These were used as a basis for their campaigning by Sabha volunteers.\textsuperscript{72} Their activities were mainly confined to Gandhi's home area, the Bombay Presidency.

In Delhi, the Satyagraha Sabha branch had staged its Rowlatt hartal a week early on March 30. Confrontation with the authorities on that day led to a number of fatal shootings, but the Satyagraha Sabha under the leadership of Swami Shradhanand managed to contain the explosion of anti-British feeling which followed and were to stage a second peaceful hartal on April 6.\textsuperscript{73} They appealed, however, to Gandhi himself to come to Delhi to assist them in disciplining the crowds and in educating them in the principles of satyagraha. On April 3, Gandhi released a letter to the press commenting on the coming all-India hartal in the light of what had just happened in Delhi. "The Delhi tragedy", he said, "imposes an added responsibility upon satyagrahis of steeling their hearts and going on with their struggle ..." Broadly, he accepted Shradhanand's published account that the authorities had overreacted, but he criticised the Sabha for not dispersing the crowds after this was ordered by the authorities: Civil disobedience against the Riot Act was not part of Gandhi's programme at this stage, as we have seen. He also publicly congratulated Shradhanand and "the people of Delhi" "for exemplary patience" and for the sacrifice of "such innocent blood as Delhi gave".\textsuperscript{74} Privately, he wrote to moderate Indian leaders like Sastri and Malaviya arguing that the methods used by the Delhi police and the consequent sacrifices, demanded that they speak out more strongly against the Rowlatt Act.\textsuperscript{75}

It was while he was on his way to Delhi on April 9, in answer to Shradhanand's request, that the authorities made their blunder by issuing an order preventing him from entering the city and Gandhi made his greater blunder of resisting their order and thus placing
himself under arrest. In Delhi this set off a further hartal and series of demonstrations which lasted for over a week until April 18, even though Gandhi himself was released from police custody as he returned to Bombay on April 10. Two more riots occurred in Delhi and, in all, over the three week period of unrest from March 30, nineteen people died.  

Before he knew what had happened in Delhi, or in Ahmedabad or the Punjab, Gandhi was faced with the explosion of feeling in Bombay. On April 11, on his return to the city, he issued a "Warning to Satyagrahis and Sympathisers" which was published as the third Satyagraha leaflet. In it, he criticised Bombay supporters of the satyagraha demonstrations for obstructing trams, stone-throwing and demanding the release of arrested people. He went on to say that "satyagrahis", meaning members of the Sattha who had taken the Satyagraha Pledge, were responsible for the conduct of sympathisers who joined the demonstrations - if it proved impossible to prevent "the slightest violence from our side", then it might be necessary to abandon the movement in its present form or greatly restrict it.  

On April 12, before he returned to Ahmedabad and saw the destruction there, he issued the following "Instructions Regarding Satyagraha":

"In order that satyagraha may have full play and a chance of permeating the masses, in my humble opinion, the following instructions should be STRICTLY obeyed. Some of the items may require change later. The rest are inviolable principles of satyagraha.

No processions.
No organised demonstrations.
No hartals on any account whatsoever without previous instructions of the committee.
All police orders to be implicitly obeyed.
No violence.
No stone-throwing.
No obstruction of tram-cars or traffic.
No pressure to be exercised against anyone.

AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

No clapping of hands
No demonstrations of approval or disapproval.
No cries of "Shame!"
No cheers.
Perfect stillness.
Perfect obedience to instructions of volunteers or management.

Mohan Das K. Gandhi

This of course should not be taken out of the context of the complete breakdown of discipline following the Rowlatt hartal, which Gandhi, by April 12, was becoming aware of. But it illustrates how he saw a direct link between conventional political partisanship and antagonism in public meetings and demonstrations, and the descent into lawlessness. This was the antithesis of satyagraha.

When the Delhi branch of the Sabha, in the midst of the second upheaval provoked by Gandhi's arrest, read Gandhi's "Warning to Satyagrahis and Sympathisers" of April 11, they wrote to him through Shridhanand asking for clarification. Were members of the Sabha really responsible for all actions taken by people who joined their demonstrations, including (i) those who were non-satyagrahis who were provoked by police violence into retaliation and (ii) those who joined the demonstrations and actively opposed the leadership of the Sabha members? If any violence whatsoever stemming from either of these groups caused injury to others, had Gandhi really meant to say that the satyagrahis themselves were responsible for that "sinful injury"? Gandhi replied uncomprisingly on April 17, stating, "I ... hold that we are just as responsible for the action of non-satyagrahis when they act with us as we are for our own." The following day, April 18, Gandhi announced the "temporary suspension" of the programme of individual civil disobedience against the Press Laws and of his own plans to challenge his restriction order. However, the Delhi branch of the Sabha had disbanded the day before and burned its membership list. Faced with what Ferrell calls, "The complete loss of control, the violence and the actions of the government ..." a general feeling
had grown in the city that things had gone too far and, "They began to
doubt the validity of mass agitation because such agitations invariably
led to violence."\(^{80}\) Swami Shradhanand wrote to Gandhi withdrawing from
the Satyagraha Sabha on May 3.\(^{81}\)

Further north in the Punjab, according to one commentator, its principal
city, Lahore, was "ripe for 'revolution'" in 1919:\(^{82}\)

"All that was required in April 1919 to launch a popular movement
against the British government was an issue which would provide a
channel of expression for the discontents which affected various
classes and communities in Lahore. By initiating a satyagraha
against the Rowlatt Act, Gandhi provided such an issue, and he
thereby set afoot a movement whose intensity surprised the local
administration no less than it surprised the local leaders of
Lahore."\(^{83}\)

For four days, from April 11 to 14, control of the city passed out of
the hands of the British and into those of a People's Committee.
Martial law was declared on April 14 and order restored by troops,
the city being placed under the direction of a Military Administrator.
Well over thirty people were killed by police and army units firing
into crowds.\(^{84}\)

It is Amritsar, however, 30 miles from Lahore, which is most associated
with the Punjab atrocities by the British in April 1919 which fuelled the
later nationalist movement. The arrest of Gandhi coupled with the arrest
and deportation of two local leaders, set off severe rioting in Amritsar
which led to the murder of several Europeans. In retaliation, troops
were sent in to teach the citizens of Amritsar a lesson. On April 12,
a proclamation was issued prohibiting all gatherings in the city, but
this was read in English and probably not widely understood. On the
following day a meeting of about 10,000 people assembled in
the Jallianwala Bagh, a large open air meeting place, was fired on by
troops without warning. Under the command of an Englishman, General
Dyer, 50 soldiers fired 1,650 rounds into the crowd for 10 minutes.
at a range of 100 yards. As a recent nationalist history records:

"When Dyer withdrew after all his ammunition was exhausted he left about 1,000 dead and several thousand wounded." 86

The troops turned round and marched off without giving any thought to the wounded: Dyer is said to have commented that it wasn't his job to care for them.

Martial law was declared in the Punjab on April 15 and continued for nearly two months until June 11. During this period a regime of deliberate humiliation was imposed on Amritsar and other parts of the Punjab. The most notorious abuse of power was the "crawling order": Indians who passed the spot where a European woman had been severely beaten, were forced to crawl on their bellies; if they refused they were publicly whipped. Other abuses included public floggings, numerous summary trials, dubious convictions and punitive sentencing under martial law; cruel punishments like the skipping order; the commandeering of Indian-owned vehicles and other property and providing them to Europeans for their use; compelling thousands of students to walk 16 miles a day for roll-calls; the arrest and detention of 500 students and professors; forcing school children aged between 5 and 7 to attend parades and salute the flag; and rigid press censorship. 87

The "Punjab events" of 1919 occurred at the periphery of the Gandhian movement, where Gandhi's personal influence had been least felt. There was no branch of the Satyagraha Sabha in the Punjab and Gandhi had never visited the province. While the pretext for the Governor of the Punjab suppressing local political leaders was the celebration in Amritsar, Lahore and elsewhere of the national Rowlatt hartal on April 6, it was later claimed by Gandhi that his satyagraha movement had nothing to do with the explosion of feeling which took place in the province. A
similar view has been taken by historians subsequently. The causes of
the "Punjab events" were grievances specific to the province. If the
Amritsar massacre had taken place in Bombay or Ahmedabad, where
Gandhi's ideas were much more widely known; moreover, if the victims
of this calculated butchery had been pledged satyagrahis, fully
committed to the campaign of nonviolence which Gandhi was promoting,
then the consequences for the development of the Gandhian programme
would have been far-reaching. As it was, political conditions in a
vast sub-continent like India were diverse, British governors of the
Indian provinces were allowed considerable autonomy and few were as
inflexibly disciplinarian as the Governor of the Punjab, Sir Michael
O'Dwyer. Moreover, as a result of press censorship, it was some weeks
before Indian nationalists outside the Punjab were able to grasp what
had happened in Amritsar on April 13 and that was still going on under
martial law.

As reports of what was happening in the Punjab began to seep out, these
seemed to confirm in many nationalist minds the argument which Gandhi
had made to justify the Rowlatt Satyagraha; namely, that the reform
programme which the Government was introducing to increase Indian
representation at municipal, provincial and national level, was
meaningless while the Raj maintained such fundamentally contemptuous
attitudes to expressions of popular Indian opinion and continued
to exercise arbitrary power against the Indian people when they defied
its dictates. At the end of May - after the Satyagraha/in Bombay had
staged a peaceful hartal in protest against the deportation of its
English vice-chairman, B.G. Horniman, - Gandhi called a meeting of
Sabha representatives from across India to discuss extending the
grounds for civil disobedience to "The Punjab Matter". Their object-
ive should be to press the government to stage, first, an impartial
inquiry into the Punjab disturbances and administration of martial
law and, second, to empower an independent tribunal to review and revise the sentences handed out under martial law. In the middle of June, he informed the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India in London, E.S. Montagu, that he would be resuming individual civil disobedience in July in order to secure (i) the withdrawal of the Rowlatt Act, (ii) the appointment of an inquiry into the Punjab events and (iii) the release of the editor of a Lahore-based nationalist paper, Babu Kalinath Roy, who had been jailed for two years' "rigorous imprisonment" for his writings on the Rowlatt events.

In the drafting of the Rowlatt Satyagraha pledge, Gandhi had given the Sabha committee the authority to extend the range of laws against which civil disobedience would be offered, but had not allowed for increasing the number of issues which would justify civil disobedience. Gandhi readily admitted that in bringing in the question of the Punjab, he was going beyond the original objectives of the Sabha, but he was able to win the support of the May 23 Sabha meeting. Since his aim in launching the Rowlatt Satyagraha had been to challenge the Raj for retaining arbitrary powers for itself in peacetime and for its contempt for Indian opinion, it was consistent for him to extend the campaign to questioning the use by the Raj of arbitrary power in the Punjab. Moreover, as Judith Brown points out, by taking up the Punjab question Gandhi was able to move on to familiar ground:

"On the Punjab issue Gandhi repeated the tactics he had employed in Champaran and Kaira. Simultaneously with his criticisms on specific cases he campaigned for a government enquiry ..."

But even though the Punjab issue, as a "real" grievance, came to assume more importance to Gandhi and to the national movement than the Rowlatt question, which was "abstract" (since the powers given to the government by the Act were never used), Gandhi did not easily drop the Rowlatt campaign. His plans for a renewal of individual civil disobedience were detailed elaborately in a new set of "Instructions to
Satyagrahis", issued to secretaries of the Sabha on June 30. He had already secured for himself in the Bombay Presidency "the power to select the exact moment of starting civil disobedience and the satyagrahis who should take part in it and to decide upon the manner of offering civil disobedience". His plans envisaged that he alone would launch the action by breaking his restriction order which confined him to the Presidency. Because entering the Punjab would have seemed too "theatrical" and might have threatened renewed violence, he would break the order by entering Madras Province to the south. As with the Horniman hartal in May, there were to be no demonstrations at all when he was arrested. No further acts of civil disobedience by other individuals were to be undertaken for at least a month, and then only if "full peace" had been observed over that period. This programme was to be confined to the Bombay Presidency; however he did write to the Madras branch of the Sabha suggesting that they should adopt a similar strategy.

In Bombay, Gandhi selected five "independent self-sustained centres, each seeking cooperation with the advice from the rest but none being under the orders of any". He named the leaders who from these centres were to operate a "constructive programme" to discipline and prepare individuals for civil disobedience. No more than two at a time were to offer civil disobedience from any one centre, nor should civil disobedience be commenced simultaneously at all the centres.

As Gandhi prepared himself and his supporters in June 1919 for the renewal of the Rowlatt struggle, however, he was also seeking to re-establish his relationship with British officialdom which had been placed under enormous strain by the events of April. By his work in helping the authorities bring the situation in Bombay under control as well as in Ahmedabad, and by the restraint with which the hartal against Horniman's deportation was carried out, Gandhi imagined that he was getting through to the Government the difference between
satyagraha and conventional political agitation. Also, typically, respecting the Raj's estimate that it was under pressure he waited until after June 11 when martial law was withdrawn in the Punjab before announcing the renewal of civil disobedience. Time after time in his speeches and writings he distinguished between civil disobedience and criminal disobedience. Civil disobedience was a branch of satyagraha, and satyagraha was the ancient law of India which the Indian people were rediscovering. On many occasions, Gandhi argued that satyagraha provided the only possible restraining force which was preventing Indians from exploding in violence. He appears to have convinced himself that the explosion which followed the Rowlatt hartal was inevitable, and that satyagraha and civil disobedience itself had a slight restraining influence. Gandhi engaged in regular correspondence in this vein with the Viceroy's Private Secretary and with the Secretary of State for India in London. On July 12, he met with the governor of Bombay to discuss his proposed campaign of civil disobedience with him. He had already gained the impression that the Rowlatt Act was to be withdrawn and appears to have received information about a Punjab inquiry and the Roy case too. At any rate, Gandhi made it clear to the governor that if the Viceroy publicly asked him to call off the renewed campaign of civil disobedience, he would do so. This offer appears to have been unconditional. His intentions in giving the Viceroy this apparently easy let-out are not recorded - but it seems likely that he was hoping to establish further his integrity as a satyagrahi, one who would not embarrass the authorities at a time of instability in the subcontinent. Thus when the Viceroy did send Gandhi a letter giving him "a grave warning" of the consequences to public security if he went ahead, Gandhi on July 21 duly announced publicly that he was suspending civil disobedience again. He added in his statement that Kalinath Roy's sentence had been reduced from 2 years to 3 months and that he had received an assurance that a Committee of Inquiry into the Punjab events would be appointed.
The Rowlatt Act was never withdrawn, however, and Gandhi was to look a little foolish for this climbdown. Nevertheless, his principal objectives at this time seem to have been both to restore his credit with the Raj after the trauma of April and, equally, to oblige the Viceroy to recognise the continuing strength of Indian feeling against both the Rowlatt Act and the handling of the Punjab events. He was also attempting to instil a sounder grasp of the principles of satyagraha among his supporters. This involved a difficult balancing act for Gandhi, particularly when the dangers of losing control of a renewed civil disobedience programme - his trump card - were so great. But a remarkable tribute to his skill as a tactician and to the confusion which his new political method of satyagraha had sown in the minds of the British rulers, was that he, the spark of a widespread rebellion against the Raj in April, was still permitted to go free when he threatened to launch the movement again in July. Gandhi was undoubtedly seen by the British as a "special case", not bound by the rules normally governing the treatment of political agitators - jail, deportation or hanging. At one level, this was because as the Rowlatt hartal had demonstrated, he already commanded widespread popular enthusiasm at all levels of Indian society and it would be dangerous to move against him. But, at another level, he pitched his objectives so close to the middle ground of nationalist opinion and he argued so consistently, and demonstrated by his actions, that his radical method of civil disobedience should be conducted in the highest principles of citizenship and with the utmost respect for authority - that it was hard to isolate him and portray him as a wholly irresponsible extremist of rebel.

The second suspension of civil disobedience in July, however, caused ructions inside the Satyagraha Sabha. Judith Brown reports:
"After Gandhi’s second suspension of civil disobedience satyagrahi critics became more vehement, and at a Bombay meeting of about 200 of them on 26 July he was mercilessly cross-examined on his decision. One anonymous correspondent ... called Gandhi 'disappointing as a leader', and said, 'I fall at your feet to resume the vow. Or else leave your leadership.' " 98

Brown demonstrates that even before this new crisis for the Sabha hundreds of resignations had been received from different parts of India, and the Sabha was disintegrating. Yet Gandhi, as late as July 3, had written to a member of the Madras branch, suggesting that they establish the Sabha as a permanent organisation with a broad programme of objectives:

"I see that we will have to extend the scope of satyagraha activity to all spheres of life and to all other questions. I am seriously thinking of altering the constitution of the Sabha and make it a permanent body." 99

At the end of July, this was no longer possible. The Satyagraha Sabha had served a useful purpose in co-ordinating the April hartal and sustaining a much reduced programme for several months afterwards. It had also enabled Gandhi to get his ideas across for the first time on a national scale; and helped him incidentally to acquire control in Bombay and Gujarat of two newspapers. It had established for him, too, links with most of the nationalist leaders in other parts of the country who were later to become his followers or his allies. But with the virtual demise of the Sabha itself in July 1919, Gandhi was left again in Judith Brown’s phrase, "isolated at the centre of institutional politics".

Even so, he did not abandon his campaign against the Rowlatt Act. Having suspended civil disobedience for a second time and effectively lost the Satyagraha Sabha, he tried to shift the burden of opposition to the Act on to the moderate politicians who had pressed him to call off radical action.100 They accused him of not having fully exploited constitutional methods of protest, so Gandhi supported a Home Rule League petition against the Act in October101 and organised his own
petition through Navajivan in November 1919. He refused to accept that the Act becoming a dead letter was enough; but insisted that through the power of satyagraha it would be withdrawn before its three-year period was completed. He was reluctant to ask the Viceroy to remove the restriction order confining him to the Bombay Presidency, because he was planning to break this order if the time came to renew civil disobedience. When in September 1919 he felt obliged to ask permission to go to the Punjab to investigate conditions there himself, and within three weeks his request was granted, he was quite explicit that he was sacrificing his means of civil disobedience against the Raj:

"so long as the Rowlatt Act remains on the statute-book the release order can be no joy for me. In the interment order I had a ready-made weapon for offering civil resistance."

He went on:

"I hear people saying that satyagraha is as dead as Queen Anne, and that Mr Montagu will never repeal the Rowlatt Act, although he is quite sure that the Act will never be enforced. Those who make the first statement do not know what satyagraha is and how it works. Those who make the second do not know the power of satyagraha. He who runs may see that satyagraha is slowly but surely pervading the land. So far as Mr Montagu's supposed declaration is concerned, the strongest man of South Africa had to yield to that matchless force ... General Smuts ... said that, although the Transvaal Asiatic Act would not be enforced, he would never formally repeal it, but in 1914 he revealed his strength by repealing that Act ... I have not the slightest doubt that Mr Montagu and the Viceroy will yield to the same ancient force and repeal the Rowlatt Act long before the expiry of its time limit. But whether they do or not the lives of the satyagrahis are dedicated to securing among other things the repeal of that Act."

Again we see Gandhi's ultimately religious concept of satyagraha, a force, like God, acting on society in mysterious ways. In the world's terms, October 15, 1919, when the Viceroy lifted the restriction order confining Gandhi to the Bombay Presidency at Gandhi's request, should probably be seen as the final conclusion of the Rowlatt Satyagraha. But even in 1920 he was contemplating renewing civil disobedience against the Act and in April 1920 launched National Week, from
April 6 to April 13, which was to commemorate thereafter the Rowlatt hartal and the Amritsar massacres and to signify the moment when a new phase of the nationalist struggle under Gandhi's leadership was launched. For the rest of his life, he fasted for 24 hours on April 13. From Gandhi's perspective, a satyagrahi never gives up, particularly when he or she has taken a vow, and is never disheartened; for him, therefore, the Rowlatt Satyagraha never really ended but was merged into other more immediate struggles.

On the other hand, as a mass movement the Rowlatt struggle lasted for about two months in March and April 1919. It demonstrated that Gandhi could co-ordinate an upsurge of feeling across the whole of India. But perhaps just as important, it showed in the suspension of civil disobedience that Gandhi had the determination to bring the movement under control when it did not develop as he had intended, and that particularly in the Bombay Presidency he had the ability to do this. Thus Gandhi demonstrated a certain authority to the other political leaders in India and suggested his capacity to assume leadership of the national struggle. Brown, noting the multitude of grievances which moved different groups across India to support the Rowlatt hartal, comments:

"The Rowlatt satyagraha showed Gandhi as an all-India leader of immense potential. His personality, his ideology, his novel approach to politics, and his technique of satyagraha enabled his campaign to become the focus for multifarious local grievances and gave him access to the power they generated. But if he was to realise his potential he had to lead and be the master mind of his campaigns, instead of a figurehead for local struggles."

Owen's conclusion, as we saw earlier, is that Gandhi recognised through the Rowlatt Satyagraha the impossibility of co-ordinating renewed countrywide agitation by personal face-to-face leadership, and became committed to more elaborate organisation and preparation. In his
Autobiography, Gandhi writes that he himself concluded that he would have to train a team of committed co-workers closely identified with himself and his philosophy. It also seems probable that with a secondary leadership of reliable co-workers committed to his philosophy he saw himself as better able to centralise a future struggle under his personal direction.
SUMMARY

1. When called upon to launch a national campaign against the Rowlatt Bills, Gandhi formed his own organisation, the Satyagraha Sabha, because "all hope of the existing organisations adopting a novel weapon like Satyagraha seemed to me to be in vain."

2. The principal means which Gandhi used to bind the members of the Sabha together and to discipline them for the struggle, was the taking of a religious vow. He saw this as a direct opportunity for those taking the satyagraha pledge to commit themselves to a new form of political life.

3. Because he was determined to launch a disciplined campaign of civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Bills, Gandhi refused to contemplate "collective" civil disobedience; but restricted the action to "individual" civil disobedience by signatories to the pledge.

4. Against criticism that signatories could not bind their consciences to act at the decision of the Sabha committee, Gandhi argued that the vow contained a conscience-clause which allowed them to opt out if they wished, without breaking their word. This helped to establish the practice, nevertheless, of Gandhi's followers effectively surrendering their judgement to him, because of his "superior wisdom".

5. Against criticism that it was legitimate to commit civil disobedience only against the Act in question, the Rowlatt Act, Gandhi argued that civil disobedience could be extended reasonably to "bad" laws such as the Press Acts, the Salt Laws or certain Land Revenue laws; but not to "good" laws which benefited society.

6. When only a few hundred people had signed the satyagraha pledge Gandhi added a second category of action to the Rowlatt Satyagraha. This was the nationwide hartal, a genuinely mass action involving a day of religious observance, closing dom of businesses, processions and meetings. Again, he conceived of this as a method of spreading his religiously based concept of politics. Participants in the hartal were not permitted to engage in civil disobedience unless they had signed the satyagraha pledge.
7. Effectively, organisation of the hartal across the country was handed at short notice to members of the Sabha and other nationalist leaders who were not necessarily versed in organising mass nonviolent street demonstrations.

8. There was no branch of the Satyagraha Sabha in the Punjab, nor any signatories to the pledge. Observance of the Rowlatt hartal in Lahore and Amritsar contributed later to the worst outbreaks of violence.

9. When his arrest led to violent outbreaks in several parts of India, Gandhi suspended the programme of "individual" civil disobedience. Satyagraha volunteers supported the authorities in restoring law and order. They were instructed by Gandhi to demonstrate the distinction between civil disobedience and criminal disobedience.

10. Gandhi's "success" in calling off the civil disobedience and calming crowds in Bombay and Ahmedabad demonstrated his determination to lead a satyagraha campaign according to his own methods and strategy, or not at all. It also showed his residual control of the movement in the Bombay Presidency.

11. Gandhi did not immediately abandon his programme of individual civil disobedience; but reformulated it, proposing to begin again by challenging the order confining him to Bombay. Other individuals were selected by him to carry on the campaign after his arrest. Gandhi also secured the agreement of the Sabha to extend the grounds of civil disobedience to a government inquiry in the Punjab. When such an inquiry was announced, he called off civil disobedience again; causing the Satyagraha Sabha to collapse in dissension.

12. Pressure to call another hartal in response to the Bombay government's expulsion of Horniman was cautiously accepted by Gandhi. This time no processions or meetings were conducted and the action was confined to Bombay City. It passed off peacefully.

13. Operating on a national scale, Gandhi was unable to maintain the face-to-face dialogue with his opponents which he had achieved with the planters and British officials in Champaran; and with the millowners in Ahmedabad. Also, he did not have the benefit of reference to a higher level of government which might intervene on his behalf, as he had had in Champaran. His main hope rested with Montagu, the Secretary
of State for India in London, rather than with the Viceroy, Chelmsford. Through Montagu, the Punjab inquiry was instituted; but Gandhi was shocked that Montagu never withdrew the Rowlatt Act.

14. Gandhi's approach to the opponent, therefore, was mainly expressed indirectly through the conduct of the satyagraha campaign itself. His emphasis on civil disobedience as a responsible method of dissent for citizens denied any other means of redress, did not persuade the Hunter Commission when they investigated the Rowlatt events. But the Commissioners were impressed with Gandhi's sincere effort to restore order after the rioting had stalled his satyagraha movement.

15. Gandhi had too much support among Indian political "moderates" on the Rowlatt and other issues for the government to move strongly against him.
REFERENCES


2. ibid, p 123

3. ibid p 145, 159.

4. ibid, p 160

5. See pp 43-44 above.

6. See pp 120-123

7 op cit p 50

8. See chapter 2 pp 32-37


10. ibid p 115.

11. see pp. 74-80


13. ibid p 64.

14. ibid p 88.


17. ibid pp 78-79


19. "The Satyagraha Pledge", February 24, 1919, Collected Works, Vol.15 1918-1919, pp 101-102: "Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No.1. of 1919 and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No. II of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that, in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit and we further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property."

20. Yajnik, Indulal, Gandhi as I Know Him, Mr G.G.Bhat, 1933(?) pp 64-65; Masselos, James, "Some aspects of Bombay City Politics in 1919" in Kumar (ed) op cit p 181
24. Brown, op cit, pp 168-169
30. "Statement on Laws for Civil Disobedience", op cit
33. For text of pledge, see footnote 19 above, p 160.
34. See pp 42-46
36. "Speech on Satyagraha, Madras", March 20, 1919, ibid pp 141-143
38. "Instructions to Volunteers", February 26 1919, ibid pp 118-120; see also the accompanying "Summary of the Rowlatt Bills", ibid pp 110-118.
39. "Speech on Satyagraha Movement, Tuticorin", op cit
41. "The Vow of Hindu-Muslim Unity", April 8, 1919, ibid pp 201-203.
42. "The Swadeshi Vow - 1 ", April 8, 1919 ibid, p 198
44. "The Vow of Hindu-Muslim Unity", op cit p 203.
48. "Directions to Demonstrators", April 5, 1919 ibid pp 177-178.
49. Kumar, R. Essay on Gandhian Politics; the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919 on cit pp 9-16.
50. ibid, pp 15-16.
51. Gandhi, Autobiography, op cit, p 346
53. Gandhi, Autobiography, op cit, p 346
57. Gandhi, Autobiography, op cit. p 347
59. See text of pledge in footnote 19 above.
60. "Letter to C.F. Andrews", April 1919, ibid, pp 169-170
62. "Directions to Demonstrators", April 5, 1919, ibid pp 177-178
63. "Message to Countrymen", April 9, 1919 ibid, pp 207-209.
64. See pp 169-170 above.
65. "The Duty of Satyagrahis, July 6, 1919, ibid. p 436
67. See pp. 84-85 above
68. "Instructions for Satyagrahis", June 30, 1919, ibid pp 412-416
72. "Letter to Swami Shraddhanand", April 17, 1919. ibid p 239;
73. See Ferrell, Donald W., "The Rowlatt Satyagraha in Delhi", in Kumar, on cit pp 189-235.
76. Ferrell, op cit
78. "Appendix III: Questions on Satyagraha", before April 17, 1919 ibid pp 502-503
80. Ferrell, op cit p 232.
81. Brown, op cit p 184n.
82. Kumar, R. "The Rowlatt Satyagraha in Lahore", in Kumar,R. (ed) op cit pp 236-297; see esp. p 275.
83. ibid p 297.
84. ibid
89. "Letter to S.R.Hignell", June 18, 1919, ibid pp 377-378; "Cable to E.S. Montagu", June 24, 1919, ibid p 387.
90. "Notes on the Informal Private Satyagraha Conference", op cit
91. Brown, op cit p 233
93. "Letter to C. Rajagopalachari", July 3, 1919, ibid, p 430; see also "Written Statement on Future Plans", July 1,1919, ibid pp 424-425;
95. See letters and cables to J.L.Haffey, S.R.Hignell, and E.S.Montagu, between April 14 and June 28 1919, ibid pp 218-220, 274-275,
CHAPTER 5: Page 184

96. "Written Statement on Future Plans", July 1, 1919. ibid p 425;
   Brown, op cit p 178.
97. "Letters to the Press on Suspension of Civil Disobedience", July 21,
98. Brown, op cit p 182.
   pp 429-430
100. See, for example, "Letter to G.S. Arundale", August 4, 1919,
    Collected Works, Vol.16. p 6; "Letter to Abdul Aziz", August 8, 1919,
    ibid p 16.
102. See "Rowlatt Petition", November 2, 1919, ibid. p 274, 544-545.
103. "Interview to a Journalist", August 4, 1919, ibid pp 3-4.
104. "Letter to the Press", October 17, 1919, ibid pp 239-241; see also
105.
106.
107. Dalal. op cit p 204, "Statement of Fasts".
    Bondurant states "seven weeks".
110. Owen, in Kumar, op cit p 88
111. Gandhi, Autobiography, p 347.
3. The Swadeshi Sabha

While the Satyagraha Sabha was still active, Gandhi in June 1919 founded a second organisation to carry forward the constructive side of his programme. The Swadeshi Sabha was launched with Gandhi's characteristic energy and determination, but for reasons which we can only speculate about was not a success. There is no mention of the Swadeshi Sabha in Gandhi's Autobiography, nor in Tendulkar's biography, and very little has been published about it.

Swadeshi was not a new concept. At the time of the Partition of Bengal in 1905 a major movement for the boycott of British goods and the promotion of Indian manufactures had been launched by nationalists in Bengal and was supported elsewhere in India. According to a recent commentary, the Bengal campaign had two aspects:

"On the one hand, British wares were burnt at public places and shops selling them were picketed; on the other, a vigorous drive was made for the production and sale of Swadeshi goods. The confectioners vowed against using foreign sugar, washermen against washing foreign clothes, priests against performing pujas with foreign materials. Women of the Deccan and Bengal gave up foreign bangles and glass utensils. Students refused to use foreign paper. Even doctors and pleaders refused to patronise dealers in British manufactures." 1

Fourteen years later Gandhi acknowledged his debt to the earlier movement, but decided that it was totally impractical to substitute across the board Indian goods for British goods as the Bengal movement had tried. People who took a vow not to use British goods of any sort would find this vow impossible to keep and the movement would break down. Therefore, he proposed to be selective in promoting swadeshi, or home manufacturing. As he said to a meeting in Bombay in June 1919:

"When swadeshi was introduced in Bengal, the people there were not ready for it, nor the traders. The leaders then embarked upon
the task of spreading swadeshi far and wide among the people, and gave it up, for, in the attempt to take too big a step, they lost everything ... If we think of using everything swadeshi all at once, the result will be that we shall succeed in using none. I am placing before the people a programme which they can assimilate and carry out." 2

He repeated the same thought to a Swadeshi Sabha meeting in Ahmedabad later in the same month:

"The fault, then, which I have noticed in the earlier movement is this, that it was organised on too large a scale. It is plain enough that we cannot have everything swadeshi all at once." 3

Gandhi, typically, was reluctant to advocate "too big a step". Too often political and social movements overreached themselves and collapsed, because they went beyond the capacity for sacrifice of their supporters. He wanted a swadeshi campaign which the people could "assimilate and carry out". Gandhi felt that the place to start with was with cloth for a number of practical reasons. After food, clothing was a primary necessity of life; 4 the largest proportion of Indian income spent on foreign goods was used to buy imported cloth; and historically, India had had a flourishing textile industry. 5 In addition, Gandhi wanted to tap the unutilised energy of women and he felt that this could be done if they took up spinning in their own homes. 6 Moreover, spinning and weaving in the villages would bring in extra income for rural families during the months when there was no work on the land. 7 To launch such a programme on a large scale was an extraordinarily ambitious conception, which naturally demanded a concentration of effort. When later, the proposal was made to extend the Swadeshi campaign to sugar, Gandhi agreed in principle with encouraging Indian manufacture of sugar but declined to make this an objective of the campaign, which was still confined to cloth. 8

Gandhi's swadeshi campaign, however, was distinguished from the earlier Bengal movement in another significant way - and this presumably had a lot to do with the slow growth of the movement. He was strongly
opposed to the boycott of British goods. He thought that such a boycott was impractical; also, it was a negative concept and it might encourage dependence on other foreign goods which would be imported as substitutes. Eighteen months later, in the National Congress programme of Noncooperation, he was forced to modify his opposition to boycott, but in 1919 through the Swadeshi Sabha Gandhi placed his emphasis on swadeshi alone. He felt that Boycott would generate antagonistic feelings towards the British and could only be considered effective if it drew overwhelming support so as to materially affect or "punish" British cloth producers. It was reasonable to promote swadeshi without boycott, because this was a positive programme to develop Indian skills and resources which could be said to be effective even if only one individual adopted it. Boycott in Gandhi's view was a short-term movement, solely geared to a political objective; whereas swadeshi was a life-long principle for building a new social order.

With this conception, Gandhi tried to construct a campaign which was geared realistically to the practical capacities of the Indian people and to their needs. He sought at the same time decisively to modify the swadeshi idea. He transformed it into a religious rather than a political principle, or rather a religious principle which would underlie and help to shape political activity. This principle of swadeshi - which was expressed primarily in the campaign to promote hand-spining, but later in many other forms - was to become a guiding concept behind all his constructive work in India. In a report on a speech Gandhi made in Poona in July 1919 the religious standpoint is stressed:

"He had defined swadeshi as restricting oneself to the use and service of one's immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote ... He felt that the first and elementary duty of man was to use and serve his neighbours and that if he went
farther for his needs and services, it argued on his part more regard for self than for others," 12

In rural Gujarat in August, he was more specific, as another report shows:

"To him the religious aspect was all sufficient. That elementary religion which was common to mankind taught him to be kind and attentive to their neighbours. An individual's service to his country and humanity consisted in serving his neighbours. If that was true, it was their religious duty to support their farmers, these artisans, such as weavers, carpenters, etc. And so long as the Godhra farmers and weavers could supply the wants of the Godhra citizens, the latter had no right to go outside Godhra and support even (say) the Bombay farmers and weavers. He could not starve his neighbour and claim to serve his distant cousin in the North Pole. This was the basic principle of all religions and they would find that it was also of true and humane economics."

Thus Gandhi devised a specific campaign to promote his religious ideal of swadeshi. He later called swadeshi "an eternal principle whose neglect has brought untold grief to mankind." 13

The basis of the swadeshi campaign was inevitably a religious vow.

Gandhi launched the new movement on the day of the Rowlatt hartal, April 6, inviting his listeners on the beach at Bombay to take the vow three days later during a religious festival. In two leaflets distributed on April 8, Gandhi gave the text of the vow:

"With God as my witness, I solemnly declare that from today I shall confine myself, for my personal requirements, to the use of cloth, manufactured in India from Indian cotton, silk and wool; and I shall altogether abstain from using foreign cloth, and I shall destroy all foreign cloth in my possession."

He thought that while the "purifying movement" of satyagraha was going on, that is, the work of the Satyagraha Sabha in organising the April 6 hartal and civil disobedience, this was a supreme and "revolutionary" moment, during which "allied activities have an easy chance of success". 15

Moreover, when the riots following the hartal forced him to suspend civil disobedience, swadeshi propaganda became a useful substitute for action against the Rowlatt Act — "in order to keep the people fully engaged". 16

Yet in principle and in practice Gandhi was determined to keep the swadeshi campaign separate from the Rowlatt Satyagraha. 17 At the same
time as he was confronting or planning to confront the Raj with civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Act, he wrote to the Viceroy and to the Governor of Bombay requesting them to sign the swadeshi pledge.\textsuperscript{18}

Swadeshi, he explained, was not a political movement — though it was "fraught with political consequences" — and could be supported by people not in sympathy with his political work. In this way, Gandhi signified his \textit{bona fides} as a \textit{satyagrahi}, one who was working for the good of Indian society at the same time as he challenged the Raj on a contentious political issue. Not surprisingly, British officials did not adopt the swadeshi pledge as Gandhi requested, but he did receive guarded support from some of them in promoting swadeshi;\textsuperscript{19} similarly Indian and Anglo-Indian leaders who opposed him in his civil disobedience programme publicly supported his swadeshi work.\textsuperscript{20}

However, despite his initial promotion of the swadeshi vow through the two leaflets published at the time of the Rowlatt hartal, Gandhi delayed launching the Swadeshi Sabha until mid-June. In the intervening period he appears to have been brought face-to-face with a great deal of resistance to his proposal. As he stated in a new leaflet on the swadeshi vow published in May, the idea had "now been fully thrashed out", and a number of clarifications and practical alterations made. First, he stressed the point that the swadeshi vow was not related to the Rowlatt agitation, but would continue long after the repeal of that Act. Second, he had to emphasize the importance of "commercial honesty". In the previous swadeshi campaign during the time of the Bengal partition millowners and shopkeepers had taken advantage of the campaign to charge inflated prices for Indian goods of inferior quality, and this had not been forgotten.\textsuperscript{21} Third, he had to ask people not to buy large quantities of swadeshi cloth, because Indian suppliers could not meet the demand. This understanding forced him later to emphasize in his campaign the
production of swadeshi cloth, as much as its consumption. Finally, there were problems in obtaining Indian yarn from which to weave the cloth. He was thus obliged to introduce two new vows, a "pure swadeshi vow" which was similar to that proposed in April, and a "mixed swadeshi vow" which committed the signatory to wearing Indian cloth irrespective of where the yarn came from. Both vows, however, could be restricted to a limited number of years, rather than committing the signatory for a life-time as in April; and neither mentioned the destruction of foreign cloth. Also, Gandhi had relaxed somewhat his idealistic requirement that the yarn and cloth be hand-spun and hand-woven in order to constitute pure swadeshi. 22

When the Swadeshi Sabha was finally launched with the publication of a fourth leaflet on the Swadeshi Vow on June 18, Gandhi admitted:

"We advisedly deferred issuing this leaflet so long, for the reason that we thought it necessary to make some provision for the supply of cloth to intending signatories before giving the vow wider publicity." 23

Shops selling "pure swadeshi" were opened in Bombay and Ahmedabad and branches of the Swadeshi Sabha started in both these cities. Over the next few months Gandhi opened a number of other swadeshi stores in Gujarat. 24 On July 1, the Central Swadeshi Branch was founded in Bombay to co-ordinate branches of the Sabha throughout the Bombay Presidency, with Gandhi inevitably as President. The managing committee of the Sabha was to consist of 30 members; branches were to have a minimum of ten members. In addition to the "pure" and "mixed" vows, there was now a third vow, permitting those who were already in possession of foreign clothing to retain this, but committing them in future to buying only cloth manufactured in India. 25 Gandhi confessed later to be embarrassed by this compromise.
CHAPTER 6: Page 191

The swadeshi stores were committed to selling at a profit of no more than 5% to 7%. Gandhi, on learning that only 25% of the demand for cloth in India could be met from Indian mills, had shifted a great deal of his attention to the production of swadeshi cloth. He concluded that it was impossible to expand mill-production quickly enough to meet the demand and that therefore the only realistic approach coincided with his religious standpoint, that home-production of yarn and cloth was the best way to produce the required amounts of swadeshi cloth in a short period. Members of the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad had been weaving for some years; Gandhi now instructed them to concentrate on hand-spinning. Gandhi quite self-consciously saw his ashram setting an example to people interested in the campaign. Experiments in spinning and weaving at the ashram were complemented by a contest launched through Navajivan to invent a more efficient spinning wheel. One of Gandhi's followers was despatched to research hand-loom weaving in all parts of India. In his many speeches to women's meetings in Gujarat Gandhi urged the women to take up spinning and their husbands weaving. Frequently he pointed out the example of Gangabehn, the woman he had met at the Broach conference in 1917, who had succeeded in establishing a network of over 100 spinners and weavers in a rural part of the princely state of Baroda, which adjoined Gujarat. He also persuaded high-class Indian ladies in Bombay to take up regular spinning lessons as an example to other Indian women. Gradually a network was established where the Sabha branches supplied cotton to the spinners and cloth to the swadeshi stores. Much of this was of poor quality, and Gandhi began to argue for the superior aesthetic pleasure of wearing homespun, however coarse, to being clothed in finer machine-made or foreign garments. By September he was able to claim:

"As a result of the present movement about 2,000 wheels are working and 200 weavers have begun to weave afresh."
This of course was a significant beginning for the Khadi campaign which was to become an integral part of the constructive programme launched in later years. But it was not the revolutionary impact which Gandhi had anticipated in April. Moreover, sales of swadeshi cloth and signatories to the three vows did not spread as he had hoped.

In July he admitted:

"The vow of the third category is so simple that I even felt ashamed when including it, for there can be no vow which does not entail some suffering. I cannot understand why people have not taken such a simple vow in large numbers. There should be none in Bombay who has not taken one or other of the three vows." 34

Opening a new swadeshi store in Bombay in September, he complained:

"If the swadeshi movement were flourishing in India as we want it to flourish, we would have swaraj this very day. But, friends, it is not."

Gandhi said that he had received letters telling him that if he went to open a swadeshi store where they lived, then the people would take up swadeshi cloth; but this hadn't happened where he had done so. The explanation that it was the poor quality of the Indian-made cloth which was the problem did not mollify him - "No cloth anywhere in the world can stand comparison with what I am wearing. Surely the Bhagavad Gita doesn't say that we should dress ourselves in delicate Japanese fabrics." But he seems to have accepted at this point that a gradual adoption of the swadeshi campaign was the best he could hope for, and then only if "the young people" took it up.35

One major restriction on Gandhi's promotion of the Swadeshi Sabha was that he was still confined at this time by government order to the Bombay Presidency.36 When finally in November he was permitted to go to the Punjab he found there a much healthier tradition of hand-spinning and weaving than in Gujarat.37 He continued to speak on the subject of swadeshi, especially to women's groups, and to open Swadeshi Stores in different parts of India, but perhaps because of
the effort he was putting into the Punjab inquiry and simultaneously into building up the Khilafat movement, he seems not to have put a major organisational drive into promoting the Swadeshi Sabha outside the Bombay Presidency after his first initiative in June. His promotion of swadeshi was personal and piecemeal until eventually it became absorbed into the concept and programme of Noncooperation. Indulal Yajnik devotes a chapter to the Swadeshi Sabha in his account of Gandhi's activities at this time. He shows how the Gujarat workers were directed to take up spinning following the collapse of the Rowlatt civil disobedience campaign and how many of them abandoned this difficult craft, and the Swadeshi Sabha, when they got swept up into the Khilafat agitation and work for the Amritsar session of the Congress in December 1919. Gandhi was clearly casting around for direction at this time but his underlying and long-term faith in the swadeshi campaign is clearly demonstrated by a remarkable article he published in Young India just before the Amritsar Congress under the heading "Swaraj in Swadeshi". This was the Congress session where the political leaders had to decide whether to accept or reject the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

Gandhi commented:

"The much-talked of Reforms Bill will become the law of the land within a few days and in due course the new legislature will take the place of the old ... I have refrained from expressing an opinion on the report of the Joint Committee for I do not feel sufficiently interested in it. It is not possible to be enthused over a thing which when analysed means little for the people ... I would simply urge that we should take the fullest advantage of it ...

"But the real reform that India needs is swadeshi in its true sense. The immediate problem before us is not how to run the government of the country, but how to feed and clothe ourselves ... The Reform Scheme, no matter how liberal it is, will not help to solve the problem in the immediate future. But swadeshi can solve it now ...

"I know (that swadeshi) means a revolution in our mental outlook. And it is because it is a revolution that I claim that the way to swaraj lies through swadeshi. A nation that can save sixty crores of rupees per year and distribute that large sum amongst its spinners and weavers in their own homes will have acquired powers
of organisation and industry that must enable it to do everything else necessary for its organic growth.

"The dreamy reformer whispers 'Wait until I get responsible government and I will protect India's industry, without our women having to spin and our weavers having to weave.' This has been actually said by thinking men ...(But) India cannot wait for a protective tariff and protection will not reduce the cost of clothing. Secondly, mere protection will not benefit the starving millions. They can only be helped by being enabled to supplement their earnings by having a spinning industry restored to them. So whether we have a protective tariff or not, we shall still have to revive the hand-spinning industry and stimulate hand-weaving."

Ghandi went on to say that, if he had his way, he would make spinning or weaving compulsory for all Indians and he would start in the schools and colleges because they presented "ready-made organised units". Starting new factories would not deal with the problem in time and would not succeed in distributing the extra wealth to the peasantry, but would concentrate money and labour and thus make matters worse.

The Amritsar Congress was the session where Gandhi made his mark as a member of this body for the first time. In the "Swaraj in Swadeshi" article he presented himself to congressmen as a mature political figure with a range of practical concerns which went far beyond the narrow preoccupation with political representation which had been the prime focus of Congress up to then. He professed himself not much interested in the political reforms because they missed the point, which was the poverty of the people which he felt they should tackle by their own direct efforts. The Swadeshi Sabha was Gandhi's first effort to practice what he preached through a constructive programme launched on a mass scale. Though it remained formally in being for some years, the Sabha did not have the impact which Gandhi had hoped. What it did was to bring many of his political co-workers much closer to the philosophy and way of life which he was promoting in his ashram. It also provided a pool of skilled workers and technical experience...
for the later Khadi movement. What it did, too, was to announce to
the Indian National Congress a fresh way of building a popular move-
ment for national independence. Many of Gandhi's political co-workers,
now committed to the swadeshi programme, were with him when he made his
bid to capture the organisation of Congress less than a year later.
And they constituted his loyal supporters when he tried to introduce
swadeshi as a main plank in the programme of Congress in subsequent
years.
SUMMARY

1. Gandhi launched the swadeshi campaign on April 6, the same day as the Rowlatt hartal; thus indicating the broad satyagraha movement he was hoping to initiate. However, later he chose to differentiate the swadeshi campaign from the political movement against the Rowlatt Act, and this change of approach may be the reason why the Swadeshi Sabha itself was not founded until June.

2. The basis of the swadeshi campaign was again a religious vow which committed the signatory to wearing only Indian cloth manufactured from Indian yarns, and to destroy all foreign cloth in his or her possession. Later, the vow was modified and variations introduced to meet a number of practical objections.

3. The practical nature of Gandhi's organizing method is well-illustrated in this, the most idealistic of his campaigns:

(i) Swadeshi had established itself in Bengal more than ten years earlier as a campaign to find substitutes for all British goods during a boycott campaign. Gandhi viewed this as hopelessly impractical. He therefore isolated cloth as the sole item to concentrate on in a new swadeshi campaign which, he felt, could actually be implemented on a vast scale. This "limited" objective was reinforced by an "extreme" method, taking a sacred vow.

(ii) In the earlier Bengal campaign, swadeshi stores had exploited the shortage of Indian cloth to make large profits. Gandhi proposed 5 to 7½% as a maximum profit for stores; he also shifted attention from the consumption of swadeshi cloth to its production, which he thought could be best most effectively by cottage industries.

(iii) Gandhi seems to have believed that individuals spinning and weaving in their own homes could meet the demand for cloth more quickly than could an expansion of factory production. A more valid argument, probably, was his further point that the distribution of income gained from increasing production of cloth would be more equal if the emphasis was on cottage industries.

(iv) Consolidating his earlier work in the Ahmedabad ashram to develop skills in weaving, ashram workers and other supporters were now instructed to improve their techniques of spinning.
Also classes were started with educated women to try by example to take the craft of spinning to the villages.

(v) Once permitted to enter the Punjab, Gandhi discovered there a flourishing tradition of spinning and weaving and he proceeded over the next few months to open new swadeshi stores in several parts of the country.

4. The Swadeshi Sabha did not have the impact for which Gandhi had hoped and the more politically-oriented workers were pulled back into other activities as Gandhi took up the khilafat and Punjab issues.

5. Gandhi persisted in a romantic view that the British in India might support his swadeshi campaign. He wrote to the Governor of Bombay and to the Viceroy requesting their support, without result. His public meetings to promote swadeshi were occasionally patronised by British officials, though.

6. The swadeshi campaign met with support from a number of Indian political and cultural figures, as for example some associated with the Servants of India Society, who would not have supported Gandhi's civil disobedience movement. The swadeshi campaign was one of the factors which enabled Gandhi to maintain the high personal regard of some prominent "moderate" leaders.
4. The Khilafat Movement

Most accounts of Gandhi's activities in 1919, if they refer to the Swadeshi Sabha at all, treat it as a short-lived experiment which he took up in some desperation and dropped quickly when he got involved in the Khilafat campaign. It is true that the Swadeshi Sabha did not have the sweeping effectiveness which Gandhi had expected. What he had presented as a pragmatic "one step at a time" approach to swadeshi, in practice made demands of his fellow Indians which most found it impossible to fulfil. Pledging oneself to wear only clothing made in India, or devoting hours of one's time to learning the arts of spinning and weaving, were not commitments that could be made easily. Gandhi's "particularist" approach made enormous demands on those who followed his lead. Moreover, Gandhi did get caught up in more immediate political causes. He does appear to have neglected the Swadeshi Sabha itself after his initial enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, the principles of swadeshi were to play an important part in the programme of Noncooperation which he developed between 1919 and 1922, first, as a strategy for the Khilafat movement in confrontation with the Raj, and then in more extended form, for the national movement itself under the leadership of Congress. The concept of a positive movement to develop self-reliance among the people was a principle which he refined and extended throughout the rest of his career. Always, this work provoked hesitation and scepticism among many of his supporters who followed him, on the one hand, as a national leader of outstanding insight and energy but who were reluctant, on the other, to go "the whole hog" and adopt all the requirements of his social programme. Always there was a tension between his insistence that the constructive work was non-political "national work" or "public service", and his simultaneous assertion that only through the medium of this con-
structive programme could a genuinely unified nationalist movement be built.

The failure of the Swadeshi Sabha to take root in 1919; Gandhi's shift on to more short-term "political" issues like the Ïhilafat and Punjab questions; but his development and promotion of the swadeshi programme within the new campaigns - these illustrate the difficulty which he found in promoting his religiously-based social programme. In the late summer of 1919, Gandhi might have persisted in the narrow task of assembling in the Swadeshi Sabha a company of true believers; but his drive to put his ideas across to the Indian nation as a whole led him into alliance with nationalists of other persuasions whom he then tried again to lead in his direction.

The Ïhilafat campaign was one of the strangest alliances which Gandhi forged. In London as a student in the 1890s and in South Africa before returning to India, Gandhi had formed firm attachments with Indian Muslims. On the basis of the unity that had been achieved in the satyagraha struggles in South Africa, Gandhi believed that a similar alliance between Muslim and Hindu was possible in India itself. Hindu-Muslim Unity was a precept of his in 1916 at the same time as the national leaderships of the Congress and Muslim League were effecting a political alliance for the first time to press for constitutional changes from the Raj. Where the approach between the established national leaderships and Gandhi on the question of unity was different, however, was that Gandhi looked to a unity among the people based on reconciliation and mutual respect at a local and village level, whereas the approach of the established politicians was for two separately organised "monolithic" communities to come together through political bargaining and accommodation between their separate leaderships. 43 The Congress and League
politicians moved in 1916 towards a negotiated compact through which they could jointly press their claims on the British. Gandhi, typically, was more radical, though he did support the Congress League Pact of 1916. He sought a lasting solution organised from the bottom-up through a change in the religious and social customs of the ordinary Hindu and Muslim people. He thought that the way to achieve this was through emphasising rather than playing down or neglecting the religious identities of the people. He sought to mobilise the best elements in the religious traditions and among the respective religious leaderships, emphasising tolerance, integrity and respect for diversity.

On his return to India in 1915, Gandhi pursued his popular strategy for communal unity by seeking links with the Pan-Islamic movement among Indian Muslims. Pan-Islamic leaders were questioning the conservative, pro-British line adopted by the Muslim League which had been based on cooperation with the British Raj in order to secure the position of the Muslim minority in India. The pan-Islamists felt that this had failed to protect the interests of Indian Muslims who were being left behind by the emergence of popular Indian nationalism. They were also critical of a secular drift in League policy, favouring the reassertion of a Muslim unity across national frontiers focused on the religious leadership of the Sultan of Turkey, the Khalifah, with his command of the Holy Places in the Middle East. When the First World War saw India, as part of the British Empire, automatically pulled into a war against the Ottoman Empire, which had aligned with Germany, this posed a conflict of loyalties for the Indian pan-Islamists. Islamic countries in the Middle East were undergoing major upheavals as the rival Imperial powers undermined more than 400 years of stable Turkish rule, encouraging nationalist movements in the course of the war to upset
the old order. Indian Muslims looked on powerless as European troops and European-sponsored nationalist movements overthrew the Turkish Empire, dislodged the Khalifah, and occupied the Holy Places. Then came the dividing up of the spoils of War in the Peace Treaties which followed the Allied victory. For the Pan-Islamists and their supporters in India, a fundamental tenet of their religion was under threat. Muslim control of the Holy Places through the religious institution of the Khalifat was about to be abolished, despite wartime promises from the British political leaders that Muslim sensitivities in the Middle East would be respected. The Ali brothers, Mohammad and Shaukat, were Delhi journalists who publicly stated the dilemma the War placed them in. For their pains, they were put under house arrest - and Gandhi pursued their case and their friendship, along with that of other pan-Islamic leaders like Abdul Bari.

Other nationalist Hindu leaders were more circumspect in taking up the Khalifat cause, but Gandhi as a radical religious revivalist, critical of the political calculations of the established politicians, had no such qualms. His position was that Indian Hindus were obliged to support their Muslim brothers when fundamental tenets of their religious faith were under threat. Moreover, the British government had pledged itself on several occasions to protect the interest of the Indian Muslims in the Middle East and must be held to those pledges. His support for the campaign of the Ali brothers against their detention first gained him the confidence of the pan-Islamist leadership. Then the Rowlatt Satyagraha indicated that a popular alliance might be achieved between the pan-Islamist Muslims and nationalist supporters of Gandhi. After the collapse of the Rowlatt Satyagraha Gandhi continued to support the pan-Islamist claims on the Khalifat. As a result when the Khalifat movement itself was put to the test towards the end of 1919, Gandhi’s commitment to the cause was tested too.
The issue was the Peace terms imposed on Turkey at the end of the war. Supporters of the Khilafat movement realised that they needed Hindu support if they were to mount a serious challenge to the British government. They also needed an effective method of struggle which fell short of violent rebellion against the Raj. Therefore they looked to Gandhi to cement an alliance and to advise them on their campaign. The basis of the alliance was the need of the Indian pan-Islamists for Hindu support against the Raj, but also the new method of struggle which Gandhi was developing. By the summer of 1920, Gandhi felt that "the moment of moments" had arrived. He called upon Hindus to do all in their power to support the Muslims, for such an opportunity of uniting the two communities "would not arise in a hundred years".

Preparations For Taking Up the Khilafat Issue

In 1919, as the reality of an impending struggle between the Raj and its Muslim subjects became clearer, Gandhi concentrated on two things. First, was the need to assure himself and have the agreement of Muslim religious leaders that satyagraha, the nonviolent method of struggle, was consistent with Islamic teaching. Gandhi never sought to deny that a violent struggle was consistent with the Islamic religion; his problem was to achieve consent among Muslim divines, first, that nonviolence was not specifically excluded by the Koran as a means of struggle for Muslims, and second that a programme of nonviolent action could be taken up by the Muslim community of India, in a life and death struggle, with the authority of the Koran behind them. Discussions with the Ali brothers, with Abdul Bari and other Muslim religious leaders, eventually convinced Gandhi that he was on the right lines. Thus in a speech on the Khilafat issue to a meeting of Muslims in Bombay in May 1919, only a month after the Rowlatt hartal, (and before he had given up the idea of renewing civil disobedience on this issue), Gandhi commented on the need of Muslims to be able to enforce
their demands on the Raj:

"When people have become enraged against governments for a deliberate failure to carry out their wishes, they have resorted to violence and I know that many consider that violence is the only remedy open to them when ordinary agitation has failed. This is an age-long remedy. I consider it to be barbarous and I have endeavoured to place before the people and the Government another remedy which does away with violence in any shape or form and is infinitely more successful than the latter. I feel we are not justified in resorting to violence for asserting our rights. It is nobler by far to die than to kill. Had it not been for my talks with Barisahib (Abdul Bari) I would have hesitated to talk to you on a subject which is deeply religious. But he assured me that there was a warrant enough for satyagraha in the Holy Koran. He agreed with the interpretation of the Koran to the effect that whilst violence under certain well-defined circumstances is permissible, self-restraint is dearer to God than violence, and that is the law of love. That is satyagraha - violence is a concession to human weakness, satyagraha is an obligation." 47

In February 1920, Gandhi stated in Nava jivan, his side of the "agreement" he had reached with the Ali brothers and with the Muslim divine, Hasrat Mohani:

"'When you offer satyagraha, invite me to join you; at other times, I am not with you.'"

He went on to describe the response he had received from the three Khilafat leaders:

"The Brothers do not put unqualified faith in satyagraha. Hasrat Mohani Saheb, however, whispered to me in passing, 'I cannot say whether satyagraha can always be practical but, for this purpose and in these times, I too believe that there is no other weapon like it. I shall certainly therefore propagate it'." 48

The second fundamental requirement for which Gandhi pressed in 1919 as the likelihood for the Khilafat movement of conflict with the Raj came nearer, was that the movement should define carefully what its objectives were, and then commit itself to them seriously and devise a method for enforcing them. His correspondence and speeches in the summer of 1919 are full of suggestions to the Khilafatists that they should state their claims straightforwardly and plan a realistic campaign which would bring significant pressure on the Raj. Addressing a meeting predominantly of Muslims in Bombay in September, Gandhi upbraided his audience in his familiar style when preparing a community for nonviolent struggle:

"... I confess I do not fear the ministerial neglect of duty so much as I fear yours - the leaders' on the platform and this vast
If you and I do not do our duty today, we shall rightly deserve the curses of the millions of Mohammedans who are hoping that somehow things will come out right... The British rulers... take no time to find out whether we are serious or at play. I want therefore to ask you to ask yourselves whether you are serious about this very serious matter... A sincere and true man is ready to sacrifice himself for a cause. Are you ready to sacrifice yourself for a cause? Are you ready to sacrifice your ease, comfort, commerce and even your life? Then you are satyagrahis and you will win." 49

Earlier, in May, Gandhi had invited Bombay Khilafatists to experiment themselves with satyagraha by joining the hartal organised so cautiously to protest against Horniman's deportation.50 By October, when a Khilafat Conference in Lucknow called for a "Khilafat Day" of 24 hours of fasting and prayer, Gandhi took up the proposal and urged non-Muslims to make it a "national fast and national prayer" accompanied by suspension of business, that is, another hartal.51 As with the Horniman hartal in May, Gandhi's proposed demonstration for the Khilafat Day was significantly restricted when compared with the Mudaliar's hartal; again, there were to be "no processions, no meetings". Gandhi felt sure enough of his authority with the Khilafat leaders to write almost peremptorily to Abdul Bari advising him to issue "public instructions" to Muslims which would ask them to observe his proposed limitations on the form of the action.52 In the event, the First Khilafat Day passed off peacefully on October 17, and the call for prayer, fasting and suspension of business was observed in many parts of India.

Thus by October 1919, Gandhi had won recognition from the major Khilafat leaders in Bombay and northern India as a trustworthy ally, and his general approach, advocating satyagraha and a deadly serious campaign to challenge the British, was being heeded. When in November, a two-day conference of Khilafat leaders was held in Delhi to discuss the outlines of a strategy for the Khilafat movement, Gandhi was the only non-Muslim
invited to attend the first day's proceedings, which were private. He was also honoured by the invitation to preside as chairman over the second day's session which was public.\textsuperscript{53}

The First All-India \textit{khilafat} Conference, November 1919

This all-India \textit{khilafat} Conference in Delhi on November 23 and 24 was of decisive importance for the \textit{khilafat} movement and for Gandhi's future in politics. Despite considerable differences of viewpoint, Gandhi was able to impose his personality on the gathering and to carry the decision on several important points. Invitations had been sent to Hindu leaders to attend the public session of the conference; their cooperation had been sought by the proposal that the conference would discuss ways of preventing cow-slaughter in the Muslim communities which gave such offence to Hindu religious feelings. Gandhi had agreed to chair the public conference session on November 24. He therefore announced from the chair that he could not allow the question of cow-slaughter to be discussed; this was a separate issue which should be discussed separately on its own merits. As Gandhi himself admits, despite the wishes of several of his friends that the issue should be discussed, the conference acquiesced before his wishes and it was not.

Similarly, from his position in the chair, Gandhi was able to prevent a second issue being discussed at the conference. Several Hindu supporters of the \textit{khilafat} movement felt that mass Hindu support could not be gained for the campaign unless the issue of the atrocities in the Punjab was combined with the \textit{khilafat} issue as the basis of the campaign against the Raj. Gandhi - who at the time of the conference was heavily involved in the conduct of the Congress inquiry into the Punjab events and who had also received some satisfaction from the government by the appointment of the Hunter Commission to investigate the same
events - was strongly opposed to any attempt to combine the two issues. He argued that the \textit{hilafat} question was an international issue relating to the terms of the peace treaty which was to be signed by governments at the end of the war; whereas the Punjab question was an internal matter. On the \textit{hilafat} question no significant concessions had been won, whereas on the Punjab further protest action should await the results of the two inquiries. Again, from the chair, Gandhi's veto was respected by the conference, despite strong feelings that his decision was a mistake. Gandhi was fully convinced of his right as chairman to take this action. As he commented in \textit{Nava\!jivan} at the time:

"Many had looked forward to (these questions) being discussed. My ideas on both had been already formed. If I allowed the issue of cow-protection to be discussed, the cause would be harmed. If I threw open the Punjab issue for debate, both the Punjab and \textit{hilafat} causes would suffer. I could not let this happen. My position, therefore, was extremely delicate. I had to take upon myself the responsibility of causing pain to people whom I knew."

Judith Brown quotes from a Bombay police report on the confrontation between Gandhi and his critics over the question of linking the \textit{hilafat} and Punjab issues:

"Gandhi maintained his veto. The opposition then said that the principle of deciding by majority vote had been admitted at the meeting on the 23 rd and should apply to this question as well. Gandhi replied by a categorical statement of his intention to resign the whole campaign if any attempt was made to call for votes or even if any amendment to the decision was suggested. This threat cowed his opponents into submission."

We see here, therefore, Gandhi's way out of a dilemma in which he had placed himself by assuming the role of a satyagraha leader attempting to lead supporters and colleagues who were not convinced upholders of the satyagraha doctrine or who were simply less well-versed than he was in the practice of it. Where he had made up his mind and was convinced that any concession by him would damage the method of satyagraha and hence the cause for which he was fighting by this method, he
would insist on having his own way, or resign the campaign. Given his desire to lead non-believers in satyagraha in campaigns conducted according to the rules of satyagraha, he really had no other choice. Thus the principle of authority became increasingly explicit in Gandhi's campaigns. He, the foremost exponent and practitioner of satyagraha, must be given decisive authority in the direction of satyagraha campaigns.

What we also see here is yet another example of Gandhi's "particularist" method. Muslims and Hindus should work together both to defend the khilafat and to end cow-slaughter; but each issue deserved support on its own merits, not as part of a bargain between the two communities. Support offered in expectation of a reward, he said, was "mercenary" and undermined the integrity of a campaign and its supporters. In principle, as we have noted, Gandhi disliked pacts secured on the basis of mutual advantage. In his view, they bred suspicion and recrimination when one side felt the bargain had not been kept. If Hindu support was offered to Muslims unconditionally on the khilafat question then Muslims were in practice more likely genuinely to examine and change those practices which offended Hindus. Similar high-mindedness motivated Gandhi on the question of linking the khilafat and Punjab issues.

While the khilafat question demanded an immediate and fierce campaign and the willingness to make the utmost sacrifices, it would be wrong to whip up feelings against the government on the Punjab question when this was already the subject of two inquiries. Thus Gandhi was willing and indeed determined to sacrifice the apparent political advantage of automatic Hindu support which could be gained by combining the khilafat issue with the question of cow-slaughter or the Punjab. Such scrupulous insistence on tackling each issue in its own right would protect the movement from the criticism of being opportunist.
Under the theory of satyagraha, it should even startle and disarm the opponent (in this case, the British Raj and, in a sense, Indian Muslims) who finds that the satyagrhis are not playing politics by the usual rules but are governed and sustained by a strict code of ethical conduct which will not be compromised for the sake of immediate advantage. 59

On a third issue at the Delhi _hilafat conference, Gandhi also partly had his way. As the need for a serious Muslim struggle short of violence to challenge the Raj had become clear, several _hilafatists had begun to call for a boycott of British goods. Gandhi, as we have seen from our discussion of the Swadeshi Sabha, had already given this matter a great deal of thought and was strongly opposed to boycott. His position focused primarily on two elements: first, the importance of sustaining a sacred vow once made, but the impossibility of sustaining a generalised boycott of British goods; second, the negative feelings aroused by a boycott campaign. His approach was to be positive by promoting Indian manufactures; to be selective by choosing a particular vital area for Indian peasant economic life, clothing; and to avoid specific hostility against the British by promoting a general boycott of all foreign clothing. At the private meeting which Gandhi attended on November 23, a resolution to boycott British goods was debated at the subjects committee, which met in the afternoon to draft the resolutions, and at the general meeting in the evening. On both occasions, Gandhi was invited to speak against the resolution and, on both occasions, despite Gandhi's opposition, the resolution was carried. On the following day, however, in the public session over which Gandhi presided, the resolution in favour of boycotting British goods was not put before the meeting, and Gandhi spoke from the chair asking the _hilafatists to reconsider the decision they had taken the previous day. Judith Brown comments
that at this public session Gandhi's influence over the Khilafatists was "carried to the point of dictatorship". She also notes that by the positions which Gandhi took, especially on the question of boycott, he helped to secure the position within the all-India Khilafat alliance of some prominent Bombay Muslim businessmen who were in danger of being outflanked by more extreme voices from north India. 60

Nevertheless, despite his willingness to use his personal authority and his position in the chair to get his own way, Gandhi was profoundly influenced by the militants at Delhi. Hasrat Mohani, Gandhi's most stringent critic on the question of the boycott, had pointed out that "mere boycott of foreign cloth" could not have the type of immediate impact on the British which was needed. Gandhi, in struggling for a mode of action consistent with his satyagraha principles which would bring significant pressure to bear on the British government and channel the energies of the militants, hit upon the concept of withdrawing cooperation from the government. Boycott, which punished the British people for the actions of their government in India, was a mistaken tactic in his view; withdrawal of cooperation from the British government in India by individual Indians who propped up that government by numerous actions in their daily lives was a quite different proposition. In his speech at the private conference on November 23, Gandhi first formulated the concept of noncooperation and he repeated this from the chair at the public session the following day. 61 One of the resolutions at the private session had set up a subcommittee to consider further the questions of boycott and noncooperation. Preparation of a workable programme of noncooperation became a major concern of Gandhi in the months that followed. Judith Brown notes that, within six months, Gandhi had parted company with several of the Bombay Khilafat moderates. She comments:

"By May he was no longer prepared to act as a shield for the Bombay moderates against the stronger policies of the leaders from northern India. The reasons behind this shift of position, can only be conjectured. It seems most probably that, having made an emphatic stand against violence and boycott, Gandhi realised that he must produce a viable counter-plan in order to retain Muslim support." 62

This is undoubtedly correct. In his Autobiography Gandhi states explicitly that he was forced by the arguments of Hasrat Mohani - and implicitly by the strength of opinion which Mohani represented - to devise a programme which went beyond "mere boycott of foreign cloth". 63
Prior to the Delhi conference, in August, Gandhi had begun calling on the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India to resign if they were unable to persuade the British cabinet to secure the wishes of the Indian \textit{hilafatists} at the peace conference which followed the war. He wrote in \textit{Navajivan}:

"We believe that Mr Montagu and Lord Chelmsford owe it, as a duty, to see that the Muslims get the justice to which they are entitled, or, as a mark of protest against the injustice, to give up their posts as Secretary of State for India and the Crown's Representative (in India)." 64

He continued to hammer away at this theme, arguing that the government should "make common cause with the people" 65 when the government announced that "peace celebrations" were to be held across India to mark the end of the war with a public festival, Gandhi's response was firm:

"I venture to think that His Excellency the Viceroy can, if he will, tell His Majesty's ministers that Indians cannot participate in the celebrations, so long as the \textit{hilafat} question remains unsettled. And I do hope that His Majesty's ministers will recognise the necessity of securing and publishing an honourable settlement of the question before advising us to take part in peace celebrations". 66

Gandhi therefore had no difficulty in supporting a resolution brought before the Delhi conference in November that the Viceroy should be asked to postpone the peace celebrations "until such time as the question of the \textit{hilafat} was satisfactorily settled"; and that failing that "no Indian would be able to take part in the Peace Celebrations". 67 This proposal for a boycott of the peace celebrations on December 13, 1919, was the main immediate result of the Delhi conference and a first act of non-cooperation. Gandhi lent his powerful support to it and, with Muslim feelings rising in many parts of India, another nationwide hartal similar to the \textit{hilafat} Day on October 17 was attempted. Police reports state that "a serious curtailment of the programme of celebrations" was the result. 68

Thus at the end of December, 1919, when the annual session of the Indian National Congress was held in Amritsar, Gandhi was by then a major figure among the leaders of a growing agitation among Indian Muslims and as well he was the principal organiser of the partially successful Rowlatt protests earlier in the year. Although he had
already begun pointedly to call for the resignation of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State on the Khalifat issue, Gandhi was at an early stage in preparing for a nationwide Khalifat agitation. Similarly, on the issue of the Punjab, Gandhi was personally involved in a detailed investigation into the events of April and May 1919, and unprepared to launch a major protest agitation. This helps to explain both the status which he possessed at the Congress session and the moderating influence which he exercised during its proceedings.

During 1920, the Khalifat movement became a major political force in the country. Decisive events included the release of the Ali brothers and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from jail as part of an amnesty staged by the British to mark the end of the war. Each of them threw himself wholeheartedly into the Khalifat struggle alongside Gandhi. There was also the publication of peace terms unfavourable to Turkey and the Khalifat in May and their consolidation in the Treaty of Sevres in June; and the launching in June of a campaign by the Khalifatists to get the terms of the treaty revised. At the end of May, the Hunter Commission’s report on the Punjab was published which totally failed to satisfy Indian nationalists’ demands and expectations — and from this point on the basis for linking the Khalifat and Punjab issues was patent. Finally, there was the holding of a Special Session of Congress at Calcutta in September 1919 to consider the programme of Noncooperation being promoted by Gandhi and the Khalifatists.

Gandhi, as a champion of the Khalifat cause and the principal organiser of the Khalifat campaign, concentrated during the year on four basic problems. First, to devise an effective programme of noncooperation which was capable of bringing decisive pressure on the Raj. Second, to win the support of the Hindu population for the Muslim struggle. Third, to develop in the nation as a whole, and particularly in the Muslim population, the necessary discipline to sustain a major non-violent struggle which had been lacking in April 1919. Fourth, to preserve and improve his direct links with the Raj, the British government and British public opinion, so that they would take up the case for the Khalifat and get the terms of the peace treaty revised. It was in tackling this fourth problem that he was least successful; and this led him substantially to reconceive and broaden the programme of noncooperation later in 1920.
Evolution of the Programme of Noncooperation – November 1919–August 1920

As we saw, Gandhi was forced into his proposal for a programme of noncooperation with the Raj by criticism at the November Delhi Khilafat conference that the sanctions he had in mind would not be effective. Noncooperation was at first a vision, a largely theoretical notion about the subject of withdrawing support from the government and thus compelling its submission. Gandhi's key theoretical distinction was that whereas a boycott of British goods, the idea favoured by his critics within the Khilafat movement, would punish British workers who had nothing to do with the terms of the Peace Treaty, withdrawal of support for the government would affect directly the British rulers, who were responsible for the peace terms.

The actual form which noncooperation was to take—that is an assessment of the specific forms by which Indians cooperated in their own subjection under the British crown leading to the formulation of a programme by which they could withdraw their support—took many months to prepare. Khilafat conferences between November 1919 and May 1920 established a succession of subcommittees of which Gandhi was a member to work out the programme of noncooperation. It was not until July 1920, eight months after the initial proposal, that the final subcommittee came up with the detailed programme which Gandhi was to apply between August 1920 and February 1922 as he launched noncooperation across the nation.

How the programme of noncooperation was arrived at deserves a full study in its own right. Maulana Azad, a Muslim nationalist from Bengal, describes his reaction as a member of one of these subcommittees in January 1920:

"As soon as Gandhi described his proposal I remembered that this was the programme which Tolstoy had outlined many years ago. In 1901, an anarchist attacked the King of Italy. Tolstoy at the time addressed an open letter to the anarchists that the method of violence was morally..."
wrong and politically of little use. If one man was killed, another would always take his place. Tolstoy advised that the proper method to paralyse an oppressive government was to refuse taxes, resign from all services and boycott institutions supporting the Government. He believed that such a programme would compel any Government to come to terms. I said without a moment's hesitation that I fully accepted the programme. If people really wanted to help Turkey, there was no alternative to the programme sketched by Gandhiji."

Azad, then, quickly decided to support Gandhi, but the others on the sub-committee wanted more time to make up their minds. It took months to persuade the Central Khilafat Committee itself to adopt the programme and even longer to win the approval of the principal nationalist leaders in Congress.

Perhaps the most important point about Noncooperation is that it was not a programme of civil disobedience. While Tolstoy and Thoreau might have conceived of a withdrawal of cooperation being centred in a campaign of tax refusal, Gandhi had already tried to launch a campaign of civil disobedience in April 1919 and had failed. Gandhi accepted the criticism of the Rowlatt Satyagraha that he had launched civil disobedience prematurely before the mass of people were ready to maintain nonviolent discipline. Thus he conceived Noncooperation as a programme building up in stages, the first acts involving direct or indirect withdrawal of services from the government but not a breach of the law. Gandhi's nervousness about moving to direct confrontation with the police and army by launching civil disobedience led him to place all sorts of restrictions on this type of action. It is a mark of his ingenuity as a strategist and organiser, that he was able to outline and initiate in 1920 a programme of Noncooperation that was markedly different from the programme of civil disobedience which he had intended to follow during the Rowlatt Satyagraha, only a year previously. Tax refusal, the civil disobedience stage of Noncooperation,
was never reached between 1920 and 1922. Gandhi did not return to the aggressive civil disobedience which he had planned against the Rowlatt Acts in 1919 until he launched a new nationwide struggle in 1930 by deliberate breaches of the salt laws.

In November 1919, Gandhi first formulated noncooperation as the right to refuse to serve government by declining to accept titles or employment from it. The idea of Noncooperation fitted exactly with the immediate plans of the Khilafat for boycotting the Raj's Peace Celebrations. But in December, just before the Amritsar session of Congress, Gandhi was totally unprepared to consider a boycott of the new reform councils as a further extension of Noncooperation. In an article in Navajivan, he agreed that Council boycott would have been "the best remedy" for combating the Rowlatt Act and tackling the Punjab issue, but absolutely no preparations had been made for launching such a campaign and none of the deputations to England to press for alterations to the Reform Bill had threatened such a boycott; therefore he opposed the idea. "It must be admitted that the nation is not yet ready for such rejection," he wrote; "it has not had the required political education".

However, it is clear that within the Khilafat movement itself, some Muslims were calling for withdrawal from the Councils as part of non-cooperation. Early in March Gandhi said at a public meeting on the Khilafat question in Bombay:

"If this question is not settled satisfactorily and if our Muslim brethren resign from the Councils, I can tell you with confidence that my brethren, the Hindu representatives, cannot but follow their example."

On March 7, 1920, Gandhi tried to put some closer definition on his ideas for Noncooperation by publishing what was called a "manifesto".
In this, in response to a growing militancy in the Khilafat movement, especially in Bengal, he concentrated on "what we may not do". Itemising four separate points he emphasised, first that there should be no violence "in thought, speech or deed"; second, there should be no boycott of British goods; third, they should set their "minimum" demands and, having set them, "there should be no rest"; and fourth, there should be no combination of the Khilafat issue with other political issues. He went on to support the call for a Second Khilafat Day on March 19, but his positive proposals for Noncooperation were still very vague:

"Those who are holding offices of honour or emolument ought to give them up. Those who belong to the menial services under Government should do likewise ... Advice to soldiers to refuse to serve is premature. It is the last not the first step ... We must proceed slowly so as to ensure retention of self-control under the fiercest heat." 76

In private, more detailed discussions were going on. The Central Khilafat Committee meeting in Bombay from March 11 to 14 followed Gandhi's advice to concentrate on propaganda before attempting noncooperation; but it also adopted a detailed plan drawn up by a subcommittee of which Gandhi was the principal member. Judith Brown writes:

"This plan suggests several stages of non-cooperation, starting with the relinquishing of titles and honours, followed by the resignation of council members, the withdrawal of private servants and government employees, including the police, the withdrawal of Muslims from the army, and culminating in a refusal to pay taxes." 77

During March, serious discussions began in private between Muslim and Hindu political leaders, to consider noncooperation as a practical proposition for the nation. Doubts began to be expressed by conservative Muslim elements as well as by the established Hindu politicians. The most pungent criticisms were expressed by the Liberal, Srinivasa Sastri, and by Annie Besant, both of whom feared a repetition of Gandhi's loss of control in April 1919, and many other negative consequences. Gandhi's principal response was that of course there was a risk of violence, but
if they succeeded in "defeating the scheme of noncooperation" the risk was much greater, and he challenged them to suggest an alternative method of satisfying Muslim grievances. Eventually, on May 5, he was drawn to spell out in public, the four stage plan for non-cooperation which had been agreed privately in March:

"Perhaps the best way of answering the fears and the criticisms as to non-co-operation is to elaborate more fully the scheme of non-co-operation. The critics seem to imagine that the organisers propose to give effect to the whole scheme at once. The fact however is that the organisers have fixed definite, progressive four stages."

First, was giving up titles and resignation of honorary posts - that is, no action involving the sacrifice of people's livelihoods. Second, if this failed, they would move to the second stage which "involves much previous arrangement". This was to invite all government employees in the civil service to resign - though "all the classes of servants will not be called out at once" and no undue influence would be brought to bear on people to resign. This second stage was bound to be successful in forcing the government to capitulate, "if the response is at all on an adequate scale". Therefore, the third stage of withdrawing the police and army was "a distant goal"; and the fourth stage, refusal to pay taxes, was "still more remote". Gandhi added:

"The organisers recognise that suspension of general taxation is fraught with the greatest danger. It is likely to bring a sensitive class in conflict with the police. They are therefore not likely to embark upon it, unless they can do so with the assurance that there will be no violence offered by the people." 79

It was this programme of noncooperation which was "finally" adopted by the Central Khilafat Committee at its meeting in Bombay on May 12, prompting the resignation of several of its more conservative members.

It will be noticed that in his May 5 spelling out of the four stages
of noncooperation, Gandhi made no reference to boycott of the councils. In fact, later in the month, Gandhi clearly envisaged supporters of the national movement standing for the new legislatures and he advised readers of Navajivan on whom they should vote for. During May, however, the Peace Terms unfavourable to Turkey and the Indian Muslims were published and so was the report of the Hunter Commission on the Punjab. These two hammer blows to Indian national opinion shocked and outraged all sections of the national movement. Early in June, Lala Lajpat Rai—a leading Hindu politician in the Punjab, who had attended a joint meeting with Muslim Khilafatists in March and had joined a sub-committee with Gandhi and others to work out the programme of noncooperation—announced that he would withdraw from the forthcoming elections to the provincial council in the Punjab, in protest against British behaviour in the province. Gandhi immediately took up the suggestion and incorporated it as a proposal for a national boycott of the councils in the noncooperation programme. At this point, too, Gandhi switched from insisting that the Khilafat and Punjab issues should be treated as two separate campaigns, and assumed that protest on the two questions should be combined in a single movement of Non-cooperation. He also persuaded the Khilafatists to move directly from the propaganda and preparation stage of the agitation to direct confrontation with the Raj.

On May 18, on publication of the "Turkish terms" Gandhi called them "a staggering blow to the Indian Mussulmans". He went on to call for their revision and stated his view that "they are capable of being revised" if noncooperation was faithfully followed. He called also for a joint conference of Hindus and Muslims to consider what to do next. On May 30, Gandhi attended a meeting of the all-India Congress Committee at Benares where he invited the Committee to support the Khilafat demands and the programme of Noncooperation. This they
declined to do, but they did announce that a Special Session of the Congress would be held in Calcutta in September to consider the question of Noncooperation. The joint conference of Muslims and Hindus to consider how to respond to the Peace Terms was held in Allahabad from June 1 to 3. Most of the Hindu leaders present were unwilling to endorse Noncooperation and opted to wait for the Congress Special Session. But the Khilafat Committee confirmed its support for the four stage programme of Noncooperation and appointed a new subcommittee to implement it. This Committee came to be known semi-seriously as the "Martial Law Committee" of the Khilafat movement and Gandhi as its "dictator". Its members included the Ali brothers, A.K. Azad and Hasrat Mohani.

On June 9, following the publication of the Hunter Report, Gandhi first argued publicly in Young India that the nation should take up Noncooperation on the Punjab issue. He recognised, however, that the stages of complaint and petition were not exactly the same with the two issues, and proceeded to organise for direct confrontation with the Raj on the Khilafat issue but stayed his hand a little on the Punjab question. On June 22, he wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, inviting him to lead the Muslim agitation against the Peace Terms in order to avoid Noncooperation. A few days later he announced in Navajivan that Noncooperation would begin from August 1. And on July 4, in Navajivan, he spelt out on behalf of the Noncooperation Committee, their revised programme of action.

The reality of moving into open noncooperation with the Raj seems to have been one factor which led the Committee to expand greatly the programme of activities to be followed in the first of the four stages. Without delay, supporters were to decline to take up new government loans and they were to withdraw from recruitment into the armed forces
and the civil service. Also, Indian troops should refuse to serve in the Middle East. From August 1, the first stage of Noncooperation was to be carried out as follows:

"1. Titles and honorary positions will be renounced.

2. Legislatures will be boycotted.

3. Parents will withdraw their children from Government schools.

4. Lawyers will give up practice and help people to settle their civil disputes among themselves.

5. Invitations to Government functions, parties, etc. will be politely refused, non-cooperation being given as the sole reason for doing so." 85

This insertion of a boycott of the Councils, of schools and of the law-courts - what came to be called the "Triple Boycott" - completely transformed the Noncooperation programme from what had been outlined at the beginning of May. Now the resignation of civil servants from Government employment, the second stage, was not mentioned specifically. Neither were the third and fourth stages, resignation from the police and Army, and refusal of taxation. Gandhi, faced with the reality of trying to organise and lead a nationwide confrontation with the British which would require immense discipline and self-sacrifice, had switched the programme of Noncooperation in its first stage to something close to his own ideal prescription for Indian society. In his testament published in 1906 in South Africa, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, Gandhi had shown that he had no love for legislatures or for the legal profession. At his ashram, he had been experimenting in devising a form of education suitable to Indian conditions rather than implanted by the Raj. In proposing a first stage of Noncooperation which followed Tolstoy's advice to "boycott institutions" "supporting the government", Gandhi was favouring his own social and religious prescriptions for Indian Society in opposition to the expectations and interests of the majority of Indian political leaders who saw the Raj's influence on Indian society as beneficial. In drawing in boycott of the legislatures, schools and
law courts to his programme, Gandhi was by implication broadening out the very programme of swadeshi which he had been advocating since April 1919. Only instead of focusing on cloth as an area of life in which Indians should favour the local product in preference to that from further afield, he was now promoting swadeshi in politics, in education and in personal disputes. Indian political workers should forsake the legislatures and go out to work with the masses; schools should teach pride in Indian culture and language rather than ape the British; disputes should be settled by the time-honoured Indian method of arbitration rather than an expensive legal system.

I have seen no satisfactory explanation of why Gandhi chose to take such an extraordinary risk in broadening the programme of non-cooperation in July 1920. Conservative Muslims on the Central Khilafat Committee were resigning; prominent Hindu politicians had shown themselves to be lukewarm about the programme and were awaiting a Special Congress where they were likely to oppose the scheme; Gandhi's earlier efforts to promote his ideal programme through the Swadeshi Sabha had met with little support. Presumably an explanation lies in a set of decisions which Gandhi must have taken at about the time of the Benares meeting of the all-India Congress Committee in May, just after the publication of the Peace Terms and the Hunter Report. Since the established nationalist leaders were not going to agree easily to non-cooperation, he would have to go ahead and organise the campaign whether or not he had their support.

In order to sustain a campaign of satyagraha — which was at base a religious movement reliant on self-sacrifice and voluntary suffering — it was necessary for the educated classes who were most active in nationalist politics to take the lead in making sacrifices as an example to the rest of the nation. Thus Gandhi pitched his programme so as to challenge, through boycott of the councils, the schools and
the law courts, the self-interest and willingness to sacrifice of
the very groups who were involved in Congress politics. In this
he was throwing down the same challenge to Congress as he had thrown
down earlier to the Home Rule Leagues – more than bitter speeches and
angry demonstrations were needed if they were seriously to oppose the
Raj. He was also challenging the "limited politics" of the Liberals
whose petitions and speeches within the councils had failed. But as a
signal of his determination to direct a major satyagraha struggle
whether or not he had the support of Congress, Noncooperation was
scheduled to begin on August 1, over a month before the Special Congress
was to meet at Calcutta. In other words, if Gandhi was to take the
lead and direct Noncooperation across India on his own initiative
then it had to be with a programme which satisfied his criteria for
a satyagraha struggle. Hence the expanded programme of Noncooperation
was brought in at the point when Gandhi decided to "go for broke" and
lead the struggle in his own way. This may be part of an explanation.

Following the ultimatum to the Viceroy, Noncooperation did begin on
August 1, 1920 with a third Khilafat Day. The Noncooperation Committee
of the Central Khilafat Committee made no mention of the Punjab issue
in its instructions for the day of action circulated from Bombay, though
Gandhi did raise the Punjab grievance in his second personal letter to
the Viceroy. 86 Noncooperation was to begin with 24 hours of fasting
and prayer, accompanied by the suspension of business and by public
meetings – Gandhi was beginning to get more confident about organising
large public demonstrations – but there were still to be no processions.
At these meetings, resolutions were to be passed calling for a revision
in the terms of the Peace Treaty. It was also expected that resignations
by title-holders, honorary magistrates and council members would begin
on August 1. In the event, Noncooperation began quietly with an all-India
day of fasting and hartal, accompanied by a smattering of resignations by title-holders. On this, the Third Khilafat Day, the Noncooperation Committee renewed its call for the boycott of the courts, the schools and the councils - the triple boycott - and Gandhi began hammering away at his theme that across the nation people prepare themselves for acts of great self-sacrifice.

In working as the predominant member of a series of Khilafat committees to devise the programme of Noncooperation between November 1919 and August 1920, Gandhi's main preoccupation appears to have been to devise a strategy for a mass nonviolent movement which would bring effective pressure to bear on the Raj but would not involve the use of civil disobedience, at least in the early stages. The collapse of civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Act only a few months earlier left him with little option but to try new tactics. Working from a theoretical concept to a practical programme, Gandhi at first envisaged a programme involving the resignation of honorary positions, the withdrawal of those directly employed by the government and the nonpayment of taxes. Quickly, for practical reasons, it became clear that all parts of the programme could not be launched at once. Gandhi therefore conceived of what he began to call "progressive" nonviolent noncooperation, a movement building up in four stages. Noncooperation was to be progressive in at least three and perhaps four senses. First, it involved moving from acts of small sacrifice to acts of greater sacrifice - that is, from resigning honours, to resigning jobs, to refusing taxes. It was to move from what are sometimes called "symbolic" actions, which damage the morale of the government, to more direct actions, which directly cripple its ability to function. Second, it was to begin with the most privileged of the educated classes, those who had been honoured by the Raj, moving to the educated classes generally, then to everyone in government employment, and finally to the masses. Only by privileged
classes making the greatest sacrifice did Gandhi imagine he could educate the masses in nonviolence and sustain mass nonviolent discipline. Third, as involvement broadened from the "classes" to the "masses" so there was greater risk of public disorder, particularly as the later stages would involve confrontation with the authorities. Fourth, it was through this progressive build-up of the campaign that Gandhi imagined they could raise the necessary funds to sustain noncooperators who had resigned their jobs and develop in every town and village the necessary organisational structure to co-ordinate a mass movement.

However, there was a problem with progressive noncooperation as at first envisaged: that the first stage, involving the resignation of honorary positions, did not involve a wide enough circle of people, and that the second stage, the resignation of government jobs, involved asking a conservative body of people to make too great a sacrifice at too early a stage. Therefore, Gandhi had to find a way of expanding and extending the first stage - expanding so as to widen the numbers of the educated classes being asked to make sacrifices, extending so as to delay the moment when the government employees were asked to join the programme. Gandhi's solution was vastly to expand the first stage of the movement so that it included not only the resignation of honours received from the government but also the boycott of institutions which supported the government. By this means the demand for sacrifice in the first stage of the campaign was aimed directly at the educated class who constituted the political elite of the nation and whose participation in noncooperation from an early stage was essential if the movement was to succeed. Hence the idea of Council boycott - and more problematically, the schools boycott and the law-courts boycott. Through this, the triple boycott, Gandhi was able in the first stage of noncooperation to damage the credibility of the Raj's reform programme and to isolate "collaborators" with the Raj; to draw school and
college students into full-time work for the movement; and to pressure some of the most prestigious lawyers in the country who were also the political elite in Congress to give up their practices and turn to full-time political organising. This need to expand dramatically participation in the first stage is a second explanation for his sudden introduction of the triple boycott.

But this is looking at noncooperation with hindsight. In July 1920, when Gandhi first proposed the expansion of the first stage to include the triple boycott, his proposal was looked on with incredulity. Indalal Yajnik describes the reaction of political workers in Gujarat and across India in July and August, when Gandhi was preparing to launch Noncooperation of behalf of the Khilafat Committee alone and when he proposed the boycott of schools and courts:

"A hue and cry ... arose from every quarter of India against Mr Gandhi's plan of this double boycott of Schools and Courts, and it then appeared nearly impossible that he would be able to carry the Congress or the large majority of the masses with him in the novel plan that he was seeking to foist on them".

Political workers like Yajnik knew of Gandhi's views - "his thesis of philosophical anarchism as contained in his book on Indian Home Rule" - but they had "time and again expressed the utmost opposition to them". Lawyers seemed to be the group least likely to respond to Gandhi's programme; schools boycott would be a disaster for thousands and hundreds of thousands of children leaving school and not knowing what to do next.

Nevertheless, in Yajnik's account, some of the workers were "speedily" converted to Gandhi's viewpoint as he spelled out his "full plan of building up constructive national institutions in proportion as the Nation was weaned from the sinful Government institutions".
Thus he asked us not to be merely satisfied by weaning voters from the polling booths, but to mass them in the Congress fold with a view eventually to organise and develop the Congress machinery and its activities as the National Government of the land ... We were led to dream of setting up a chain of national arbitration courts under the aegis of the Congress ... Regarding the boycott of Schools ... The Congress would help the same teachers or draft new ones to organise National Schools ... We were thus persuaded that ... the Congress would be readily enabled by the vast amount of popular support behind it to build up hundreds of arbitration Courts and thousands of Schools ... and that apart from a few days or weeks of inevitable confusion the measure of success achieved in both these boycotts would be automatically reflected in the creation of parallel non-official institutions. We thus saw that the whole programme of Non-co-operation, even in its first stages, was only not conceived in a spirit of emotional negativism, but was really designed to inspire the political workers of the country to build up a system of parallel National Government."

Yajnik and others who had worked with Gandhi during the Rowlatt agitation and before, but were sceptical about the Khilafat agitation, moved strongly in his support in the weeks before the Special Congress. The Gujarat workers called their own Provincial Congress which endorsed Gandhi's programme, and across India other provincial congress gatherings approved the idea of Noncooperation in principle, though with many reservations about the details of the programme in practice.

Gandhi made it absolutely clear that he and the Central Khilafat Committee would go ahead with noncooperation on the Khilafat issue whether or not they achieved the backing of the Congress. But in winning the support of the Special Session at Calcutta and then having this confirmed by the annual session in Nagpur, Gandhi was forced to modify the programme of Noncooperation yet again. In part, this was in response to the continuing pressure for a boycott of British goods. In part, it was because Congress would support a movement as drastic as noncooperation only if the goal of the movement was swaraj, independence itself, rather than two specific grievances, however important, the Khilafat and the Punjab. The broad strategy and detailed programme of noncooperation was nevertheless worked out almost entirely by Gandhi in collaboration with the Khilafat
movement in the months prior to September. The Khilafat issue, coupled with the need for Hindu support if the Khilafat movement was to succeed, catapulted Gandhi almost fortuitously into his bid to lead Congress into noncooperation late in 1920.

Winning the Support of Hindus for a Muslim Struggle

A second issue which preoccupied Gandhi in preparing for Noncooperation was the need to draw in Hindu support for the Khilafat campaign. We have seen that at the Second All-India Khilafat Conference in Delhi in November 1919, Gandhi took an unusual position on this question. Using his pivotal position as the Hindu leader most identified with the pan-Islamic Muslims and the leader best able to organise a mass nonviolent struggle against the Raj, he employed all his influence to stop discussion between Muslim and Hindu politicians of a deal over cow-slaughter and the Punjab. Having ruled out the most obvious basis on which Hindu support for the movement could be attracted, he had to develop an alternative means of making the restoration of the Khilafat a national demand.

Gandhi's fundamental argument was in terms of the nation:

"it is impossible that one of the four limbs of the nation be wounded and the rest of the nation remain unconcerned. We cannot be called one nation, we cannot be a single body, if such a wound has no effect on us."

This he wrote in Navajivan in September 1919. In October, in the same journal, when he was seeking support for the First Khilafat Day, his argument was similar:

"A mother suffers when her only son dies. She has no desire for eating. A nation is born when all feel the same sort of grief at the suffering of any one among them; such a nation deserves to be immortal."

This was a moral argument on the grounds of patriotism; but when he began seriously to engage with nationalist Hindus and was striving to convince the political activists to join him, Gandhi was equally willing
to argue the same point in terms of political expediency. On accepting
the presidency of the All-India Home Rule League in May 1920, he wrote
in Navajivan:

"So long as there is no unity between Hindus and Muslims, I
think swaraj will remain a mere dream. I should like, therefore,
to extend all "help to the Muslims in their fight on the
Khilafat issue and thus win them over for ever." 96

Gandhi's argument here was very similar to his reason for supporting
recruitment to the British Army in 1918 - that helping Britain in its
hour of need was bound to help India to freedom! Later in May (though
I am selecting one sentence from a larger argument) he was even more
crude:

"... by helping the Mohammedans of India at a crucial moment
in their history, I want to buy their friendship." 97

Gandhi was also to advocate other arguments which were purely expedient.
In the course of his association with the Khilafat movement he became
convinced that Indian Muslims would turn to violence and attempt to
make a "bloody" revolution if no nonviolent alternative that promised
to be effective could be developed. 98 In May 1920 he argued in Navajivan:

"I am convinced that, had there been no move for noncooperation,
vioence would long since have broken out. It is noncooperation
which has prevented violence. The Muslims are boiling over
but they have kept their patience in the belief that the Hindüs
are with them." 99

To his critics like Annie Besant and Srinivasa Sastri who argued that
noncooperation was bound to lead to violence in the same way as had the
Rowlatt Satyagraha, he replied:

"I urge those who talk or work against noncooperation to descend
from their chairs and go down to the people, learn their feel-
ings and write, if they have the heart against noncooperation.
They will find, as I have found, that the only way to avoid
violence is to enable them to give such expression to their
feelings as to compel redress. I have found nothing save non-
cooperation." 100

Again and again he challenged his critics to produce an alternative to
noncooperation, which would enable Indian Muslims to win their demands
without violence. When the terms of the Peace Treaty hostile to Indian Muslims were announced, talk began to circulate that Khilafatists would support an invasion of India from Afghanistan. Moreover, within a few weeks thousands of Muslims began to leave the country in a mass exodus known as hijrat, quitting British India for life under an Islamic ruler in Afghanistan. Gandhi felt vindicated. In June, he argued:

"In my opinion, the best day to prevent India from becoming the battle ground between the forces of Islam and those of the English, is for Hindus to make noncooperation a complete and immediate success, and I have little doubt that if the Mohammedans remain true to their declared intention and are able to exercise self-restraint and make sacrifices, the Hindus will 'play the game' and join them in the campaign of noncooperation." 101

Here we see Gandhi spelling out the balancing position from which he could direct the movement; on the one hand, Muslims would exercise restraint if Hindus joined them in noncooperation; on the other hand, Hindus would join Muslims in noncooperation if Muslims would show restraint. In July, Gandhi again challenged his critics to suggest an alternative:

"And may I draw the attention of those who are opposing noncooperation that unless they find out a substitute they should either join the noncooperation movement or prepare to face a disorganised subterranean upheaval whose effect no one can foresee and whose spread it would be impossible to check or regulate." 102

By July, Gandhi had found his clinching argument on grounds of expediency, which though not explicitly spelt out was that he alone with the support of the other Khilafat leaders and through the movement of noncooperation, could control India's Muslims. As he wrote publicly to the Viceroy at the end of June when warning him that noncooperation would soon begin:

"I venture to claim that I have succeeded by patient reasoning in weaning the party of violence from its ways. I confess..."
"I confess that I did not - I did not attempt to - succeed in weaning them away from violence on moral grounds, but purely on utilitarian grounds. The result for the time being at any rate has been to stop violence. The school of hijrat has received a check if it has not stopped its activities entirely. I hold that no repression could have prevented a violent eruption, if the people had not been presented to them a form of direct action ..." 103

It was an exaggeration to say that he had not attempted to persuade Muslims against violence on moral grounds, but there is no question that the practical arguments were the ones he found effective. Gandhi fully recognised that Indian Muslims were entitled by the authority of the Koran to rise in violent rebellion against the Raj. On March 19, the second Khilafat Day, he went so far as to move a resolution which reserved to Muslims the right to resort to violence "in the event of the failure of the joint movement" of noncooperation. 104 In his speech to a mass meeting in Bombay, he commented on the resolution:

"... it commits the joint movement to a policy of non-violence in the course of the struggle. But Mahommmedans have special Koranic obligations in which Hindus may or may not join. They, therefore, reserve to themselves the right, in the event of the failure of noncooperation cum nonviolence, in order to enforce justice, to resort to all such methods as may be enjoined in the Islamic scriptures. I venture heartily to associate myself with this resolution." 105

Gandhi put himself in a box where he was promising to deliver to the Khilafatists both Hindu support and an effective nonviolent strategy. If he failed, they would be released from their commitment to follow the discipline of nonviolence. His task during 1920 was to try to make the broad nationalist movement party to this agreement too.

Probably the bulk of Gandhi's vast journalistic outpouring and his many speeches on the Khilafat did not concern itself with making an expedient case for the movement, however. As a polemicist of great skill he wrote article after article in his two newspapers arguing with allcomers the merits of the Khilafat grievance as a genuine affront to India's Muslims. 106 If he had not believed the
cause to be a just one, then the expedient arguments would not have counted with Gandhi. Because of his belief in the movement, he set out to build a campaign which the nationalist movement could not afford to ignore. Part of this effort was in his journalistic output, his speechmaking tours, and the joint conferences with Hindu leaders. But through the Central Khilafat Committee he was building an independent political movement across the country; when he joined the All-India Home Rule League, he was able to bring this, the most active of the nationalist organisations affiliated to Congress, under his influence; and finally, with the publication of the Hunter report in the summer of 1920 and widespread outrage against the Raj, he did extend the scope of noncooperation to include a wider range of issues than just the Muslim grievance.

There appears to have been no explicit deal that Muslims would help Hindus on the Punjab question in return for Hindu support for Muslims on the Khilafat. Rather there was general outrage in both communities against the behaviour of the Raj; and the Khilafat movement by building a network of support and the momentum to start noncooperation against the Raj, was offering the only feasible method apparently available for expressing this fury and exerting effective pressure against the government. Thus by building the plan of noncooperation and then launching the movement on August 1 before most nationalist Hindu leaders had made up their minds on what to do, Gandhi effectively compelled Hindu support for the Khilafat campaign.

The decisive argument for nationalist Hindus was not a deal over cow-slaughter or Punjab, but that if they did not join the noncooperation movement they would be cast aside by the new forces which Gandhi's activities and the Khilafat agitation had brought into nationalist politics. Gandhi's decisive argument was that he had organised a movement which nationalist Hindus could not afford to ignore.
"Fear of violence as a side-effect of his satyagraha campaigns", writes Judith Brown, "was very near the surface of Gandhi's mind after the debacle of the Rowlatt Satyagraha, and his caution attracted many Hindus who had similar fears." With few exceptions, the pan-Islamist Muslim leaders of the Khilafat campaign were never committed to nonviolence in principle. Nevertheless, especially after a Khilafat deputation, led by Mohammad Ali, had returned from a extended visit to Britain and Europe where they experienced complete failure, the Khilafat leadership committed itself to seeking independence for India as the only means of securing self-determination for their community. Gandhi's scheme of noncooperation seemed to be the most feasible way of bringing effective pressure to bear on the Raj with the support of nationalist Hindus. Hence the Khilafatists were drawn into a tactical alliance with Gandhi, which both sides openly acknowledged, which included a tactical commitment of nonviolence.

In his "manifesto" on noncooperation issued to the press on March 7, 1920, Gandhi stated:

"The power that an individual or a nation forswearing violence generates is a power that is irresistible. But my argument today against violence is based upon pure experience, i.e. its utter futility. Noncooperation is therefore the only remedy left open to us ... "I will cooperate wholeheartedly with the Muslim friends in the prosecution of their just demands so long as they act with sufficient restraint and so long as I feel sure that they do not wish to resort to or countenance violence. I should cease to cooperate and advise every Hindu and for that matter everyone to cease to cooperate the moment there was violence actually done, advised or countenanced." 112

Moreover, after the launching of Noncooperation on August 1, in a series of speeches and commentaries during a tour of the Muslim areas of Madras which Gandhi conducted with Shaukat Ali, Gandhi was extraordinarily frank about the nature of their alliance:

"He (Shaukat Ali) believes that one can kill an enemy and, for doing so, even deceit can be employed. I believe, on the
contrary, that in killing an enemy, one falls from one's true nature as a human being ... Despite this, we have joined hands, since he has understood that the people have no strength of arms; that they lack unity and qualities like firmness, courage and capacity for self-sacrifice; and that till they acquire then they cannot wield the sword. He says that, whereas his car needs good roads, my cart can move, whatever their condition. Hence, for the present, he has accepted my way ... (Having) accepted it, he is trying to cultivate the qualifications necessary for success in it and pleads with the people to do likewise ... He tells the people frankly that, at the present time, my way is the best for them. If the Muslims are peaceful, it is because of his firmness." 113

This passage published in Navajivan reveals part of Gandhi's strategy for holding the Muslim community in India to nonviolent discipline. He believed that if he could convert and hold the Muslims to a firm conviction that nonviolent action was the only possible method to adopt in the circumstances of 1920, then they would be able to control and discipline the Muslim masses. In April in a reply to Annie Besant and to an editorial in The Times of India, he claimed he had no fear of noncooperation leading to violence "because every responsible Mohammedan understands that noncooperation to be successful must be totally unattended with violence." 114 When criticism grew that the Noncooperation Committee appointed at Allahabad in June to direct the movement was unrepresentative of Muslim opinion in the country, Gandhi candidly agreed that this was so because the committee did not contain "doubting elements."

"It has been purposefully restricted to those who are able to give their whole time and attention to the work of organised noncooperation and in the process of ensuring obedience to instructions, other discipline and nonviolence. It is therefore a committee of workers ... It contains those only who have the largest faith in noncooperation and who, although they swear by it, yet will not force the pace to the breaking point but will endeavour to carry the nation with its programme, in so far as it is practicable, and who whilst doing so will not themselves be deterred from taking the boldest steps and will seek out those who are prepared to do likewise." 115

Here then we have the same formula which Gandhi had employed in all his earlier campaigns, from Champaran to Rowlatt, gathering round him
to direct the struggle a group of the most committed "whole-timers" who accepted his leadership and for whom he was willing to accept responsibility. In the committee, whose principal members beside Gandhi were the Ali brothers, A.K. Azad, Hasrat Mohani and Saifuddin Kitchlew (who had been expelled from the Punjab in April 1919 at the same time as Gandhi), he conveniently had with him those "extremist" Muslims most likely to try to launch a campaign of violence. These men he had convinced to join him in a nonviolent experiment.

In the run-up to noncooperation, the first means of trying to prepare the Muslim community and the whole population for an all-India satyagraha, was the selection of special days of prayer, fasting and hartal, the Khilafat Days. A correspondent critical of Gandhi commented in April that hartal was becoming a "powerful political weapon for uniting the educated and the uneducated" and that it was teaching direct action. 116 Khilafat Days were held in October 1919 and March and August 1920. In addition there was a further hartal in opposition to the Peace Celebrations in December and a week-long commemoration of Rowlatt events in April, the Satyagraha or National Week, which included two days of activity devoted to the Khilafat. Thus in ten months Gandhi was involved in five all-India days of hartal and prayer on the issue of Khilafat.

Gandhi thought that the success of the First Khilafat Day was "proof" of the acceptance of satyagraha, however slightly, however unconsciously, both by the rulers and the ruled. 117 The second Khilafat Day, in March, he called "a great success and a complete triumph of satyagraha" because in Bombay no canvassing for people to close their businesses had taken place on the day of the hartal; it had been completely voluntary. All that was necessary for the people's hopes to bear fruit was to add "the spirit of self-sacrifice" to the discipline and self-restraint they had shown.
"The spirit of prayer was abroad and it dominated the people rather than the spirit of revenge, anger, excitement ..." In Bombay, the vast public meeting had been conducted without applause "or any other effusive demonstration". He continued:

"The organisers deserve the warmest praise for having introduced the ancient peacefulness, quiet, determination and orderliness in the place of modern fluster, excitement and disorderliness. The one develops just the qualities that make for satyagraha, the other inevitably leads to violence."

Gandhi felt after the Second Khilafat Day that an "exemplary patience, self-restraint and orderliness ... are evolving in our midst." By the time of the third, in August, which of course launched the movement of noncooperation, he was focusing more on the question of organisation:

"But the greatest thing in this campaign of noncooperation is to evolve order, discipline, cooperation among the people, co-ordination among the workers. Effective noncooperation depends upon complete organisation. Thousands of men who have filled meetings throughout the Punjab have convinced me that the people want to withdraw cooperation from the Government, but they must know how ..."

There was a danger that out of anger, citizens would attack persons representing the Government or supporters of the Government who refused to join the movement. "Disorderliness comes from anger, orderliness out of intelligent resistance." Those who wished to make noncooperation a success in the shortest possible time "will consider it their first duty to see that in their neighbourhood complete order is kept."

These simultaneous demonstrations across India, the Khilafat Days and other hartals, were ways of testing and demonstrating strength of support, of mobilising new groups, of building and exercising a network of organisers, of educating supporters in the issues of the campaign, of training them in nonviolent discipline and of developing the beginnings of a unified consciousness across India.
In response to the criticisms of Annie Besant and others who feared that noncooperation would break down in violence, Gandhi began to spell out more of his strategy:

"These writers have assumed ... that the advocates of non-cooperation do not know their job. The latter do not intend to climb to the last step of the staircase of noncooperation all in one jump. If they proceed step by step, there will be very little fear of their falling."

"Progressive" noncooperation had been introduced, the division of the campaign into four stages, "because of doubts whether we would remain blameless". Gandhi frequently drew on the analogy between conduct of this campaign and that of an army. Referring to an order by the Delhi government in May 1920 restricting public meetings, Gandhi insisted that the order be obeyed until the civil disobedience stage of noncooperation was reached.

"If, in this movement, even a single worker follows his own judgment, he will do it much harm.

"There is no difference between those who join this fight and the troops in an army. In an army, the individual soldier cannot act on his own responsibility but must await orders from his superiors, and this is also true of the Khilafat struggle. ... If we can acquire full control over the people, victory will be ours this very day,"

In July, he went so far as to say publicly that if riots broke out as a result of noncooperation he would not hesitate "for the time being" to help the government control the disorder. When in August it was clear that supporters of the movement in Delhi and Sind had obeyed government restrictions on their activities, Gandhi was pleased. He commented in a newspaper interview:

"I consider that people are better disciplined now than they were before. In this I include even the masses whom I have had opportunities of seeing in large numbers in various parts of the country."

However, he made it clear that in the first stage of noncooperation, even though he believed he had the support of the Muslim masses, he was not working for a "complete severance of cooperation" with the government, but simply to make the government realise the depth of
popular feeling" on the Khilafat and Punjab issues. In general, Gandhi argued that the delay in launching noncooperation between May when the Peace Terms were announced and August, and the fact that in that two and a half months Indian Muslims did not erupt in violence, was itself a demonstration of the discipline that was being evolved in that community. When some supporters of the Khilafat movement in May renounced titles and honorary positions Gandhi was publicly critical:

"I think this is a hasty step. Before taking the momentous step of noncooperation, it is very necessary for people to make petitions for a reconsideration of the peace terms and give public expression to their feelings ... I hope, therefore, that people ... will not act individually and will take no steps without instructions from the central body."

A further aspect of Gandhi's effort to discipline the Muslim supporters of the Khilafat campaign and to draw in Hindu support was his insistence that Muslims should take the lead in noncooperation on the Khilafat issue. Gandhi was convinced that if the Muslim community was able to discipline itself in a major nonviolent struggle, then Hindus would follow it into the campaign. His own presence as a Hindu on the central committee of Muslims directing the struggle was something of an anomaly, which he resolved by calling himself an "adviser" only, because of his special qualifications in satyagraha. The principle that the Muslims should give the nation the lead in a satyagraha struggle helped to make the community and its leaders conscious that they must set an example to their fellow Indians. By launching noncooperation on August 1, a month before the Special Congress met in Calcutta, the Central Khilafat Committee fully acted on this principle, that Muslims must take the lead. Gandhi applied the same logic to the Punjab question. He publicly proposed Council boycott across India, only after Lajput Rai, a leading Punjabi politician, had called for a boycott of council elections in the Punjab.
CHAPTER 6: Page 237

Through his speeches and writings Gandhi also worked prodigiously to try to develop an understanding of nonviolence and the need for discipline among the Muslim population. In July, before launching noncooperation, he undertook a major tour of Muslim areas of Northern India in Punjab and Sindh. In his speeches he emphasised the martial qualities of the Muslims, often employed by the British Army. In Rawalpindi he called for an "unarmed, swordless army":

"The Punjabis know how to draw the sword, but I call their sword mercenary ... Your sword is availing against anyone who can employ his more skilfully than you ... I have found a way by which you can fight while keeping your swords sheathed." 130

In Karachi, he said that the movement needed "soldiers with spiritual power" - "I want you all to be soldiers with such force of will that you will stand in your place and never retire." 131 Before the Special Congress in August Gandhi conducted a second major speaking tour of Madras in South India. Here, speaking to an Indian Muslim community with which he was more familiar, he placed more emphasis on the religious basis of noncooperation and its value for changing the lives of individuals:

"I call it a spiritual weapon, because it demands discipline and sacrifice from us ... (m)he promise behind every religion that I have studied ... is that there is no spotless sacrifice ... which has not carried with it its absolute adequate reward ... It is a spiritual weapon because it brings out the best in the nation and it absolutely satisfies individual honour if a single individual takes it (up) ... " 132

It was in August in Young India, when he was using all his skills as journalist to win supporters for noncooperation, that Gandhi published his famous article, "The Doctrine of the Sword". All sorts of correspondents were informing him, he said, either that noncooperation would inevitably lead to violence and he must not interfere with this, or that they admired his clever tactics of publicly planning a nonviolent struggle while secretly intending to promote violence at the appropriate moment. Since the success of noncooperation depended principally on the absence of violence, he was anxious to state his views as clearly
as possible:

"I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence ... But I believe that nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence ..."

"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will ..."

"I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of nonviolence is ... meant for the common people as well. Nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute ..."

"(B)eing a practical man, I do not wait till India recognises the practicability of the spiritual life in the political world. India considers herself to be powerless and paralysed ... And she takes up noncooperation out of her weakness. It must still ... bring her delivery from the crushing weight of British injustice if a sufficient number of people practise it.

"Meanwhile I urge those who distrust me, not to disturb the even working of the struggle that has just commenced, by inciting to violence in the belief that I want violence. I detest secrecy as a sin. Let them give nonviolent noncooperation a trial ..."

This famous article, published on August 11, 1920, just after the Khilafat Committee had launched noncooperation and before the Calcutta Special Session, has been quoted ever since to show Gandhi's conditional support for violence. Whereas it was written with just the opposite intention, to spell out that India had "better work to do, a better mission to deliver to the whole world".  

Within the article, however, Gandhi did recognise that India was taking up noncooperation "out of her weakness" rather than a belief in his satyagraha philosophy. And this brings us to a final point about Muslim adoption of noncooperation in 1920. In March, Gandhi gathered from Hasrat Mohani that "nobody believes in noncooperation. But it has been taken up merely to conciliate me". Gandhi hurriedly called the principal Khilafat leaders to spend the Satyagraha Week in April, commemorating the Rowlatt Satyagraha, with him in Bombay - but it is not clear how many attended and what was decided. Later, in April, he wrote about Muslims active on the Khilafat issue:
"I do not say that they are free from hatred but I am sure that, joining my love with their hatred, I can diminish the intensity of that hatred. I also believe that, if my method is followed by a large number, their hatred can be counteracted altogether." 136

When Shaukat Ali made a wild speech in support of noncooperation, Gandhi repeated the same point in May:

"I do admit that all the Muslims do not view noncooperation on the same light as I do. But there is a clear understanding with them that there can be no violence side by side with noncooperation. Besides, though Muslims may adopt nonviolence in a spirit of retaliation, we can produce a happy result from it and save ourselves from an outbreak of violence. All good actions, by whatever feelings prompted, yield some fruit." 137

Later, in August, Gandhi wrote that Shaukat Ali followed "the law of nonviolence with hatred in his heart", but "even so", Ali supported noncooperation because there was "no other effective method of upholding the honour of his faith". 138 On this rather tenuous basis, Gandhi launched noncooperation in August 1920 with Indian Muslims as the vanguard.

At this stage, noncooperation rested first on the pledged word of the principal Khilafat leaders that they would maintain nonviolent discipline and, second, on the enormous efforts that this group had made to plan and build a phased struggle conducted according to Gandhi's rigorous conditions. It is remarkable that the alliance held throughout Noncooperation and that very little violence did ensue from Muslim areas. It is also interesting and important to recognise that Gandhi did propose nonviolence as a tactic to the Muslim community; he saw their adoption of nonviolence as likely to attract Hindus and therefore to promote Hindu-Muslim unity and the growth of the national movement. He also believed that on that basis the nation could compel concessions from the British on the Khilafat issue; and that through the experience of nonviolent action, some Muslims would be drawn to adopt the satyagraha philosophy.
Preserving Good Relations with the Raj

A major consideration for Gandhi in developing the Khilafat struggle was his relationship with the Raj. In September 1919 when he first called for the resignation of the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, because of his handling of the Khilafat issue, and also for that of the Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, Gandhi's reputation with the British was already severely dented. As the author of the Rowlatt Satyagraha he was blamed for the riots which had followed the April hartal. The fact that he had helped in restoring order in Bombay and Ahmedabad, in the eyes of the Raj, mitigated the offence; but the ban preventing him from leaving the Bombay Presidency was not lifted until October. Once he was permitted to enter the Punjab Gandhi immediately threw himself into the unofficial inquiry which the Congress was undertaking there as a rival to the official Hunter Commission. Then, in November, at the First Khilafat Conference in Delhi he called for noncooperation against the Raj. Gandhi was thus occupied with the two major grievances of Indian nationalists against their rulers and calling openly for a new movement of nonviolent rebellion on one of them, the Khilafat question. Yet, at the Delhi Conference, he refused to permit the linking of the Khilafat and Punjab issues and at the Amritsar Congress in December, he aligned himself consistently with the moderates who wanted to collaborate with the Raj. He was instrumental in securing Congress support for the Montagu-Chelmsford reform proposals and achieved the passage of a resolution thanking Montagu for his efforts. No clearer example could be found of Gandhi's "particularist" method, his determination to pursue issues separately, one at a time. For the Raj, though, his stance must have been confusing.

In March 1920, Gandhi revealed that his political priorities had
altered dramatically. In his "manifesto" on the Khilafat question, he began:

"The Khilafat question has now become the question of questions. It has become an Imperial question of the first magnitude ..."

"I trust that the Hindus will realise that the Khilafat question overshadows the Reforms and everything else."

Gandhi had changed his priorities probably as a result of the shoddy reception given in England to a deputation on the Khilafat undertaken by Indian Muslims, including Mohammad Ali. He now called on the Viceroy to place himself at the head of the Khilafat agitation and to fight on India's behalf. In an ambiguous passage which indicated that noncooperation was to be conducted in stages, Gandhi also seems to have suggested that one of the last stages, refusal by soldiers to obey their orders, should not be attempted until "the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the Premier" (that is, the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George) had resigned to lead the Khilafat struggle. Whether or not Gandhi did seriously entertain such a fantasy, that in the later stages of noncooperation leading British politicians would resign in support of the Khilafat campaign, he repeated his request to Chelmsford to "lead the agitation yourself", three months later in his letter which announced noncooperation. The Central Khilafat Committee also called on the Viceroy in its separate warning letter to "make common cause with the people of India" and to press his case "even to the point of resignation" if British ministers should fail to secure revision of the peace terms. Thus until June 1920 Gandhi seems to have sustained a view that British politicians might be persuaded to support noncooperation.

Later in June, however, Gandhi hinted at a second grand strategy where the British were concerned. He agreed in an article in Young India that noncooperation might not compel revision of the peace terms.
If it did not, but noncooperation was effective, then Britain would have to choose between either its control of India or its "usurpation" of Turkey. He continued:

"I have enough faith in England to know that at that moment England will expel her present jaded ministers and put in others who will make a clean sweep of the terms in consultation with an awakened India, draft terms that will be honourable to her, to Turkey and acceptable to India." 144

This fallback position—where Britain's "jaded ministers", having failed to respond to India's demands, were to be kicked out by the British public—appears to have been the perspective with which Gandhi went into noncooperation in August. In a private letter in June, he admitted that he "thoroughly distrusted" Lloyd George, was "prejudiced" against the "deceitful" British diplomacy in the Middle East, and found the Viceroy's pronouncements on the Khilafat full of "insolence and hypocrisy". 145 Publicly, in July, Gandhi accused Lloyd George in regard to Turkey of choosing "the crooked course of secret treaties, duplicity and hypocritical subterfuges". 146 At the beginning of September, Gandhi admitted in Young India that he had lost faith in Lord Chelmsford's "probity and capacity to hold the high office of Viceroy of India." 147

This breakdown of his trust that India's Muslims could get "justice" from the British leaders marked a serious crisis for Gandhi's noncooperation strategy. If there was to be no likelihood that Britain would concede on the Khilafat issue (nor the Punjab issue), then it became necessary to challenge the legitimacy of British authority itself. At this point his determination to take one issue at a time (spelled out in his March manifesto) 148 was drastically undermined. It became difficult for him to resist the argument—as Yajnik puts it in his comparison of Gandhi with Tilak—that the "trunk" of British imperialism must be tackled as well as its branches. Within a few months, swaraj itself was added as an objective of noncooperation.
But Gandhi still retained his instinct for moving one step at a time, that is, not mobilizing the people to fight for something beyond their capacity. Having admitted to himself that Britain's representatives in London and Delhi were not going respond to the demand for a revision of the peace terms (or for justice on the Punjab) Gandhi went into noncooperation strongly proclaiming his loyalty to the British Empire and the British Constitution. His "disaffection", he said, was from the Imperial and Indian governments. "I can no longer retain affection for a Government so evilly manned as it is nowadays." The "present representatives" of the Empire, he added, "have no real regard for the wishes of the people of India and they count Indian honour as of little consequence." 149

This new strategy, arguing loyalty to the British connection, but promising progressive noncooperation with the Empire's "present representatives", made particular demands on Gandhi as a strategist. His view, which he stated often enough over the next few years, was that India must not swallow the "humiliation" of its opinion counting for so little "in the councils of the Empire". Britain must no longer insult India by calling her a partner and ignoring her feelings. Lloyd George would not have dared to treat Canada, Australia or South Africa in this way: "Let her (Britain) treat India as a real partner". To get to this point there would have to be "a change of heart" on the part of the British officials, who must have it proved to them "that we are their equals". Gandhi, of course, was confident that in non-violent noncooperation India had a weapon which would compel respect from the British:

"Equality attained by means of physical force is of the lowest kind, it is the way of the beast; for the Hindu, especially, it is a policy ever to be shunned. For thousands of years past, our training has been in a different direction altogether."
"It is my firm belief that the British can be won over by moral force. I have, indeed, written strongly and bitterly against the injustices perpetrated by British officers but I believe, all the same, that no European nation is more amenable to the pressure of moral force than the British ..." 152

At the beginning of July Gandhi announced the much broadened programme of noncooperation, including in the first stage the Triple Boycott of councils, courts and schools. It was by this attack on three of the key institutions by which, through the collaboration of the educated classes, the British secured their prestige in India, that Gandhi marked the shift in his objectives for noncooperation. No longer was the campaign focused solely on the Khilafat issue; now, as well as addressing the Khilafat question, noncooperation was being geared explicitly to challenge the nature of British rule in India.

From what we know of Gandhi's thinking as an organizer of previous nonviolent struggles, there was a problem with this new strategy, that its approach to the British was both indirect and general. Instead of appealing directly to the Imperial and Indian governments on a specific issue or issues, the struggle now tended to be displaced into building a broad movement to develop the identity of the Indian nation. In so far as noncooperation proved to be successful in mobilising India, the British might then be forced to rethink on the Khilafat, or the Punjab, or even constitutional reform. But in the summer of 1920, the Raj was far from being conciliatory and tried to call Gandhi's bluff. It didn't take his proposed movement of noncooperation seriously. Gandhi was thus put in the position of having to "prove" to the British their mistake; he was obliged to go ahead with organising the movement on a national scale, something which it appears he had not expected to have to do. The task was enormous. On such a vast scale before - at least not a sustained struggle Gandhi had not conducted his nonviolent experiments/across the whole of India. Inevitably, his most pressing concerns became organisational, internal to the movement. Relations with the Raj became a subsidiary
issue, not to be tackled again until the movement had proved its strength.

In some respects, once he had lost confidence in the representatives of the Raj, Gandhi also lost control of this key aspect in nonviolent struggle, the relationship with the opponent. From having a single issue on which to press the movement's claims on the Raj, noncooperation was geared to three: two specific, the Khilafat and Punjab, and one general, swaraj. In practice, moreover, as noncooperation was taken up and stimulated activities in localities across the nation, so particular regions and contingencies added their own grievances and issues to the campaign. Swaraj as a goal, the establishing of a quite different relationship with the British rulers, was on the face of it remote. This was the goal which the Home Rule Leagues had pressed in their agitation previously and which Gandhi had refused to take up because he believed it let Indian political activists into empty posturing and their supporters into continual frustration. He had made it clear time and again that he preferred intermediate or single-issue objectives, the successful resolution of which brought forward the substance of swaraj. But now he had been rebuffed with the "particularist" approach on the Rowlatt, Khilafat and Punjab issues, and was effectively forced to move over on to the ground which he had earlier rejected. While he did call mildly on August 1 for the Raj to sponsor a conference of "recognised leaders" which could resolve the Khilafat and Punjab issues, the major demand of noncooperation which emerged in subsequent months and was toyed with up and down the country, was for "Swaraj in One Year".

Such a result was inconceivable by any conventional yardstick - and the failure to achieve it damaged Gandhi in the long run just as the
slogan, "Freedom Now", rebounded over 40 years later on Martin Luther
King's nonviolent movement in the USA. Gandhi himself had opposed
a campaign proposed in December 1919 to boycott the new legislative
councils on two grounds. First, that the nation had not been prepared
for it by a campaign of "political education" and second, that the
British had not been forewarned by a deputation to London. Six
months later he reversed his views presumably partly on the grounds
that both the Indian people and the British rulers were now better
prepared. But events were also running away with Gandhi and he was
seeking to ride them. "Swaraj in One Year" was a rallying cry
designed to channel the emotions of a mass movement and to shake
the Raj. It was not the sort of objective which would enable Gandhi
easily to maintain cordial relations with the Viceroy, nor could it
be expected to appeal to the British people. Yet Gandhi professed
to have immense faith in the power to work changes of his nonviolent
methods. Satyagraha, as a spiritual weapon introduced into the realm
of politics, could, he believed, work a breakthrough which would not be
bound by the normal limits of politics, the art of the possible. He
thought that a movement which engaged in acts of truly disinterested
self-sacrifice would generate immense spiritual power, and so work a polit-
ical miracle. By arguments such as this, mystical in the sense that
he believed that God would intervene in the political arena if the
sacrifice for a true and just cause was pure enough, Gandhi appears to
have reconciled himself to his failure to maintain friendly dialogue
with his opponents.

A particular example of the way in which the need to develop a strong
base for noncooperation forced Gandhi to relax his strict rule of non-
vviolent conflict, happened early in 1920. In April, Gandhi was pressed
to add his weight to the Khilafat deputation in England which was
receiving short shrift from British politicians. He sent a telegram to
the Viceroy's Private Secretary:

"... as one desiring welfare of Empire I feel I owe it to ministers and British Public to acquaint them disastrous consequences if decision hostile to just Muslim sentiments and to tell them that such adverse decision must result in complete withdrawal of cooperation from government ..." 157

He also telegrammed Montagu in London in similar vein:

"Before taking any serious step I would like personally place before ministers my feelings in this important matter and understand ministers' viewpoint."

This was the classic Gandhian stance, not only to forewarn the opponent, but also to gain clarity and insight for the struggle ahead through "understanding the ministers' viewpoint". However, because of the hostility which he expected to meet in England and, we may guess, the early stage of his preparations for noncooperation in India, Gandhi placed a condition on his visit. He asked Chelmsford to give his "approval" to his mission, and when this was not forthcoming, he made the same approach to Montagu:

"... am unwilling proceed without encouragement from government in difficult task. Could you please favour me ministers' view." 158

Thus in April Gandhi was still attempting to get the support of the British ministers responsible for India for his Khilafat campaign in order to give him a firmer basis for argument in London. It may be that his failure to get this approval was a particular cause of his bitterness against Chelmsford and Montagu. 159 By the end of April Gandhi had decided not to go to England. As he wrote to Abdul Bari: "Organisation must start immediately", and a few days later in another private letter he put it more clearly: "Without perfect organisation our going would be worse than useless." 160 In other words, Gandhi realised that he would be listened to in London early in 1920 only if he had the support of the British government representatives concerned with India. Without that, there was no argument he could make of which notice would be taken. He therefore had to turn to organising the country in order to demonstrate over the heads of the
Raj's representatives, India's abhorrence of the peace terms.
As a result, he had to sacrifice his desire - which was strictly a require-
ment of the satyagraha method - to "personally place before ministers"
his feelings on the Khilafat and, in return, be enabled to "understand
ministers' viewpoint".

Gandhi did formally prepare the Raj in advance for noncooperation on the
Khilafat issue with his public letter to the Viceroy five weeks before
the start of the campaign. On August 1, in his second formal letter
to Chelmsford to mark the birth of noncooperation, he also included
the Punjab issue as a grievance. However, at the Special Session of
the Congress in September when swaraj was added explicitly as a third
objective of the programme, critics argued that insufficient warning
had been given to the Raj for Congress itself to launch noncooperation.
A Congress deputation to England was proposed. Ideally, Gandhi almost
certainly would have wished to take the revised demands to Britain
before launching into council boycott, the most specific and pointed
affront to the Raj. But elections to the new councils were due to
take place within a matter of weeks in November and the Khilafat
movement had already commenced noncooperation. He could not afford
to lose the momentum of the struggle by accepting a postponement.
From the point of view of principle, he had personally, in his own
eyes, more than adequately warned the British that noncooperation
was coming; from the point of view of tactics, it made no sense to
hold up the struggle. Thus in both April and September 1920
Gandhi concluded that the pressing needs of organising noncooperation
in India precluded a visit to London to confront his opponents in
person.

The response during this period of the British officials in India
to Gandhi's noncooperation proposals was essentially to do nothing.
Montagu and Chelmsford were in a difficult position because the Foreign Office had indeed concluded secret agreements with Britain's war partners in 1915 to divide up the Ottoman Empire once the victory was achieved; and the India Office was in no position to ensure that its warnings were taken heed of by the British government, let alone the peace conference. If the two men had followed Gandhi's advice, of course, they would have resigned. In January, a deputation of Khilafat leaders, including Gandhi, met with Chelmsford; they were received with courtesy but gained no satisfaction. In June the Raj began to consider prosecuting Gandhi, but came to the conclusion that it would be hard to gain a conviction until the later stages of non-cooperation were reached. They were also anxious not to provoke the sort of upheaval which had followed Gandhi's temporary detention in April 1919. Moreover, by tactful handling of him they hoped to retain the support of the Indian moderates who were critical of Gandhi and who were intending to stand for the new councils and make the reformed constitution work. In July Montagu said in the House of Commons that Gandhi could not expect to be treated as leniently as he had been after the Rowlatt Satyagraha, and this provoked Gandhi in Young India to stronger criticism of the British. But in October, Chelmsford was still inclined to believe that non-cooperation was not "a practical policy" and thought that it would not be taken up. Provincial governments were authorised to arrest subordinate leaders of the campaign, but the policy of the Raj towards the main leaders was to wait and see. 163

Overall, then, Gandhi went into noncooperation with deep mistrust of the British on his side; while on the part of the Raj there was a stiffening resolve to hold him at arm's length, watch him carefully and not make any mistakes. In October, Gandhi published his letter "To Every Englishman in India":
"You can repent of the wrongs done to Indians. You can compel Mr Lloyd George to redeem his promises ... You can compel the Viceroy to retire in favour of a better one ... You can compel the Government to summon a conference of the recognised leaders of the people ...

"But this you cannot do unless you consider every Indian to be in reality your equal and brother."

This was now a long-term struggle he was engaged in - to challenge the basic attitude of the British towards the Indians, to change the nature of the relationship between Britain and India.

In this deepening and broadening of his challenge to the Raj, we have a third and decisive explanation for Gandhi's sudden introduction of the triple boycott of councils, courts and schools into the non-cooperation programme in July 1920. He had been promoting the plan of noncooperation in face of widespread opposition from leading nationalist Hindu figures - therefore first, once the decision to go ahead with noncooperation was made, he was free from political attachments to the Hindu politicians and could choose to pursue something close to his ideal satyagraha programme. Second, the first stage of noncooperation needed broadening and lengthening. As outlined in May it did not demand the involvement of a wide enough spectrum of the educated classes, and with this limited participation it would lead into the second stage too quickly. But it was, third, the intransigence of the Raj which appears to have prompted Gandhi to extend his programme and contemplate swaraj as an explicit goal for the movement. To avoid the posturing and negativeness which Gandhi associated with the earlier popular campaigns for swaraj initiated by the Home Rule Leagues, he needed to devise an alternative method of campaigning. Gandhi's alternative programme for achieving swaraj was to give practical tasks to the nation's politically active groups, undertakings which demanded great sacrifices of them and would thus draw in the masses in support. The boycott of courts, schools and councils was to bring the educated who took it up into much closer
contact with the common people and to oblige them to clarify and widen the objectives of Indian nationalism. The triple boycott broadened the concept of swadeshi from the matter of cloth and the promotion of Indian goods to questions of whether the true focus of politics should be in the legislatures or in working among the people. Swadeshi in education meant the development of national schools; in the case of legal disputes, it meant the attempt to reduce the prestige of the British legal system and to rebuild the Indian system of arbitration. The triple boycott, as the basis of an alternative movement for swaraj, was developed later into a permanent programme undertaken by Gandhi's supporters in India, the constructive programme.

Thus the inability of the Raj to respond to his "particularist" demands on the Khilafat and Punjab obliged Gandhi to take on the general demand of swaraj - and swaraj for Gandhi required the construction of a national movement which embraced some of the deepest problems in India and was seen to represent honest attempts to tackle them. Constructive programme, an indirect response to the Raj, the building up of the internal strength of the Indian nation, grew directly out of the triple boycott announced by Gandhi in July 1920. It developed through all the years that followed as a major part of Gandhi's effort to take on the issue of swaraj and build a movement which would oblige the Raj to change its ways.
1. There is a direct continuity between Gandhi's promotion of the Swadeshi concept through the Swadeshi Sabha and his later formulation of the programme of Noncooperation - in opposition to economic boycott - as the sanction to be used by the Khilafat movement against the Raj.

2. In attempting to offer leadership to what was effectively a rebellion of Indian Muslims against the Raj, Gandhi sacrificed the opportunity to build up "a company of true believers" through developing the Swadeshi Sabha or reviving the Satyagraha Sabha. Joining the Khilafat movement, he entered into a tactical and strategic alliance with Muslim political leaders who were not believers in nonviolence and who could not be guaranteed to hold their followers to nonviolence. Gandhi's reasoning included some of the following elements:

   (i) the Khilafat cause was just;
   (ii) Indian Hindus must support their Muslim brothers in their hour of need;
   (iii) the opportunity to secure Hindu-Muslim unity through support for the Muslims would not recur for generations;
   (iv) through his personal direction of the Khilafat campaign, it might be possible to restrain the movement from violence (This was perhaps his most remarkable achievement);
   (v) Muslims following the discipline of nonviolence for tactical reasons might come to embrace nonviolence at a deeper level; and
   (vi) a tactical alliance between the Khilafat movement and the Indian National Congress at this moment would greatly strengthen Indian nationalism.

3. In offering leadership to the Khilafat movement on condition that it maintained nonviolent discipline under his direction, Gandhi had to:

   (i) ensure that the Koran did not expressly forbid the adoption by Muslims of nonviolent action on a life or death issue;
   (ii) exercise arbitrary authority in rejecting proposals for a deal between the two communities over cow-slaughter and the Punjab question;
   (iii) assemble and organise a reliable company of Muslim "lieutenants" who would accept the discipline of nonviolence and ensure that this code was followed by Khilafat supporters;
(iv) devise a programme of nonviolent action, consistent with his satyagraha principle, which would be seen as an effective challenge to the Raj in face of strident calls from Muslim voices for their idea of a nonviolent programme, which was for economic boycott of British goods; (v) demonstrate that under his leadership the movement could secure major support from the Hindu population; and (vi) publicy accept that if the nonviolent movement failed, Muslims had the right to resort to their "traditional" sanction of violent rebellion.

4. Gandhi did succeed in securing the allegiance to his leadership of a key group of Khilafat organisers who took responsibility with him jointly for touring Muslim parts of India and promoting the Khilafat cause from a common platform.

5. The first actions promoted by Gandhi on behalf of the Khilafat movement were three hartals at five month intervals, plus a boycott of the Raj's Peace Celebrations. These hartals were again mass religious observances, preparing supporters in personal discipline for nonviolent action.

6. Noncooperation, as conceived by Gandhi was no programme of civil disobedience. Because of his fears of "collective" civil disobedience getting out of hand, he formulated the concept of "progressive" non-cooperation in stages, with the moment for mass civil disobedience long-postponed. Noncooperation was progressive in at least four senses:

(i) it involved moving from acts of small sacrifices - resigning honours - to acts of greater sacrifice - resigning jobs - and so on;
(ii) it was to begin with the most privileged individuals - those who had been honoured by the Raj - and move through the educated "classes" and then to the "masses";
(iii) it would begin with actions least likely to risk breakdown into violence and develop with actions involving greater risk; and
(iv) through the progressive build-up of the campaign, it was assumed that money would be gathered and organisation developed to support "noncooperators" who had resigned their jobs and were working full-time on the campaign.
7. Gandhi had the greatest difficulty in securing the support of Hindu politicians for his noncooperation programme. The freedom from constraint which this gave him may, paradoxically, be part of an explanation for his decision to incorporate in the programme something close to his own "ideal" prescription for Indian society - the Triple Boycott. It also contributed to his decision to launch the Noncooperation movement one month before the Indian National Congress held a special session to discuss it.

8. The coincidence of the Peace Terms at the end of the War, which dashed Khilafatists' hopes, together with the Hunter Commission's Report, which offended all Indian nationalists, being published simultaneously, was a gift for Gandhi. This gave him the opportunity to link the Khilafat and Punjab issues and attract Hindu support for Noncooperation. He also correctly judged that national anger against the British would lend support to the radical assault on the structures of British India contained in the Triple Boycott.

9. Organising a perilous campaign on a vast scale, and losing confidence in British political leaders, Gandhi sacrificed his wish to go to England to forewarn the opponent of his intentions. Forced to adopt "swaraj" - a general rather than a particular objective as a goal for the campaign - he bent his efforts to trying to build up the substance of swaraj through the Triple Boycott. He began to hope, too, that his message would bypass British political leaders and get through directly to British public opinion.

It was by taking up the Khilafat issue and advocating noncooperation that Gandhi moved firmly outside his base in Gujarat and the Bombay Presidency. The Central Khilafat Committee was able to mobilise support among Muslims in north and south India and elsewhere, and the idea of noncooperation appealed to social classes in different parts of India who were being drawn into nationalist politics for the first time. The established politicians, whose interests were directly affected by the proposal for the triple boycott and who hesitated to support both the Khilafat campaign as an issue and noncooperation as a method, were taken by surprise by the swiftness with which non-cooperation won popular support in the late summer of 1920, and they failed to organise adequately against Gandhi's movement. It was the Khilafat movement which catapulted Gandhi to the centre of Indian politics and greatly aided his efforts late in 1920 to capture
the Indian National Congress and organise noncooperation as a campaign sponsored by the principal nationalist organisation in India.

But in the Khilafat movement we see Gandhi as an organiser for the first time obliged to enter into real political compromises. His local struggles, in Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda, he had directed with complete personal authority. The Gujarat Sabha, when he joined it was immediately transformed to carry Gandhi's own social and political programme. The Rowlatt satyagraha, although it was taken up by different groups in different parts of India, was initiated in Bombay by a self-selecting group who formed the Satyagraha Sabha with Gandhi as its undisputed leader. However, the break-up of the Satyagraha Sabha in the summer of 1919 and the simultaneous failure of the Swadeshi Sabha, caused Gandhi to look beyond organisations over which he had absolute authority. His link-up with the Central Khilafat Committee was a true political coalition, a marriage of convenience, albeit unconventional because of the terms which Gandhi imposed. While Gandhi was accepted by the Khilafat leaders as the "dictator" of the movement with arbitrary power to develop and direct the programme of noncooperation, Gandhi in his place had to accept that the Muslim leaders were not satyagrahis according to his conception. They had adopted nonviolence and embraced him as leader for tactical reasons only. Thus Gandhi in moving so decisively to promote nonviolence at a national level by taking up the Khilafat campaign and providing the movement with a feasible programme for nonviolent action was also very vulnerable. The movement which took him to the leadership of the Indian National Congress was committed to nonviolence only as a tactic. His need to take advantage of the opportunity afforded him, to try to establish from his position as a national leader a national organisation which truly embraced his principles and would faithfully follow the disciplines of satyagraha from conviction, is very clear.
REFERENCES

1. Chandra, Tripathi and De, Freedom Struggle, New Delhi, 1972, p 89
4. "Speech at Women's meeting, Surat", May 26, 1919, ibid, p 324
5. "Speech at Public meeting, Surat", May 26, 1919, ibid, p 329
REFERENCES

19. See note from Private Secretary of Governor of Bombay, October 7, 1919, op cit Vol 16, p 62; also the Collector of Godhra, Mr. Clayton, and his wife, presided over meetings on swadeshi addressed by Gandhi, August 14, 1919, ibid, pp 26-31.


33. "Swadeshi in a Nutshell", Young India, September 13, 1919, in ibid p 126.


36. ibid, p 112.

37. See Punjab Letters in Navajivan, November 9 and December 14, in ibid p 285, 331; see also "Speech at Women's Meeting, Amritsar", November 4, 1919, ibid, pp 286-287.
CHAPTER 6: Page 258

REFERENCES

38. Yajnik, Indulal, "Discovery of the Spinning Wheel", in op cit, pp 61-84


41. Yajnik, for example, dismisses the Swadeshi Sabha in this way (op cit p 84). So too does R.A. Gordon, op cit, p 11.


43. This interpretation is based on Rothermund, Indira, The Philosophy of Restraint, pp 6-7, 98-115.


49. "Speech on Khilafat, Bombay", September 18, 1919, ibid, pp.151-152.


CHAPTER 6: Page 259

REFERENCES

56. ibid, p 319.


60. Brown, op cit, p 203.


68. Quoted in Brown, op cit, p 204.


70. This section is based principally on discussion of the evolution of Noncooperation in Brown, Krishna, Yajnik and Gordon, op cit.


72. "It should be clearly understood that this is not a movement of civil disobedience" - "Martial on First August", Young India, July 21, 1920, in op cit, Vol 18, pp 78-79; "Interview to "The Madras Mail" on Noncooperation", August 12, 1920, ibid, p 139. See also "The Delhi Notification and Press Orders", Young India, May 5, 1920, in op cit. Vol 17, p 389, and "Repression in Delhi", Navajivan, May 9, 1920, in ibid, p 393.


75. "Speech at Khilafat Meeting, Bombay", March 5, 1920. op cit Vol 17, p 68.

76. "Letter to the Press ", Young India, March 10, 1920. in ibid, p 73.


REFERENCES


86. "The first stage of Noncooperation was, therefore, arranged so as to involve minimum danger to public peace and minimum of sacrifice on the part of those who participated in the movement" - "Speech at Bombay", Young India, August 4, 1920, in ibid, pp 96. See also "Speech at Calicut", August 10, ibid, p 161.

87. "... it would be wrong to appeal to the door-keeper until one has appealed to the highest in the land" - "At the Call of the Country", Young India, July 21, 1920 in ibid, p 68. "... the first stage largely affects the uppermost strata of society ..." - "Interview on Noncooperation", August 12, 1920, ibid p 140. "The people - the masses - require from us a clear lead ... If once we feel that we cannot cooperate with this Government, we have to commence from the top." "Speech on Noncooperation, Madras", August 12, 1920, ibid, pp 149-150.

88. "If perchance ... and God forbid that it should happen - the special Congress decides against them, I would still advise my countrymen, the Mussulmans, to stand single-handed and fight ..." - "Speech on Noncooperation, Madras", August 12, 1920. ibid, p 149.


91. Yajnik, op cit, pp 114-115


94. "The first stage of Noncooperation was, therefore, arranged so as to involve minimum danger to public peace and minimum of sacrifice on the part of those who participated in the movement" - "Speech at Bombay", Young India, August 4, 1920, in ibid, pp 96. See also "Speech at Calicut", August 10, ibid, p 161.

95. "Interview on Noncooperation", August 12, 1920, ibid, p 142. See also, ibid, p 139, and p 96.


98. "The first stage of Noncooperation was, therefore, arranged so as to involve minimum danger to public peace and minimum of sacrifice on the part of those who participated in the movement" - "Speech at Bombay", Young India, August 4, 1920, in ibid, pp 96. See also "Speech at Calicut", August 10, ibid, p 161.

99. "Interview on Noncooperation", August 12, 1920, ibid, p 142. See also, ibid, p 139, and p 96.

REFERENCES


102. "'Hijrat' and Its Meaning", *Young India*, July 21, 1920, in *op cit* Vol 18, p 77.


104. *ibid*, p 99 fn.2.


106. A number of these articles are collected in a volume of his journalistic writings selected from *Young India*, see Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India, 1919-1922*, Madras: S.Ganesan, 1922.


108. Both Bose and Yajnik suggest that there was such an agreement. This may have been the way that political workers perceived the Hindu-Muslim collaboration, but I have seen no direct evidence for it.

109. This is essentially Judith Brown's argument, *op cit*, pp 271, 300-304.

110. *ibid*, p 208.


116. Quoted in "Neither a Saint Nor a Politician", *Young India* May 12, in *ibid*, p 405.
REFERENCES


122. "Repression in Delhi", ibid, May 9, 1920, in ibid pp 392-393


130. Gandhi clearly was waiting for a lead from the Punjab before Lajpat Rai made his council boycott proposal.


REFERENCES


140. Hamid, op cit, p 140.

141. "Letter to the Press", op cit, Vol 17, p 76

142. "Letter to the Viceroy", June 22, 1920, ibid, p 504

143. "Muslim Leaders Representation to the Viceroy", June 22, 1920, ibid, p 506.

144. "The Mussalman Representation", Young India, June 30, 1920, ibid, p 521

145. "Letter to C.F. Andrews", June 20, 1920, ibid, p 499


147. "The Viceregal Pronouncement", Young India, September 1, 1920, ibid, p 217.

148. "There should be no mixing up of other questions with the Khilafat" - "Letter to the Press", op cit, Vol 17, p 73.

149. "Mr Montagu on the Khilafat Question", Young India, July 28, 1920, in op cit, Vol 18, p 89.


152. "Boycott of Councils", Navajivan, July 18, 1920, in ibid, p 57.


154. For Gandhi's continuing argument with established nationalist tactics as well as aims, see "Boycott of Councils", op cit, Vol 18, pp 55-57.


158. "Cable to Secretary of State for India", after April 15, 1920, ibid, p 317.
159. Gandhi frequently compared Montagu with General Smuts in South Africa and Chelmsford with an earlier Viceroy, Hardinge. Smuts and Hardinge had responded to a satyagraha campaign led by Gandhi.


163. See Brown, op cit, pp
IN April 1920 Gandhi achieved control of a national organisation through which he could hope directly to promote his personal political and social views. The All-India Home Rule League, founded by Annie Besant in 1916, of which Gandhi had been consistently critical, was split in the summer of 1919 on the question of civil disobedience and on whether or not to support the reform programme. Annie Besant as President was rapidly outflanked by radicals dissatisfied with her leadership. Nine months later Gandhi was invited to accept the Presidency, and in April, after consulting with a number of influential friends, he did so. Immediately, he transformed the programme of the organisation.

According to Brown, there is no clear evidence of how Gandhi came to be offered the Presidency of the League, though she suggests that Motilal Nehru actually invited him. Gandhi himself said in a private letter to Srinivasa Sastri that the "demand" had come from people with whom he had worked before, presumably referring to the group of Bombay Home Rulers with whom he had launched the Satyagraha Sabha. In his letter to Sastri, which was circulated privately to other friends, Gandhi stated the conditions he had placed on joining the League:

"I have told them that at my time of life and with views firmly formed on several matters I could only join an organisation to affect its policy and not to be affected by it".

He went on to list five conditions, the first of which was a pointed rebuke to what he saw as the political opportunism practised previously by the nationalist movement:

"1. (The) highest honesty must be introduced in the political life of the country if we are to make our mark as a nation. This presupposes at the present moment a very firm and definite acceptance of the creed of Truth at any cost".

Only a few weeks earlier Gandhi had engaged in a public exchange with Tilak, leader of the other Home Rule League, on the question of truth-
fullness in politics. "Politics", Tilak had said wittingly, "is a game of worldly people and not of sadhus (holy men)."

Gandhi's second condition of acceptance was swadeshi - "swadeshi must be our immediate goal". Third, he wanted the adoption of Hindustani "in the immediate future" as a national language. Fourth, was the principle of redistributing the provinces of India on a linguistic basis. Fifth, he demanded support for Hindu-Muslim unity as an "unalterable article of faith", which would include in the official programme of the League "vigorous" promotion of the Khilafat cause. Here were all the articles of Gandhi's social programme as developed at that stage, but he also made it clear that he would not press the League into more contentious areas of his programme: "I will not think of asking for official recognition of my creed of civil disobedience". Gandhi insisted that his social programme in practice was non-political, and should be accepted by all as "non-party" activity; whereas he recognised that civil disobedience was a method inviting strong political disagreement.

At this time, Gandhi's status as a national political figure was rising rapidly. Not only was he identified with the Khilafat movement, in particular with the second all-India Khilafat hartal in March and with the effort to draw Hindu leaders into support for noncooperation, also in April 1920 he promoted the National week to commemorate the Rowlatt events. At the Amritsar Congress in December he had played a pivotal role in achieving guarded support for the government reform programme. At the end of March he had just published the Congress report into the Punjab events, a report of which he was acknowledged to be the principal author. Also, he was being pressed at this time to join the Khilafat deputation in England, while simultaneously there was talk of his going to England to present the Congress report.
on the Punjab. With this rising reputation, Gandhi was presumably an attractive prospect as a leader of the League whatever conditions he laid down. The invitation, at any rate, was not withdrawn and at the end of April, he announced that he had joined the League and accepted office as its President.

"It is a distinct departure from the even tenor of my life", said Gandhi in a public letter to the members of the League, "for me to belong to an organisation which is purely and frankly political". This remark is worthy of note because it shows that Gandhi was aware that he was taking risks as he moved towards the centre of Indian political life. The Khilafat movement was in many respects a religious movement; the Satyagraha Sabha and the Swadeshi Sabha had been based on religious vows; the Gujarat Sabha was a civic organisation whose object was to promote the social and economic wellbeing of the people of Gujarat. By accepting the leadership of the League Gandhi was identifying himself with an organisation of which he had been strongly critical. He justified his action with three arguments. First, that he had already moved into the political arena by his activities at the Amritsar Congress, where he "found it impossible to remain silent" as on previous occasions. Second, that he would not lose his independence to act freely according to his own conscience, his "splendid isolation", for the League had accepted him as President in full knowledge of his views. Moreover, he would be wrong not to "utilize" the organisation for advancing the causes associated with him, for he would "gain a platform for propagating my ideas". Gandhi's third point was that the object of the League, swaraj, could be achieved most speedily by those causes which he espoused - swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim unity and the spread of Hindi: "If I succeed in engaging the League in these activities, I shall feel confident of our being able to achieve swaraj at an early date."
In a reiteration of the views he had expressed in his "Swaraj in Swadeshi" article the previous December, Gandhi made it clear that he thought that the political reforms being introduced by the British were of secondary importance to the programme of social reforms which he was inviting the League to take up. The direct challenge which Gandhi issued to the nation's educated in July when he announced the triple boycott of the councils, the courts and the schools, he made less dramatically but equally clearly in April when he took over the All-India Home Rule League. He announced then a programme for the League, not of pressure to get the rules for the forthcoming elections changed or of propaganda to get a Gandhian faction elected to the councils. Typically, he wanted to get the nationalist activists out of the legislatures and into the villages. "We are to work with the millions and influence them" he said. Once in control of the League, Gandhi set out immediately to convert its members to his views. In his new position as president, he was now attempting to explore publicly the question of how swaraj could be achieved by his methods - and move himself into the centre of nationalist agitational politics. In particular, his advocacy of linguistic provinces recognised growing movements for autonomy within the old Presidencies. Even so, his main preoccupation was still with the Khilafat movement and the developing noncooperation - and it was perhaps inevitable that the Home Rule League became not a politicised reinvention of the Swadeshi Sabha as he seems to have intended, but an important vehicle for Gandhi's drive to win the nation to noncooperation.

Richard Gordon, in his study of council boycott and noncooperation, states that:

"Gandhi planned to capture Congress by a three-pronged attack: through the All-India Home Rule League, the Khilafat Committees and such support as he could muster in the Congress Committees themselves."
Moreover, at the Special Session of the Congress in Calcutta, when it was still unclear whether the subjects committee would support non-cooperation, Gandhi is reported to have called a meeting of the League to discuss what to do in case he lost. Once the Special Session had agreed to support noncooperation, Gandhi still did not have full support from the All-India Congress Committee which directed the affairs of Congress between the annual sessions. He was thus obliged to send out a circular letter to branches of the Home Rule League drawing to their attention the Congress resolution in support of noncooperation and requesting them "for the next two months" to concentrate their attention principally on the boycott of the reformed councils. The letter contained the wording of a "form" which voters were to be asked to sign, stating that they did not desire to be represented in the councils.

Between the Special Session in September and the annual session at Nagpur in December, Gandhi remained dependent for the organisation of noncooperation on the Central Khilafat Committee and the Home Rule League.

During October, however, the League was hit by a number of prominent resignations, including that of Jinnah, at that time a leading nationalist Muslim who had been president of the branch of the League in Bombay for some years. The contentious issue was that Gandhi had had the constitution of the League changed, including its name, which was to be Swarajya Sabha. In this move Gandhi was quite clearly using the League as a lever to influence the Congress session at Nagpur, just as he had used the Gujarat Political Conference in August to nudge the Special Congress into support for Noncooperation. The aim of the new Sabha was to be independence with or without the British connection and the means of achieving this aim were to be "peaceful" and "legitimate." These were precisely the changes in the
Congress constitution which Gandhi advocated successfully later at Nagpur. Jinnah argued that Gandhi had acted unconstitutionally in that the meeting in Bombay which took the decision was attended by only 61 members out of an all-India membership of 6,000. Gandhi, who had already been blocked once by similar charges after an earlier meeting in September, replied that the meeting was legal, and he added:

"... the country is moving so fast now that our leaders cannot keep pace with it. In such circumstances, no matter how much we are pained we just go ahead. India will not have such an opportunity for a century. We cannot afford to miss it. We may only hope that when the leaders realize the value of the strong popular current, they will not hesitate to join it". 14

Gandhi's view was that Congress must question the British connection and he was willing to launch civil disobedience if it was to remain of nationalist feeling in the country. In fact. Nevertheless, in endeavouring to keep pace with the times, Gandhi was using the Swaraj Sabha for a quite different set of objectives than he had outlined when he accepted the Presidency of the League only a few months earlier. In particular he had stated in April that he had no intention of drawing the League into civil disobedience, whereas in October he now admitted the new creed of the Sabha would "cover" civil disobedience. 15 Gandhi's "utilization" of the League for his own purposes did not stop there, however, for once his second victory at Nagpur confirmed that he could work through the organisation of the Congress itself, he appears to have dropped the Swarajya Sabha altogether. Brailsford quotes a prominent nationalist Hindu on the affair:

"Some resentment was felt because Gandhi, before he was sure that he could win Congress, had entrenched himself within the Home Rule League, which he renamed the Swaraj Sabha. This rival organization, when he no longer needed it, died a peaceful death." 16.

Gandhi's capture of the All-India Home Rule League was thus a temporary phenomenon lasting only eight months until he achieved control of the
Congress. Again we see his belief that with superior political insight and experience he was entitled to force the pace and set the programme for the League as long as its members had confidence in him. Again, as with the Satyagraha Sabha, we see strong political disagreements with colleagues operating from different political principles causing splits in the organisation when Gandhi chose to follow his own lead. Although through the Home Rule League Gandhi had arrived at the leadership of the national Congress, he had done so by using it for a far more "political" purpose than he had promised when taking over as president. Instead of creating a "non-political" organisation which would substitute for and extend the work of the Swadeshi Sabha, he appears to have done what he said he would not do, recruit from the Home Rule League a "party" organisation which helped his rise in the Congress. This meant, though, that Gandhi, at the height of his power in India, with the Indian National Congress under his direction, still did not control an all-India organisation which was committed to his principles of satyagraha. Gandhi in taking on the leadership of the Indian National Congress took on the leadership of a coalition of political interests, which like the Khilafat movement, had its own expedient reasons for accepting his lead. But his own base of support for the full satyagraha programme he was advocating was thin. Thus he embraced the leadership of Congress in much the same way as he had accepted the leadership of the League and the Khilafat movement, hoping by directing the membership into a nonviolent programme to do some good and to recruit from out of the experience some new converts to his position. But within the Congress coalition Gandhi was operating on a far vaster scale on a larger issue and on a larger range of issues and with more formidable political figures as colleagues than ever before. Thus again he was very vulnerable to losing control.
CHAPTER 7: Page 272

SUMMARY

1. The Home Rule Leagues had been established a few years earlier by Annie Besant and Tilak because Congress as a body was unwilling to move into agitational politics - but they remained affiliated to Congress.

2. Gandhi accepted the leadership of Besant's All-India Home Rule League on condition that he was permitted to shape the organization according to his own views on how to achieve Home Rule - that is, through promotion of swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim unity, Hindustani and linguistic provinces. However, he undertook specifically not to lead the League into civil disobedience.

3. Nevertheless, in his campaign to win Congress support for the Khilafat programme of Noncooperation, Gandhi used the League as a lever. The aims of the League were changed in its constitution to permit a demand for independence without the British connection, if necessary, and by means of civil disobedience, if necessary.

4. Critics of this change were vigorously and publicly rebutted by Gandhi who was sensitive to charges of procedural irregularity. But he added that his critics were out of tune with the country's mood.

5. When Gandhi achieved control of the Congress organisation, the Home Rule League was allowed to die. Since Congress under Gandhi's leadership was to become itself an agitational body for Home Rule, there was some clear justification for this; but it left some resentment against Gandhi.

6. As a result of the way Home Rule League developed and then ceased to exist under his leadership, Gandhi was still without an organised body of supporters committed to his satyagraha principles.
In the concluding sections of her book, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics, 1915-22*, Judith Brown shows how even after his capture of the leadership of Congress in 1920, Gandhi remained an isolated and potentially vulnerable political figure. She writes:

"Apart from a small group of loyal henchmen like Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel and the less known Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi's power rested on three main bases - newly mobilised groups and areas which had not previously participated in the politics of nationalism; an unstable alliance with sections of the Muslim community, which helped to push new areas into politics and provided him with allies in the ranks of the politicians; and the unwilling consent of some sections of the existing political elite, particularly in the Presidencies, who calculated that he was their best bet because of his other sources of power."

It is doubtful whether Gandhi set out with a conscious strategy of mobilising newly political social groups and regional areas in the belief that he could then outflank and undermine the narrow political elite which dominated nationalist politics. Rather he believed as a moral and religious assumption of his work in India, that the educated elite should identify themselves with the "masses" and that the "masses" should be mobilised to change their conditions of life. Both the Raj, on one side, and the existing nationalist leaders on the other, stood in the way of this vision. The British rulers, because of their racism, their conservatism and their willingness to maintain the status quo by means of repression; the nationalist elite because of their fear of the masses, their identification with the British "mission" in India, and their concentration on "politics" as a narrow area of debate and decision in the legislatures. So Gandhi entered the political world in his own way - in Bihar, in Gujarat and on the Rowlatt, Swadeshi and Khilafat issues - challenging both the Raj and the nationalists.

By late 1919, however, Gandhi had failed to establish his own independent base of followers who would accept his lead on some of the major
issues facing the nation. It as a result of his leadership on the Punjab and Khilafat issues, and his following in Gujarat, he found himself called upon increasingly to act as an important figure in the established political world. He seems therefore to have taken a decision at around the time of the Amritsar Congress in December 1919 to try to draw on those political assets he could muster and to exercise direct influence inside the established institutions of Indian nationalism. In particular, his commitment to the Khilafat movement obliged him to gather all possible Hindu support for the Muslim campaign. Hence in 1920, we see him joining the Home Rule League and taking over its leadership, and attending many private conferences with nationalist leaders on the Khilafat question and later the Punjab issue, including an approach for support in May to the All-India Congress Committee. Finally, on failing to achieve the support which he needed, he decided to try to win Congress to his position. Presumably after the Benares meeting of the AICC, Gandhi did decide very directly to draw on all possible bases of support and capture the Indian National Congress if he could.

Brown's analysis points to what she calls the "roots of Gandhi's power" in the rather fortuitous conjunction of three different elements - the mobilisation of new geographical areas and social groups; the activation of one particular community with a political network across India, the pan-Islamist Muslims; and the capitulation of the established politicians. In tracing Gandhi's attempt between 1915 and 1920 to exercise leadership and develop a following through a number of organisations, what we have been doing is to examine his judgments and techniques as an organiser. By the summer of 1920 Gandhi felt able to try to capture the organisation of Congress, to transform it, and to do useful work through it. The purpose of the remainder of this
chapter is to discuss how Congress was captured, how the organisation was changed as a result of Gandhi's initiative, and what Gandhi then attempted to do with it.

The Punjab Satyagraha

Congress, prior to 1921, was not an active body. The President, appointed annually, had the assistance of three secretaries and would call quarterly meetings of the All-India Congress Committee to discuss important issues. Between the annual sessions of the Congress in December, the Provincial Congress Committees were virtually moribund, coming together just before the annual session to elect delegates and to debate policy. Having failed to get the agreement of the annual session in 1915 to develop a more permanent and active organisation, the "Extremist" leaders, Tilak and Besant, formed their Home Rule Leagues to carry on active propaganda and organising between Congress sessions. The Leagues were affiliated to the Congress. Despite Annie Besant's election to the Presidency of the Congress in 1910, Congress remained a part-time organisation, basically an annual get-together for the nation's political elite, through all the events of 1919 and 1920.

In 1919, Gandhi, along with other politicians, began his campaign to get an official government inquiry into what had happened in the Punjab between March and June, when civil order broke down, the Amritsar massacre took place, and martial law was imposed. Confined as he was to the Bombay Presidency by the banning order, he used the columns of his newly-acquired journal Young India, to maintain a steady questioning of every new offence to due process of law and to Indian dignity which became known in the Punjab. By the end of May, 1919, he proposed to the Satyagraha Sabha that they should take up the Punjab question in addition to their campaign against the Rowlatt Act. In June, he announced that he would resume civil disobedience unless the Rowlatt Act was withdrawn, an inquiry was held into the Punjab events,
and a Punjab journalist was freed from jail. After discussion with
the Bombay governor, however, he retreated from this proposal for civil
disobedience, when he received an assurance that a government inquiry
would be undertaken and that Kalinath Roy, the Lahore journalist,
was to have his sentence substantially reduced.

The All-India Congress Committee announced in June 1919 that it was
intending to conduct its own inquiry into the Punjab events with the
object of bringing evidence before the government-appointed Hunter
Commission. Two of the leading figures in Congress, Madan Mohan
Malaviya and Motilal Nehru went personally to the Punjab to begin
their preliminary investigations, together with Swami Shraddanand
who had been the leader of the Satyagraha Sabha in Delhi. Most of
the prominent Punjabi politicians were in jail. In October, however,
as soon as his ban was lifted, Gandhi went himself to the Punjab and
was immediately coopted on to the committee. Within a short period,
despite the involvement of a third major Congress figure, C.R.Das,
Gandhi seems to have taken charge of its work. When the Punjab
government refused to release on parole for the period of the Hunter
Commission's examination in Amritsar those political leaders in the
city who had been jailed under martial law, the Congress Committee
announced that it would boycott the Hunter Commission's investigation.
An office was opened in Lahore and Gandhi organised the work of an
independent Congress inquiry conducted in parallel with the
Commission's work, though by different procedures. Public meetings
were conducted at seventeen centres in the martial law areas at which
people were invited to submit statements; 1,700 were received, of which
about 650 were included in appendices to the final report.

During this work Gandhi was taken away to the First Khilafat Conference
in Delhi and it was at this conference that he refused to permit the
linking of the Khilafat and the Punjab issues. Referring to the Raj's peace celebrations proposed for December 1919, he said:

"Personally, I feel that, whatever the sufferings of the Punjab, we cannot on a local issue, dissociate ourselves from a celebration which concerns the whole Empire. We have other means by which to publicize the wrongs of the Punjab. Nor can we dissociate ourselves from the celebrations on the ground that justice has not been done in the matter of the Punjab, because we still hope for justice. It is for this purpose that the Hunter Commission is sitting and our Commissioners are working. We may abstain from the Peace Celebrations only if we have any cause for dissatisfaction or doubt arising directly from the peace terms. The Khilafat is the only issue of this kind."

Here then we see Gandhi, having taken charge of the Punjab investigation, insisting that the issue be pursued according to his method of satyagraha. The government had conceded an inquiry into the Punjab events and until that investigation was completed and the results of it known, it would be wrong to whip up agitation on the issue. At this time, Gandhi did have strong hopes for "justice" on the Punjab question. No doubt in his own mind there were parallels with the success of the Champaran inquiry in 1917 and the partial victory in Kheda in 1918. It seems probable that when he returned to Lahore to continue his investigation, and a few weeks later to nearby Amritsar to attend the Congress Session, it was with the view that the Punjab issue was being tackled according to the rules of a satyagraha struggle. It was thus in a conciliatory spirit that he went to Amritsar, ready to make a gesture towards the Raj on an issue which he did not consider to be vitally important, the question of the new reformed constitution. When he saw that the "Extremist" leaders, Tilak and Das, were proposing to reject the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, but still to take their places in the new reformed councils, he decided to challenge them openly in the Congress session. This moment, as Gandhi comments in his Autobiography, marked his "real entrance into the Congress politics."
The job of writing the main section of the Congress report on the Punjab events also fell to Gandhi. This document, which occupies 178 pages in the Collected Works, took him weeks to prepare, involving the sifting and collating of evidence from so many witnesses. Back at the Sabarmati ashram near Ahmedabad, and later in Lahore, he worked with an intensity which staggered his friends and colleagues. Yajnik records:

"We worked then at the rate of nearly twenty to twenty-two hours a day, practically leaving him only two to four hours for food and sleep ... And the very sight of his extraordinary absorption and his sustained industry served only to feed the fires of our faith in miraculous powers ..." 27

When the report was finally finished at the end of February, Gandhi met with his colleagues on the Congress Committee, who included Das, to decide on its recommendations. Their choice on the principal issue was between calling for the prosecution of the leading British civil and military figures in the Punjab events, Lieutenant-Governor Sir Michael O'Dwyer, General Dyer, and a few others, or their dismissal.

In Young India in 1921, Gandhi wrote publicly about the discussion between the members of the committee on this point:

"The recommendation was hotly debated among them and they came to the unanimous conclusion that India could only gain by refraining from prosecution. Mr Das in a notable speech at Patna recently referred to the compact then made between the Commissioners that, whilst and if they reduced their recommendation to a minimum, they must solemnly resolve to enforce them at the risk of their lives." 28

Thus not only may we assume that Gandhi persuaded his colleagues to follow the rules of satyagraha and pitch the Congress demands at the minimum, rather than the maximum. He also appears to have secured a solemn compact between four of them that they would fight "at the risk of their lives" to ensure that this demand was met. 29 A second important recommendation of the Report was that the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, be recalled.
The Congress Report was published on March 25, 1920, and created an inevitable sense of outrage in India. Gandhi, however, did little to channel or orchestrate these feelings except to promote a fund to purchase as a permanent national memorial, the piece of enclosed land, the Jallianwala Bagh, where the Amritsar massacre had taken place. In his letters published at the end of April and beginning of May accepting the Presidency of the All-India Home Rule League and outlining his programme, Gandhi mentioned the Khilafat issue but not the Punjab. In common with other nationalist leaders, he was waiting for the publication of the Hunter Commission's Report. Meanwhile, Gandhi noted the progress which the Jallianwala Bagh memorial fund was making:

"If we wish to measure the increase in popular awakening during the last year, we can do so from the contributions being received from all quarters for the Jallianwala Bagh memorial."

Emphasising the willingness with which Gujarati villagers of all classes were giving to the fund, he added characteristically:

"From this fact another inference may also be drawn, that it is easier to carry on national work in villages than in cities; it would, therefore, be natural to make a start with village swaraj and thence to proceed to swaraj for the whole country."

The Hunter Commission report, together with responses to it from the Government of India and the Secretary of State in London, was not published until May 28. Only two weeks previously the terms of the Peace Treaty affecting Turkey, the Treaty of Sevres, had been published, also with a commentary by the Viceroy. The publication of both documents within a few days was an unfortunate coincidence for the Raj, for both caused bitter anger and dismay among all sections of nationalist opinion. At a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held in Benares on May 30 to discuss the Congress report and also the call for noncooperation on the Khilafat issue.
the assembled nationalist leaders went beyond the recommendation of their sub-committee and demanded the prosecution of O'Dwyer and Dyer. It is unlikely that Gandhi argued at the meeting for non-cooperation to be taken up by Congress on the Punjab issue, but the AICC was unwilling in any event to endorse noncooperation on the Khilafat question and decided instead to hold the Calcutta Special Congress to discuss the matter. 31

On June 9, in his first public comment on the Hunter Report, Gandhi described it as "an attempt to condone official lawlessness" and he ended with a vague call for noncooperation on the issue:

"Appeal to the Parliament by all means if necessary, but if the Parliament fails us and if we are worthy to call ourselves a nation, we must refuse to uphold the Government by withdrawing co-operation from it." 32

On June 23, having despatched his letter to the Viceroy the previous day announcing that Noncooperation would begin on the Khilafat issue on August 1, Gandhi published an appeal in Young India for the Punjabi political leaders to stir themselves and take the lead on the Punjab issue:

"I am sure that if they will only begin a determined agitation they will have the whole of India by their side." 33

In a public speech in Bombay on June 26, Gandhi reluctantly moved a resolution calling for the prosecution of O'Dwyer and Dyer, but added:

"If I could have my way, I would bring in a resolution advising noncooperation and satyagraha against this, for that is the only way to succeed in our aim." 34

Finally, in a press statement published on June 30, he linked the Khilafat and Punjab issues for the first time. Lala Lajpat Rai, the leading Hindu nationalist politician in the Punjab, called for a boycott of the reformed councils in the province. Gandhi took up the suggestion, deemed it to constitute support for the whole noncooperation programme, and suggested that council boycott be
applied across the whole of India:

"The issue is clear. Both the Khilafat terms and the Punjab affairs show that Indian opinion counts for little in the councils of the Empire. It is a humiliating position. We shall make nothing of the reforms if we quietly swallow the humiliation. In my humble opinion, therefore, the first condition of real progress is the removal of these two difficulties in our path. And unless some better course of actions is devised noncooperation must hold the field."

Had Gandhi by linking the Khilafat and Punjab issues "reversed" the stand he had taken so forcefully at the first Khilafat conference in Delhi seven months earlier? A strong case can be made that he had not, for Gandhi's handling of the Punjab issue constitutes in many ways a classic satyagraha struggle. First he called for an official inquiry, announcing civil disobedience if it was not granted; then when an official inquiry was started but its methods proved unsatisfactory, he was party to launching a parallel unofficial investigation; during both inquiries he managed to prevent a major agitation being started and succeeded in getting the unofficial report published before the official one, so as to retain the initiative; finally, when the official report failed to match the findings and the demands of the unofficial one, but was endorsed by the government, Gandhi was ready to launch noncooperation; he waited however for a call for direct action from the Punjab itself before doing so. It was logical, therefore, in terms of a "particular" satyagraha campaign on the Punjab issue, to call for noncooperation in June 1920, and not before. The fact that Gandhi's "particularist" method led him to call for noncooperation on the Punjab issue at the same time as he was calling for noncooperation on another issue was a coincidence. Admittedly, both issues by this time illustrated for Gandhi a deeper issue, "that Indian opinion counts for little in the councils of the Empire". But both issues demanded the adoption of the noncooperation programme in Gandhi's view by the
Indian National Congress. Moreover the method of noncooperation itself, in particular, boycott of elections to the new legislative councils - effectively linked the two issues,\(^{37}\) for it would have made no sense to run separate simultaneous campaigns of council boycott supported by much the same people.

What we can say is that the "coincidence" of two separate struggles demanding a campaign of noncooperation at the same time showed a problem with Gandhi's "particularist" method. In response, it could be argued that only through working through each issue separately by the painstaking "particularist" method of satyagraha, was it possible for the common people of India to see the link between the two issues, and in the process discover the will to act on the underlying deeper issue, the contempt of the Raj for the wishes of its people. There is truth in this, but Gandhi's discovery in 1920 that British imperialism was not as amenable to his "particularist" campaigns as he had thought, left him in a difficult position. Having failed to persuade the All-India Congress Committee to endorse the campaign of noncooperation at Benares in May, he was forced to go out and try to capture the leadership of the Congress at its Special Session in September and its annual session in December. This new campaign not to win Congress was a "particular" struggle to gain the verdict on a particular issue of principle, but a "general" one, building a political alliance to gain power in the Congress organisation and control it. With the development of a broad political alliance, the permanent political organisation of the Congress, which followed his success, Gandhi lost his grip on the "particular" issues of the Khilafat and the Punjab, and noncooperation was taken up on the "general" issue of swaraj. It is interesting to speculate on what would have happened had Gandhi been able to launch non-cooperation on a single issue like the Punjab. As it was, faced
with a campaign focusing on three distinct issues - the Khilafat, the Punjab and swaraj - plus the unresolved and largely superseded issue of the Rowlatt Act, plus a number of other issues which emerged during the struggle. The representatives of the Raj had every incentive to sit back, do nothing and hope that the movement would collapse or fall apart.
1. What we shall call the Punjab Satyagraha - Gandhi's control and shaping of the nationalist investigation into British repression in the Punjab in 1919 - is directly similar in its structure to the Champaran and Kheda satyagrahas.

2. Gandhi campaigned for a government inquiry into the Punjab events. When this was granted, he refused to permit the Punjab issue to be linked to the Khilafat issue as grounds for noncooperation. However, when the Punjab government declined to allow jailed Punjab leaders to attend the Hunter inquiry session freely, Gandhi insisted that Congress pursue its own independent investigation.

3. Gandhi personally took charge of the inquiry which was conducted, as in Champaran and Kheda, by going out to visit the people in the affected areas and taking depositions on the spot. The report was published before the Hunter Commission's report so as to retain the initiative.

4. Gandhi was able to bend the Congress inquiry team, which included the prominent Bengali leader, C.R. Das, to his views on how to present the Congress demands. This was that they should not seek vengeance by having the perpetrators of the Punjab atrocities prosecuted, but justice by having them dismissed.

5. When the Hunter report was broadly endorsed by the government of India and by Montagu in London, this meant that the minimum demand of the Congress Committee, which was for the dismissal of the British officials responsible for the Punjab outrages, had not been accepted. Gandhi then called for noncooperation on the Punjab issue and linked this with the Khilafat campaign.
Drafting a New Congress Constitution

If the conjunction of the Khilafat and Punjab campaigns and his need to capture the Congress organisation posed a problem for Gandhi's method of organisation, he was startlingly well prepared in at least one respect. At the Amritsar Congress in 1919, he was entrusted with the responsibility of drafting a new constitution for the Congress. His brief was:

"1. To examine the Congress constitution and consider necessary changes in it.
2. To examine and consider the financial transactions of the different departments of the Congress.
3. To make suggestions for the next year's session of the Congress."

The report was to be submitted before June 30, 1920. Gandhi makes it clear in his Autobiography that he was the principal figure on a subcommittee of five appointed to do the job:

"My other aptitude which the Congress could utilize was as a draftsman. The Congress leaders had found that I had a facility for condensed expression ... I undertook the responsibility of framing a constitution on one condition. I saw that there were two leaders, viz. the Lokamanya and the Deshbandhu (Tilak and Das), who had the greatest hold on the public. I requested that they, as the representatives of the people, should be associated with me on the Committee for framing the constitution. But since it was obvious that they would not have the time personally to participate ... I suggested that two persons enjoying their confidence should be appointed along with me ... This suggestion was accepted ..."

Yajnik in particular emphasises the importance of this step for Gandhi's political career. At the end of 1919, he writes, Gandhi had placed himself "at the head of the revolutionary mass struggle" by three distinct moves. First, he had "secured the adhesion of the most virile and militant elements" in Indian nationalism by his prosecution of the Rowlatt Satyagraha. Second, by taking up the Khilafat cause, he had "caught the real lever which would eventually secure him the following of the vast millions of comparatively backward Mohamadan masses". Third, "he made a humble approach to organisational leadership" by being appointed
CHAPTER 7: Page 285

to this committee to redraft the Congress constitution.41 There can be no question that by the end of 1919 Gandhi had begun to think seriously about how to organise through the principal organisation of Indian nationalism, the Indian National Congress.

The problem with the structure of the Congress, in Gandhi's words, was as follows:

"The question had been coming up year after year. The Congress at that time had practically no machinery functioning during the interval between session and session, or for dealing with fresh contingencies that might arise in the course of the year ... The Congress was too unwieldy a body for the discussion of public affairs. There was no limit set to the number of delegates that each province could return. Some improvement upon the existing chaotic condition was thus felt by everybody to be an imperative necessity." 42

With his absorption in the Khilafat campaign, his responsibilities for preparing the Punjab report, and numerous other commitments, it is not surprising that Gandhi found it hard to conduct the affairs of the constitution committee properly. In fact, the subcommittee never met, though Gandhi claimed that four out of the five members had some hand in its preparation. Gandhi's first draft was completed in June, revised and then circulated at the Special Session in September. His final draft was submitted to the All-India Congress Committee later in the month, published in the press, and brought before the annual Congress session at Nagpur. 43

A novel feature in the preparation of the draft constitution was that because the members of the subcommittee could not agree on several issues, Gandhi adopted the unusual procedure of submitting his own minority proposals to the AICC, indicating the points on which the majority disagreed with him. He justified his action in Young India:

"It must be stated ... that it does not pretend to be the unanimous opinion of the members. Rather than present a dissenting minute, a workable scheme has been brought
out leaving each member free to press his own views on the several matters in which they are not quite unanimous."

The principal issue on which the committee's members were divided was the question of the number of delegates permitted to attend the annual sessions. Gandhi originally favoured limiting the number to 1,000, while other members wanted no limit to be set. In his minority proposals to the AICC Gandhi appears to have increased this figure to 1,500, but at the Nagpur Congress it was expanded to 6,000, or 1 to every 50,000 of the adult population. Gandhi personally was unhappy with this figure, thinking it too large, but the other members still apparently objected to any limit. The issue concerned the nature of the annual Congress, whether it was a business session or a great national demonstration. Gandhi argued that the two aspects could be combined if the area to be occupied by the delegates was clearly demarcated and other areas made available for "visitors" and "guests". He was anxious to secure an annual business session which could not be swamped by the importation of unrestricted numbers. Writing of himself to the AICC, he said:

"Mr Gandhi ... considers that the restriction is essential in order to give the Congress a truly representative character and to make it a proper deliberative body. He thinks too that the Congress demands will become irresistible when it scientifically represents the whole people of India with an effective and proportionate voice in its deliberations and when every resolution has been considered with precision."

The majority of the committee, on the other hand, while recognizing the "unwieldy nature" of the existing arrangements, felt that their benefits outweighed the costs.

A second issue which provoked dissension was Gandhi's proposal to change the Congress creed, that is, the statement of aims of the organisation. This did not so much divide the subcommittee; but
they knew it would create a major stir among nationalist politicians. When Gandhi, in line with these proposals for Congress, had the creed of the All-India Home Rule League changed, this provoked the acrimonious resignation of Jinnah and other prominent figures. At the Congress session in Nagpur, this clause containing the proposed alteration in the creed, was separated from the rest of the draft constitution, and a whole day's debate was given to it.

The two questions at issue are familiar from many accounts. First, there was the proposal to delete any reference to the British connection; second, the suggestion that the means of achieving swaraj should be stated as "legitimate and peaceful", rather than "constitutional" as hitherto. Gandhi's argument was that Congress should seek independence for India within the British Empire if possible, but it was demeaning to make a fetish of the British connection. Moreover, since it might be claimed that a movement demanding complete independence was unconstitutional, it was necessary to change the description of the means/which swaraj would be sought. In answer to fierce newspaper criticism of the proposed changes when the draft constitution was published before the Nagpur Congress, Gandhi replied uncompromisingly in Young India:

"... the extraordinary situation that faces the country is that popular opinion is far in advance of several newspapers which have hitherto commanded influence and have undoubtedly moulded public opinion. The fact is that the formation of opinion today is by no means confined to the educated classes, but the masses have taken it upon themselves not only to formulate opinion but to enforce it. It would be a mistake to belittle or ignore this opinion, or to ascribe it to a temporary upheaval. It would be equally a mistake to suppose that this awakening amongst the masses is due either to the activity of the Ali brothers or myself. For the time being we have the ear of the masses because we voice their sentiments. The masses are by no means so foolish or unintelligent as we sometimes imagine. They often perceive things with their intuition, which we
ourselves fail to see with our intellect. But whilst the masses know what they want, they often do not know how to express their wants and, less often, how to get what they want. Herein comes the use of leadership, and disastrous results can easily follow a bad, hasty, or what is worse, selfish lead." 48

Insofar as national opinion could be brought to bear inside the Indian National Congress, Gandhi appears to have been absolutely convinced late in 1920 that the Indian nation was ready to define a role for itself, if necessary, outside the British connection. Moreover, he implied, the determination of the more conservative elements in Indian opinion to resist this change reflected their own "selfish" interest in preserving the British link, whereas the "masses" had no such interest, and to thwart or ignore them could have "disastrous results".

At Nagpur, Gandhi's formula was accepted. It was the midpoint between loyalist demands to retain the British connection and republic demands to sever it completely.

Other important changes in the constitution included the expansion of the All-India Congress Committee from 180 to 350 members; the creation of a new executive of fifteen, the Working Committee, to conduct day-to-day business of the Congress; and an increase in the number of provincial Congress committees from 12 to 21 by a redrawing of the boundaries. What Gandhi, as the principal author of these changes, had in mind was a representative organisation much like the British Parliament, with the AICC as the House of Commons and the Working Committee as the Cabinet.

Through redrawing the boundaries of the Congress provinces on a linguistic basis, Congress business could be conducted in the vernacular languages, making possible mass participation in its
Brown notes the decisive change in the organisation of Congress which these innovations were to bring:

"By enlarging the AICC ... and relegating it to a secondary place beneath a small group of men who could act as the Congress spearhead, the Congress turned itself into an active organization, instead of a shambling federation of local groups who met annually for discussion. The creation of the working committee repeated what Gandhi had done in the Gujarat Political Conference and the Khilafat movement: it bore the stamp of his leadership which placed a premium on single-minded action and a central control which verged on dictatorship."  

Gopal Krishna, in an outstanding paper, "The Development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Organisation, 1918–1923", emphasises, however, the distinction between the rigorous discipline which was demanded of office-holders and the exceptionally wide freedom of opinion and action which was permitted to Congress members. "The Indian National Congress", he writes, "represented a broad national front and not a tightly organized party." By creating a Working Committee which was bound, like the British Cabinet, by a firmly applied doctrine of "collective responsibility", Gandhi attempted to meet the need for a compact and disciplined executive to direct a loosely-knit mass movement which necessarily had to remain a broad coalition of divergent elements."  

In June 1921, just before the first AICC elected under the new constitution met to appoint the first Working Committee, Gandhi described how the executive body should operate:

"... its members must be those who command the greatest respect of the All-India Congress Committee and the nation. It dare not take any hasty decisions, and it must be a homogenous body. It cannot have two policies or two or three parties within itself. Its decisions have largely to be unanimous. When a member cannot pull on with the rest, he can resign, but he may not obstruct or affect the deliberations of the Committee by an open discussion of its deliberations in the Press."
CHAPTER 7: Page 290

Gandhi, then, in the redrafting of the constitution, was out to build "parliamentary swaraj". Challenged by critics, including the Governor of Bengal, who were reading his early testament Hind Swaraj and assumed that he was trying through noncooperation to "foist" his personal crusade against "modern civilisation" on the nation, Gandhi made his famous rejoinder:

"But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am today aiming at the swaraj described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it. It may seem an impertinence to say so. But such is my conviction. I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of parliamentary swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India". 53

Gandhi believed that the constitution which he had devised for the Indian National Congress was itself one of the immediate instruments by which this swaraj could be achieved. As he wrote in Young India in March 1921:

"The last Congress has given a constitution whose working is in itself calculated to lead to swaraj. It is intended to secure in every part of India representative committees working in conjunction with, and under willing and voluntary submission to, a central organisation - the All-India Congress Committee ... If ... it is honestly worked, and commands confidence and respect, it can oust the present Government without the slightest difficulty." 54

His vision of how this could be done he explained in another article in the same terms which had so excited Yajnik in the summer of 1919:

"It is necessary for us to understand the meaning of the Congress constitution. This constitution has been so drawn up that we may be able to win swaraj at an early date. If, in accordance with that constitution, we can form a Congress Committee in every town, and succeed in having the name of every man and woman of twenty one years (and over) on our register, it will mean Congress authority respected in everything simultaneously with the Government's. The latter is maintained by force. When, in one and the same place, another authority comes to be voluntarily respected by the people, the authority of the Government, if it is not accepted by the people, will not last even a moment. That is to say, if we can see the Congress constitution functioning on a country-wide scale, we may take it that swaraj will have been established that very day." 55
But while Gandhi saw the implementation of the new Congress constitution as, in itself, "a peaceful and bloodless revolution" which with determined organisation could be accomplished in one year, it was not the social and spiritual revolution which was the deeper reason for his intervention in the political world. "In so far as I can see", he wrote in December 1920, "swaraj will be a parliament chosen by the people with the fullest power over the finance, the police, the military, the navy, the courts and the educational institutions." The only part of the programme of Hind Swaraj "which is now being carried out in its entirety is that of nonviolence." Swaraj, as pursued by the Congress, "means the swaraj that the people of India want".

Did Gandhi really have this vision in his mind at the Amritsar Congress in 1919 when he accepted his "humble" commission to draft a new constitution for the organisation? The likelihood is that this extraordinary organiser did. Certainly, in the late summer of 1920 when the final draft was being prepared, we can assume that Gandhi insisted on presenting his minority proposals to the AICC, because he knew that they represented what he called then "a workable scheme".

Brown points to a second aspect of the constitution drafted by Gandhi in 1920 and implemented in subsequent years. The reorganisation of the Congress provinces on a linguistic basis and the allocation of delegates to these new provinces shifted the balance of power within the organisation. Whereas the "backward" areas previously had been swamped in Congress by the Presidencies, Bombay, Bengal and Madras, from which the majority of the western-educated leaders came, the new constitution opened Congress up to new sources of power. "For the first time," says Brown, "power in Congress through voting rights came within the reach of men whose outlook and interests differed from those of the men who composed and controlled Congress in its first forty years." She adds
that many of these "new Congressmen" who were brought into the organisation in the latter half of 1922 came precisely from those groups which Gandhi's activities - and those of the Home Rule Leagues - had helped to mobilise for the first time. As a result of this change, Congress was able to represent and direct the upsurge of political activity which took place especially in the rural areas of India.

The composition of the AICC, for example, changed by 1922 to an organisation dominated by members from rural districts where previously most members had come from the cities and provincial towns.

Gandhi's drafting of the Congress constitution then, his "real entrance into the Congress politics", was in most respects an achievement of conventional politics, not a task that reflected his deeper social and spiritual aims. He fashioned for the Congress an organisational structure which enabled it to adapt to the rising tide of Indian nationalism at the point when mass political organisation became possible and necessary. In this, he did the job of the other nationalist politicians for them. For Gandhi, the dilemma he faced by his failure in 1919 to build a true satyagraha movement to further his aims in India, he solved by adopting a "stages theory" of political development. The first step was the achievement of parliamentary swaraj. Of first priority was the construction of a movement which would challenge the temerity of the British in refusing justice on the Khilafat and Punjab issues. His deeper social and spiritual goals were to remain "personal" and subsidiary.

The Das-Gandhi Pact: Whose Victory Was It?

With hindsight, Gandhi's achievement in constructing the new Congress constitution reflected not so much his aptitude as a draftsman as his profound awareness of how the new political forces emerging in India could be harnessed. But, in the late summer of 1920, his ability to
have the constitution implemented in full depended largely on whether Congress at its Special Session and Annual Session took up noncooperation. His triumph at Calcutta and Nagpur enabled his "workable scheme" to be attempted.

When the Gujarat Political Conference, acting as a Provincial Congress Committee, voted in favour of noncooperation in August 1920 and then proceeded to implement the programme without waiting for the verdict of the Special Session, Gandhi came under a lot of public and private pressure to "play the game" and wait for the national body's decision. He replied with characteristic audacity:

"In my humble opinion it is no Congressman's duty to consult the Congress before taking action in a matter in which he has no doubts. To do otherwise may mean stagnation.

"The Congress is after all the mouthpiece of the nation. And when one has a policy or a programme which one would like to see adopted, but on which one wants to cultivate public opinion, one naturally asks the Congress to discuss it and form an opinion. But when one has an unshakable faith in a particular policy or action, it would be folly to wait for the Congress pronouncement. On the contrary one must act and demonstrate its efficacy so as to command acceptance by the nation.

"My loyalty to the Congress requires me to carry out its policy when it is not contrary to my conscience. If I am in a minority I may not pursue my policy in the name of Congress. The decision of the Congress on any given question therefore does not mean that it prevents a Congressman from any action to the contrary, but if he acts, he does so at his own risk and with the knowledge that the Congress is not with him." 61

According to Krishna, the fact that Gandhi continued to maintain this doctrine after he had captured Congress, meant that the degree of latitude permitted to dissenters in the new mass organisation was "exceptionally wide". 62

With noncooperation having started and the Gujarat political workers and the Khilafat movement as the vanguard, Gandhi made his bid to win Congress support at the Special Session at Calcutta. 63 All the leading Nationalist figures opposed Gandhi — partly because most of them had spent months
in 1920 building up electoral organisations with which to contest the new elections to the provincial councils and they were unwilling to support council boycott. Debate centred round whether noncooperation could be carried on within the new councils by a determined policy of obstruction, rather than wholesale boycott of the elections. But Gandhi won a narrow verdict in the subjects committee – the preliminary meeting of elected representatives from provincial delegations which met to decide what resolutions should be brought before the Congress – and a substantial victory in the open session.

Commentators agree that Gandhi's opponents had underestimated him.

The principal reason why he won the verdict in the subjects committee is that his efforts at mobilising support prior to the Special Congress through the networks of the Khilafat movement, the All-India Home Rule League and the Provincial Congress Committees had succeeded. Not only had supporters from the newly-politicised areas like Gujarat, Bihar, Punjab and the United Provinces been drawn to the Congress, but also significant numbers of Muslims were attending for the first time. In addition, non-cooperation was beginning to undermine the Presidency politicians on their home ground as new social groups responded to Gandhi's militant programme. Congress opponents of Gandhi had been thrown into disarray by the death in August 1920 of the outstanding "Extremist" leader from Bombay Presidency, Tilak; and Annie Besant from Madras in the south had lost her influence. Moreover, recognising on the one hand that Gandhi had captured a new mood in the people, a key figure like Motilal Nehru appears also to have calculated that the chances of his local Congress organisation winning a majority in the elections in the United Provinces were slim. In the course of the Special Congress, Nehru and others defected to Gandhi's side, and this was the specific turning-point which gave Gandhi victory.
The concessions which Gandhi had to make to achieve this extraordinary triumph were few. At Nehru's suggestion, proposals for schools and courts boycott were watered down, so that Congressmen were committed only to a "gradual" adoption of them. This meant effectively that Gandhi's opponents could delay taking a personal decision on these for three months until the annual Congress session met to debate them at Nagpur. To Gandhi's publicly-stated embarrassment a second compromise was that the proposal for economic boycott was reintroduced into the programme, despite his often-stated opposition to it. Between Gandhi's reluctant acceptance of a boycott of foreign cloth and his opponents' determination to press for a boycott of British goods, a compromise was reached in favour of a boycott of foreign goods. Both sides were also able to agree to Gandhi's suggestion to add the propagation of swadeshi to the programme. 64

A final significant change was that "swaraj" was added as an aim of noncooperation. The preamble to the Noncooperation Resolution carried at Calcutta now read:

"This Congress is of the opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs (Khilafat and Punjab) and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of swarajya." 65

During the debate before the Subjects Committee, Gandhi still stuck to his preference for specific grievances. His argument was reported as follows:

"He accepted the amendment regarding full self-government in his proposal not on the ground that the khilafat question was subservient to the question of swaraj. To him the khilafat and the Punjab were greater than swaraj...

"... he was clear that he wanted to go to every elector and ask him to boycott elections for the insult offered to the country by the Punjab and khilafat questions. He would not use his appeal to them on the question of swaraj. To him swaraj was only a means to an end and he for his part was prepared to exchange swaraj for any other system of Government if, in his opinion, it was for the good of the country." 66

But in his speech moving the resolution before the open session of the
Special Congress on the following day, Gandhi had begun to expand the concept of swaraj so that it was more in line with his own thinking, now being advanced through the Home Rule League, on the necessity of developing national self-reliance and self-confidence. Placing greater emphasis therefore on the demand for swaraj, he said:

"If there is a sufficient response to my scheme (that is, the full noncooperation programme of council, schools and law-court boycott), I make bold to reiterate my statement that you can gain swarajya in the course of a year."

Gandhi’s use of the word "you" is surely significant - "you can gain swarajya". He went on:

"Not the passing of the resolution will bring swarajya, but the enforcement of the resolution from day-to-day in a progressive manner, due regard being had to the conditions in the country." 67

Nevertheless, when pressed by moderate critics of his programme to justify the addition of the demand for swaraj to the noncooperation campaign, he went back to his earlier position, that swaraj was a subsidiary demand, made necessary by the other two. It was on this basis that he rejected the strongly-advanced argument that, before noncooperation was launched on the issue of swaraj, British public opinion and the British government itself had to be prepared by propaganda, warnings and attempts at negotiation. 68 Despite these changes, in its essentials the noncooperation resolution described the same programme which Gandhi had outlined at the beginning of July.

Following this extraordinary achievement at the Calcutta Special Congress, however, Gandhi was by no means in control of Congress supporters across the subcontinent. The Presidency politicians had to make up their minds quickly on whether to accept the Congress decision on council boycott, and reluctantly most of them did. But they were unwilling to accept even the "gradual" boycott of schools and courts as a practical political programme, and this remained largely a project of Gandhi's immediate Gujarat and
Khilafat colleagues prior to the projected "showdown" at Nagpur. Council boycott ceased to be a seriously divisive issue once the elections to the reformed councils were completed in November 1920. The nationalists then felt free to address the remainder of Gandhi's noncooperation programme. The main opposition to Gandhi's programme in the weeks prior to the Nagpur Congress in December was in the Bengal Presidency, where C.F.Das and B.C.Pal tried to fashion an alternative approach to noncooperation and to rouse other nationalist leaders defeated at Calcutta in their support. Their two main objectives were, first, that the schools and courts boycott was being launched without adequate preparation and, second, picking up on the argument maintained consistently by Harrat Mohani since November 1919, that in Gandhi's programme economic boycott was grossly understressed. In response to the schools and courts boycott, therefore, they did not oppose it, but outlined more detailed proposals for establishing national schools, arbitration courts and means of support for non-cooperating students, teachers and lawyers. In addition, they wanted the aims of noncooperation revised, so that "swaraj", tacked on at Calcutta as an afterthought by Gandhi to his principal concern with the Khilafat and Punjab issues, would become the principal demand. Also, they called for a vigorous new Congress organisation to be developed as part of noncooperation, geared especially to social groups brought newly onto the provincial electoral rolls, and a major fund-raising drive to support this effort.

Gandhi's dominance at Nagpur is demonstrated by the Congress agenda itself. Following the elections to the Subjects Committee on the first day, and the President's opening speech, the second and third days were devoted in the subjects committee and then in open session to discussion of the new Congress creed proposed by the constitution committee.
Similarly, the fourth and fifth days were used to discuss the programme of noncooperation; and the last day was occupied with the main body of the constitution committee's proposals for totally reorganising the Congress structure. In other words, all the significant Congress business was generated by him. After fierce debate in the subjects committee, Gandhi's compromise formula for a change in the creed was seconded in open Congress by the Bengali leader, Pal, and accepted without alteration. A great deal of horse-trading in the subjects committee on the noncooperation resolution brought a victory for Gandhi on this momentous issue too. C.R.Das himself rose in the open session to propose support for the noncooperation programme and, with Gandhi seconding, the resolution was carried without difficulty. On the last day, again, the resolution to change the constitution went through "calmly" with, according to Gandhi, the single alteration (which he deplored) of increasing the number of delegates to the annual session from 1,500 to 6,000.

None of the changes in the noncooperation resolution moved by Das constituted a fundamental concession by Gandhi, except perhaps the revised aim of the movement as stated in the preamble. This now read:

"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 the redress of their many and grievous wrongs, more especially with reference to the Khilafat and the Punjab; ... " 69

It meant that the "general" aim of swaraj, as we have argued previously, now took decisive precedence over the two "particular" grievances, Khilafat and the Punjab, which were merely illustrative of the need to achieve swaraj. Gandhi had the support of the Muslim Khilafat leaders in accepting this change; but it marked a substantial shift in his
position from Calcutta, and posed problems, as we have suggested, for his strategy as an organiser. At Nagpur, however, Gandhi appears not to have been in the least embarrassed by this change. It seems absolutely clear that Gandhi considered that the revision of the Congress creed achieved in the first three days of the Nagpur session freed him to link noncooperation decisively and solidly to the demand for swaraj. In other words, taking over the Congress organisation in order to launch such a momentous and critical struggle for the future of India as noncooperation made it inevitable and necessary that he should gear the campaign to the achievement of the Congress’s principal goal, which was swaraj. Moreover, the fact that the creed had been revised meant that it was now possible to do this; whereas at Calcutta, and subsequently, noncooperation, and in particular its later stages, had been deemed by several leading Congressmen to be contrary to the organisation’s creed.

There were other changes, too. The section in the revised noncooperation resolution congratulating Congress supporters on their boycott of the polls in November and calling for the resignation of those who had defied the boycott and been elected to the councils, carefully omitted to mention whether the next round of elections in 1923 should be boycotted. Also Gandhi’s statement in the resolution that swaraj should be “established within one year” was heavily underlined. This was taken to mean by many that the Triple Boycott was to be enforced for only one year. In particular, it gave Das a let-out for contesting the 1923 elections, which in the event he took. Again, Das’s proposal to include the development of the Congress organisation as part of the noncooperation programme was a particularly important innovation in line with Gandhi’s own proposals to reform the Congress through the revised constitution. Moreover, Das’s proposal to establish a band of national workers, the Indian National Service, and to finance them and other
activities by a special fund, the Tilak Swaraj Fund, had been fore-
shadowed by Gandhi's own proposals to the AICC in September, which
had been accepted in October.\textsuperscript{73} So there was no reason for disagree-
ment here.

Another change in the Nagpur resolution on Noncooperation was the
proposal by Das to strengthen alternative arrangements for people
taking part in the schools and courts boycott. Yet this was balanced
by a clear commitment by the nationalist politicians to "make
greater efforts" to carry out these boycotts. The word "gradual"
had been withdrawn. This was therefore a major victory for Gandhi
and was made all the greater by endorsement in the Nagpur resolution
of all four stages of the noncooperation programme, including tax
refusal, whereas at Calcutta only the first stage had been explicitly
supported.\textsuperscript{74} The inclusion of economic boycott in the programme was
a decisive defeat for Gandhi which did embarrass him; but that defeat
occurred at Calcutta and not at Nagpur. At Nagpur he appears to have
been wholly reconciled to promoting a boycott of foreign goods, by
which he meant foreign cloth.\textsuperscript{75} In principle, what he could not
accept was a boycott of British goods — and he prevailed on that.

This, then, was the Das-Gandhi Pact.\textsuperscript{76} The Bengali politicians,
in acquiescing before Gandhi, may have seen that they could turn
noncooperation, and the fervour it was arousing in Bengal and else-
where, in their own interests by going out to build through it a
mass agitational and, ultimately, electoral machine. They also
appear genuinely to have accepted their defeat and to have sought
from their own perspective which was not that of satyagraha, to make
the noncooperation programme workable for them by driving as hard a
bargain as they could.\textsuperscript{77} Gandhi seems to have understood what their
objectives were by his statements later that he was working for
"parliamentary swaraj" and by his argument that the enrolment of
millions of members in the Congress would constitute a parallel government which could establish swaraj itself. He may have thought, though, that the Congress itself would constitute the swaraj parliament; rather than becoming, as it did, an organisation through which the nationalist politicians could contest elections to the councils of the Raj. Gandhi also is known to have agreed as part of the bargaining in Nagpur that the Bengali leaders should have autonomy in the direction of noncooperation in the Presidency. 78

The price that the Bengali and other nationalist leaders had to pay for their agreement with Gandhi was a large one, however. They had to accept Gandhi himself, with his unconventional views on the conduct of politics and his insistence on discipline at the top, as the dominant leader in national politics and the "general" in whose hands the conduct of the national struggle of noncooperation would largely rest. Against the better judgment of most of them they were committed to calling the students and teachers out of government schools, colleges and universities and to finding somehow the resources and the staff to found new national educational institutions. Many of the leading Congressmen, like Nehru and Das, were extremely wealthy lawyers who, having accepted Gandhi's programme of noncooperation, were obliged to resign their practices. These acts of self-sacrifice by veteran nationalist figures caused a great impression and were seen as a particular triumph for Gandhi. 79 Finally, and most important of all, with Gandhi at the helm, they were obliged to join him in the boldest satyagraha experiment he had yet attempted, a deadly-serious adventure in taking politics to the masses and challenging the power of the Raj. No one could know what the results of this unprecedented gamble would be. While it was not the satyagraha of Hind Swaraj, the nationalists were committed by the noncooperation resolution at Nagpur to the development of a wholly nonviolent movement "in word and deed". Gandhi, having taken the
Khilafat movement into non-cooperation had now forged a second major
tactical alliance with which he could attempt to conduct his first
sustained experiment in nonviolent civilian resistance on an all-
India scale.

It is only in the long run, then, that the Das-Gandhi Pact can be seen
as a victory for Das and a defeat for Gandhi. In the long run, by
aligning themselves with Gandhi, the nationalist politicians were able
to avoid splitting the Congress organisation and then to participate
in its transformation into a major national instrument for governing
the country. In the long run, Gandhi lost control to more convent-
ional political leaders who were able to utilise the Congress for
purposes which were more limited than he had in mind. 80 But in
the short run, and indeed throughout his career, Gandhi was to have
an extraordinary influence over the politicians who joined him in
non-cooperation, and in later projects, and whose self-sacrifice as
they followed him in simplifying their lives, and into civil resist-
ance to the Raj, was often exemplary and heroic. 81
CHAPTER 7: Page 303

SUMMARY

1. In addition to his leadership of the Khilafat movement, his command of the All-India Home Rule League, his popular support in Gujarat, his direction of the Congress investigation into the Punjab and his advocacy of a political method, noncooperation, to challenge the high-handedness of the Raj - one other factor which helped Gandhi to gain control of Congress and then transform the organisation should be noted. This is his membership of a subcommittee appointed by the Amritsar Congress in 1919 to draft a new constitution for the Congress.

2. With superior energy and judgment, Gandhi was the major nationalist leader who assumed the burden of this work. He fashioned an organisational structure for Congress which he hoped would be capable of capturing and representing mass support and which could become an instrument for the achievement of swaraj.

3. The structure which Gandhi created - as with all organisations in which he was involved - assumed an active, tightly-disciplined leadership at the top and a much looser organisation below. Other Congress leaders at a later date were able to fashion out of it an electoral machine for contesting elections to the legislative councils of the Raj; Gandhi appears to have assumed that the Congress organisation would itself become the governmental structure of the country - the instrument to achieve swaraj and then to implement it.

4. At the Calcutta Special Congress, Gandhi achieved a partial victory with support for the boycott of the legislative councils - but reservations on most other aspects of his Noncooperation Programme.

5. At Nagpur, Gandhi achieved a more substantial victory. Major opponents like Das publicly endorsed the Noncooperation Programme under Gandhi's leadership. His proposals for a complete reorganisation of the Congress structure and for a change in the Congress creed - which would permit nonviolent rebellion against the British crown - were accepted.
REFERENCES


10. ibid, p 141, 145.


19. ibid, p 355.


21. Owen in Low, op cit

22. See Brown, op cit, Chapter 7, "The Punjab: Counterpoise to the Khilafat", pp 230-249.

REFERENCES

26. ibid, p 358.
27. Yajnik, Indulal, Gandhi as I Know Him, C.G. 1933, p 98.
29. Yajnik, op cit, p 98.
31. "Speech on Hunter Committee Report", Navajivan, July 4, 1920, in ibid, pp 513-514; "Political Freemasonry", Young India, June 9, 1920, in ibid, p 482. See also Brown op cit pp 238, 238n, 244 and 219, and Gordon in Gallacher, Johnson and Seal, pp 137, 139.
34. "Speech on Hunter Committee Report", op cit, Vol 17, p 513
37. Gordon in Gallacher, Johnson and Seal, on cit, p 141.
39. ibid (In his Autobiography he states "three.").
41. Yajnik, op cit, p 102.
50. Brown, op cit p 293.
51. Krishna, op cit pp 413-430, see espec. p 415, pp 428-430.
52. quoted in ibid, p 415.
53. "Hind Swaraj" or the 'Indian Home Rule', Young India, January 26, 1921, in op cit, Vol 19, pp 277-278; "On the Wrong Track" in "Notes" ibid, December 8, 1920, in ibid., pp 79-81.
57. "On the Wrong Track", op cit in ibid., pp 79-81; "Hind Swaraj" or the 'Indian Home Rule', op cit in ibid., pp 277-278.
63. The following discussion of the Special Congress at Calcutta and the annual Congress at Nagpur is based largely on Brown, op cit., Chapter 8, pp 250-304, and Gordon in Gallacher, Johnson and Seal, op cit., pp 125-153. In particular it is addressed to Gordon's argument that at Nagpur Gandhi "capitulated" to Das. I have also made use of Brownfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society, Chapter IV, "The Interregnum", espec. pp 145-168.
64. See, for example "Speech on Noncooperation Resolution, Calcutta Congress", September 8, 1920, op cit., Vol 18, pp 243-249; "Speech Replying on Noncooperation Resolution," September 8, 1920, ibid., p 250; and "The Congress", Young India, September 15, 1920 in ibid p 262.
71. See, for example, V.J. Patel's criticisms on this score, "V.J. Patel's Note on Draft Instructions", September 22, 1920, op cit., Vol 18, p 489.
73. "Report on Draft Instructions for Congress Organisations", September 22, 1920, op cit, Vol 18, p 284; see also op cit, Vol 19, fn.1; "On October 2, 1920, the All-India Congress Committee had resolved to raise the Tilak Memorial Fund but the resolution was not enforced till December 1920, when the annual session of the Congress adopted it."

74. See V.J. Patel's criticisms, op cit, Vol 18, p 489.

75. See "The Secret of Swaraj", Young India, January 19 1921 in op cit Vol 19, pp 239-242; also, "Draft Resolution on Noncooperation", ibid p 184; "Speech at Chhindwara", January 6, 1921, ibid, p 204 and "Nagpur Congress", ibid, p 208.

76. Most of the evidence presented above refutes Gordon's interpretation of the agreement, see Gordon in Gallacher, Johnson and Seal, pp 150-151.

77. See Brown, op cit, pp 296, 299-300; Broomfield, op cit, p 169.

78. Brown, op cit, p 297 fn.


80. This I take to be the underlying thrust of Gordon's argument, which I think is valid.

The immediate results of Gandhi's capture and reorganisation of Congress and the impact of his taking the organisation into noncooperation were phenomenal. By 1922, the organisation had expanded to cover most of British India; 213 out of the 220 administrative districts in British India had District Congress Committees. A drive early in 1921 to recruit several million members was only partially successful, but at the end of the year paid membership of Congress was almost two million. Fund-raising campaigns produced the most remarkable results. In three months in 1921, ten million rupees were collected for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, compared with an annual income for the AICC in previous years of less than 50,000 rupees. In the process, Congress was transformed into a modern mass organisation. Villages with five or more Congress members formed a Committee to carry out the national programme. Above the village, in a conventional hierarchical structure, were often two other levels of representative units—the firka, or circle, and the taluka, or tehsil. Above these were the District Committees which sent representatives to the Provincial Congress Committees. This mass political organisation was progressively brought into being as the Congress carried out noncooperation.

One of the notable features of noncooperation in practice is that Gandhi, having taken months in 1920 to construct the four-stage plan of action and to win acceptance for it, more or less threw away the blueprint during 1921 and proceeded to improvise. From his position of authority in Congress, there was no one in the early months to challenge him. "Progressive nonviolent noncooperation" did take place in principle as Gandhi had intended, that is, a movement developing progressively in stages to a climax of activity which was reached late in 1921. But the first stage, the period of mobilisation and preparation which was to involve minimal risk of confrontation with the Raj, was extended ingeniously by Gandhi.
for many months, taking in several new campaigns. The second stage, which had envisaged the withdrawal of civilians from government employment, was launched simultaneously with the third stage, the campaign for Indians to resign from the military and the police. But these two stages were not prosecuted with the determination one might have expected from Gandhi—probably because the initiative to begin them did not come from him. Finally, the fourth stage, the moment for the "masses" to undertake refusal of taxes, was substantially altered to become a two-tier plan for civil disobedience. This included tax refusal, but a lot more besides.

THE FIRST STAGE: MOBILISATION AND CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME, AUGUST 1920—OCTOBER 1921.

It is probably more accurate, therefore, to present noncooperation as it happened in three stages. First, there was a long-drawn out phase of preparation—propagandising throughout the country, mobilising different social groups and regions, building an effective organisation, disciplining Congress workers and supporters and educating them in nonviolence, testing to see if the movement was ready to move on to the next stage. Implicit in this process was the notion that if the movement was unable to develop within itself the requisite discipline to tackle the next stage successfully, then Gandhi as the "general" in command had the authority and the duty to withdraw, or to try new tactics. In practice, though, he did not possess this freedom of action to any great degree. Given the nature of the political coalition he was directing, his colleagues in the leadership were not committed as he was to nonviolence as a principle and were liable to chafe under restrictions. While the pressures of a mass movement of newly-mobilised civilians drawn from all parts of the subcontinent and moving in different directions according to local conditions, did not give Gandhi the easiest of tasks! Gandhi's response, therefore, was to prolong the first stage of preparation for as long as he could, inventing new campaigns to sustain the level of
activism and to develop as far as possible what he called the "atmosphere" necessary before he would move on.


The first campaign was the Triple Boycott. Starting in August 1920 with pressure on prominent Indians to surrender titles and medals, its initial drive was towards winning the verdict at the Special Congress at Calcutta. At Calcutta, Congress agreed to support Council boycott and with few exceptions Congress workers withdrew from the elections and organized a voters' boycott. Prior to Nagpur, however, it was left to Gandhi and his immediate supporters, basically the Khilafatists and the Gujaratis, to prosecute the schools boycott and the law-courts boycott. Their approaches to parents, to students and to governing bodies met with some success, especially in Gujarat, but when they tried to close down the main Muslim, Hindu and Sikh universities at Aligarh, Benares and Khalsa, they were rebuffed. Undaunted, they proceeded to establish alternative "national" institutions themselves, some of which still survive. Before Nagpur one of the leading Congress politicians, Motilal Nehru, resigned his wealthy legal practice. By the time of the annual Congress in December, most of the leading politicians had begun to adopt the mode of dress favoured by Gandhi, that is, the wearing of swadeshi (or khadi) cloth.

At Nagpur, Das and most of the leading nationalist politicians were "converted" to noncooperation, and when the Bengali leader returned to Calcutta he resigned his legal practice - as did several other prominent Congressmen - and took up the schools boycott. A major student strike was the result and the establishment of a number of mainly short-lived national schools. Gandhi, who had all along argued that schools boycott should be promoted in advance of establishing alternative institutions, came back from Nagpur to Gujarat with a new campaign. While a country was at war, he argued, its young people left their schools without thought for their studies and returned, having made their sacrifice, when the war
was over. In the national schools, instead of developing a new academic training, they should prepare for the national struggle by taking up spinning, and if they felt confident enough they should then go out to the villages to promote the swadeshi campaign. At the end of March, Gandhi said he thought that most of the educated "classes" who were likely to respond to the Triple Boycott had done so; and by then he had already started a second campaign to take the "public workers" he had recruited to the "masses".

b) The Bezwada Programme, April 1, 1921

The second campaign in the first stage of noncooperation, known as the "Bezwada Programme", was launched at a meeting of the AICC in Bezwada, Madras, from March 31 to April 1, 1921. Under the new Congress Constitution, the expanded All-India Congress Committee - the "Parliament" of the new movement - was to be elected by June 30, 1921; at its first meeting it was to appoint the new Working Committee. Other targets had been set, for example, February to elect new District Congress Committees and March to form new Provincial Committees, but Gandhi decided that June 30 should be linked to three additional organisational drives. Under the Bezwada Programme, "progressive nonviolent noncooperation" was taken from the "classes" to the "masses" with the selection of three new targets for Congress workers: the collection of ten million rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund; the enrolment of ten million members; and the introduction of two million spinning wheels "in working order" into villages and homes - all by June 30. Gandhi was reported as saying at the meeting:

"The awakening of the masses was phenomenal and while the masses were fully alive to the urgent need of realization of swaraj the leaders were lagging behind. It was therefore necessary to give form and shape to the aspirations of the masses. Their aspirations for swaraj were based upon the very definite perception that without swaraj their condition could not improve and the direct means of improving their condition was to enable them to clothe and feed themselves. It was for this purpose that he felt the charkha (spinning-wheel) movement was full of the utmost potentialities in the winning of swaraj."
The background to the Bezwada Programme was the revised Congress Constitution and the new creed adopted at Nagpur. Gandhi was trying to adapt noncooperation so as to prepare the Congress movement for nonviolent struggle and he was also attempting to shape his methods to a "general" issue like Swaraj. His principal slogan "Swaraj in One Year" had become the rallying cry for the whole movement and excited enormous expectations. Gandhi had introduced the slogan specifically to distinguish noncooperation from previous campaigns by the politicians - especially, one would imagine, the Home Rule Leagues - for swaraj. From his perspective, this was not an empty slogan to be mouthed from public platforms but not acted on. It was a commitment to build an organisation within a certain time period which would change the lives of Indians and compel the achievement of swaraj. Swaraj, Gandhi argued repeatedly, could be realised through the fulfilment of almost any "particular" aspect of the noncooperation programme. In the concrete achievement of new levels of organisation and discipline - through getting spinning-wheels into every home, for example, or developing the Congress organisation in every village - lay the essence of swaraj. (We go back to December 1919 and Gandhi's argument that swadeshi was more important than the reforms, because the swadeshi programme, if properly carried out, would demonstrate "powers of organisation and industry" which would then enable the nation to undertake everything else necessary "for its organic growth"). If this could be done, then it would compel respect and recognition from the Raj of a new Indian capacity and dignity, and it might not even be necessary to engage in the risk and sacrifice of civil disobedience. And if the targets were not achieved, no harm would have been done and the effort would have prepared and disciplined the people for further struggle.

The Bezwada programme was a partial success. Huge sums were raised for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, particularly in Bombay City and Gujarat, a feature being the involvement of educated women for the first time, donating
jewellery, and of some sections of the merchant classes. But there were also the contributions from vast numbers of the poorer class and caste groups, particularly in rural areas. Such collections established the role of "honest" Congress public workers - they had to be trusted - bringing the Congress programme down to the villages and creating reliable networks. The vast Tilak Swaraj Fund, says Krishna, "made it possible to expand Congress activity on a scale hitherto inconceivable". Each of the new Congress provinces had its particular target of money to be raised - and a similar allocation was made for the membership drive and distribution of spinning wheels. The money was spent as it was raised, Gandhi objecting to the establishment of a permanent fund. Provincial Congresses were thus enabled to finance the spinning-wheel campaign, to promote swadeshi cloth and national education, to tackle problems of untouchability, depressed classes, famine and flood relief, and to support picketing, the volunteer organisations and general propaganda. The second two targets were not reached, but a major expansion of Congress membership was achieved and the spinning wheel programme led some of the "public workers" or "national workers" to take on the role of "whole-timers", another phrase of Gandhi's designed to distinguish the demands he was making on the nation's educated from their previous part-time political commitment. Some of them established themselves in ashrams from where they could go out to work in the villages.12

The Congress goal of "Swaraj in One Year", together with the new target of June 30 to complete the Bezwada Programme, excited tremendous enthusiasm. At first Gandhi's prophecy was expected to be fulfilled by August 1, 1921; later, it was shifted to December 31, twelve months after Nagpur. Expectations of "swaraj" were expressed in different parts of India according to local conditions. A temperance movement began in the Central Provinces and spread to several other provinces. Boycotting
liquor stores badly hit government excise revenue from sales - and won Gandhi's approval because of its character as a campaign of moral improvement! Sikhs in the Punjab began a movement for the reform of their shrines; in Champaran, in Bihar, peasants campaigned to establish their rights to graze cattle on waste lands; in the United Provinces, a peasant movement began a campaign of tax and rent refusal against government and landlords; and in Assam, workers on the British-owned tea plantations went on strike, encouraging a "sympathy" strike from Bengali ship and rail workers. Gandhi was reluctant to take up several of these campaigns, largely because of his fear of violence. He emphasised - as in the Rowlatt satyagraha and throughout 1920 - that noncooperators should obey the law and all police instructions until civil disobedience was authorised. Incidents of rioting and even killings, including at Malegaon in Bombay Presidency the murder of police officers who had arrested some noncooperators, marked the difficulty of holding noncooperation across the whole continent to the nonviolent discipline and of keeping the different local and regional centres of the movement in phase with each other. In May, rising tension moved the new Viceroy, Lord Reading, to hold several private talks with Gandhi but these led to nothing directly, except an apology by the Ali brothers for some of the more violent speeches they had been making.

By June 30, the target date for the completion of the Bhashwa Programme, Congress workers generally were expecting Gandhi to move on to the next stage of noncooperation, to direct the mobilised Congress movement into open nonviolent confrontation with the Raj. In the second week of July, the Central Khilafat Committee meeting in Karachi passed a resolution instructing Muslims to move directly to the third stage of the original noncooperation programme, to resign from membership of the Indian Army. Gandhi, however, did not take up this call. In
July, at the first meeting of the AICC to be called under the new constitution, a symbolic moment when the next phase in the struggle was to be announced, he apparently asked the Ali brothers not to press the Khilafatists' call for resignations from the Army. No resolution to this effect was presented, and Gandhi instead launched a third campaign as part of the first stage of noncooperation.

c) Complete Boycott of Foreign Cloth, July 30, 1921

The third campaign which Gandhi announced at the expanded AICC gathering in Bombay on July 28 to 30 was for the complete boycott of foreign cloth. The next day in Bombay, he personally set alight a massive bonfire of foreign clothing including many luxurious items, and this action was later imitated in hundreds of locations across India. At this AICC meeting, which brought together for the first time balanced representation of delegates from the newly-formed 21 Congress linguistic provinces, he proposed a new target date of September 30 for the achievement of the complete boycott of foreign cloth, though this was later extended to October 31. Another campaign announced at the Bombay meeting was for a hartal across India when the Prince of Wales arrived from England in November on an official visit, with a boycott of his tour across all other parts of the country.

Gandhi stated clearly what he was doing in an article published at the time:

"Civil disobedience is on the lips of every one of the members of the All-India Congress Committee. Not ever having really tried it, everyone appeared to be enamoured of it, from a mistaken belief (that) it was a sovereign remedy for our present-day ills. I feel sure that it can be made such if we can produce the necessary atmosphere for it ...Mass civil disobedience ... can only be tried in a calm atmosphere.

"We have too long been mentally disobedient to the laws of the state and have too often surreptitiously evaded them, to be fit all of a sudden for civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil has to be open and nonviolent.

"Complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion - a refusal to obey every single state-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be
put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardships. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficacy of innocent suffering ... A full grasp of the conditions of successful civil resistance is necessary at least on the part of the representatives of the people before we can launch on an enterprise of such magnitude. The quickest remedies are always fraught with the greatest danger and require the utmost skill in handling them. It is my firm conviction that if we bring a successful boycott of foreign cloth, we shall have produced an atmosphere that would enable us to inaugurate civil disobedience on a scale that no Government can resist. I would, therefore, urge patience and determined concentration on swadeshi upon those who are impatient to embark on mass civil disobedience."

These bonfires of foreign cloth helped to capture the mood of resistance which was spreading among the Congress workers and also to channel the urge towards violence. As Gandhi wrote in reply to criticism:

"India is racial today. It is with the utmost effort that I find it possible to keep under check the evil passions of the people. The general body of the people are filled with ill-will, because they are weak and hopelessly ignorant of the way to shed their weakness. I am transferring the ill will from men to things."

The bonfires also neatly symbolised, as the collections for the Tilak Swaraj Fund had done, the willingness of the wealthy classes to make sacrifices of valuable belongings in the interests of swaraj — and of course endeavoured to unite all classes in the promotion of swadeshi and the cult of the spinning wheel. Moreover, by focusing on one "particular" aspect of the constructive work — not national schools, or arbitration courts, or Hindu-Muslim unity, or the membership drive, but swadeshi — Gandhi hoped both to test his theory that in the achievement of one aspect of the programme lay the essence of swaraj and to consolidate the links between Congress workers and the "masses".

However, the dilemma of trying to restrain a mass movement actively mobilised in many parts of the subcontinent and to bend the leaders of the Congress noncooperation coalition to his will, soon caught up with Gandhi. In August, a rebellion of Muslim peasants along the Malabar coast in Madras led to the murder of Europeans and many Hindu
landlords and money-lenders, and the forcible conversion of some Hindus to Islam. There was no doubt that the rising had been stirred by noncooperation agitation, and in September Gandhi and Mohammal Ali had arrived in Madras Presidency on their way to the area when Ali was arrested by the Raj for the July Khilafat statement inciting Muslims to resign from the Army. Gandhi was prevented from proceeding to the area where what is known as the "Naplak Revolt" was going on, and a week later in a reaction to the arrest of his friend which was as startling to his contemporaries as it seems to us now, he proceeded to step up the swadeshi campaign by announcing that he would discard all his clothes except for a loin-cloth. He also proceeded to shave his head. He was worried apparently about the shortage of swadeshi cloth and wanted to demonstrate that all that a man needed to wear was a small loincloth made of khadi. His head was shaved as a sign of mourning.

The arrest of the Ali brothers and other Khilafat leaders signalled, however, the end of this long-prolonged first stage of noncooperation. Hastening to speed up the swadeshi campaign Gandhi suggested that for the month of October all other activity be suspended:

"If only we can go through the course of organising manufacture (of swadeshi cloth) and collecting foreign cloth during the month of October, abstaining from meetings and excitement, we shall produce an atmosphere calm and peaceful enough to embark upon civil disobedience if it is then found necessary." 21

But he was also involved in organising and publishing a manifesto signed by most of the leading Congress politicians at the beginning of October which repeated the words of the Khilafat resolution and rendered all the signatories liable to prosecution.

The end of the first stage of noncooperation was thus reached at the beginning of October 1921 without the activity of the Triple Boycott, the "Bezwada Programme or the foreign cloth boycott having achieved
swaraj. Gandhi's argument that if these "constructive" activities were pursued with enough dedication, then swaraj could be gained without the necessity for direct confrontation with the Raj, had been found wanting - though not necessarily proved invalid. There is as yet little in published historical research which shows what impact the constructive programme at this early stage, was having on the Congress movement itself, let alone the people of India; nor is there published material to show how the officials of the Raj were responding to this aspect of the programme undertaken by the Congress and Gandhi. Presumably most British officials were publicly and privately scathing about Gandhi's activities, seeing his social programme as "trickery"; though there was also considerable respect for him. Certainly, the Indian moderates, who were crucial to the Raj's plans at this time, respected Gandhi's constructive programme, if not his linking it with civil disobedience and with a directly political campaign for swaraj. Also, the Raj was afraid to arrest Gandhi, not simply because he was seen as a Mahatma, a holy man, but also because of the regard in which he was held because of his constructive work.

THE SECOND STAGE: INDIVIDUAL CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

a) Solidarity with the Khilafat leaders facing Trial, October 4, 1921

The second stage of noncooperation was formally launched on October 4, 1921, when 50 Congress leaders acting "in our individual capacity" issued a manifesto stating that it was contrary to national dignity for Indians to serve the government, whether as civilians, police or soldiers. The Congress Working Committee endorsed the resolution the following day. Through the initiative of the Khilafat leaders, therefore, Congress had taken up the second and third stages of Gandhi's original outline plan for noncooperation. But it did so not so much as a signal to the country to take up the campaign and bring pressure
to bear on Indica employees of the Raj across the land to resign. Rather the Working Committee adopted this new stage as a civil liberties issue, arguing that Indians had a right to demand the resignation of their compatriots who were serving such an intolerable government, and that Muslims had a religious duty to do so. The Working Committee added that it had not called for such resignations before because the Congress was not yet ready to support those who had no other means of livelihood. 23

In the event, the manifesto was repeated, in the words of Tendulkar, "by hundreds of persons from countless platforms, but no action was taken by the Government." 24 Some resignations from government employment did take place and some police and probably soldiers resigned also 25 - but the relatively small response may be related to the fact that the Congress did not launch an organised and protracted campaign on the issue.

What Gandhi did begin on October 4 was "individual civil disobedience", the second stage of noncooperation as it evolved in practice. Individual civil disobedience, according to Gandhi, could be launched before the country was organised and disciplined; mass civil disobedience, on the other hand, could only be tried "in a calm atmosphere". 26 Mass civil disobedience, he said later:

"is like an earthquake, a sort of general upheaval on the political plane. Where the reign of mass civil disobedience begins, there the subsisting Government ceases to function. There, every policeman, every soldier, every Government official must either leave the place, or enlist in the service of swaraj. The police stations, the court offices, etc. all shall cease to be the Government property and shall be taken charge of by the people ... But although the opposition to the Government must be so determined in character, the essence of civil disobedience is that it must be undertaken in a spirit of perfect composure." 27

At the October Working Committee, then, Gandhi secured the passage of a resolution stating that mass civil disobedience could not be attempted
in any Province or District until it had achieved complete boycott of foreign cloth and self-sufficiency in the production of cloth by hand-spinning and hand-weaving. One of the problems for Gandhi at this time, as Yajnik points out, was that not only had none of his colleagues engaged in mass civil disobedience as he described it, but neither had he! On the other hand, since he was vastly more experienced in the practice and theory of civil disobedience than they, they were effectively obliged to accept his leadership, his definitions, and his conditions, at least until the "Swaraj year" was out. 28

b) Challenging the Ban on Congress and Khilafat Volunteer Groups November 1921.

Once the Khilafat leaders, including the Ali brothers, were sentenced at the beginning of November to two years rigorous imprisonment, pressure built up further for Congress to reply with more aggressive action. Individual civil disobedience Gandhi was to present as "defensive" action, asserting one's rights peacefully in face of an oppressive government; mass civil disobedience was "aggressive". 29 Bamford, Deputy Director of the Raj's Intelligence Bureau and author of the official government history of noncooperation published in India in 1925, writes about the next meeting of the AICC in Delhi on November 4 to 5:

"The feature of this Delhi session was the restiveness displayed by a large proportion of the delegates against Gandhi's shyness of declaring mass civil disobedience immediately ... It seems correct to say that the Committee gave a grumbling assent to the scheme, mainly out of personal regard for Gandhi and a feeling that he should be allowed to have his own way in his own movement till the end of the year within which he had promised "Swaraj". It seemed clear that after that time Gandhi would have served his turn and if he failed to produce Swaraj as promised he would have to make way for other leaders and other methods." 30

Taking as his text the fact that "the Nation had demonstrated its capacity to observe complete nonviolence over the arrest of the Ali brothers", Gandhi's "scheme" to which the AICC gave its "grumbling assent" was to authorise Provincial Congress Committees to launch both individual
and mass civil disobedience. He placed strict conditions on this go-ahead, however. Individuals undertaking civil disobedience must know hand-spinning and have played their parts in the swadeshi programme, believe in Hindu-Muslim unity and nonviolence and, if a Hindu, have demonstrated their opposition to untouchability.31

For mass civil disobedience, Gandhi also imposed stringent conditions, expressed earlier in an article in Young India:

"If one district can be found where (i) ninety per cent of the population have completely boycotted foreign cloth, and are manufacturing all the cloth required by them by hand-spinning and hand-weaving; (ii) if the whole of the population of that district, whether Hindu or Mussalman, Parsee or Sikh, Christian or Jewish, is living in perfect amity; (iii) if the whole of its Hindu population is purged of the sin of untouchability; (iv) and if at least one in every ten of its inhabitants is capable of suffering imprisonment or even of mounting the gallows; and (v) if while that district is civilly, peacefully and honourably resisting the Government, the rest of India remains nonviolent and united and prosecutes the programme of swadeshi, I hold it to be perfectly possible to establish Swaraj during this year." 32

Gandhi proposed that he be permitted to begin mass civil disobedience in the Bardoli taluka in the district of Surat in Gujarat on November 23.

He concluded his speech to the AICC as follows:

"When the swaraj flag floats victoriously at Bardoli, then the people of the taluka next to Bardoli, following in the steps of Bardoli, should seek to plant the flag of swaraj in their midst. Thus district by district, in regular succession, throughout the length and breadth of India, should the swaraj flag be hoisted. If, however, while the movement is on, there is the slightest outbreak of violence in any part of the country, then it would not be safe or advisable to prosecute the campaign any further." 33

It was an extraordinary scheme, and perhaps a desperate one. Having failed to develop the requisite level of progress in the earlier constructive projects, including the promotion of hand-spinning and swadeshi, Gandhi proposed to deal with the risks of undertaking mass civil disobedience by confining it in the first instance to an area of just over eighty thousand people. Thus the action was to be a symbol, an act of sacrifice under the discipline of satyagraha, by participants whom Gandhi could personally train and direct.
However, before mass civil disobedience at Bardoli was due to begin, the Prince of Wales arrived at Bombay on November 17. Hartal was proclaimed across India and was remarkably successful. But, in Bombay, while Gandhi was conducting the burning of a pyre of foreign cloth, riots broke out as crowds of his supporters attacked "cooperators" who had gone out to welcome the Prince. The rioting continued for four days. Gandhi was devastated. After two days he had decided what to do. He declared that he would fast until the "noncooperators have made peace with the cooperators". By November 22, peace was restored and he was able to break his fast - but he announced that he would maintain a 24 hours fast every Monday "till Swaraj is attained". On November 23, the Working Committee meeting in Bombay agreed to postpone the Bardoli campaign.

However, at this point, a second campaign of individual civil disobedience was taken up elsewhere in India, especially in Bengal. On November 19, provoked by the hartal, the Government of Bengal declared the volunteer organisations of the Congress and the Khilafat Committees to be illegal and banned political meetings. The governments of the Punjab and the United Provinces, Bihar and Assam followed suit. Over the next few days and weeks, 30,000 civil disobedients were arrested as they defied the government ban and engaged in picketing, selling khadi cloth and newspapers, or holding meetings. Virtually all the prominent leaders in these provinces were arrested and jailed, including Lajpat Rai, Das, Motilal Nehru, Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru. Indian moderate politicians, the "cooperators" on whom the Raj was relying to ensure the credibility of its reform programme, reacted strongly and pressed the new Viceroy, Reading, to retreat. He agreed - apparently anxious to secure a hartal-free visit for the Prince of Wales to Calcutta - and seems to have been willing, despite criticism from Provincial
Governors and from the Cabinet in London, to grant a Round Table Conference at which full provincial self-government might have been attainable. Das and Azad who were visited by Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Viceroy's envoy, in jail in Calcutta, pressed Gandhi to agree to Reading's conditions which were simply for Gandhi to call off non-cooperation, and in particular the proposed hartal in Calcutta.

Reading was apparently willing to have the ban on Congress volunteer organisations lifted and the prisoners jailed under those bans freed; however, he was unwilling to release the Khilafat leaders jailed previously for their challenge to the Indian Army. Gandhi therefore refused to call off noncooperation before a Round Table Conference, and the negotiations failed.36

Das, in jail, was furious and is said from this point to have "abandoned the Mahatma as a profitable ally".37 But Gandhi wrote with some insight in Young India that he thought "a Conference at which the Government is represented will be useful only when the latter has tried the non-co-operators to its satisfaction and measured their strength in quantity and quality." This was not a lust for battle, but an understanding that the Raj was not prepared to yield very much. Commenting further in January, Gandhi wrote:

"Swaraj scheme is undoubtedly a matter on which there will be as many minds as there are men and women ... The adoption of the Congress Franchise is my own suggestion, but what I have laid down as the guiding principle is really unassailable. The scheme of Swaraj is that scheme which popular representatives frame." 39

It seems, then, that at the end of 1921, the "parliamentary swaraj" which Gandhi favoured was for the Congress organisation itself to be recognised as a parliamentary institution which could govern the subcontinent. This is a far cry from Das's apparent willingness to settle for increased power for Indian politicians in the provinces - and marks a decisive gap between the two.
The Third Stage: Mass Civil Disobedience at Bardoli, February 1922

The scene was now set for the third and final stage of Noncooperation. Gandhi argued that because the Congress had demonstrated impressively its ability during the arrests of huge numbers of Volunteers to maintain nonviolent discipline, the "atmosphere" was now right to move on to mass civil disobedience at Bardoli. He was in an increasingly difficult position, for calls to abandon nonviolent discipline and opt for violent methods of struggle had emerged openly at the annual session of the Congress held in December 1921 in Ahmedabad. While in January, serious riots broke out in Madras. Moreover, the pitch of activity stirred by the defiance of provincial bans on Volunteer organisations was stimulating more local struggles in different parts of the subcontinent and, in some of these areas, the Raj was in danger of losing control. There was thus tremendous pressure to keep up the agitation - but not exactly the "calm atmosphere" which Gandhi said he needed for his next step.  

On the other hand, Indian moderate politicians were keeping up the pressure of the Viceroy to negotiate. Thus in January Gandhi postponed launching the new stage of the struggle for a further period, in order to attend a conference with the moderates in Bombay. He appears here to have taken an uncompromising position, arguing not only for concessions on the Khilafat and Punjab issues but also for "full responsible government on a Dominion basis". When this led to nothing, he returned to Bardoli and on February 1 issued his ultimatum to the Viceroy stating that mass civil disobedience would begin on February 8.  

An interesting feature of this ultimatum is that Gandhi pitched its demands to the moderates - to the civil liberties issues raised by the ban on Volunteers which had drawn the moderates to his side. He offered to suspend mass civil disobedience if the government would free all prisoners and permit the Congress to engage peacefully in the agitation
for which the Ali brothers had been jailed in November and for which
the ban on Volunteer organisations had been imposed in the same month.
In other words, he was trying to insist in Congress having the right
to continue the activities of speech-making and picketing which had led
to two campaigns of "defensive" individual civil disobedience. What he
was also doing was trying to hold the nonco-operation campaign still
longer to the extensive programme of tactics short of civil disobedience
which he had been pursuing for nearly eighteen months. Within the letter
of ultimatum, Gandhi admitted that he did not have the control over the
forces of violence in the country which he would have liked, but he felt
that the government's actions made it his "imperative duty" to go ahead.42

The Viceroy summarily rejected Gandhi's ultimatum. Mass civil disobedience
was all set to proceed when news came through to Gandhi of 22 policemen
having been burnt to death as a result of a riot by noncooperators in the
United Provinces. Immediately, he called off his campaign of mass civil
disobedience - and had this decision endorsed by the Congress Working
Committee a few days later. Although individual civil disobedience was
permitted to continue, the momentum of the movement was lost and its
morale shattered. Early in March, Gandhi was arrested, tried and jailed.
For loyal Gandhians - the "no-changers" - Noncooperation continued as
before, but for many of the leading nationalists Gandhi's policy had
failed and a new direction was to be attempted.

"Chauri Chaura", the name of the village where the policemen were
murdered was a symbol operating in the reverse direction to Gandhi's
hoped-for symbol at Bardoli. Given the nature of the method and strategy
which he was following in the third stage of Noncooperation at Bardoli, it
was inevitable that he called off the action. Mass civil disobedience, as
he had described it, required absolute attention and quiet in the rest of
India while the small Bardoli taluka went through its symbolic rebellion.
As the inhabitants of Bardoli suffered from the repressive forces of the Raj, so public opinion in India was to be aroused and the conscience of the Raj's officials and the British people touched. Ultimately, Bardoli, if carried through, was to result in a new respect for the dignity, courage and organisational ability of the Indian people.

It was probably an impossible scheme. Gandhi never attempted it again. But in the Salt Satyagraha in 1930, he organised a small group of 79 hand-picked and personally-trained people to march across Gujarat and electrify the nation into support for his next campaign of Civil Disobedience. While, in 1928, the same taluka of Bardoli did undertake a successful tax refusal campaign on a much more limited issue than swaraj - which helped to focus nationwide attention for the 1930 struggle.

"Chauri Chaura", however, was seen by Gandhi's colleagues in jail at the time and his critics ever since as the occasion for an enormous blunder by him. S.C.Bose commented in 1935:

"I am reminded of what the Dashbandhu (C.R.Das) used frequently to say about the virtues and failings of Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. According to him, the Mahatma opens a campaign in a brilliant fashion; he works it up with unerring skill; he moves from success to success till he reaches the zenith of his campaign - but after that he loses his nerve and begins to falter.

Gandhi certainly was hesitant about launching mass civil disobedience late in 1921 and early in 1922. But the charges made by Bose and others that "Chauri Chaura" revealed in Gandhi a fundamental lack of courage, an incapacity to lead the national struggle and a fatal flaw in his method of nonviolence, seem to be unfair.

In the first place, as Bose's quotation from Das recognises, Noncooperation under Gandhi's leadership had brought Congress and the Raj in December 1919 to a point where a significant concession from the Raj is widely agreed to have been possible. Therefore, to put it crudely, nonviolence did work. Moreover, Gandhi's capacity to lead was demonstrated in February 1922 - if not in the way he and his fellow nationalists had hoped -
by his determination and ability to call off the campaign of mass civil disobedience when what he considered to be the right method and strategy could no longer be followed.

The more fundamental point, however, is that Gandhi in 1920 and 1921 was probably overconfident in his ability to organise the Indian subcontinent according to his principles of satyagraha. The nation did not come close to achieving his conception of swaraj during the prolonged first stage of Noncooperation as he had said it could. Also, it was not prepared for the third stage of mass civil disobedience as he had hoped. In these respects, Gandhi's nerve did falter as reality struck home; and nonviolence did fail. But these weaknesses would not have mattered, it seems, if Gandhi had been willing to compromise with the Raj in December 1919. Gandhi, however, was not prepared to settle for a "swaraj" which meant increased representation for Indian nationalist politicians in the provincial legislatures, as Das apparently was. As he had said consistently, the reforms did not interest Gandhi very much, because he was after a "swaraj" which would mean real changes and improvements in the lives of the Indian "masses". This meant, in parliamentary terms, for him, the achievement of full self-government at the centre "under the Congress Franchise" and Dominion status.

By pursuing such an uncompromising vision of "swaraj" in 1921, Gandhi appears to have overestimated the bargaining-power available to him. Also, from surveys by Low in particular, of the British willingness to concede independence to India, it seems clear that Gandhi exaggerated too the possibilities of a change in British opinion to meet his objectives. In other words, Gandhi in 1921 was unrealistic in his hopes for swaraj. Civil disobedience was called off when he realised that the strategy he had been pursuing could not be sustained. It would have taken an even more extraordinary campaign of nonviolent pressure in 1921, than
the one Gandhi did organise, to have pushed the British remotely close to his concept of swaraj. For this, India had to wait another 25 years, and even then it was not really the "parliamentary swaraj" which Gandhi had in mind in 1921.
CHAPTER 8: Page 329

SUMMARY

1. Noncooperation was a partial success.

2. It did secure through the Triple Boycott, the active participation of a section of the nation's educated in a single-minded campaign to break with the Raj and build Indian institutions. It did through the Berwada Programme raise vast sums of money and establish the Congress organisation as a viable political machine in many parts of the country. Also, it did, through the boycott of foreign cloth, draw Congress volunteers into villages across the whole country and give a tremendous boost to the swadeshi programme.

3. But the pressure to move on to mass civil disobedience put Gandhi under intense pressure; and when the Khilafat leaders finally broke ranks and called for the resignation of Muslims in government service, both civilian and military, Gandhi had to devise a campaign as risky as the bonfires of foreign cloth - in order to transfer the growing ill-will "from men to things". The jailing of the Ali brothers forced him to sanction individual civil disobedience, with the repetition from public platforms of the offending words of the Ali brothers' resolution.

4. However, rising expectations and tension led to serious rioting, obliging Gandhi to postpone his ingenious plan for mass civil disobedience in one small area of Gujarat, the Bardoli taluka. Noncooperation was then rescued by government bans placed on Congress volunteer organisations in several parts of India to prevent picketing of clothing and liquor stores. Thousands were arrested in a new campaign of "defensive" individual civil disobedience, which is said to have been entirely peaceful and especially effective in Bengal.

5. Inspired by this success, Gandhi revived plans for mass civil disobedience at Bardoli. But this action was postponed again as a result of pressure from moderate nationalist politicians who had information that the new Viceroy, Reading, was willing to negotiate a settlement. Gandhi did not find Reading's offer acceptable, and the negotiations collapsed - leading to much bitterness among Gandhi's fellow Congress leaders.

6. Gandhi then issued his ultimatum to the Viceroy, that the Bardoli civil disobedience was about to begin. But within days the mass civil disobedience was called of instantly when he heard that major rioting in Chauri Chaura had resulted in the deaths of 22 policemen. This shattered the morale of the Noncooperation movement and shortly afterwards, when Gandhi was jailed, the movement faded.
7. It seems possible that Noncooperation could have achieved negotiations with Reading late in 1921 which might have led to increased nationalist participation in the Raj's provincial legislative councils. But this would have meant leaving the Ali brothers in jail - and it was not at all what Gandhi meant by "parliamentary swaraj".

8. Faced with the symbolic warning of Chauri Chaura, which implied a spreading movement of violent outbreaks as against the spreading movement of nonviolence he had hoped to initiate at Bardoli, Gandhi had little option but to suspend mass civil disobedience. Not to have done so would have gone against the whole strategy which he had so painstakingly constructed since first formulating the concept of noncooperation.

9. Like the Rowlatt Satyagraha, Noncooperation collapsed, but never formally ended. Many "noncooperators" continued the struggle unceasingly until 1945. Within the Congress movement there were serious disputes about the "noncooperation" strategy to be followed - in particular whether "noncooperators" could enter the legislative councils of the Raj and continue to obstruct from within. The movement of Noncooperation, which Gandhi launched in 1920, was revived in a new form in 1930, and again in 1941.
REFERENCES


2. This summarised account of Noncooperation has been stimulated principally by Indulal Yajnik, Gandhi As I Know Him, G.G.Bhat, 1933. Chapters XXVII to I, pp 110-234. (Yajnik's approach is uniformly disparaging of Gandhi.) Other useful accounts are in Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol II, pp 1 - 102; Bose, S.C. The Indian Struggle, 1920-34, pp 55-91; Judith Brown, Gandhi's Rise to Power, Chapter 9, pp 307-351; Bamford, P.C. Histories of the Noncooperation and Khilafat Movements, Delhi: Deep Publications, 1974; and for Dass's role in Bengal, Broomfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society, pp 165-168, 204-34

3. Bose quotes Gandhi as describing the programme of Noncooperation in a similar breakdown of stages to the one followed here, though he mentions four stages rather than three. Bose, op cit, pp 67-68.


5. "Speech on First Resolution at AICC Meeting, Bezwada", March 31, 1921, ibid, pp 494-495.


16. Yajnik, op cit, pp 184, 190.

17. Tendulkar, op cit, Vol I, pp 52-53

18. ibid, p 55.

19. ibid, p 60.

20. ibid, p 59; Yajnik, op cit, pp 167-183


22. ibid, pp 60-61.

23. Bamford, op cit, pp 36-38
REFERENCES

27. *ibid*, p 66.
31. *ibid*
34. *ibid*, pp 67-70.
38. *Young India*, December 22, 1921, quoted in Yajnik, *op cit*, p 204.
GANDHI'S METHOD AS A POLITICAL ORGANISER

In most of the years reviewed in this study, Gandhi was not yet the established national leader who could command automatic attention and veneration. This makes his activities particularly interesting because, for this short period, he was more nearly in the position of other nonviolent political activists who do not command the allegiance of masses of people and a political machine, but who are at the margins of political life looking for a way in.

As a newcomer to Indian politics with a distinctive political philosophy Gandhi found his place in the nationalist movement at a time of economic and political turmoil. The consequent uncertainty made it possible for a novel political doctrine like satyagraha to be taken to the centre of Indian political life. But this impact for Gandhi's "experiments" with nonviolence was not achieved without much effort and skill. Practical choices faced him as an organiser about what issues to take up, which groups to involve, what methods to pursue and to what lengths he should go in order to achieve the results he was seeking. These questions for the organiser of nonviolent action have been the subject of this study.

Many Indian nationalists were to be captivated by Gandhi's ideas and proposals; many more adopted some aspects of the satyagraha programme while it was the policy of the national movement or while it was fashionable to do so. As a result Gandhi became a pre-eminent national figure with unprecedented authority. From this position, Gandhi continued with his satyagraha "experiments" apparently no more afraid to take personal risks than before. His unusual position at the centre of political life, however, gave him the opportunity to experiment increasingly with methods of nonviolent action which only someone in his place could have attempted. The remarkable fasts to influence his fellow countrymen on questions of Hindu-Muslim unity and the abolition of untouchability can be
repeated in most situations only by national political leaders of similar prominence. Quite probably a symbolic march, like the Salt March which Gandhi led in 1930, would require a personality of his renown at its head to command the attention and precipitate the mass imitative action which that demonstration did. Thus the years in India before Gandhi had achieved his position as "Father of the Nation" are particularly worthy of attention for students of nonviolent action who want to know how a nonviolent movement which had a major impact was planned and organised by someone on the edge of the political mainstream.

The case-material presented in this thesis can be grouped broadly into three periods. The first period, up to 1918 and including the Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda satyagrahas, was the period when he was searching for ways to introduce his ideas and methods into Indian politics. The actions he attempted were principally local in their scope and focused on particular issues or grievances. His successes brought him and his movement to prominence in Gujarat. The second period sees Gandhi in transition to national leadership and is pivotal to this study. Gandhi attempted in 1919 from his base of support in Gujarat and Bombay City to initiate a national campaign on the particular issue of the Rowlatt Bills. As a mass action this lasted for less than a month and as an ongoing campaign it survived only six months before petering out. Shaken by the rioting and repression which Rowlatt catalysed, Gandhi rethought his approach and began casting around for other ways to launch nonviolent action on a mass scale. In the summer of 1920 the third period begins with Gandhi's decision to initiate a second national satyagraha campaign, combining two particular grievances, the Khilafat and Punjab issues, and quickly taking on the general issue of swaraj. A key contention of this thesis is that Gandhi's principal response to the Rowlatt debacle was to devise an additional method of mobilising civilians on a mass scale which fell far short of
CHAPTER 9: Page 335

civil disobedience and other methods of civil resistance. This was
to initiate a co-ordinated programme of constructive work, the Triple
Boycott and then the Bezwada Programme, which can be seen to have
evolved later into the constructive programme.

In addition to this fundamental question of the balance between civil
resistance and constructive work in Gandhi's method, a number of other
related themes have been explored. These include how his methods as an
organiser changed as he moved from local to national campaigns - and back
again. Also, how he adapted his method of organising on particular issues
to the problem of launching a mass movement on the general issue of swaraj.
Again, how he adapted his approach when he came to lead coalitions of
political activists most of whom were not convinced upholders of his
satyagraha ideology.

Two other features of Gandhi's method have been noted. In the early
campaigns in Ahmedabad we saw the fundamental importance to his campaigning
of the religious vow - this was one of the principal techniques he employed
for introducing the religious spirit into politics. The other is the
distinction he made in 1921 between aggressive and defensive civil disobedier
Gandhi clearly favoured defensive action in the 18 months of slowly built-
up mobilisation which constituted the bulk of Noncooperation.

For followers of Gandhi in India, most of these points are familiar. In
particular, the contention that Gandhi's method employed a careful balance
between negative and positive - between campaigns of civil resistance
and constructive programme - with the priority given to constructive
work is wholly unexceptionable. Several of the other points are also
widely reported in works by Dhawan, Diwakar, Bose, and so on.¹

However, in the West, the principal authorities on nonviolent action have
neglected practically all these aspects - with the partial exception of the vow. In particular, the fundamental point that nonviolent action as a focused method and technique/just as much on constructive work as campaigns of civil resistance is virtually ignored. Yet Gandhi's successes as an organiser cannot be understood unless it is recognised that at the base of every campaign of civil resistance - especially at the national level - was a programme of constructive work.

Faced with the problems we have indicated, Gandhi turned to a programme of constructive work almost as a panacea. Constructive work was designed to discipline the people prior to civil disobedience. It was to provide tasks which could be taken up the poorest peasants and give them a place in the national movement. It was designed to provide a link between the national political elite and the peasantry and to take active nationalists out of legislatures to the "real" politics of India, tackling poverty and injustice in the villages. It was used too not only as a preparation for civil disobedience but also as a delaying tactic: until the targets were reached and the "capacity" of the nation demonstrated, civil disobedience could not be launched.

Again, promotion of constructive work helped Gandhi to deal with the problem of scale, moving from a local level where he could preserve face-to-face contact to a national level where he could not. If it was impossible to rely on inexperienced satyagraha leaders to launch civil resistance campaigns across the subcontinent, what he could do with much less risk was to invite them to introduce the nation to campaigns of constructive work. Constructive work too helped Gandhi to deal with the problem of campaigning on a general issue rather than a particular issue. Before Quit India in 1942, he insisted on launching "do-or-die" struggles on limited, particular issues capable of achievement. Swaraj, full political self-government, was a general goal not likely to be achieved in 1920. However, re-interpreted in Gandhi's concept as the development
of a nation organised, united, self-reliant and capable of solving its own economic and social problems, swaraj could be approached as a general issue by a programme of constructive work. Again, moving solidly into the political arena when he entered political organisations like the Congress and the Home Rule League, he knew he would be unable to find unity at the highest levels behind his distinctive satyagraha ideology. Accommodation with the nationalist elite was buttressed therefore by mass constructive campaigns which (after the Triple Boycott) were in significant respects politically uncontentious or innocuous and designed to develop unity in the mass movement at the base. They served in effect to undercut opposition to Gandhi at the top.

Satyagraha as a method has been the subject of a number of scholarly studies published in the west. The best known of these - Richard Gregg's The Power of Nonviolence, Krishnalal Shridharani's War Without Violence, and Joan Bondurant's Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict - have developed a common theme expressed by the subtitle of Bondurant's work. This is that in satyagraha Gandhi demonstrated a method and a philosophy of engaging in conflict which can be developed as an effective substitute for political violence. Shridharani and Gregg go further and urge that nonviolent conflict can replace war as a method of settling disputes between nations, a theme which has been taken up subsequently by Gene Sharp and a number of other scholars.

When scholars are making such claims for their interpretations of Gandhi's method it is extremely important that they present it in a way which makes it possible for political activists influenced by them to understand how he used and developed the technique in practice. Bondurant comes very close to the explanation of Gandhi's method developed in this thesis when she defines satyagraha as "a technique for social and political change"; or again "an instrument of struggle for positive objectives and for fundamental change". Clearly this is more than a conflict technique
in her eyes. She states too in one section:

"The constructive program was an essential component of the Gandhian revolutionary struggle for Indian independence. It was the constructive program which gave content to the satyagraha framework and applied Gandhian principles to the Indian circumstance." 5

Nevertheless, the balance of her especially valuable study of satyagraha is overwhelmingly on the conflict side. "I have tried only", she writes, "to attack a problem inadequately explored in political theory by abstracting from the Gandhian experiment a theoretical key to the problem of social and political conflict." 6 The place of constructive programme within her analysis is understated and ambiguous. She tends to see it as an ideal goal or a prescription for moral conduct, rather than as a method of mobilising people for social change. Primarily it is presented as a subsidiary discipline and necessary demonstration of social rectitude to be taken up for the duration of a direct action campaign, rather than as an autonomous part of the satyagraha method, to be followed and organised for its own sake.

Gregg, as we have seen, was personally a satyagrahi in the full Gandhian sense - one who believed that the essence of the technique is to apply a number of disciplines in one's own life and to build out from there a political movement. In The Power of Nonviolence he devotes the final portion of the book to the type of "training" needed to engage in nonviolent resistance. He also repeats his prescription for taking up manual work and social service projects. 7 There is though a complete divorce between the idealised proposals in this concluding argument and the powerfully presented case-studies of nonviolent resistance with which the book begins. His abstract presentation, unrelated to the historical examples, fails to show how constructive programme was an integral part of the method of satyagraha developed by Gandhi. Also, constructive work is seen as a personal discipline for individuals and small groups rather than a programme of campaigns to be waged on social issues as part of a larger
political struggle.

Shridharani took part personally in the Salt March in 1930 and his book, *War Without Violence*, first published in 1939, remains an inspiring and persuasive argument for learning from Gandhi's campaigning methods. His work includes a chapter on "organisation" which describes in outline the Congress machinery for conducting satyagraha campaigns. But the dynamic process of Gandhi actually organizing satyagraha, that is, making decisions as an organizer, is still missing from his account. Gunu Sharp has rightly claimed Shridharani as a pioneer of the "technique approach" to nonviolent struggle - by which Sharp means nonviolence as a technique for engaging in conflict divorced from any necessary connection with Gandhi's philosophy of life.

Sharp himself is today overwhelmingly the most important theoretician of nonviolent action in the west and he has made it a life's work to establish the technique on a body of case-material and theoretical argument which separates it from Gandhi's particular philosophy and beliefs. He is not however in any way hostile to Gandhi but remains profoundly respectful of him. He has recently published a collection of essays in which he demonstrates successfully that Gandhi himself was willing to make a distinction between nonviolence as a philosophy and nonviolence as a policy or expedient, and that Gandhi organised his satyagraha campaigns fully understanding that most of those who supported him did so as a temporary and often unwilling discipline for the period of the struggle only. In *Gandhi As a Political Strategist* Sharp publishes an excellent short summary of Gandhi's satyagraha method and a brief, accurate representation of the importance of constructive programme in Gandhian theory.

What Sharp has signally failed to do, however, in his enormous compendium
of theory and case-material, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, published in 1973, is describe adequately how Gandhi's method of action worked in practice. The reason is that Sharp does not look at Gandhi as an organiser, a politician making strategic choices and tactical decisions about how to shape the campaigns he is directing. Where he considers strategy and tactics it is in the context of a pre-existing nonviolent struggle. How Gandhi found himself as leader of mass campaigns of noncooperation or civil disobedience is outside Sharp's brief which is simply to analyse how nonviolent struggles were conducted once they started. In particular, the place and role of constructive programme in Gandhi's method is almost entirely missing.

Each of these major theoreticians of nonviolent action has understood Gandhi's method fully and has chosen to tailor their presentation of it to what they think is most significant in his achievement. They have also followed Gandhi's broad principle of "swadeshi" (cultivating that which is local) by attempting to translate satyagraha into terms which are assimilable for readers whose background is in the political and social culture of the west. Bondurant explains the basis on which she selected from his method as follows:

"It is essential rigorously to differentiate satyagraha as technique of action from those specific considerations of right-living with which Gandhi also concerned himself." 13

Sharp draws attention to the personal battles he has had to endure with "dogmatic" Gandhians and pacifists over many years as he has maintained his revisionist attitude to the Gandhian method. 14

The studies of these scholars are in my opinion as important historically as their authors claim because they do demonstrate that there is another way of fighting and of exercising power not based in violence, a perspective which is not readily recognised in political theory and practice. However,
by presenting Gandhi's method for a western audience with such a single-minded emphasis on conflict, they have narrowed the focus of their analysis in such a way that unfortunately it is difficult to understand how Gandhi's campaigns were built up and sustained. Methods of engaging in conflict have been separated from methods of mobilising the social and political movement equipped to engage in conflict. This is not an argument for taking over Gandhi's beliefs wholesale before engaging in nonviolent struggle. But Bondurant is mistaken when she says that it is necessary rigorously to differentiate satyagraha as a technique of action from Gandhi's hobby-horses regarding "right-living". It helps us to understand Gandhi's technique if we see it as a method of social struggle informed by strongly held positive values, virtually all of which may have relevance for us. What I am saying is that the attempt to separate the technique of action from the background of beliefs which prompted it has diminished our understanding of the technique. To sum up, Gandhian satyagraha should be seen as a method of organising a movement for positive social change. Second, an integral part of this technique - as important to its successful development as the use of civil resistance - is constructive programme.

Unfortunately, in a study which draws its case material almost entirely from only eight years of Gandhi's career in India (from 1915 to 1922) it is not possible to draw final conclusions about Gandhi's methods throughout his career. More particularly, it is not possible to attempt detailed analysis of the place of constructive work in his method on the evidence of this early period. Nonetheless, the case outlined above can be generally supported from the evidence contained in this thesis. Moreover, if we add to this the assessments of theoreticians of Gandhi's methods who have explored the whole canon of his career, we may infer that a strong case has been made out.
Local and National Organising

In local struggles Gandhi was able to play a highly visible part in the action, directing many matters personally and taking much of the burden of civil resistance onto his own shoulders. When he moved onto a national scale and tried to repeat this pattern, the level of organisation proved to be inadequate and discipline broke down.

As a result, Gandhi adapted his methods in several respects. First, instead of relying on individuals who broadly accepted his satyagraha principles and would loyally follow his lead, he joined national organisations (the Khilafat movement and the Indian National Congress) not committed to satyagraha as a creed. Second, having joined the Congress, he was instrumental in devising for it a membership structure which enabled it to be representative of nationalist activists throughout India. Congress was a machinery for bringing most of the elements of Indian nationalism into one organisation (Gandhi likened it to a "Parliament" rather than a "Party"), and followers of Gandhi were one faction only within it. Gandhi's principal innovation was the disinterested one of extending the Congress organisation into the villages rather than extending his own following. Third, because of the problem of mass all-India civil resistance campaigns getting out of hand if the leaders moved too quickly to aggressive confrontation, he devised a programme for diverting the energies of the nation's political elite out into constructive work and out into rural areas. There they could consolidate the membership of the vastly expanded Congress organisation and prepare it for disciplined nonviolent struggle. Fourth, having moved to construct a national mass organisation within which his own following was a faction only, Gandhi experimented with ways of developing forms of action over which he could have personal control which would then constitute the leading edge of the movement. His followers in one district of rural Gujarat were selected to launch aggressive civil disobedience. As a
personal action to promote the use of swadeshi cloth among the poorest peasantry, he vowed publicly to reduce his own clothing needs to a loin-cloth only.

In this way, by working with people with different political viewpoints, by developing disciplined organisation, by pitching the struggle as far as possible at the level of constructive work rather than confrontation and by devising new symbolic ways of exerting personal leadership, Gandhi adapted from local to national struggles.

Gandhi himself has drawn attention to the differences between his organising methods at a local and a national level in his pamphlet on Constructive Programme which provided the framework of discussion in Chapter 4. There he states categorically "no elaborate constructive programme was or could be necessary" in local struggles; but insists that to organise civil disobedience at a national level without securing "the co-operation of the millions by way of constructive effort is mere bravado and worse than useless." The same passage has been quoted approvingly by Bose in his excellent Studies in Gandhism and restated by Sharp as Gandhi's viewpoint. But neither writer has attempted to analyse this perspective further. Dhawan also notes Gandhi's conclusion which was maintained over many years.

Working as Part of a Coalition

Having failed to develop an all-India organisation of his own supporters, Gandhi was drawn into political coalitions with other nationalist leaders and factions.

Expediency was the only basis on which he could win consent at the highest levels of nationalist politics for his judgments, campaigns and methods.
His fellow politicians backed Gandhi when his proposals seemed to be the most feasible to follow at that particular moment. None of this prevented him, however, on the public platform and in his newspapers, from arguing his full political position based in satyagraha principles. As a result, within a coalition of divergent views, Gandhi was still able to recruit popular support for his fundamental beliefs.

On many issues, Gandhi’s judgment of what it was possible to achieve and right to aim for was closer to the nationalist “Moderates” than to the “Extremists”. What distinguished him from the “Moderates” was, first, his belief that real politics lay outside the legislatures in the villages of India and, second, once he had set himself a limited aim, his determination to pit his body and soul to the struggle to achieve it. His links with the “Moderates”, on the one hand, and his commitment to populism and radical action, on the other, gave him a special leverage in nationalist politics. He could outmanoeuvre the “Extremists” because he appeared just as committed to radical action as they and more committed to practical objectives.

The fact that Gandhi became leader of all-India political coalitions pursuing limited objectives on the basis of expediency does not mean that he compromised his satyagraha principles. He insisted, for example, on nonviolent discipline in the Khilafat and Congress movements while he led them. He insisted too on the particular campaigning issues of the Khilafat and Punjab being kept separate until all avenues of compromise with the Raj had been gone down fully on both questions. He fervently opposed the boycott of British goods, rather than foreign goods. Furthermore, strategies for achieving the limited aims of the coalition were always designed to advance the cause of satyagraha. The Triple Boycott, for example, had the startling effect of persuading thousands
of members of the nationalist elite to make contact with village India. While "Swaraj in One Year" - a dubious slogan - convinced some nationalists that they need make sacrifices for one year only,\(^\text{18}\) it was neatly turned by Gandhi into a mass programme of constructive work which would build the movement's organisational strength and tackle the "real" problems of India as he saw them.

Lacking a national organisation committed to satyagraha, Gandhi recognised that within the nationalist coalition were different levels of commitment to his ideas. At the base Congress was a very fluid organisation with considerable freedom and uncertain discipline. But at the top Gandhi created a tight Working Committee of a few individuals. While he retained authority from the Congress to act as leader, he insisted that the working committee follow a policy of collective responsibility like the British cabinet - thus speaking with one voice. In this way unity was achieved at the top behind his policy. At a local and regional level, a nationwide organisation of volunteers was created within the Congress structure. These volunteers were obliged as a condition of membership to take a vow committing them to nonviolent discipline.\(^\text{19}\) Some of them received training in Gandhian ashrams and established new ashrams from which to carry out constructive and other work. The programme of constructive work was promoted by Gandhi as an uncontentious movement of national self-improvement which should be supported by all factions in Congress. Through this he aimed for unity at the base of the movement.

Thus considerations of expediency prompted other nationalist politicians to support Gandhi's leadership of Congress - a position which was helped by his novel balance of commitment to "moderate" views with determination to fight by radical methods. This, together with a combination of tight discipline at the top, support for his policies at the base, and the development of a network of volunteer groups broadly accepting his
direction alongside ashrams of committed workers, enabled Gandhi to enter political coalitions without sacrificing his satyagraha principles.

The principal discussion of Gandhi's acceptance of expediency as a basis for political coalition is in Gene Sharp, *Gandhi As A Political Strategist*, though he concentrates solely on the issue of nonviolent discipline in conflict.20 Where Sharp is particularly illuminating, too, is in contrasting Gandhi's view of political power with the conventional one. What further differentiated Gandhi from the Moderate was his outstanding insight that power lies outside the centres of government in the activity or inactivity of the people.21

Building Campaigns Around Particular Issues

We have laid considerable stress on Gandhi's consistent strategy of working for general goals by way of campaigns with particular, limited objectives.

During his early struggles back in India, as a less than typical Loyalist who nonetheless was intending no immediate or general assault on the legitimacy of British rule, Gandhi concentrated on trying to eradicate particular "blots" on the Raj's record. Even then, however, his positive aims of strengthening the Indian nation by developing self-reliance, social responsibility and moral awareness were general in scope. We can recognise, therefore, two well-known features of the Gandhian method. First, the selection of a series of particular measures, "one step at a time", to advance a general goal. Second, the concentration on means as containing within them the essence of whatever and will emerge - hence satyagraha being a doctrine of means as much as ends. Through pursuing a means as general and all-embracing in its scope as satyagraha, unforeseen general benefits will result, even though the nominal aim is limited to a specific issue.
Of course, a much more pragmatic case can be made for concentrating, as Gandhi did, on the single issue. It assumes, among other things, that rationality and fairness can be brought to bear in politics, that both sides in a dispute can learn to understand and even respect the other's position if no side issues are brought in, and that by limiting demands to the minimum short of sacrificing principles, practical gains can be achieved. Using this method, Gandhi was able to control the pace and development of struggle precisely because it was limited in scope and objective, and also to restrain retaliatory opportunities open to his opponent.22

When Gandhi did move to the general issue of Swaraj in 1920 we have seen that this was with great reluctance even though by that time it had become logical to combine campaigns on two "particular" issues which had reached the same stage of breakdown with the Raj. Gandhi's ingenious solution to this was to interpret Swaraj in terms of a number of particular objectives for constructive work - such as a Congress organisation capable of assuming the running of the country or a nation capable of throwing off dependency on imports and supplying all its own clothing needs by the efforts of the largest/of its citizens.

Thus his "particularist" method survived Gandhi's translation to national leadership committed to the goal of independence for India. It facilitated control of the action and restraint on the activities of both sides. Within campaigns on the issues selected, general advances could be achieved "one step at a time", while the nonviolent means served to bring forward a philosophy of "right-living".

These three related questions, of keeping issues separate, being satisfied with limited gains as long as the principle is won, and emphasising means
as much as ends, have been widely discussed in the literature on Gandhi.

**Truth-Force and the Importance of the Religious Vow**

There is a fourth question, however, which must be introduced as well if we are to understand the impact of a method which employed nonviolent means for limited objectives on particular issues. This is the determination to gain a victory once a struggle has been launched without even contemplating the possibility of defeat. Gandhi continually insisted on the infallibility of his satyagraha method.

In order to understand this in secular terms, it is tempting to notice how strong is the emphasis on Will in Gandhi's method. Starving mill workers vow not to return to work until they have won a victory; farmers vow to forfeit their ancestral lands if necessary. When the workers in Ahmedabad weakened, Gandhi himself took a vow that he would share their conditions by starving himself until their sacrifice was recognised.

Such an explanation goes only half-way to explaining Gandhi's method, however. Gandhi's absolute determination not to give in on a campaign once launched was allied to a belief that the strength to maintain the fight comes from God. Taking a religious vow to struggle until some amelioration or advantage was won was not, as cynics argue, simply an opportunist move to bind ignorant people to a course of action which otherwise they would think better of and slide out of. In the vow, and in the successful outcome of struggles where people had vowed that they would not give in, Gandhi saw the means of enabling people to bring their most profound sense of spiritual rectitude into politics. In victory, not only would their self-confidence soar, but also their belief in the power of the spirit, or as Gandhi came to express it more and more, truth.
CHAPTER 9: Page 349

Here then we come to the core of satyagraha - which has often been translated as "truth-force" or "soul-force". Gandhi tried hard in practice not to overemphasise the power of the human soul to force change in the political world. But (i) on a specific, carefully-defined issue, (ii) where the objectives of the campaigners had been limited to the least they could reasonably demand, (iii) if the struggle was conducted scrupulously in a nonviolent spirit without recourse to trickery or manipulation and (iv) with a willingness to suffer to the limit without compromise, then (v) the human soul could exercise power and force changes in the world of politics.

This was Gandhi's "truth-force" or "soul-force", conceived and organised as a novel experiment in political action. It was a fragile technique because it was so poorly understood and so little tried as a conscious method. Gandhi remained fascinated by this experiment throughout his life, convinced that if it was applied with enough skill it could never fail. However, as we have argued in this study, he came to realise that he had been overconfident in promoting it as a method on the conflict side in campaigns of civil resistance. Increasingly he placed stress on campaigns of satyagraha which were constructive in nature, designed to change social conditions directly, rather than competing in the fraught arena of conventional politics.

Numerous writers have defined truth-force before. In particular, Iyer has stressed the importance of the vow in satyagraha. But perhaps no-one has emphasised in quite this way how fundamental was the combination of a limited issue and absolute determination to its success. These first conscious experiments by Gandhi were expressly limited in their scope in order to match their chances of success to the moral strength of the satyagrahis. If this is accepted, then the
problems of organising satyagraha on a national scale, particularly in its more contentious form of civil disobedience, become obvious. Where the spirit of the people cannot be concentrated on a particular issue and their struggle conducted in something approximate to the rules developed by Gandhi, then the "truth-force" method cannot work.

The Slow Build-Up and Offensive Action

This points to a final feature of Gandhi's method which has been explored in this study, namely the change of approach he adopted to initiating satyagraha on a national scale. Whereas with the Rowlatt Satyagraha the campaign was launched with plans for widespread individual civil disobedience, during Noncooperation the launch of aggressive civil disobedience was delayed and delayed and then finally abandoned altogether.

My belief is that the restriction order placed on Gandhi during the Rowlatt Satyagraha caused him (probably consciously) to try to repeat the defiance which had worked so well for him two years earlier in Champaran. The disastrous results of this symbolic resistance, however, caused him to rethink his approach. The slow development and build-up of the Noncooperation movement should be seen as more mature example of Gandhi's method of organising at a national level. This was the approach he adopted in the first sustained all-India campaign which established his leadership of the nationalist movement. What it involved was a progressive series of steps for, first, mobilising the nationalist elite and directing them to the villages where real issues for the future of India lay; second, consolidating the links achieved between full-time idealistic workers and villagers in a programme to develop organisation and expand constructive work; third, moving onto defensive civil disobedience when the Raj tried to restrict the activities of Congress volunteers; and fourth preparing to launch aggressive civil disobedience in a limited area when the nation was ready.
Thus the essence of the revised method was a long-drawn-out period of mobilisation and preparation, building up enthusiasm, unity and constructive achievement until the right "atmosphere" for civil disobedience had been achieved. It was no longer assumed - as Gandhi had in 1919 - that satyagraha would take the people by storm. Defensive disobedience, the defiance of government restrictions on their "legitimate" activity, was permitted on an individual rather than mass basis by Gandhi. Aggressive civil disobedience, the deliberate breaking of a law chosen by Gandhi at the right moment to escalate the confrontation, was held back as a last resort for when the movement was thoroughly prepared to support and sustain nonviolent discipline.

Case examples selected by Bondu rant in her authoritative study of the satyagraha method give the impression that Gandhi favoured exemplary civil disobedience as his method of mobilising a mass nonviolent movement. This was the technique employed in the only two national struggles she describes, the Rowlatt Satyagraha and the Salt Satyagraha in 1930. Gene Sharp in his valuable study of the 1930-1932 movement in Gandhi Wields The Weapon of Moral Power also implies by his selection and treatment that Gandhi favoured aggressive civil disobedience. In Sharp's The Politics of Nonviolent Action almost all his references to all-India actions organised by Gandhi are to this period, which Sharp had studied in depth. This means that two of the most influential authorities on nonviolent action in the West, do not take account explicitly of the principal national struggle by which Gandhi established his position in India.

Rowlatt and the Salt Satyagraha are the best known examples of Gandhi's method in the West. Their reputation has, however, in my view, helped give nonviolent activists in the West a misleading impression of how Gandhi's satyagraha campaigns were constructed.
The crucial point is that Rowlatt was a failure and that the Salt Satyagraha followed ten years of preparation led by Gandhi, including principally the major initial mobilisation achieved by Noncooperation from 1920-1922. It is beyond the scope of this study to develop this contention further - but the argument that the Gandhian method places much less emphasis on dramatic civil disobedience than is usually supposed, is well supported in this thesis.

Satyagraha in Action

In only four pages of her book Conquest of Violence, Joan Bondurant has summarised what she calls "The Essentials of Satyagraha in Action". Derived from earlier Gandhian scholars, this summary first published nearly thirty years ago is still generally accepted as the best practical description of Gandhi's method.\(^2\)

Bondurant herself makes no great claims for this section of her work. She writes:

"If one were to lay out a handbook for the conduct of a mass satyagraha campaign based upon the experience with satyagraha in India, the three first chapters might well deal with (1) fundamental rules governing the campaign, (2) the code of discipline, and (3) the steps through which the campaign is to be pursued. Among the points which should enter into such a guide are those outlined below."\(^3\)

It is perhaps surprising that such a modest and, as the author herself suggests, incomplete presentation of Gandhi's method has not been re-evaluated and tested subsequently.

It is not intended to examine here the nine points of her proposed "chapter 2", the code of discipline, which Bondurant has taken from a document which Gandhi prepared for those taking part in civil disobedience in 1930. Even so, a code of discipline prepared specifically for Congress volunteers from differing political backgrounds who were taking part in a campaign of nonviolent direct action is bound to be different from that suggested for "life-satyagrahis" living in the ashrams and going out to engage in
constructive work. Also, the discipline for this type of aggressive civil disobedience will not be the same as for conducting a hartal or a procession or a public meeting. Thus Bondurant's summary of the discipline for satyagraha is incomplete and deserves further investigation and amplification.

The other two "chapters" of Bondurant's imaginary handbook do fall more squarely within the framework of this thesis and demand closer examination. Possibly a real handbook would adopt a slightly different structure. Thus Sharp's *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* is divided into three broad sections - the first on political premisses, the second on methods, and the third on dynamics. We will follow Bondurant's framework, however, and see how well it encompasses the general conclusions of our study.

Bondurant's first "handbook chapter" on "fundamental rules" contains nine points. Adapted and elaborated from N.K. Bose in his *Studies in Gandhism*, these rules can be grouped under three broad headings. First, those concerned with preparation for and sustaining a struggle:

1. Self-reliance at all times.
2. Initiative in the hands of the satyagrahis.
3. Propagation of the objectives, strategy and tactics of the campaign.
4. Reduction of demands to a minimum consistent with truth.

Second, there is the conduct of the struggle:

5. Progressive advancement of the movement.
6. Examination of weaknesses within the satyagraha group.
7. Persistent search for avenues of cooperation with the adversary on honourable terms.

Third, the basis for a settlement:

8. Refusal to surrender essentials in negotiation.
9. Insistence upon full agreement on fundamentals before accepting a settlement.
CHAPTER 9: Page 354

If we examine each of these in turn, we will see that indeed a number of important "rules" as demonstrated in this thesis are either underemphasised or omitted. First, there is the question of the basic orientation of those taking part in satyagraha. For Gandhi the first question often was "Are you prepared to die?" or "Are you prepared to go to jail?" There was also the insistence that those taking part in the campaign should give up their privileges and identify with the peasantry by some form of practical action. Thus our first additional rule might be: Reorientation of satyagrahis to face hardship and to identify with the poor. Second, Bondurant is certainly right to emphasise self-reliance - that is, for example, strikers supporting themselves from their own resources, rather than launching a strike fund. But in a list of Gandhian rules there should surely be a greater emphasis on constructive work - that is, a daily discipline which is not only a symbolic act of identification with the poor and with the national struggle itself but also an occasion for meditation and quiet. This rule can be stated as: A daily discipline of constructive work. Third, the demands of the campaign should indeed be reduced to a minimum consistent with truth, but the issue itself should be specific and practical rather than general and remote. Also, the campaign should remain focused on the specific issue and not combine with other campaigns for the sake of political advantage. This can be stated: The issue should be specific and practical and should not be combined with other issues for the sake of gaining wider campaigning support. Finally, once the issue is defined and the demands set, satyagrahis should pledge themselves never to give in, whatever the penalty, until the principle expressed in the demand is met. This fundamental determination to act without fear of the consequences to oneself is absolutely basic to "truth-force" and must be underlined. This rule may read: Circulate a solemn pledge which will commit the satyagrahis to maintain the struggle whatever the consequences for themselves.

The second set of rules relate to the conduct of a campaign. We may add,
first, to the rule about progressive advancement of the movement, a corollary that where the movement has not reached the requisite level of awareness and discipline for the next stage, then ways of extending the campaign at its present level must be found. Thus: **Delay advancement to next stage if movement is not prepared.** A further corollary is that where it proves impossible to hold the movement to the requisite level of discipline and concentration for applying the satyagraha technique, but on the other hand the movement appears to be slipping out of control, then there should be a willingness to suspend the next stage of the campaign or even to call off the campaign. Thus: **Willingness to suspend the campaign if no further advancement can be made.** Again, as a further rule, all actions of the satyagrahi are symbolic in the sense that they represent the movement and effect ultimately the reputation and fortune of the whole movement - so they must be polite and civil, by which Gandhi meant that they should represent the highest ideals of citizenship. Thus: **All action by satyagrahis is symbolic and must represent the highest ideals of the movement.**

When we come to the basis for a settlement, one aspect of cooperation with the opponent should be further emphasised: that is the willingness to surrender the campaign to third-party arbitration where this will enable the opponent to recognise the principle in the satyagrahis' case with the least loss of face. Thus: **Willingness to seek third-party arbitration.**

The third proposed "chapter" in Bondurant's handbook is derived from Shridharani's *War Without Violence* and lists nine "Steps in A Satyagraha Campaign". It is a descriptive classification of the stages in a satyagraha struggle to which the rules we have just discussed apply. Bondurant says that these steps are for a movement "against an established political order" but they could be adapted to "other conflict situations."
They are:

1. Negotiation and arbitration.
2. Preparation of the group for direct action.
3. Agitation.
4. Issuing of an ultimatum.
5. Economic boycott and forms of strike.
7. Civil disobedience.
8. Usurping of the functions of government.

Perhaps the most important point in addressing this schema is to observe that it is unlikely to fit any satyagraha campaign in its entirety. To take two examples, the Champaran satyagraha began with stage (7), civil disobedience, when Gandhi refused to be externed from the area. Once Gandhi was permitted to stay and conduct an investigation, the agitational stage (3) was entered; followed by stage (1), negotiation and arbitration; then in some respects stage (8), usurping of the functions of government, and stage (1) again, negotiation and arbitration. A settlement was reached and no further action was necessary.

Noncooperation (1920-1922) was different, however. The first four stages were gone through over a period of months in 1920 up to the ultimatum in July. Then stages (6) and (5), noncooperation and economic boycott, were begun and were sustained for many months as the main body of the campaign. Stage (7), civil disobedience, took place only defensively in defiance of restrictions on picketing, the selling of literature and rights of assembly - and the campaign was suspended without taking up aggressive civil disobedience.

In some respects, Shridharani's schema can best be applied to the three all-India campaigns of 1920-1922, 1930-33 and 1940-42 considered as three stages in one struggle. How useful it is in its entirety for
analysing more limited campaigns on a smaller scale is debatable. For example, Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad all ended in arbitration, that is, stage (1).

Omitted from the Shridharani-Bondurant list is the underlying bedrock of preparation for civil resistance in a programme of constructive work. There is also insufficient emphasis on conscientious and comprehensive investigation to prepare a cast-iron case, building links between different sections of the movement and mobilising support. Missing too is the vitally important step of the pledge. Also missing is the important distinction we have found between defensive and aggressive civil disobedience as distinct stages in the development of a satyagraha movement. And to repeat again, in a campaign which falls short of a revolutionary objective, the most likely outcome of a satyagraha will be arbitration, rather than parallel government.

There are further qualifying issues which could be explored as further "chapters" of a satyagraha handbook. One is the question of scale. First, whether the action is local, regional or national in scope. Second, if national, whether it is conducted simultaneously across the nation or concentrated symbolically in a particular region or one locality. Third, whether it is a mass action (either dispersed or concentrated); or a small group action; or action taken by individuals; or by a leader or leaders personally.

Another key dimension concerns the question of the political orientation or sophistication of the participants. Are they full-time satyagrahis who may be living in Gandhian ashrams or are they political nationalists who have accepted nonviolent discipline for the duration of the struggle only? On similar lines, is the campaign based around a coalition of
"pure" satyagrahis and "tactical" satyagrahis, or is it made up exclusively of one group or the other? Again, have different tactics been selected for different sections of the movement? For example, are particular actions being asked of leading members of the nationalist elite, or of the educated classes generally? Are particular expectations placed on self-employed shop-keepers, or industrial owners, or mill-workers? Some caste-groups, some provincial or language groups, some classes owning land or some who are landless, some religious groups - are different tactics and programmes designed to mobilise these different elements? All these gradations give a sense of a movement which has to be planned and organised in the real world - and which does not therefore have anything like a uniform programme or strategy, but must be flexible and adaptable to circumstances. The point is that Gandhi was not afraid to make distinctions according to capacity or position when developing strategy and tactics for campaigns.

Other issues for the organiser of satyagraha which might form part of "chapters" in a handbook include questions of timing: that is, how is an organiser of Gandhi's stature able to "know" when is the right moment to propose an all-India hartal or to launch a Triple Boycott? Such questions of judgment and intuition are notoriously difficult to pin down - but Gandhi developed a method of "testing" by observing the conduct of public demonstrations, especially hartals, or the take-up of his campaigns of constructive work, or the number of signatures to a pledge, or contributors to a fund.

Yet again, how are the issues to be taken up selected? Gandhi, as we have seen, concentrated on limited issues rather than taking up the main issue, gearing "truth-force" to the practical capacity of the satyagrahis. Fundamental seem to have been questions of local initiative, organisation and self-reliance. Thus he fought hard for the boycott of foreign cloth
only, rather than all goods. Clothing was selected as the item for boycott and home production, rather than sugar or other goods. Mobilising the peasantry to national self-consciousness and developing effective organisation was a major consideration. Production of clothing was chosen as the key to mobilising on a national scale, rather than housing or improvement of food production or land-redistribution or labour organising.

There is then much subtlety and flexibility in Gandhi's use of the satyagraha method. My purpose in comparing some of the issues raised by this study with the outline of satyagraha provided by Bondurant has been to demonstrate a principal argument of the thesis. That is, that by studying Gandhi as an organiser (dynamically, in his context) we can gain fresh insights into his method and a deeper understanding of it. Also, we have seen how the move from local to national organising faced Gandhi with a number of problems which forced him to adapt and clarify his methods. A third argument has been that the principal authorities on nonviolent action in the west have largely ignored the importance of constructive work in Gandhi's method. It is to this that we shall finally turn.

The Place of Constructive Programme in Satyagraha

Satyagraha has been neatly described by Shridharani as "Gandhi's method of fighting the British". This is the way in which the term is normally used, to describe a nonviolent fight, so that to talk of "a satyagraha" is to refer to a battle with a beginning and an end fought by nonviolent means; or more rarely a campaign encompassing a number of such battles. The term has spread into general usage in India where many campaigns which do not involve the use of violence have come to be called "satyagrahas".

Bondurant, however, following Gandhi, has distinguished strictly between "satyagrahas" which follow the scrupulous rules for the conduct of these struggles laid down by the Mahatma and "duragrahas" or "passive resistance" where the activists do not resort to violence but the campaign is not
shaped by Gandhi's philosophy and guidelines. Against this, the general tendency of western scholars, most notably Sharp, has been to ease the study of nonviolent action out of the limits and some of the philosophical biases established by Gandhi. Nonviolent action, as defined by Sharp, promotes change as a result of persuasion, accommodation or coercion. Satyagraha, on the other hand, when conducted according to Gandhi's rules, relies principally on persuasion, is reluctant to settle for accommodation, and seeks always to avoid coercion.

What is common to both approaches - those looking at satyagraha in its "pure" form, and those taking a wider view of nonviolent action - is that in focusing on the question of conflict they have neglected a large area of the technique of nonviolent action as developed by Gandhi. "Satyagraha", in its second widely accepted usage, refers to the broad philosophy of truth-force developed by Gandhi, a philosophy which was adopted by "life-satyagrahis" who went to live in ashrams, engaged in personal religious and other disciplines, and accepted a public role as social and community workers. Bondurant says we should "rigorously" distinguish satyagraha as a technique of action from "those specific considerations of right living with which Gandhi also concerned himself". It is my contention that not only does this distinction diminish Bondurant's presentation of the satyagraha method and make it hard to understand how it worked. Also, it seems to me, the theorists of nonviolent action who treat satyagraha as an approach unsuited to western conditions have distorted our understanding of the technique by presenting Gandhi's experiments selectively. It is not necessary to hold to Gandhi's full philosophy of satyagraha to recognise that programmes of constructive work are essential to the method of nonviolent action developed by Gandhi. Gandhi's campaigns of civil resistance, certainly at a national scale, would have been impossible without complementary campaigns of constructive work. The two were completely interlinked in his method of satyagraha, which should be seen as a
method of making social and political change beyond its significance as a conflict technique. Thus one important conclusion of this study, from a careful examination of Gandhi's method, is that the technique approach to nonviolent action should be broadened to include consideration of methods and campaigns which had little directly to do with conflict. More narrowly, another conclusion is that Gandhi's method and practice of satyagraha should be recognised in a wide range of campaigns which he launched in India, including the swadeshi campaign in 1919, its re-emergence in the campaign of Noncooperation just over a year later, and the development of these early initiatives into the mature constructive programme.

By studying Gandhi as an organiser we have been able to step back from one common approach which is to look at him as a nonviolent general or warrior. The other conventional view is to see him as a philosopher of right-living training followers in ashram disciplines and projecting for the wider society a vision of a decentralised politics based in a rural and craft-based economy. In between these views, Gandhi stands in this study as a consummate political activist and organiser who had an original perspective on how to build and direct a movement for nonviolent social and political change.

Gandhi's method of organising satyagraha can be presented in the following table: 37
### Chapter 9: Page 362

Some Examples of Gandhi’s Method of Organising Satyagraha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructive Programme</th>
<th>Mass Action (Dispersed or Concentrated)</th>
<th>Representative or Individual Action</th>
<th>Personal Action by the Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spinning, weaving, wearing swadeshi cloth</td>
<td>Key leaders take up spinning or wearing khadi; ashrams founded to spread campaigns</td>
<td>Gandhi makes speeches, writes articles; sets targets; opens swadeshi stores; vows to wear only loin cloth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National schools</td>
<td>Gujarat leads national schools campaign</td>
<td>Presidency of Gujarat National University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive to build up Congress membership, raise funds</td>
<td>Establishment of local and provincial Congress organisation</td>
<td>Speeches setting targets and target dates, coining slogans etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Resistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strike of mill-hands in Ahmedabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowlett hartal and processions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycott of elections, Politicians withdraw from elections, lawyers from courts, resignation of honours, teachers resign etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processions; boycott of royal visit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What the table illustrates is the balance between constructive work and civil resistance in Gandhi's satyagraha method, each complementing the other. The presence of three integral parts of the programma of Noncooperation - promotion of swadeshi cloth, national schools and the Congress membership drive - on the "constructive" side indicates the important place of constructive work in a major all-India satyagraha campaign.

What the table also demonstrates is that Gandhi used broadly the same strategy and tactics in organising the two sides of satyagraha. He was able to make an enormous personal contribution as leader by virtue of unconventional as well as conventional initiatives and he sought mass participation in both constructive and "obstructive" or civil resistances campaigns. But especially important to his method was the range of exemplary activities taken up by selected individuals, groups, districts or even regions. This differentiation between the lesser expectations placed on a mass movement and the much greater requirements made on a smaller "representative" or select grouping is fundamental to his method.

In his The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Sharp describes with great perception a key element in nonviolent strategy and tactics which he calls "the indirect approach to the opponents' power".

"In nonviolent action there is no attempt to combat (the government's troops, police, prisons and the like) by using the same type of instruments, as would be the case if both sides were using violence. Instead, in strategic terms, the nonviolent groups counters this expression of the opponent's power indirectly, in various ways ... Nonviolent struggle carries indirect strategy ... to the point where the military opponent is confronted not only with differing strategies but with a contrasting technique of struggle and non-military 'weapona system'. Nonviolent action involves opposing the opponent's power, including his police and military capacity, not with the weapons chosen by him, but by quite different means."

Yet Sharp makes no mention of one of the most obvious and brilliant examples of this in the strategy which Gandhi pursued in India, the programmes of
constructive work. These were an integral part of Gandhi's "indirect" method.

In many respects it would be interesting to compare Gandhi's organising methods with those of socialist or Marxist organisers or revolution by guerrilla warfare. There is the same concern to choose the ground carefully and to avoid major set-piece confrontations which the movement will lose. There is too the same insistence on integrating the political with the "conflict" sides of the struggle, seeing in the political mobilisation of the peasantry a crucial weapon and a basis for managing and reordering society once the immediate conflict is over.

If we could learn to study Gandhi as a practical strategist immersed in the immediate political issues of his society, then we might see ways of filling some of the glaring gaps in the development of nonviolent action in the west. Gandhi didn't set out to abolish war or to find a substitute for it. Such projects would be altogether too grandiose for him. His object was to offer a practical method and a vision to the people of his country so that they could improve their society and the tenor of their political activity. He saw no limits in theory to the application of this method and philosophy - but where it began and ended in practice was in the capacity of ordinary people to believe in themselves and to practice self-reliance. This gave him his main task as an organiser. And his achievement suggests that if we want nonviolent action to fill the great role as substitute for violence which has been claimed for it, then the most important starting point is to develop a perspective and a programme which link it to the most pressing, immediate concerns of ordinary people. The social programme of nonviolence precedes, complements and continues on from its use as a conflict technique.
REFERENCES


2. For a useful discussion of constructive programme, see Dhawan, op cit, pp 190-208.


5. ibid p 180

6. ibid p xiv

7. Gregg, op cit, see chapter 10 "The Need for Training" and chapter 11, "Training".

8. Shridharani, op cit


10. ibid

11. ibid, pp 219-221 and pp 77-86


14. Sharp, Gandhi as a Political Strategist, pp 251-252fn


16. Bose, op cit, p 86; Sharp, Gandhi As a Political Strategist, p 86

17. Dhawan, op cit, p 193. Dhawan quotes Gandhi as holding this view in 1930.


19. The text of the Congress Volunteers' pledge drawn up by Gandhi in 1921 is in Dhawan, op cit, p 211.

20. Sharp, op cit

21. ibid, pp 43-59
REFERENCES


24. For a discussion of individual and mass civil disobedience, both defensive and aggressive, see Dhawan, op cit, pp 242-247.


29. ibid, p 38.

30. See ibid, p 237 fn 4.

31. See ibid, p 237 fn 6.

32. Shridharani, op cit, p 15.


37. Rothermund, op cit, pp 66 et seq, attempts a more complex breakdown of all-India satyagraha. Within this, she distinguished the same three types as I have, which she terms "mass satyagraha", "representative satyagraha" and "individual satyagraha". But I find confusing her use of the term "individual" to describe Gandhi's personal satyagrahas as leader: the 1940-1941 satyagraha was indeed a representative form of satyagraha, but is known as Individual Satyagraha.

Principal Sources

Bamford, P.C. Histories of the Noncooperation and Khilafat Movements, Delhi: Deep Publications, 1974 (This is a reprint of the Government of India Press edition, 1925)


Bose, Nirmal Kumar, Studies in Gandhism, Indian Associated Publishing Company, 1947


BIBLIOGRAPHY: Page 370


Prasad, Rajendra, At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi, Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1955.


Yajnik, Indulal, Gandhi As I Know Him, Bombay: G.G. Bhat 1933 (Reprinted in a second extended edition: Delhi: Danish Mahal, 1943.)
BIBLIOGRAPHY: Page 371

Other Works Consulted


*Young India 1919-1922*, Madras: S.Ganesan, 1922


Greenlees, D. Gandhi Ashram, 1935


BIBLIOGRAPHY: Page 373


Shelvankar, K.S. The Problem of India, London: Penguin, 1940

Shukla, Chandrachanker (Ed), Incidents of Gandhi's Life, Bombay: Vora & Co. 1949.


Soddy, Frederick, et al. Reflections on Gandhi's "Hind Swaraj" by Western Thinkers, Bombay: Theosophy Company (India) Ltd. for the Aryan Path, 1948.

