CHAPTER II

GANDHI, NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT AND THE REVOLUTIONARIES

Gandhi arrived in India, almost around that time when the early phase of the revolutionary movement was at a crescendo. The Congress till then, was only an elitist organisation attracting little attention of the masses, whereas the revolutionaries had been successful in holding their attention through their heroic acts. The Indian national movement from 1915 onwards, therefore, came to be influenced by two main currents represented by Gandhi and the revolutionaries. Gandhi insisted on non-violence being the heart and soul of his satyagraha and the revolutionaries were bent upon proving that the gospel of violence was a necessary pre-condition for securing political freedom; while Gandhi preached one should learn to hate the sin and not the sinner, the revolutionaries firmly expressed the view that the sinner should also be appropriately punished for his sinful activities; while Gandhi promised that his dealings would be open, the revolutionaries believed in secret plots and overt activities.

This chapter would, therefore, deal with the activities of Gandhi as well as the revolutionaries between 1915 to 1920 and their coming together for a brief spell (1920-22). It will be interesting to know why the
revolutionaries accepted Gandhi initially, and how deep was their participation in his first major movement.

**REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE 1920**

The revolutionaries in this phase were mainly interested in an armed uprising and making renewed attempts at getting foreign aid in the form of arms and ammunition. Gopal Haldar said, "the tasks conceived by the revolutionaries at this time was to seduce the Indian section of the (armed) forces posted in India and Burma; (2) to throw into the country the Ghadr element of the Punjabi revolutionaries who began to return to India for this purpose; (3) to effectively carry out the Indo-German plot for the shipment of German arms for Indian revolutionaries particularly those in Bengal, and (4) lastly, to co-ordinate activities of the societies in India ..."¹

While the revolutionaries of Bengal were sending out emissaries to foreign countries for obtaining arms, the revolutionaries of Punjab and the United Provinces were moving towards organising an uprising involving the army. The political climate of Punjab at that time was also favourable. A large number of emigrants who were returning to India in batches from the United States and Canada were in

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touch with some of the revolutionary groups. Prompted by the circumstances, they carried on with terrorist acts and dacoities. They had to depend upon Bengal for making and using bombs. They also endeavoured to win over the personnel of the armed forces.

Benaras was also developing as an important centre between Punjab and Bengal. Sachindra Nath Sanyal, who dissociated himself from the 'Youngmen’s Association' in 1913, joined hands with Rash Behari Bose and became his principal lieutenant. Vinayak Rao Pingle a friend of Sanyal, Vishnu Ganesh Pingle an inmate of the Jugantar Ashram of Lala Hardayal at San Francisco, Satyen Sen a fellow inmate and also a member of the Jugantar group, all joined hands with Rash Behari Bose. Kartar Singh Sarabha was another prominent leader who returned to Punjab at this time. Under the guidelines provided by Rash Behari Bose, it was planned that the general uprising would be on 21st of February, 1915. According to M.N. Gupta, "The most prominent item in this programme was winning over the Army, and, in cantonments at Meerut, Kanpur, Allahabad, Faizabad, Benaras, Lucknow the revolutionaries had infiltrated." It was decided that two groups of emigrants from Lahore and Amritsar should reach the lines in the evening, join the

others of the regiment and seize the magazine. Then, was to follow the attack on the artillery and a massacre of European officials. This uprising at Lahore was to be the signal for the other places.

Sanyal was to stay put at Benaras to look after the uprising in the United Provinces. Vishnu Ganesh Pingle was sent by Rash Behari Bose with a box full of bombs to Meerut. But as planned, the uprising could not take place in Lahore because the government came to know of the plans. Rash Behari Bose tried to prepone it to 19th, but this information was also divulged to the government. It, therefore, cracked down on the conspirators, and the uprising of 1915 fizzled out. Though Rash Behari Bose escaped, other leaders were caught and tried in the Lahore Conspiracy Case. Kartar Singh Sarabha and Vishnu Ganesh Pingle were awarded the death sentence with other Ghadr leaders. They were executed on 27th April, 1915. The Government also unearthed the Benaras branch of the plot and initiated the Benaras Conspiracy Case. Sanyal was given the sentence of transportation of life. Rash Behari Bose was last seen in India in May, 1915.

The Jugantar was the foremost organisation that believed in acquiring foreign aid for effecting a revolution in the East. A promise had already been made to this group through one Jiten Lahiri in 1914. In spite of the fact that
Anushilan Samiti had a well-knit organisation all over Bengal, it developed cracks in its relationship with the Jugantar on the question of Indo-German collaboration. Under the leadership of Jatin Mukherjee the Jugantar members carried out taxi-cab dacoities because they needed money for securing arms and they further prepared the people for an armed rising.

Detailed plans were chalked out. Balasore was the place where the consignment of arms was to arrive. The plan was to blow up three principal bridges making it impossible for any outside help to recover Bengal that would be freed in the course of the uprising. But the promised consignments never arrived. The British authorities had unearthed the plans and the Bengal police came to know about the impending operations. Jatin, the leader of this group of revolutionaries, was killed in direct action in September, 1915.

Irrespective of the initial setback to their efforts, Jugantar tried to revive the operations once again. Many of the main workers of Jugantar, however, were arrested by 1916 and this shattered the hopes of the Bengal revolutionaries whose activities started decreasing after this period. The government too firmly dealt with the revolutionaries. Armed with draconian powers, conferred by the Defence of India Act, it could hold summary trial of the revolutionaries and detain them without trial.
The revolutionaries, however, continued to be active in Bengal, Bihar and U.P. The Jugantar members, carried out dacoities in and around Calcutta and also committed two murders. In January 1916, a Sub-Inspector Bhattacharya, was murdered by Deven Chaudhary of Sylhet and Sudhin Bose of Mymensingh. Basanta Kumar Chatterjee of the Intelligence Branch was shot dead at Bhowanipur by a party of five young Bengalis.

About Bihar, Jata Shankar Jha says, "A period of considerable activity began after 1916 - the principal revolutionaries Rabati Nag, Phani Bhusan Bhattacharji, Nalini Bagchi and others instilled revolutionary ideals in the minds of the local students. Liberty leaflets were introduced and circulated."^3

The revolutionary spirit was kept alive in the U. P. by one Gendalal Dixit, of Etawah. He was instrumental in starting a society by the name of "Matravedi Sanstha". "The members of this group committed a daring dacoity in the Mainpuri District, on 11th November 1917.

Thus,in spite of the internment of scores of persons, revolutionary crime could not be wiped out, and increased violence in 1916 and 1917 created a situation that was sufficiently disturbing. It resulted in the appointment of the Rowlatt Committee, by the Governor General-in-Council

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with the approval of the Secretary of State for India under the presidentship of the Hon’ble Mr. Justice Rowlatt in order,

1) To investigate and report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the Revolutionary movement in India.

2) To examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen in dealing with such conspiracies and to advise as to the legislation, if any, necessary to enable Government to deal effectively with them.\[4\]

Such harsh measures taken by the government definitely resulted in bringing down the revolutionary crimes in 1918 and 1919. While the government was adopting highly repressive measures and initiated steps to counteract them, Gandhi was emerging after his return from South Africa as the leader of the Indian masses with a new message.

**GANDHI’S EMERGENCE AS AN UNCONVENTIONAL LEADER**

Armed with a new technique, that Gandhi had acquired in South Africa, he found it easy to entrench himself firmly in the Indian political scene between 1915-1920. His greatest assets at that time were his willingness to wait for a year to assess the Indian condition as advised by his political guru Gopala Krishna Gokhale, his predisposition to experiment

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with new ideas and finally his acceptance of the need for involving the masses in the national cause. The whole of the year 1915 and much of 1916 was spent by Gandhi in touring the length and breadth of India. He visited different institutions and met influential men. B.R. Nanda says, "During 1915 - the year of probation - Gandhi eschewed politics severely. In his speeches and writings during this period he confined himself to the reform of the individual and the society and avoided the issues which dominated Indian politics."\(^5\)

Gandhi, however, did not hesitate to express his opinions on violent activities if the occasion so demanded. While addressing a large gathering at the Student's Hall, College square at Calcutta, he declared that he had given careful attention to the anarchical crimes of the (Indian) youth and had concluded that some of them resorted to nefarious means, because they were afraid of being enslaved by other men. He expressed the opinion that the youth who resorted to dacoities and assassinations, were misguided and that the misguided zeal was a foreign growth in India. He pointed out that history had shown the ineffectuality of rebellions and so the youth, he felt should be fearless, sincere and open in their approach. He finally declared that he was ready to die with them if they were guided by the

At the same time he was attacked in the press and the public. One prominent attacker was H. V. Emery, who wrote an article in The Independent, an English daily, titled "Gandhi and his imitators," where he accused Gandhi of being a "secret political agitator." This article was reprinted in the New Indian Times, a daily newspaper. Gandhi's response was a letter to the editor of The Times of India, where he defended himself against the allegations of Emery.

Gandhi himself was also targeted by the government. In November 1915, he was arrested under the Defence of India Act and detained without trial for six months. The government claimed that he was a "dangerous agitator." Gandhi was later released and continued his nonviolent campaign against British rule. He said, "I consider this arrest a proof of my mistake in going to prison in 1914. It is better to remain outside prison and carry on the struggle from outside."

Thus, it is clear that even in the early days during 1915 and 1916 Gandhi's potentiality, as a new type of leader, who never wanted to endorse violence, who insisted on fearlessness and openness, was positively discernible. He identified fear to be the basic cause of the revolutionary activities and tried to persuade that such youth should keep away from violent political activities. Judith Brown opined, "What Gandhi was to make of this potential was only clear after 1916. By then, his period of silence and observation was over and he was ready to launch himself in public life."

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The very first incident that brought to light Gandhi’s willingness to identify himself with the masses occurred at Wadhwan in Maharashtra. There he came to know about the notorious Viramgam customs that involved hardship for the railway passengers. He raised the question at the Bombay Provincial Conference on October 23, 1916, began correspondence with the Bombay Government, and later got it removed.

Another incident of great importance was the struggle taken up by Gandhi on behalf of the peasants against the European Indigo planters at Champaran, where he applied his new technique. This first local mass struggle manifested that Gandhi could violate the laws, if warranted. He refused to leave Champaran when he was ordered to do so.

Kheda much nearer Gandhi’s home was the next scene of action in Gandhi’s career. An unusually steep rise in price and a bad crop of the season forced the people to seek relief from the land revenue demand. Gandhi himself said, "The Kheda Satyagraha marks the beginning of an awakening among the peasants of Gujarat, the beginning of their true political education."  

It was in Kheda that Gandhi moved a step further and taught the people to break the law of the land if it was unjustified. Judith Brown opined, "the Kheda satyagraha

helped to create a place for him, in the ranks of the politicians. The political nature of the Kheda agitation was reflected in Gandhi’s use of weapon ... the petition, the mass meeting, the public speech and the press."\(^{10}\)

The intervention of Gandhi in the affairs of the Ahmedabad mill workers, in 1918 was projected against the capitalists. It was here that he went to the extent of fasting for supporting the cause of the mill workers, and this resulted in an amicable settlement between the workers and the capitalists.

All the three satyagraha movements conducted by Gandhi in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad were significant events in as much as they showed in practice the main tenets of Gandhian techniques and ideology, that evolved in South Africa. Gandhi’s message of non-violence was the cornerstone of all these earlier struggles. They served as a prelude to his emergence of the Indian masses at the grass root level.

It was in 1919 that the first nation-wide mass struggle was initiated by Gandhi, against the introduction of the Rowlatt Bills on the basis of the finding and recommendations of the Sedition Committee in the Imperial Legislative Council on January 18, 1919. Out of the two bills that were introduced, one became a law in the third

\(^{10}\) Judith Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power, Indian Politics 1915-22*, op.cit., p. 103.
week of March. The bill passed was to last for three years and could be used only for the purpose of dealing with anarchical and revolutionary movements.

Gandhi however felt that it had a much wider scope and so decided that the time was most opportune to launch a nation-wide struggle. He warned the British Indian government that he would be forced to start satyagraha against such a measure because it was a step taken to curb the rights of not only the revolutionary elements but each and every Indian of the subcontinent.

In a manifesto Gandhi said, "I should conclude from the reports that secret violence is confined to isolated and very small parts of India and to a microscopic body of people. The existence of such men is truly a danger to society. But the passing of the Bills, designed to affect the whole of India and its people and arming the government with powers, out of all proportion to the situation sought to be dealt with, is a greater danger."\(^{11}\)

Gandhi thus perceived that the violence of the government was more intense and provided an outlet for the discontent and frustration of the people of India, by asking them to observe 30th of March 1919 as a day of protest and prayers, but later postponed it to 6th of April. Due to the last minute decision regarding the change in the date, the

\(^{11}\) Collected Works, op.cit., vol. XV, p. 121.
instructions could not reach every place. In Delhi the hartal was observed on 30th of March, whereas in other places the response to the call of hartal was evident only on the 6th of April. Surprisingly, the Rowlatt Satyagraha resulted in general disorder and outbreaks of violence, in Delhi, Punjab and Ahmedabad. The worst was in Punjab where it resulted in a stunning incident. General Dyer fired at an unarmed crowd, killing about 379 and injuring 1200 according to the official version. Unofficially, the number was much more. It roused the fury of the Indian masses.

After coming to know about the acts of violence, Gandhi called off the satyagraha on 18th of April. He wrote in his autobiography, "If those among whom I worked and whom I expected to be prepared for non-violence and self-suffering, could not be non-violent, satyagraha was certainly impossible." 12

Though, the people displayed a willingness to rise en masse for the national cause, the message of non-violence as envisaged by Gandhi had not yet filtered down to the grassroot level. He was gracious enough to accept his mistake and considered it of Himalayan magnitude, "because he had called upon the people to launch upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified themselves for it ..." 13 The

Rowlatt Satyagraha depicted him as an unconventional leader who had arrived at the central stage of Indian politics.

In the year 1918, surfaced a new movement started by the Indian Muslims in defence of the Caliph who was placed at a precarious position due to Turkey’s defeat in the hands of the Allies in the First World War. It started as a sympathetic wave and gradually developed into the Khilafat movement. Gandhi who had always considered Hindu-Muslim unity as a prerequisite for India’s secure future was ready to lend a helping hand to the Khilafat leaders - the Ali brothers. He, however, made it plain that they should accept non-violence as an inevitable and inseparable part of their struggle. But, the Muslims were ready to accept it only as a useful political weapon. In a joint conference of Hindus and Muslims held in November 1919, the situation rising out of the Khilafat betrayal was deliberated upon. Gandhi attended it and for the first time the word non-cooperation was used. *

Gandhi succeeded in inviting some Congress leaders to discuss the efficacy of non-cooperation when a meeting of the leaders of both the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress was convened in March 1920. He issued a historic manifesto on the Khilafat question in the same month, wherein he stated that he was against violence because of its utter futility. According to him, non-cooperation was the only

remedy because it was devoid of all violence and also the most effective. He further said that non-cooperation became a duty when cooperation meant degradation, humiliation or injury to one's religious sentiments. \(^{14}\)

While the leaders were pondering over the method of non-cooperation, on 14th of May, the proposed allied peace treaty with Turkey was published. It became clear that Jaziat-ul-Arab was not to be under the control of Turkey and the Khilafat was no longer to be recognised as the warden of the Muslim sanctuaries. As a result in the month of June the Central Khilafat Committee sent a representation to Chelmsford, the Viceroy. It stated "... we shall be obliged as from the first of August next to withdraw cooperation from the government and ask our co-religionists and Hindu brethren to do likewise."\(^{15}\)

While the Khilafat question was thus gaining momentum, under the guidance of Gandhi, the Punjab issue too was assuming greater importance. The government of India appointed Punjab Disorders Enquiry Committee with Lord Hunter as its President. This committee published its report on May 28, 1920 and the committee was divided in expressing its opinion. The report failed miserably in satisfying the


Indians. In addition, the committee appointed by the Congress "characterised the Jallianwala Bagh massacre as a calculated piece of inhumanity unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration." Many leaders, therefore, clamoured for the redressal of the Punjab grievances.

GANDHI'S NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

India, in the middle of 1920, thus faced an extraordinary situation. Gandhi had been accepted by the Khilafat leaders, as their guide; the Khilafat movement had come to occupy a premier position amongst the issues that were to be settled with the British government; the Punjab conflagration added fuel to the fire; a section of the Indian National Congress had started stressing the need for Swarajya due to the totally inadequate reform measures of 1919; the Rowlatt Act though not implemented had not yet been repealed and Gandhi had already suggested the possibility of using non-cooperation and the Muslims had agreed to it. It was but natural that the same method should also be extended to diffuse the other major issue, the Punjab wrong.

The AICC in the meanwhile had met on May 30, in Benaras and declared that the situation required the convening of a special Congress as early as possible and not

later then September 15, 1920 to consider the possible courses of action including non-cooperation for the redressal of the prevailing grievances. The policy of non-cooperation was decided at an all parties conference held in Allahabad on June 2, 1920. A Committee was appointed to chalk out a programme of the new movement. The Central Khilafat committee in a memorandum to the Viceroy gave an intimation that the Muslims under Gandhi’s guidance would start the Non-cooperation movement on first August 1920, if their requests were not granted.

Gandhi wrote in Navajivan, "Since there is no reason to hope that before August 1, either the Khilafat issue will have been satisfactorily solved or a revision of the peace terms promised, we must get ready to start non-cooperation."17 He further said that the non-cooperation committee would issue its statement regarding the steps to be taken. It was mentioned in the statement, "Should non-cooperation become necessary, the committee has decided upon the following as part of the first stage.

1. Surrender of all titles of honour and honorary offices.
2. Non participation in Government loans.
3. Suspension by lawyers of practice and settlement of civil disputes by private arbitration.

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5. Boycott of reformed councils.
6. Non-participation in Government parties and such other functions.
7. Refusal to accept any civil or military post in Mesopotamia, or to offer as Units for the army especially for service in the Turkish territories now being administered in violation of pledges.
8. Vigorous prosecution of swadeshi inducing the people at the time of this national and religious awakening, to appreciate their primary duty to their country, by being satisfied with its own productions and manufactures."18

On August 1, 1920, the Non-cooperation movement was launched by Gandhi even though the approval and ratification of his programme was yet to be given by the AICC. But Gandhi had absolute faith in his new weapon and wanted to show the nation, its unfailing effects. His programmes started filtering down to the people gradually. His tours of India and write ups in journals ensured the mass support for his new movement. Many of the P.C.Cs accepted Gandhi’s opinion that non-cooperation was the only way to deal effectively with the situation. While some provinces like Bihar and U.P. accepted all the programmes, there were others, like Bengal and Central Provinces that did not

approve of the boycott of councils because of the impending council elections in the month of November.

The phenomenal emergence of Gandhi as a political leader, the reservations with which some of the P.C.C.s approved Gandhi's programme, their decision to defer the implementation of some of its aspects and finally the stiff resistance put up by some leaders of the Congress on the question of council-entry altogether made the special session to be held at Calcutta in September 1920 a very momentous occasion.

A new element was added to the already existing, exciting political situation, in the form of the released political detenus. The viceroy of India was empowered to exercise Royal Clemency on behalf of the King emperor, to political offenders. This action on the part of the Government resulted in the release of many prominent revolutionaries who had been earlier detained under the Defence of India Act. The official report stated that "The total number of persons who benefited by the amnesty exceeded 1300."19 In Bengal alone where the special session of the Congress was to be held almost 538 persons were released. It was but natural that these politically inclined individuals should influence the working of Gandhi's programme. In fact, a considerable number of these revolutionaries were solidly

behind C.R. Das, who was a prominent leader of Bengal. These revolutionaries of Bengal thus released, belonged to both the Anushilan and Jugantar Party. Having been far away from the scene of action, they lacked organisation, and hence had no strategy or clear cut programme and so were not contemplating to counteract the government's activities. A Weekly report from the Central Intelligence Department quoted the conversation of a reliable informant with a North Bengal revolutionary leader. The leader had said that it was only by a revolution that they could secure their independence but the country was not fit for the preaching of revolutionary ideas for the moment, so as to avoid giving government the chance of crushing the movement in its inception.20

Mallikarjun Sharma opined, "In this situation they had to confront the rise, in the Indian political horizon, of an entirely new kind of leader, a non-violent revolutionary in the person of Gandhi. His proposed programme of non-cooperation involving the millions of ordinary people of the land was fraught with great potentialities even for the revolutionaries and they could not afford to ignore it."21

The appearance of Mahatma Gandhi had brought about a profound change in the political atmosphere of India. The


policy of petitions and representations on the part of the moderate leaders appeared to have reached a point of no return. The revolutionaries on the other hand needed time, to recuperate from the staggering blow, they had received. The prevailing circumstances made it abundantly clear that the choice before them was either to support Gandhi’s movement or keep away from the national movement in order to strengthen their cadres for further revolutionary activities. The revolutionaries of Bengal had learnt about Gandhi and his non-violent Non-cooperation movement even when they were still under detention, though they had no direct link with either the Khilafat question or the Punjab problem, for whose solution the movement was to be launched.

Guha, a member of the Jugantar party said that the Anushilan Samiti "did not allow so much of free thought and free activity, as was allowed in the Jugantar organisation. That is why as soon as the non-cooperation came ... we decided, on release we could join the Non-cooperation movement."22 Surendra Mohan Ghose belonging to the same organisation also stated that he had discussed the future plans in the jail with the other revolutionary prisoners and "the consensus was that if we were released we would also

22. A.C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, Acc. No. 382 p. 84, NMML, New Delhi.
have to join the Congress and plunge into the movement, to work among the masses, the people of our motherland." 23

Gandhi being conscious of their presence and importance made an attempt to carry them along with him in the national struggle. He wrote in Young India that non-violence was superior to violence and so the Indians should accept non-cooperation out of their strength. He invited the school of violence too, to give his programme a trial. He urged these who distrusted him, not to disturb the working of his struggle. 24

While writing about the assassination of a Deputy Commissioner Mr. Willoughby, by a Mussalman he said that it was madness to kill an innocent man. He wrote, "I have known many Hindus who have argued that it was the throwing of bombs which brought about the removal of the partition of Bengal. I know that many consider Dhingra to have been a martyr. The Sein Feiners openly practise murder and other forms of violence for the purpose of freeing their country from the English connection. Every assassin or incendiary is considered by them a hero. It is because I feared such a result in our midsts that I advised non-violent non-cooperation regarding the Khilafat. In my opinion, it is the

active and open preaching of non-cooperation which has prevented murders and assassinations in the land."²⁵

He appealed to the school of violence to desist from their activities and give his non-violent non-cooperation a trial, that it well-deserved. The revolutionaries of Bengal, where the special session of the Congress was to be held too were in a receptive mood. According to Surendra Mohan Ghose the revolutionaries of Jugantar and Anushilan were preparing for a political sufferers conference when the Congress Session was to be held. Surendra Mohan Ghose along with one Purna Das, another revolutionary, met Gandhi in connection with the resolution regarding the release of some prisoners. Gandhi, however seems to have answered that he was keen on sending people to jail but not in getting them released.²⁶

Guha said that he came out of the jail before the Calcutta session and gathered some workers of the Jugantar section to support the Non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji which was opposed by all the eminent leaders of Bengal. He also told, "when Gandhiji came to Calcutta," we met him. I personally met him and discussed with him and I said we shall support it, and for the time being, we shall suspend our

programme on violence." He further narrated "I distinctly recollect meeting Gandhi, Madan Mohan Malviya and Lajpat Rai. We discussed the non-cooperation programme with them and offered our whole hearted support to it. And we also discussed the withdrawal of warrants of arrests against five absconding political prisoners." 

Sunder Lal, another revolutionary of Bengal confirmed the same information that Gandhi did express a desire to meet as many old revolutionaries as possible and discuss the methods with them, and that he addressed them in a very affectionate way and appealed to them to give his non-violent experiment a chance for an year and then decide for themselves. Gandhi thus convinced the revolutionary element in the Indian politics to abide by the programmes that he would be bringing about, atleast for the time being by stating in the speech on the non-cooperation resolution that "If there is sufficient response to my scheme, I make bold to reiterate my statement that you can gain swarajya in the course of a year." 

27. A.C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, op.cit., p. 201.
28. Ibid., p. 139.
29. Sunder Lal Papers file No. 19, an article on "Terrorist Movement in India" p. 19, NMML, New Delhi.
Another major task in the hands of Gandhi on the eve of the Calcutta session was also to decelerate the apprehensions of the Congress leaders who had accepted non-cooperation but not the boycott of the councils. His proposal of a programme that had a common appeal to the congressmen as well as the revolutionaries however almost ensured his success in the session. B. Bhattacharya opined "Non-violence went a long way to satisfy the constitutional conscience while on the other hand non-cooperation satisfied the revolutionary conscience at least to some extent."  

The principal resolution in the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta from 4th to 9th of September was thus, the proposal of a direct action, non-violent non-cooperation, moved by Gandhi himself. Though hotly debated, it was passed by a narrow but conclusive majority in the Subject Committee. His resolution was however accepted with a convincing majority in the open session. Madhu Limaye summed up the situation in the Calcutta Congress thus. The United Provinces, Bihar and Bengal supported Gandhi; except the C.P. and Berar, Gandhi captured every Province. As against 395 votes for the opposition, Gandhi secured 551 votes in Bengal. In Bombay the combined forces of the leadership (of C.R. Das)
could muster only 93 votes as against 243 polled by Gandhi. The strength of the new doctrine was impressive.”

The programme of gradual withdrawal of support to the government as outlined by the non-cooperation committee in the month of July 1920 was ratified by the Congress in its special session at Calcutta. It was decided that in addition to the five fold boycott of titles, schools, courts, councils and foreign goods sufficient emphasis would be laid on the positive aspects of the movement. It meant the establishment of national institutes for providing education, setting up of arbitrary courts, insistance on Hindu Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, propaganda against liquor and other intoxicants and production of swadeshi goods. On the recommendation of C.R. Das and Vijayaraghavachariar Gandhi also included the demand of 'Swaraj' in the resolution. The question of participation in the election for the councils was set aside for the time being.

The special congress held at Calcutta, thus, assumes importance for various reasons. The members of the Congress approved of the direct action policy to be carried out by Gandhi. His resolution was accepted though the stalwarts of the Indian National Congress were not in favour of it. Gandhi rose to greater eminence and displayed that he could

mobilize support from different groups. Above all, there were some well known revolutionaries of Bengal who attended the session at Calcutta. "On the occasion of the special session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in September 1920, secret meetings of the members of the North Bengal party were held in Calcutta where the members had assembled ostensibly to attend the Congress. Ex.detenus Jatin Roy, Abhinash Roy, Jotin Hui and Suresh Bhattacharji were among those who attended the meetings. The same report also mentioned that the Jugantar members of the Rangpur party were taking keen interest in Gandhi’s movement and they agreed to join it. Surendra Mohan Ghose said that Srish Babu made him a delegate to the special session of the Congress in Calcutta and so he attended the session.

According to Guha, who had attended the Calcutta Session, the revolutionaries present in the session played a crucial role. He pointed out that Gandhi was comparatively a new comer and so the young men of Bengal helped in deciding the fate of the resolution on the Non-cooperation movement. He said, "with our support and, of course, with Gandhiji’s influence and political atmosphere there, the resolution was passed with an overwhelming majority. Thus, in a way,


Gandhiji was a gift of the revolutionary movement to the political movement of India."35" There is however no evidence to substantiate Guha’s claim that Gandhi was a product of the Revolutionary movement especially when Guha does not mention the kind of support that was rendered by the revolutionaries. There is no doubt about the presence of revolutionaries in Calcutta at that time. But to presume that a large number of them were present at that time to clinch the issue would be too far fetched. In fact, the role of the Muslims who attended the session was also not negligible.

The resolution passed in the Calcutta Congress however, was still to be confirmed in the regular session of Congress at Nagpur. The intervening period between the two sessions saw the gradual acceptance of the non-cooperation programme in different province. Tactful restraint on the part of the Congress leaders saved the situation for Gandhi when the elections were held for the reformed council in November 1920. Barring a few areas, the percentage of voters as well as the numbers of candidates fell greatly. Rushbrook Williams admitted in his report that "They (non-cooperationists) have been successful in causing educational dislocation to a considerable degree and in effectually preventing any member of the left wing Nationalist party from

gaining a seat in the New council."\textsuperscript{36} Pattabhi Sitaramayya also recorded that "nearly all Nationalist candidates who, in obedience to the Amritsar Congress Resolution, had announced their candidature for the Reformed Councils, and spent considerable time, labour and money on the campaign, immediately withdrew from the contest. The voters themselves ... at least 80% ... accepted the decision of the Congress and refrained from voting, and from not a few places empty ballot boxes were sent."\textsuperscript{37}

The country was witnessing major changes. The immense magnetism of Gandhi's personality, and the vulnerability of the young students to respond to the clarion call for the boycott of the educational institutions helped the Non-cooperation movement to gather momentum in spite of the stern opposition of leaders like Malaviya, Annie Beasant, C.R. Das and Lajpat Rai. The government decided to punish, those who had incited the public to violence, or had tampered with the loyalty of the army or of the police.

The Viceroy also appealed to the public to cooperate with the government in fighting against the evils of non-cooperation. In the meanwhile the AICC session that met in Bombay on 2nd October 1920 decided to initiate the collection

\textsuperscript{36} Rushbrook Williams, \textit{India in 1920}, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 57-8.

of two funds, (1) The all India Tilak Memorial Fund and (2) Swarajya Fund.

The revolutionaries of Bengal who belonged to the two rival militant groups Anushilan and Jugantar played an active role during the non-cooperation period. Probably there were attempts to bring the two groups together but it was not very successful. It is, however, true that some revolutionaries did start functioning in accordance with Gandhi’s wishes, immediately after the Calcutta session. A government report clearly mentioned "In Bengal, Mr. Jitendra Lal Banerjee, vakil Shyam Sunder Chakrabarti and exdetenu Lalit Mohan Ghosal ... have been carrying on the propaganda work in favour of Gandhi’s non-cooperation."38 The revolutionaries participated in the Non-cooperation movement, out of expediency. They did not approve of certain modules of the programme for example. Gandhi’s insistence, on non-violence being an integral part of his movement and it continued to be a point of discord between them and Gandhi. Another suggestion of Gandhi that some of them could not agree to, was the attainment of "Swaraj in one year". Guha confessed, "We had mental reservations about many of the programmes say about this non-violence, then "Swaraj in one year." We did not expect that Swaraj would come in one year ... But he

38. Home-Poll/Oct./51/Deposit/1920. Report by the Director, Central Intelligence, describing All India Congress meeting at Calcutta, NAI, New Delhi.
(Gandhi) gave us a programme with his assurance. He must have believed it. But I, with my own political perspective and conscience did not expect that within one year Swaraj would come.”

It is amazing that in spite of such mental reservations many belonging to the Jugantar group had decided to follow the programme of the Non-cooperation movement even before it was ratified by the Congress in its regular session. On the other hand, the Anushilan members still had difficulty in accepting the Gandhian programmes and they were probably ready to support C.R. Das. Guha agreed that the batch of the Anushilan workers who went with C.R. Das to Nagpur had already decided to oppose the Non-cooperation Movement. It was under these conditions that the regular session of the Congress was held at Nagpur in December 1920.

The Nagpur session too occupies a place of prominence in the history of the freedom struggle. The personal eminence of Gandhi as a leader came to light in this session, where the programme of non-cooperation was to be finally discussed and settled. This Congress also saw the presence of an unprecedented number of delegates, some of whom were old revolutionaries. If Jitendra Lal Banerjee, an old revolutionary, turned supporter to Gandhi’s movement had

40. Ibid.
brought a few men as delegates from Bengal, C.R. Das too brought some men from the revolutionary ranks to oppose Gandhi’s suggestion of non-violent non-cooperation.

Though, there were strong reactions from the national leaders to the boycott programmes of Gandhi, everything changed on the eve of the session. The same people Lala Lajpat Rai, C.R. Das and Bipin Chandra Pal who opposed his suggestions earlier supported him during the session. Gandhi’s resolution on the non-cooperation programme was passed without any hitch, with some minor modifications. The very constitution and character of the Congress came to be reorganised. It was accepted that, "the object of the Indian National Congress", would be, "the attainment of Swarajya by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means."

There were other important changes in the constitution of the Congress. Organised on a linguistic basis, the P.C.Cs were to be broad based and more democratic. The reduction of the membership fees resulted in the increase of Congress membership.

It was during this session that the revolutionaries once again came into direct contact with Gandhi. According to Bhupati Majumdar, who went to Nagpur to fight against Gandhi’s non-cooperation programme, about seven hundred odd revolutionaries and exprisoners participated in the Nagpur session. Most of them alongwith C.R. Das had already made up
# TEXT TABLE I

**PRONOMENT REVOLUTIONARY PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONGRESS SESSIONS IN 1920**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>SOURCES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abinash Roy</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K. W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhupati Majumdar</td>
<td>Juggantar</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>B. Majumdar, Oral History Transcript, p. 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhupen Dutta</td>
<td>Juggantar</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Bhupen Dutta, Oral History Transcript, p. 149.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biren Chatterjee</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K. W.</td>
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<td>Jatin Roy</td>
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<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K. W.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jitenderlal Banerjee</td>
<td>Juggantar</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Home-Poll /Jan 26/ Deposit/ 1921.</td>
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<td>Jotin Hui</td>
<td>Juggantar</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K. W.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuntal Chakravarty</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Bandhopadhy (ed.) Gandhi <em>Parikrama</em> pp. 267-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabodh Dasgupta</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Home-Poll/ 379 I of 1924, K. W.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pratul Ganguli</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purna Das</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabindra Sen</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramkrishna Khatri</td>
<td>HSRA</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td><em>Shaheedon Ki Chaaya Mein</em>, pp. 31-2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sachindranath Sanyal</td>
<td>Youngmen's Association</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Home-Poll/ 379 I of 1924, K. W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satyendra Chandra Mitra</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Ibid., also A.C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, p. 144.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyam Sunder Chakravarty</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Home-Poll/ Jan 26/ Deposit/ 1921.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sisir Ghose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surendra Mohan Ghose</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>S.M. Ghose; Non-cooperation, p. 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suresh Bhattacharjee</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>Home-Poll/ 379 I of 1924, K. W.</td>
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**NOTE:**

1. Jyotish Ghose of Jugantar was also in the Subject Committee (Nagpur Session).

2. Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W. The Report mentioned that others whose names have not been included in it also attended the Congress Session at Nagpur.
their mind about not allowing Gandhi to come to Bengal and preach his nefarious ideas. Yet, after seeing Gandhi in person, they decided to support him along with Das.41

Guha also admitted that Bhupen Dutta and others who had gone to attend the Nagpur session promised Gandhi that they would support his programmes and suspend the violent activities temporarily.42 The same view is corroborated by Maya Gupta who said, "The leading personalities of the Jugantar group - Jyotish Ghose, Bhupati Majumdar, Purna Das, Girin Banerjee, Kuntal Chakrabarty and Bhupendra Kumar Dutta met Gandhiji and frankly discussed with him the opposing view points of violent and non-violent struggles against the British Raj. They agreed to accept Gandhiji's non-violent non-cooperation as a strategy for the time being and promised to work with it for one year without reverting to violent methods."43 A government note also mentioned that Purna Das was taking an active part in the non-cooperation propaganda. He attended the Nagpur Congress in December 1920 with a large number of followers to assist in


42. A.C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, op.cit., p. 144.

Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, himself acquiesced that the revolutionaries accepted the Non-cooperation movement as a group and pledged to work for it under Gandhi's leadership, not individually but as a party.\

According to a CID report, there was another group of Ex-revolutionaries who had come to Nagpur to attend an "All India Sanyasi Conference" held simultaneously with the session of the Congress. Three persons Jitendra Lal Bose of Dacca, Amarendra Nath Ghose of Chandranagar and Sachindra Nath Sanyal, exconvict had attended this conference and were trying to organise sanyasis to preach non-cooperation throughout the country.\

Available evidences reveal that the revolutionaries though not greatly influenced by Gandhi's creed of non-violence, were prepared to give him the time he asked for and also refrain from committing any overt activities in that period. They were impressed by the personality of Gandhi which they sensed to be the reason for his mass appeal ... something that they would never be able to achieve because of

44. Home-Poll/F.No. 379/ I of 1924 and K.W. Appendix A Note on the Activity of Related Political Prisoners and Detenus, pp.26-32, NAI, New Delhi.\

45. Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, Oral History Transcript, Acc. No. 390, p. 149, NMML, New Delhi.\

46. Home-Poll/ Jan/ 26/ Deposit - CID Report, regarding the secret meetings held by the extremists leaders during the Nagpur Congress, NAI, New Delhi.
their secretive nature of work. Their participation might also have been due to their wish to be recognised as the freedom fighters of our nation by coming out in the open. They were, therefore, ready to move along with the masses and support the Non-cooperation movement in whatever way they could.

Thus, approved by his diverse groups of followers, the Mahatma embarked upon his tours to spread the message of non-violent non-cooperation along with the Ali brothers. He had great influence on the students. Pattabhi Sitaramayya said that "the students movement in the UP, the Punjab and the Bombay presidency was in full swing. Bengal was not far behind.\(^47\) Even the government report grudgingly admitted that "the boycott of educational institutions was pursued in a vigorously aggressive fashion ... There was scarcely a University from which misguided boys did not withdraw in larger or smaller numbers to devote themselves to the work of agitation."\(^48\) Though many lawyers did leave their practices, their support to the programme was not as great.

This period of intense activity was also marked by vigorous collection of different funds, establishment of national schools and colleges and a definite impetus to the


\(^{48}\) Rushbrook Williams, *op.cit.*, p. 58
Khadi movement. The reflection of the movement was also evident on the peasants who accepted the Congress doctrine, the drive against untouchability, the temperance campaign and also the organisation of the Panchayats. In July 1921 when the AICC met at Bombay for periodic review of the situation, it was decided that there would be a concentrated drive to boycott the foreign cloth and manufacture of Khadi. It was also decided that the impending visit of the Prince of Wales would be boycotted by the non-cooperationists. Immediately after the session Mahatma Gandhi set fire to a huge pile of foreign clothes before a big audience. Bonfires of foreign cloth became a common feature of the Non-cooperation movement, thereafter.

In the month of September Gandhi was perturbed by the outbreak of violence in Malabar. He wrote "Violence and non-violence are two incompatible forces destructive of each other. Non-violence for its success therefore needs an entirely non-violent atmosphere, as nothing else has, since the inauguration of non-cooperation." Alarmed by the growth of the Non-cooperation movement, the government made its first move by arresting the Ali brothers and Dr. Kitchlew. The working Committee in its meeting at Bombay decided that every government employee could resign from the government service - civil or military. People continued to participate

in the movement with great enthusiasm but grew restless because Gandhi was still not ready to advocate civil disobedience. In November civil disobedience was authorised by the AICC, subject to the conditions to be outlined by the respective P.C.Cs. Anguished at the riots during the boycott of the prince’s visit to Bombay, Gandhi, blamed himself for the situation. He wrote, "Nor can I shirk my own personal responsibility. I am more instrumental than any other in bringing into being the spirit of revolt. I find myself not fully capable of controlling and disciplining that spirit." Taking serious view of the movement, the government declared the Congress and Khilafat Volunteer organisations as illegal, arrested the top rung leaders and put thousands of participants behind bars. Efforts for mediation between the government and the non-cooperators were on, but in vain. The Non-cooperation movement had almost reached its pinnacle around this time. The session at Ahmedabad gains importance because it was there that Gandhi was invested with the sole executive authority and the people were asked to prepare for civil disobedience. Volunteers were recruited in large numbers by the Congress for carrying out its programme and were arrested in equally large numbers by the repressive government. B.M. Taunk said, "Recruitment of volunteers was highly successful in Bengal, Madras, U.P. and Bihar and to

some extent in the Punjab and Assam, while in Bombay and Central Provinces the response was meagre."\textsuperscript{51}

Forest Laws were ignored in some areas and the Chowkidari Tax was withheld in the others. Fresh efforts were made by some leaders for bringing about a peaceful settlement between the non-cooperators and the government. Civil Disobedience on a large scale was further postponed to the end of January, because Gandhi felt that the time was not yet opportune. The government was in no mood to listen to the proposals of the mediators either.

Gandhi decided to initiate a new phase – nonpayment of taxes, but only in the Bardoli Taluqua of Gujarat. He gave the government seven days to change its attitude. The government did not give in but blamed the congress for all the unrest during the Non-cooperation movement.

While Gandhi was involved in making elaborate arrangements for a full scale mass civil disobedience, reports of rioting came from Chauri Chaura, a twin village. The policemen, there had fired at peaceful demonstrators who being incensed chased the former and set fire to the police station where they had taken shelter. The Chauri Chaura incident proved to be the last straw on the proverbial camel’s back. Gandhi felt greatly distressed and was also convinced that the country at large had not learnt the lesson

of non-violence. The working Committee therefore, met at Bardoli and decided to suspend the Mass Civil Disobedience movement. It advised the discontinuation of all its earlier activities and the pursuance of the Constructive programmes alone. The decisions taken at Bardoli were endorsed by the AICC that met at Delhi on 24th and 25th of February, 1922.

The sudden withdrawal of the movement, of course, was not well-received by many leaders who reacted strongly, wrote letters of protest and felt greatly betrayed by Gandhi’s act. But Gandhi stood firm in his decision. In fact earlier also he had felt utterly disgusted over any act of violence, for example he was perturbed over Moplah riots involving the Hindus and the Muslims and violence during the Prince of Wale’s visit to Bombay and Madras and had also fasted. He was thoroughly shaken by the display of sheer indiscipline on the part of the Congress workers in whom he had complete faith. Many believed that Gandhi had destroyed the chances of gaining freedom, by withdrawing civil disobedience at that stage. Even Jawaharlal Nehru the ardent disciple of Gandhi was not happy with the suspension of the movement.

Diwakar emphasized, "Not only Jawaharlal Nehru but almost every Congress worker in the field had been shocked by Gandhi’s withdrawal of the historic movement. There was a kind of general dissatisfaction and depression in Congress ranks. Gandhi explained his action. He said it was in the
interest of the great struggle itself that he did so. He asked us somewhat bluntly if the country had not advanced in the 15 months of non-cooperation, (January 1921 to March 1922) in the great awakening and the spirited determination to fight. It could not have been achieved by 30 years of agitation or any other kind of movement. Then he explained that it was not merely a question of violence at Chauri Chaura but the calculated act of brutal atrocity by trained Congress volunteers against armed constabulary."\(^52\)

This action clearly revealed to the government that Gandhi, was still in control of the situation. C.F. Andrews wrote "His political action after Chauri Chaura should surely be sufficient to make it clear that he would risk any political reputation in order to enforce his principles."\(^53\)

The government however decided to arrest Gandhi and he was given six years of imprisonment which was later reduced to two years. With Gandhi away in the jail, and the Civil Disobedience movement suspended, the direct action programme started declining in its intensity.

**REVOLUTIONARIES AS NON-COOPERATORS**

In spite of their conflicting ideologies the revolutionaries by participating in the Gandhian Non-

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53. Home-Poll/1933/169; C F Andrews' confidential letter to Sir Harry Haig, NAI, New Delhi.
cooperation movement proved that they could come together on the same platform for the attainment of Swarajya, if need be. Gandhi’s political tactics, based on the recognition of the importance of the masses in a national struggle, brought the revolutionaries nearer to him. It was only during the non-cooperation days that he came into personal contact with some of them on the Indian soil. Why did the revolutionaries participate in the Non-cooperation movement? Who were the participants? What role did they play? How far were they influenced by Gandhian thinking? Why did they part ways once again? These are the questions that haunt one’s mind when it is found that Non-cooperation movement did bring the two forces together.

During this period on four different occasions, Gandhi had personally met a number of the revolutionaries for the specific purpose of bringing them round to his view. He saw a few of them before the special session of the Congress held at Calcutta in September 1920 and implored them to give him a year for attaining swaraj. It is also true that he met some of them at Nagpur in December 1920 when the regular session of the Congress was held. Greatly influenced by Gandhi’s personality, the revolutionaries had agreed to keep away from violent politics for some time.

Kaka Saheb Kalelkar pointed out that a few Bengal revolutionaries had come to see Gandhi during the Nagpur
session and, Gandhi pointed at him (Kaka Saheb) and said, "I see, you are revolutionaries. Here is a revolutionary who has recently come to me, you talk to him." He further mentioned that all those revolutionaries including Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, crowded around him and, they all had a long discussion. Both these meetings between Gandhi and the revolutionaries were fruitful to a large extent because Gandhi succeeded in ensuring the support of the revolutionaries for his new movement. According to Subhas Bose, there was another meeting during the non-cooperation days, arranged by C.R. Das. He wrote,"The ex-revolutionaries had a heart-to-heart talk with he Mahatma behind closed doors and he and the Deshabandhu tried to convince them that non-violent non-cooperation, instead of weakening or demoralising the people, would strengthen their power of effective resistance. The upshot of the conference was that all those present agreed to give a full chance to the Congress to strive for Swaraj and promised to do nothing to hamper its work, while many of them agreed to join the Congress organisation as loyal and active members. According to Guha, however, there was no such meeting where Bose was present as the latter came only after the

inauguration of the Non-cooperation movement. In his opinion Bose could not have been the spokesman on behalf of the revolutionaries.\textsuperscript{56}

One cannot ignore what Subhas had written in his book, because in the first half of October in 1921 Gandhi was in Bengal and he did meet various groups of people and talked to them about non-cooperation. The revolutionaries could have been one such group. Guha also agreed that Subhas came to Calcutta around July 21, and the meeting according to the latter was held in September. So in all probability Subhas could have attended the meeting, though he might not have been the spokesman of the revolutionaries, as he claimed.

When the Congress met at Ahmedabad towards the end of 1922, according to Surendra Mohan Ghose, he and Jadugopal Mukherjee had a private meeting with Gandhi and later a group of revolutionaries from Jugantar party viz. Jadugopal Mukherjee, Amar Bose and Surendra Mohan Ghose visited Gandhi’s organisation in Bardoli where the no-tax campaign was about to commence.\textsuperscript{57} It might be, inferred from this incident that some revolutionaries still had faith in Gandhi and his Non-cooperation movement inspite of the fact that


\textsuperscript{57} Surendra Mohan Ghose, \textit{Non-cooperation}, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 95.
the promised "swaraj in a year" was nowhere in sight at that time.

Having given their word to Gandhi that they would refrain from violent activities for the time being, the revolutionaries decided to come out in the open and participate whole-heartedly in the Non-cooperation movement. According to Guha "Within three or four months of the Nagpur Congress, it was decided that all our workers were to go to their respective districts and take charge of the district organisations. Manoranjan Gupta who was associated with me in the Saraswat Library went to Barisal ... Bhupati Majumdar went to Hooghly. Surendra Mohan went to Mymensingh, Bhupen Dutta went to Khulna. Bejoy Roy went to Jessore and Jibanlal Chatterjee and Jiten Kushari went to Munshigunj, Dacca ..."58

He also referred to the Non-cooperation movement in Jessore organised by two Bejoy Roys, one who was made a state prisoner during the First World War, but, later organised the Congress Committe and the Non-cooperation movement in Jessore and the other who organised a no-tax campaign at Bandabilla village.59

The revolutionaries were actively involved in enlisting volunteers and also in organising village committees. Surendra Mohan Ghose, a member of the Jugantar

59. Ibid.
party wrote, "I was in charge of organising the village committees and volunteers etc. in the office of the Jana Sabha ... Kshitish Bose of our party was in charge of the volunteers." He further mentioned that the revolutionaries also were successful in collecting large amounts for the Congress 'Funds'.

A government report stated that Purna Das, a renowned revolutionary of Madaripur sub-division, Faridpur, was one of those Jugantar leaders who attended the Nagpur session and supported Gandhiji's programme of non-cooperation. An organiser of student's strike in Calcutta and Madaripur, he was engaged in agitational propaganda in the village near Dum Dum Cantonment. He also initiated the formation of a Panchayat in Gurgai village for the arbitration of disputes without any recourse to the British Law Courts. The same report also mentioned that "The North Bengal group also took part in the Non-cooperation movement. Their leading members like Kalipada Bagchi and Sasadhar Kar led the students's strikes in North Bengal and they also went to the villages to induce the cultivators to reduce the cultivation of jute."

Unlike the Jugantar group, however the Anushilan Samiti of Bengal was probably a house divided on the issue of

60. Surendra Mohan Ghose, Non-cooperation, op.cit., p. 91.
its support to the Non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. Right in the initial stages it appears that Pulin Das was not in favour of the Anushilan Samiti participating in the movement. In all probability there was even a meeting between Pulin Das and Gandhi but the latter did not succeed in bringing round the former to support his cause. This has been corroborated by Mazumdar who was told by one Dharani Goswami that "Pulin Babu had earlier met the Mahatma at the latter’s request but he refused to accept non-violence as a tactics even temporarily."63

But, Satish Pakrashi, another prominent revolutionary of Anushilan group, was greatly impressed by the movement, though not by Gandhi’s principle of non-violence. In Faridpur, some revolutionary leaders like Narendra Nath Banerjee and Nibaran Chandra Pal had successfully organised students’ strikes, political meetings and demonstrations. Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee had attended the special session of the Congress at Calcutta as a volunteer and later he also joined the delegates who attended the Nagpur session. He then decided to join the Non-cooperation movement. He mentioned that Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghose a former member of the Anushilan Samiti was a prominent non-cooperator. He also

wrote that Upendra Dhar an Anushilanite participated in the movement. Dhar had joined the Gandhi Ashram at Benaras and spent his days in the Khaddar bhandar of the Ashram.64

The efforts of the Anushilan members to non-cooperate with the government, however, had always been a point of dispute. Arun Chandra Guha, Gopal Haldar and David M. Laushey, based on Gopal Haldar’s essay portend the view that the samiti did not give any support to Gandhi’s movement. On the other hand Buddadeva Bhattacharya claimed that, the Anushilan members, recognising the utility of non-violence were ready to use it as a tactics in particular situations, but they did not want to accept non-violence as a creed as Gandhi wished. Explaining the dilemma of the Anushilan group he further stated that it was difficult for Anushilan Samiti to make the decision regarding participation, because they did not want to over emphasise non-violence. However, according to him the Anushilan members after thoughtful deliberations and many conferences decided to join the Non-cooperation movement.65

It is, therefore, clear that Anushilan members too were influenced by Gandhi to some extent. This is further proved by the fact that the members of this group did not get


involved in any major overt activity during this period. In fact, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee claimed, "They were very active in Congress work as is evidenced by the facts that important Anushilan Samiti leaders were also office-bearers of Congress Committees, for example Narendra Mohan Sen was the Secretary of the Dacca Congress committee and Purnananda Das Gupta was the Assistant Secretary. Prabhas Lahiri was the Secretary of Rajshahi Congress Committee and Atindra Mohan Roy was the Secretary of the Tippera Congress Committee."

The Non-cooperation movement found supporters among some revolutionaries of other provinces too. Bhai Parmanand, a Ghadr member and an accused in the Lahore Conspiracy case, on his release "found the Non-cooperation movement in full swing. On the advice of Gandhi he took over charge of National Education in the Punjab and worked as Chancellor of Quami Vidyapith in an honorary capacity for more than five years."

Many other young men also left school on the call of Gandhi. Chandra Shekar Azad left his school, at his call for boycott of schools and colleges. According to Subhas Bose, "Jatin Das ... had joined the Non-cooperation movement in


1921 and had spent several years in prison." 68 Jaidev Kapur said that he was greatly influenced by Gandhi's Non-cooperation movement particularly by his promise of Swaraj within a year. He also felt that the movement would provide him with security and help in the growth of his self respect. 69 Jaidev Gupta, an accomplice of Bhagat Singh, mentioning about himself and Bhagat Singh had recorded that they were thrilled by the idea of being free in a year's time. They left school without asking Sardar Kishan Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai, and plunged deep into the movement. 70

Durga Das Khanna had also said in an interview that, "Bhagat Singh had made a very apt appraisal of everything that preceded and followed the Non-cooperation movement of 1921." 71 Yash Pal also had reminisced that "he left school on the call of Gandhi during the non-cooperation in 1920 and worked for it in the villages till February." 72 Manmathnath Gupta of the Kakori fame and Shiv Verma of Kanpur, Rajen Lahiri, Anilbaran Roy, Pramode Sen Gupta, Ramkrishna Khatri, Bhabesh Chandra Nandi and others had also joined the Non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. Their participation in

a non-violent movement however, did not preclude the possibility of their indulgence in any secret activity during this period. But the evidences show that the revolutionaries fastidiously kept themselves away from individual assassinations and dacoities. At the same time they did not lose any opportunity to reorganise themselves and strengthen their cadres.

A government report of this period recorded that the revolutionaries were taking advantages of the Non-cooperation movement to further their own ends and strengthen and systematize their organisations. It also mentioned that many of the released detenus were irreconcilable and might be only waiting for an opportunity to start on a campaign of terrorism. Events in Ireland and the methods of Sein Fein are being closely studied. From another report of the government, it appears that the Rangpur members of the Jugantar met in January, 1921 to decide about an open and a secret wing of the party while participating in the Non-cooperation movement. It stated, "The secret branch would engage itself for collecting arms and training members on the lines of the Sein Fein movement in Ireland. The open branch would work through public institutions and try to enlist new members."


73. Home-Poll/Sep-1/Deposit/1921, fortnightly report from Bengal, NAI, New Delhi.
recruits." The same file also mentioned that some of the members of the Anushilan Samiti who met Gandhi at Nagpur held a secret meeting later and decided "that they would try to take advantage of the Gandhian movement with a view to promoting their own objective in the near future."74

Thus, one finds that the Non-cooperation movement initiated by Gandhi was acceptable to the revolutionaries to a certain extent and not beyond that. In the process some revolutionaries became true converts to Gandhian ideas, yet, many out of this group who had fervently worked for the attainment of Swarajya were rudely shaken out of their wits when Gandhi abruptly withdrew the movement after the incident at Chauri Chaura.

Shiv Verma said, "... my reaction was disappointment ... the sudden withdrawal of the movement gave an unpleasant jerk to the country as a whole ... "75 Jaidev Kapur said that Gandhi’s action was not liked by him and that it appeared to be a Himalyan mistake on his part. Promode Sen Gupta opined, "When Gandhi withdraw the Non-cooperation movement as a result of the Chauri Chaura incident we were shocked and disillusioned. In fact we became frustrated."76 It seems

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74. Home-Poll/ File No. 379-1 of 1924, NAI, New Delhi.
that the revolutionaries who were more emotional, represented the impatience of youth that demanded quick results. For such a group, the withdrawal of the movement when it had almost reached its peak came as a major shock. It is nothing exceptional because the withdrawal of the movement was widely criticised by some important members of the Congress too.

From the above analysis of the role of the revolutionaries, it is clear that the Non-cooperation movement was generally acceptable to many revolutionaries, who supported it, some with reservations and some without it. The positive features of such a programme, in fact did not escape the notice of even the revolutionaries. According to a member of the HSRA, the non-cooperation helped the peasants to overcome their fear of going to jail and the police "The second positive feature of Gandhi’s movement" according to him "was that the people began to understand what the word 'Swaraj' meant and that freedom was something for which they must fight. The word swaraj had reached the remotest corner of the country, the remotest hut." It would therefore not be too much to say that the combined efforts of the two groups, Gandhi's and the revolutionaries were definitely fruitful to a large extent in strengthening the cause of the national demand for freedom.

77. Shiv Verma, Oral History Transcript, op.cit., p. 34.
## TEXT TABLE II

### LIST OF PROMINENT REVOLUTIONARIES WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>Mode of Participation</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anilbharan Roy</td>
<td>Shree Sangha</td>
<td>Propaganda work, secretary of the PCC.</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bejoy Roy (Senior)</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Organiser of the Non-cooperation movement at Jessore.</td>
<td>A. C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, p. 159.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bejoy Roy (Junior)</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Organiser of no-tax campaign at Bandabilla</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagat Singh</td>
<td>HSRA</td>
<td>left school and took up national education</td>
<td>Jaidev Gupta, Oral History Transcript, p. 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhai Parmanand</td>
<td>Shadr Party</td>
<td>Incharge of National Education in the Punjab</td>
<td>Punjab’s Eminent Hindu Thinkers, p. 112.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.N. Sasmal</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>led a no-tax campaign</td>
<td>A. C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, p. 159.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandra Shekar Azad</td>
<td>HSRA</td>
<td>left school on Gandhi’s call.</td>
<td>Chamanlal (ed), Martyrs of Ind., p. 151.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiralal Biswas</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Provided material help</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatin Bhattacharya</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Propaganda work</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td>Mode of Participation</td>
<td>Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatin Das</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Left his school, joined the Congress Committee jailed for picketing.</td>
<td>S. Bose, The Indian Struggle, p. 162.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jyotish Ghose</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Organised Volunteer Corps. and propaganda work</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalipada Bagchi</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Led student's strikes, induced the cultivators to reduce jute cultivation</td>
<td>A. C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, p. 161.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalipada</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Assisted Purna Das at Madaripur</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banerjee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishnaswami</td>
<td></td>
<td>Made speeches in favour of non-violent, non-cooperation.</td>
<td>Young India, April 20, 1922.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makhan Sen</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Village propaganda</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motilal Roy</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Founded Prabartak Vidyapith for students who had left educational institutions</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Jugantar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narendranath</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Organised student's strike, political meetings</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banerjee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nibaran Chandra</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Propaganda work, effected student's strike and political meetings</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td>MODE OF PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>SOURCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabodh Dasgupta</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Propaganda work</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prakash Dey</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Member of the Congress Committee</td>
<td>Home-Poll/369 I of 1924.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purna Das</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Organised Shanti Sena, rendered material help</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabindra Sen</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>propaganda work</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raushan Singh</td>
<td>HRA</td>
<td>arrested and given two years of imprisonment</td>
<td>Jogesh C. Chatterjee <em>In Search of Freedom</em> p.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebati Barua</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>member of the Congress Committee</td>
<td>Home-Poll/369 I of 1924.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santosh Dutta</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Collected funds enlisted volunteers</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasadhar Kar</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>led student’s strike</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satindranath Sen</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>member of the Congress Committee</td>
<td>Home-Poll/369 I of 1924.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satish Pakrashi</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Participated in the activities of the Barisal Congress Committee.</td>
<td>Satish Pakrashi’s <em>Agni Juger Katha</em>, pp. 144-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satyendra Chandra Mitra</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Secretary of the Bengal, PCC.</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td>MODE OF PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>SOURCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyam Sunder Chakravarty</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Associated with leaders of labour unrest, encouraged the strikers during the press strike</td>
<td>S.M. Ghose, Oral History Transcript, p. 169.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibnath Banerjee</td>
<td>Anushilan &amp; Jugantar</td>
<td>In contact with both Anushilan &amp; Jugantar joined national school at Daulatpur.</td>
<td>S. Banerjee, Oral History Transcript, pp. 2-3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirish Chatterjee</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Propaganda work</td>
<td>Home-Poll/379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisir Ghosh</td>
<td>Anushilan</td>
<td>Propaganda work</td>
<td>Home-Poll 379 I of 1924, K.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Suresh Banerjee</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Encouraged Khadi and Charkha</td>
<td>Jogesh C. Chatterjee, In Search of Freedom p.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suresh Bhattacharji</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>Member of a Congress Committee</td>
<td>Home-Poll/369 I of 1924.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surjya Kumar Sen</td>
<td>Jugantar</td>
<td>set up Samyashram in Gandhian style to help the movement</td>
<td>A. C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, p. 162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE:

The following revolutionaries also participated in the Non-cooperation movement though their exact role is not traceable.

Abinash Roy (J), Amar Bose (J), Anup Sen (J), Arun Chandra Guha (J), Ashfaqualla (HRA), Ashu Das (J), Ashutosh Das (J), Ashwini Dutt (J), Basanta Mazumdar (J), Bipin Ganguli (J), Bhabesh Chandra Nandy (J), Bhagwati Charan Vohra (HSRA), Bhupati Majumdar (J), Bhupendra Kumar Dutt (J), Biren Chatterjee (A), Chandra Kumar Banerjee (J), Charubikash Dutt (A), Dinesh Mazumdar (J), Gopimohan Saha (J), Hardayal Nag (J), Hari Kumar Chakraborty (J), Ishan Chakravarty (J), Jadugopal Mukherjee (J), Jaidev Gupta (HSRA), Jaidev Kapur (HSRA), Jatin Hui (J), Jatin Roy (J), Jibanlal Chatterjee (J), Jiten Kushari (J), Jitendra Lal Banerjee (J), Jitendra Lal Bose (J), Jogen Mitra (J), Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee (A), Jugandar Chakravarty (J), Kshitish Bose (J), Kuntal Chakravarty (J), Lalit Sanyal (HSRA), Lekh Ram Sharma (HSRA), Manindra Chakravarty (A), Manmathnath Gupta (HSRA), Manoranjan Gupta (J), Mohini Sinha (J), Nagendra Chakrabarti (J), Naresh Chaudhary (J), Prakash Lahiri (A), Pratap Chandra Guha (J), Pratul Ganguli (A), Prithvi Vidhan Roy (J), Provat Ghosh (J), Rabindra Mohan Kar (HSRA), Rajen Lahiri (HSRA), Ram Dular Trivedi (HSRA), Ramkrishan Khatri (HSRA), Rattan Mani Chatterjee (J), Sarat Chandra Ghosh (J), Sarat Roy Chaudhary (J), Satindra Dasgupta (J), Suresh Banerjee (J), Suresh Burman (J) and Yashpal (HSRA).