CHAPTER III

RE-EMERGENCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARIES AND GANDHIAN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

Gandhi’s non-violent Non-cooperation movement was something unique in the history of the world, since it insisted on stimulating the moral power of the Indians by strictly adhering to non-violence through constructive activities. When it resulted in unexpected spells of violence Gandhi had to suspend it. The repercussions of the suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement were many. One of the repercussions was the re-emergence of the revolutionaries and the resumption of overt activities by them. The period between 1922 and 1928, therefore, witnessed the expansion of the revolutionary movement and its ideological changes while Gandhi concentrated in his constructive programmes. After 1928, however, the adoption of Civil Disobedience became imminent and Gandhi once again assumed control over the political issues. The period between 1930 and 1934 therefore witnessed, the violent as well as the non-violent forces vying with each other for achieving their political objectives.

RECRUDESCENCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES

The reappearance of the revolutionaries was a notable feature after the year 1922. To a section of the populace,
that was untrained in the method of satyagraha, the ideals of Gandhi appeared to be more impracticable than ever. Their participation in the earlier movement was definitely not because they were convinced about Gandhi’s creed; it was more because they wanted to explore the new avenue that Gandhi had opened before them. When they realised that it might not suit their purposes, they reverted to their old activities.

Tendulkar opined, "Gandhi’s personality and ideals had captured the imagination of the emotional youth of Bengal but they still retained their faith in the efficacy of violence as a political weapon ... On the collapse of Gandhi’s movement, the terrorists came in the open and began to preach the necessity of violence."¹

Possibly many revolutionary groups, at least in Bengal appear to have utilised the period of the Non-cooperation movement to recuperate and reorganise their set ups with a view to adopting overt activities at a later stage, if need be. The resumption of such activities by the revolutionaries was, however, preceded by occasional pieces and articles, in the newspapers glorifying the heroic deeds of individuals. A government report mentioned that, "the Chittagong Congress of April 1922 was the occasion when the revolutionaries decided to resume violent methods. It also stated that the session

at Gaya in December 1922 convinced them further that they must at once organise a campaign of violence. The real actions of the revolutionaries however, began probably in 1923 when dacoities were committed because, the revolutionaries needed money desperately for pursuing their secret activities. According to the Intelligence reports there were not less than eight robberies; five in Calcutta, two in Chittagong and one in Kona, between March and December, 1923.

The first major dacoity of this period at Kona near Howrah in May 1923, accompanied by a double murder was the handiwork of a group working under one Santosh Mitra, a militant young leader who had connections with Jugantar and Atmonnati Samiti. The same group was involved in a robbery at Ultadinghi at Calcutta on May 24, a robbery and a murder at Garpar Road, Calcutta on July 30, and the raiding of the post office and the murder of the Postmaster at Sankaritola at Calcutta on August 3. In another daring attempt, one Ananta Singh, a disciple of Surjya Sen belonging to the Chittagong group of Jugantar held up the Victoria Coach of the Assam, Bengal Railways and carried away the cash and the carriage on 14th of December 1923.

2. Home-Poll/F.No. 379 I of 1924 and K.W., Measures for coping with revolutionary activities in Bengal, NAI, New Delhi
The revolutionary exploits intensified in the next year 1924. It began with the murder of Mr. Earnest Day by Gopinath Saha belonging to the Santosh Mitra group. However, it was a case of mistaken identity and the real target was Mr. Tegart, the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta. Gopinath Saha was caught, tried and hanged on the gallows on 1st of March. The bravery and exemplary courage of Saha was approved by many men from the revolutionary ranks who had infiltrated into the Congress organisations in Bengal. On the one hand, the men in the Congress recognised the merit of such a heroic act, but they were not yet ready to give up their faith in non-violence either. To show their admiration for the bravery of the individual therefore, the Bengal Provincial Congress, held at Serajgunj on 1st of June 1924 passed a resolution. It stated that, "This conference, whilst denouncing ( or dissociating itself from ) violence and adhering to the principle of non-violence, appreciates Gopinath Saha’s ideal of self-sacrifice, misguided though that is, in respect of the country’s best interest, and expresses its respect for his great self-sacrifice." 3

Day’s murder was followed by the discovery of a bomb factory on March 15, at Manicktolla, Calcutta and it confirmed the thinking of the government that the

revolutionary net was widespread. A secret report on the political situation in Bengal reiterated, "that the old revolutionary conspiracy ... has been revived with the same aims, the same methods and to a large extent as regards leaders, the same personnel ... until recently the leaders worked under cover of non-cooperation and other political movements and it is only in the present year (1924) that they have been forced to the decision that more active measures are necessary ... all sections have for some time been considering the assassination of police officials both European and Indian as the most suitable method of paralysing any interference with their activities.\textsuperscript{4} Repeated attempts on the life of officials, especially the attempt on the life of Mr. Bruce at Calcutta on April 13, 1924, made the government realise that the revolutionaries were still steadfast in their decision to throw out the Britishers. The fears of the Government, that the revolutionaries had reorganised themselves was further confirmed when the Red Bengal leaflets started appearing in suspicious circumstances. These issues while appearing periodically claimed that the need for a violence party was essential to improve the political conditions. They openly declared that their aim was to assassinate officials, thus creating a state of anxiety for the government, that immediately issued an ordinance. It

\textsuperscript{4} Home-Poll/379 I of 1924 and K.W., Measures for coping with revolutionary activities in Bengal, NAI, New Delhi.
resulted in the mass arrest of suspected revolutionary leaders and raids of their hideouts.

While such activities were going on in Bengal - a strong-hold of revolutionary terrorism - definite changes were taking place in the northern parts of India too. Sanyal who was released under the Royal Amnesty in 1920, tried to revive his old activities after two years. In the meanwhile, Anushilan Samiti too was making attempts to increase its hold over the youth of Benaras. Manmathnath Gupta, a founder member of the HRA said that through his brother he came into contact with two men of the Kalyan Ashram and that they were keen on enlisting young men. He was also aware of Sanyal’s attempts for reviving his old associations and that Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee had replaced the two Bengali gentlemen of the Kalyan Ashram as the emissary of the Anushilan Samiti to set up an organisation in the U.P.

Probably, the efforts of Sanyal and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee together facilitated the amalgamation of the two existing groups. Manmathnath also mentioned that, "Sanyal tried to contact his old friends like Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya and Ram Prasad Bismil who joined him. He said, "Thus several groups became active at the same time. When

the merger in Northern India was effected, the combined group was called the Hindustan Republican Association ...."6

Besides, the coming together of different groups, the influence of Russia and the Russian Revolution was also evident on these groups, that joined hands. Gulab Singh, a revolutionary from Punjab opined, "that men who were not in favour of individual acts of terrorism and believed in an armed revolution to overthrow the British founded the HRA."7

Thus, was formed the new party on October 3, 1924 at Kanpur and it attracted many more brave youngmen like, Ashfaqullah, Chandra Shekar Azad and many others in its fold. A constitution of the party was drafted and it was stated that the major aim of this organisation was to set up a "Federated Republic of the United States of India by armed revolution and end exploitation of man by man."8 Sanyal was keen on pursuing a policy of vigorous violent actions as against the cautious policy of Norendra Sen of Anushilan Samiti. This however, resulted in the acquisition of a separate identity by the HRA which by 1924, had literally established itself in different areas of the U.P.

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Manmathnath claimed that the HRA "had loose connections with the Anushilan and Jugantar and Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee were not rebels who got separated from the Anushilan, as it is generally believed these days."\(^9\)

The main programmes of the HRA included the collection of funds through dacoity, securing the help of Russia through M.N. Roy and the propaganda of its programme through the newspaper, Agradoot and pamphlets. While trying to make contact with an agent of M.N. Roy, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee fell into the surveillance net and was arrested towards the end of 1924. "The Revolutionary" pamphlet issued by Sanyal in January, 1925 clearly outlined the policies of the organisation. Shiv Verma opined, "The manifesto elucidated the view of the revolutionaries with regard to the communal question, the question of economic and social life of the people, their approach towards the Congress and other parties."\(^{10}\) While trying to send a copy of this pamphlet to Rash Behari Bose in Japan, the letter was intercepted and traced to Sanyal who was arrested. Before his arrest Sanyal wrote a letter to Gandhi who had referred to the revolutionaries in the Belgaum Congress held in 1924. This letter was published in Young India with Gandhi’s

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answer. Then followed two more letters written probably by Manmathnath a member of the HRA. Once again Gandhi tried to explain away, the objections to his programmes and ideas raised by the revolutionary leadership.*

The arrest of Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee in October 1924 and later that of Sanyal in February 1925 did not deter the members of the HRA from committing dacoities for collecting money. They began with a dacoity and murder at Bamrauli on December 25, 1924. Then were committed two more dacoities one in Bichpuri (U.P.) on 9/10th of March and another in Dwarkapur (U.P.) on May 24, 1925.

The Kakori Train Robbery committed on August 9, 1925 marked the epitome of their success but it also alerted the government about their growth. This train dacoity was planned and conducted under the leadership of Ram Prasad Bismil who had a nine member party to assist him. It provoked the government to react, resulting in the arrest and trial of its prominent leaders. Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah, Rajen Lahiri and Roshan Singh were hanged till death and many more were given harsh sentences. This incident brought the revolutionary activities to a grinding halt in the United Provinces for the time being.

But, even this set back, did not deter others belonging to the group from making fresh efforts to resume

* These letters of Sanyal and Manmathnath and Gandhi’s answer to the same would be dealt with in the next chapter.
the revolutionary overt activities. There were many other groups, in the northern parts of India, trying to keep the revolutionary flame alive. Phanindra Nath Ghosh, of Bettiah, who once in 1916 had joined the Bengal Anushilan party, had organised young men, and founded the Hindustan Sewa Dal in 1925. He promoted the traffic in arms between Bengal and Punjab and came into contact with Bejoy Kumar Sinha and Shiv Verma of Kanpur.

Sukhdev of Layallpur, was the organiser of the Gupt Samiti with its headquarters at Lahore. Helped by Yashpal, he succeeded in enlisting more recruits to his cadre. Hansraj Vohra, Jai Gopal and Bhagat Singh were all in touch with each other at this time.

Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha founded by Bhagat Singh and Bhagwati Charan was another important organisation that had Dhanwantri, Ahsaan Ilahi and Sukhdev Raj as its members. The avowed aim of the sabha was to establish a complete independent republic of the labourers and peasants of the whole of India; to infuse a spirit of patriotism; to express sympathy with and to assist the economic, industrial and social movement which, while being free from communal sentiment are intended to take us nearer our ideal ..."11

There was yet another group of revolutionaries working at Kanpur, helped by Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. This

group included Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, Shiv Verma, Jaidev Kapur, Batukeshwar Datta and Bejoy Kumar Sinha and it had a passable knowledge of socialism. Shiv Verma stated that, "the Kanpur group had established contacts with Chandra Shekhar Azad and Kundan Lal, both of whom were declared absconders in the Kakori Conspiracy Case."\textsuperscript{12}

Bhagat Singh, also it appears had a close contact with the Kanpur group. He had gone to Kanpur, came into contact with Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and worked for Pratap, a Hindi daily. Buddhadeva Bhattacharya mentioned that around this time "Bhagat Singh was a full time worker of the HRA at Kanpur and was in close contact with Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee."\textsuperscript{13}

Shiv Verma claimed that, "Bhagat Singh participated in the Kakori dacoity also. This thing has not come out."\textsuperscript{14}

Buddhadeva Bhattacharya too stated that Bhagat Singh "was wanted in the Kakori case but could escape arrest only because confessor Banwari Lal did not know Bhagat Singh's real name and disclosed in his confession, the name of Balwant Singh."\textsuperscript{15}

Manmathnath, an active participant in the


\textsuperscript{13} B. Bhattacharya, \textit{Freedom Struggle and Anushilan Samiti}, \textit{op.cit.}, vol. I, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{14} Shiv Verma, Oral History Transcript, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 59.

Kakori train robbery, however denied the involvement of Bhagat Singh. After the Kakori case, Chandra Shekar Azad and Bhagat Singh became leaders of the HRA group of revolutionaries. While Manmathnath claimed, "that Azad took up the responsibility of organising the revolutionary forces," according to Shiv Verma it was Bhagat Singh who took the initiative for forming an all India organisation of revolutionaries by bringing different groups together.

From the above arguments, therefore, one may infer that Bhagat Singh definitely was emerging as a powerful leader though he had no direct involvement in the Kakori case. At the same time his leadership qualities had come to be recognised and along with Azad, he could project new ideas in order to revitalise the varied groups of revolutionaries. Under their able guidance the groups from U.P., Punjab and Delhi decided to send their leaders for a meeting at Feroz Shah Tuglak's Fort at Delhi on 8th and 9th of September 1928.

Shiv Verma, one of those who attended the meeting reported, "In this meeting, Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev from the Punjab, Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Jaidev Kapur and myself from the U.P. ... Kundal Lal from Rajasthlan and Phanindra Nath Ghosh and Manmohan Banerjee from Bihar participated ... both Bhagat


Singh and Bejoy Kumar had discussed things with Azad and he had agreed on the outline which we had proposed.

The first decision we took was to change the name of the organisation from Hindustan Republican Association to Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.

Secondly, a Central Committee was elected with Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev from the Punjab; Bejoy Kumar Sinha and myself from the U.P.; Phanindra Ghosh and Manmohan from Bihar and Kundan Lal from Rajasthan. And Chandra Shekar Azad was elected our Commander-in-chief.

Thirdly, we decided to explain our objectives ... so that people may understand where we stood politically.

Fourthly, we decided to give up murdering approvers and killing some police sub-inspectors or CID men here and there ...

Fifthly, we decided that action should be directly linked with the problems of the people.

Sixthly, Agra would be our headquarters ..."^{18}

Though, the HSRA defined its aims clearly and also included socialism in its ideologies, it is also true that the groups of Bengal were not included in this attempt of bringing together all the revolutionary groups. More often, the absence of the parties from Bengal at Delhi is criticized by many. Shiv Verma provided a first hand information as to

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how he tried initially to woo the Bengalis but in vain. In fact, a major organisation outside Bengal had emerged with a definite set of ideas and a clearer ideology, without the active support of the groups from Bengal.

While the United Provinces and Punjab were witnessing massive changes in the organisation and ideology of their societies, there were alterations brewing up in the existing structure of the societies in Bengal too. Many of these changes were brought about because of the prevalent conditions in their province. The mushrooming of these societies after 1922 had a twin purpose to serve. Many were ostensibly, started for social work but were ready to adopt secret activities. The origin of many of these Sanghas, started in the twenties may be traced back to the "Revolutionary Fraternity" started by Hem Chandra Ghosh of Barisal in 1912. He, too was one among the revolutionaries to have been released under the Royal Amnesty in 1920. He endeavoured to resurrect the old structure of his group, functioning from Calcutta, after leaving the Centre at Dacca under one Anil Roy. Anil Roy was more interested in works of social welfare and initiated auxiliary groups like Shanti Sangha, Dhruba Sangha and Shree Sangha. Maya Gupta said, "All these became important centres for recruitment and training for future armed actions. Similarly, the Sangha organisations developed in various parts of Bengal like
Mymensingh, Calcutta, Midnapore, Sylhet, 24 Parganas and Pabna between 1921 and 1929 in accordance with the careful planning of Hemchandra.\footnote{19}

Shree Sangha of Anil Roy also had links with Deepali Sangha founded by one Leela Nag in 1923. Another important group that emerged around these years out of the "Revolutionary Fraternity" was the Benu group in Calcutta. It later became the famous group called the Bengal Volunteers. Even, the revolutionaries who had joined the Congress during the non-cooperation days, formed an organisation called the Karmi Sangha at a later stage after the withdrawal of the Gandhian movement in 1922. The Government report on the other hand mentioned that, there in Bengal after 1924, was prevalent a condition of uneasiness between the older and the younger elements of Jugantar and Anushilan and therefore the younger, discontented elements united to form a new party called the New Violence Party which later developed vastly to include more militants and therefore could as well be called as the All-Bengal revolutionary party. It also reported that Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee and Sachindra Nath Sanyal were such men who were annoyed with the policies of the old timers. While agreeing with the view that there did exist a party in Bengal called the New Violence party, Manmathnath opined that

it was a very insignificant group. He also did not agree with the view expressed by the government report that Sanyal and Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee formed a group of rebels.20

Buddhadeva Bhattacharya also refuted the government's version about the existence of a New Violence Party and expressed the opinion that the "Anushilanites were leaning towards the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and so they had to think anew about methods of revolutionary activity. They had developed a mind against the renewal of old type activities, and were seriously thinking about reshaping of their tactics. But they could not fully satisfy the younger minds. Impatience for an immediate programme of action disturbed all revolutionary groups and the neo-terroristic tendencies affected the Anushilan circles also."21 Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee himself had admitted that he was deputed by the Anushilan Samiti to go to the United Provinces.22 It may therefore be inferred that there were differences of opinion between the young and the old members, but the cleavage was not so wide. The formation of the HRA also definitely was not the result of the rebels joining hands.

The government appears to have based its report on its findings of, bombs, revolvers, pistol cartridges, chemicals and literature seized at Dakhineswar, 24 Parganas and at Sova Bazar Calcutta on 10th of November 1925. Since, there is no other corresponding evidence for the existence of such a party called the New Violence party and because there did exist a number of other groups who had violent activities on their agenda in Bengal one can safely presume that all these groups together probably were dubbed by the government as the New Violence party. The government also tried to control the growth of these societies by passing an ordinance on 25th of October, 1924 and justified its action in its administration report. The obvious result was the coming down of the revolutionary crime.

The repressive measure of the government, the differences of opinion that had emerged among the revolutionaries, the increasing number of the splinter groups, the rising of the communal issue and the introduction of new ideologies from other lands forced the Anushilan and Jugantar members to make an effort for bringing about the unification of all the groups in Bengal. Though nothing substantial emerged, revolutionaries belonging to different groups definitely met sometime in 1927. The most important result of this meeting was the origination of the idea of an
Independence League which was later adopted by Subhas Bose and Jawahar Lal Nehru.

The dismal outcome of the amalgamation efforts clearly outlined the differences that prevailed between the old members and the new entrants of both Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar. The younger members recognised the necessity of mass involvement in a revolution, the futility of individual murders and dacoities and also the wastefulness of sending people abroad for securing arms. They started having more faith in a mass armed revolution and Guerilla method of warfare against the government. Such young elements from Jugantar and Anushilan, therefore chose to constitute units generally known as "revolt" or "advance" groups. Niranjan Sen and Benoy Roy of the main Jugantar party, and Satish Pakrashi and Pratul Bhattacharya of Anushilan emerged as the leaders and these new groups established close contact with Ganesh Ghosh, Surjya Sen and Nirmal Sen of the Chittagong Jugantar group. It is noteworthy that many of these young revolutionaries who actively participated in the next phase of overt activities beginning from 1928 onwards had earlier participated in the Non-cooperation movement.

By 1928, thus, one finds that there was a complete change in the ideas and the attitudes of the revolutionaries whether they belonged to Punjab, United Provinces or Bengal. They had matured as revolutionaries; had understood that
throwing out the British alone would not suffice to satisfy the masses; they had also recognised and witnessed the power of the rising masses during the non-cooperation days. But, Gandhi, who had succeeded in awakening the masses in 1920-22, had retreated to the background in the years between 1924 and 1928 though his control over the masses had not waned even a bit. During the same years when the revolutionaries were overhauling their cadres and strengthening their number, Gandhi displayed a keen interest in strengthening the moral power of the masses, with "Swaraj" as his ultimate aim.

**GANDHI'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMMES**

Gandhi’s arrest in 1922 and his absence from the scene of political action, spelt trouble for the Congress. Especially in December, when the Congress session was held at Gaya in 1922 the question of council entry came up once again but was defeated. The prochangers who supported council entry joined hands with C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru who formed the Swaraj party while deciding to stay within the Congress organisation. The swarajists however emerged successful in the 1923 elections and the Congress allowed them to enter the council. Around the same time, communalism started showing its malevolence. The abrupt withdrawal of the Non-cooperation movement annoyed the whole muslim community.
Gandhi, after his release in 1924, markedly displayed a detachment to political life but clearly identified the weakness of the policy of entering the councils for the specific purpose of sabotaging the governmental functions as conceived by the swarajists. The decision to enter the council on the part of the Swarajists meant nothing less than violence as far as Gandhi was concerned.

The Serajgunj resolution on Gopinath Saha also made, Gandhi feel that his programme of non-violent non-cooperation had swerved away from its chalked out path and therefore needed to be put back on the right track. At the same time he could not ignore the strength of the swarajists particularly at the time of the AICC meet at Ahmedabad in June 1924, where he proposed four resolutions. The most bitter feelings were expressed when Gandhi moved his own resolution relating to Gopinath Saha, because he felt that the PCC at Serajgunj had given it approval to an activity which definitely can be termed as violent. The ideological differences between him and some of the Congressmen was clear to him. The resolution was not acceptable in its entirety to C.R. Das and his group, who proposed amendments. The house was almost equally divided on the question of amendment to the resolution as suggested by him. C.R. Das and his supporters however, were defeated merely by 8 votes.
Gandhi expressed his deep anguish at the fact that 70 out of 148 could support the cause of a violent act, in spite of his repeated stress on non-violence being a necessary condition for obtaining "Swaraj". Though the resolution was passed, Gandhi felt that he was "defeated and humbled". This incident distinctly shows, that the Congress leaders were ready to appreciate the valour of a revolutionary. They probably recognised that such methods had a definite impact on the government, but at the same time they did not have a very high opinion of the efficacy of violence alone in Indian politics. On the other hand Gandhi whose ideology and technique rested on the bedrock of non-violence was apprehensive of the effect of such acts. But he could neither prevent such activities nor control his band of followers from showing their admiration to the self-sacrificing attitude of the revolutionaries. This resolution acted as an eye opener to Gandhi.

October 1924, witnessed the highly repressive policy of the Bengal government that suddenly decided to strike at the re-emerging revolutionary elements. The Swarajists were the worst hit because the government held that they were supported by the revolutionaries. It resulted in the raids of the leaders’ houses and their indiscriminate arrests. Gandhi, therefore, entered into a pact with C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. It was decided that the Swarajists would be free to
enter the council while continuing to be a part of the Congress, but they had to accept the constructive programmes and the spinning qualification as suggested by Gandhi.

The Congress session at Belgaum was presided over by Gandhi in December 1924 where the pact was ratified with minor modifications. Gandhi chalked out his programmes for 1925, "I will apply myself to preparing efficient, non-violent, self-sacrificing workers with a living faith in hand spinning and khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity, and if they are Hindu’s in the removal of untouchability also. For the current year at any rate this is the national programme and no other."23

Coming out of his self-imposed retirement from political entanglements, Gandhi attended the Congress session in December 1926 held in Gauhati, where he once again defined Swaraj. He said, "Indeed the word swaraj is all embracing. It does include Complete Independence as it includes many other things. To give it one definite meaning is to narrow the outlook, to limit what is at present limitless. Let the content of swaraj grow with the growth of national consciousness and aspirations."24 He also attended the open session of the congress held in December 1927 at Madras though he did not participate actively in the policy

24. Ibid., vol. XXXII, p. 468
decisions of the Congress. He was in fact highly critical of the Independence resolution presented by Jawahar Lal Nehru and adopted by the Congress.

While looking at the period, 1924-27 of Gandhi’s career superficially it appears to be a time of no achievement as far as his political involvement was concerned. For him, the moral power of an individual was an essential pre-requisite for obtaining the political end. He identified the disjunctions in Indian society, condemned them strongly and took adequate steps to fight against them. He, made conscious efforts to establish an emotional link with the masses and keep close contact with them throughout these years. This special bond between him and the people created a favourable situation for him in the thirties.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES (1928 - 35)

The earnest efforts of Gandhi to strengthen the moral power of the people, his success in establishing a near perfect relationship with the masses through constructive programmes, the ominous changes in the organisation and ideology of the revolutionaries, and the strengthening of their cadres in the twenties culminated finally in a period of hectic activities, all concerned with the efforts to obtain "Swarajya" through violent as well as non-violent
means in the period 1930-35. The seeds for such changes were sown towards the end of the year 1927, when an all-White Commission was appointed to enquire into the working of the Reform Act of 1919 under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon, earlier than expected.

There was complete consensus of opinion amongst the national leaders that such a commission was an insult to the Indians and, therefore, should be boycotted at all places. The arrival of this Commission in February 1928 disturbed the comparatively placid political atmosphere of the country. It brought about tumultuous changes in the Indian National Movement by stimulating the growth of radical forces that demanded complete Independence. It resulted in the preparation of the "Nehru report" wherein was outlined the form of government to be adopted by India. The Commission itself faced hostile crowds wherever it went, and the political bodies succeeded greatly in organising an effective boycott of this Commission. The prevailing political condition, thus, favoured the re-emergence of Gandhi once again from his self-imposed withdrawal from active politics. Judith Brown opined, "However, in 1928, two episodes thrust Gandhi into the political limelight. The Bardoli satyagraha and the 1928 Congress session heralded his return to all-India leadership, though they came to him unsought."  

The resistance offered by the Patidars of Bardoli, against an enhancement of the land revenue demand under the leadership of Shri Vallabhbhai Patel, was totally approved by Gandhi who acted in an advisory role. He fervently believed that it would instil courage and liberty of thought in the people. He declared, "The way to constitutional swaraj may be through Lucknow (Nehru Report), the way to organic swaraj, which is synonymous with Ramrajya lies through Bardoli."²⁶

The Bardoli Satyagraha and its success, definitely rekindled the interest of the public in the Gandhian method of Satyagraha. The Congress leaders, especially from Bengal had started making efforts to involve Gandhi actively in the annual session of the Congress to be held in December. Gandhi’s renewed interest in politics also manifested itself when he asserted that the assault on the Punjab leaders when they protested against the Simon Commission was, "the first trial of strength, the strength of non-violence against violence."²⁷ While recognising the violence of the government on the non-violent satyagrahis, Gandhi was also aware of the violent revolutionaries, who as a group had to be taught that their method would not have a permanent impact on the evolution of a swaraj.

²⁷. Ibid., vol. XXXVIII, p. 30.
By the time, the Simon Commission arrived on the scene, the members of the HRA, belonging to different territories had regrouped and the HSRA had already been formed (1928). The Simon Commission provided an impetus to the activities of this group. The movement of the HSRA members to different areas and the Dashera bomb outrage at Lahore on October 23, were the forebodings of what was to occur later. The anti-Simon Commission activities had reached an all-time high when Lala Lajpat Rai led a procession on October 30, 1928 at Lahore. He died on 17th of November, due to the physical injury he had received as a result of the lathicharge ordered at the time of the procession. The HSRA members wanted to avenge his death by resorting to individual assassinations once again. Though, the target was the Superintendent of Police, Lahore, it was Mr. Saunders, the ASP who was shot dead on December 17, by Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Shivram Rajguru and Azad. They made good their escape, immediately after the incident.

This daring act of the revolutionaries was strongly deplored by Gandhi who called it a "dastardly act" and doubted whether it had a political motive. He wished to convince the youth of the utter futility of such revengeful acts. He felt that, "The fault is that of the system of Government. What requires mending is not men but the system. And when the youth of the country have the real determination
they will find that it is in their power as it is in nobody else's to kill the system ... Freedom of a nation can not be won by solitary acts of heroism even though they may be of the true type, never by heroism so called ..."28 Gandhi's strong reaction to Saunder's murder shows that he was greatly perturbed by the visible display of violence in Indian politics and the direction it had taken. It has to be expected from a person whose basic creed was non-violence. But, his questioning the motive of the revolutionaries, behind the act proves that he still was not ready to recognise the impact, may be momentary, that such events had on the public. He probably sensed the presence of violence dangerously near the surface and also felt the need for applying satyagraha as a negation of that violence.

Immediately after Saunder's murder, it appears that Bhagat Singh went to Calcutta to secure help from the revolutionaries of Bengal, for making bombs. H.W. Hale states, "By February 14, 1929, several members of the party had foregathered in Agra and bomb-making began under the direction of Jatindra Nath Das ..."29 Bomb making continued in different places. Lahore, under Sukhdev and Kishori Lal proved to be an important nerve centre.

In the meanwhile Gandhi too had come to Calcutta to attend the Congress session in December. In his resolution, read out by Jawahar Lal, Gandhi said that he welcomed the Nehru Report and stated thus, "Whilst adhering to the resolution relating to complete Independence passed at the Madras Congress, adopts the constitution drawn up by the committee as a great step in political advance ... provided, however, that the congress shall not be bound by the constitution, if it is not accepted on or before 31st December 1930 and provided further that in the event of non-acceptance by the British Parliament of the Constitution by that date, the Congress will revive non-violent non-cooperation by advising the country to refuse taxation and every aid to the country."30 His resolution also outlined the activities to be adopted by the Congress in the intervening period. Two days later, however, Gandhi cut down the time limit to December 31, 1929.

During this session, Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, were very keen on passing a resolution demanding complete Independence, in place of dominion status as suggested by the Nehru Report. Debrata Majumdar held the view that the revolutionaries were solidly behind Subhas Chandra Bose and their contribution in this Congress was constructive. According to him, "There was thunder in the

air and this session witnessed the largest ever gathering of Bengal revolutionaries, practically from all groups and factions. That Subhas Chandra Bose remained firm in his determination to move the resolution demanding complete Independence in spite of the vacillations of the younger Nehru, was due, among other causes, to the solid support he received from the serried ranks of the revolutionaries, gathered around him on that occasion ... To assuage the aggrieved feeling of the militant patriots, it was provided that if within the next one year, the demand for dominion status was not conceded, the Congress would launch Civil Disobedience Movement for the attainment of Purna Swaraj.\textsuperscript{31}

The presence of the revolutionaries and their support to Subhas Bose is also confirmed by Adhir Bhattacharjee who mentioned that, "Purna Das, Rabi Sen, Satya Bakshi, Vinod Chakravorty, Kshitish Basu, Ganesh Ghosh and other prominent workers from both the Jugantar and Anushilan party gave their loyalties to Subhas Chandra and joined him as his deputies ... The performance of these volunteers during the Calcutta Congress was unique and it received wide appreciation."\textsuperscript{32}

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Sir David Petrie had also pointed out in his note, "By the end of 1928 ... the ideal of independence could command a following over the younger and more ardent spirits. Even Gandhi had to put forward the date of expiry of his ultimatum by an year ... The Calcutta Congress proceedings were a clear victory of the younger men ..."³³ There is no doubt that the amendment of Complete Independence, suggested by Subhas Bose was defeated, but it is also true that Gandhi had to bring about changes in his resolution. Probably, it was due to the pressure exerted by the younger Bengali elements, the supporters of Subhas Chandra Bose that the Congress brought about a change in its policy. Though, the revolutionaries alone might not have been responsible, their support might have added weight to the pressure. In fact, whenever the Congress session had been held in Calcutta, the younger elements with revolutionary zeal had inspired changes by the mere strength of their number, like, they did in the special Congress Session in 1920, while the Non-cooperation movement had just started.

However, the Congress session at Calcutta (1928) had another significant outcome - the total acceptance of Gandhi’s leadership in the affairs of the Congress as well as the national politics, by the leaders as well as the masses.

³³ Home-Poll/1930/F.No. 133, Note by Sir David Petrie on the present political situation with special reference to revolutionary crime and terrorism, NAI, New Delhi.
Gandhi knew, that he would have to start a united and perfectly disciplined movement in order to achieve real "Swaraj".

The revolutionaries, too, had defined their ideology at the time of the formation of the HSRA. One of their aim was to propagate the message of national independence. In order to pursue this course, Bhagat Singh and Bhatukeshwar Datta threw a bomb along with Red leaflets in the Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929. Since they made no attempt to escape, they were arrested and had to face trial.

Commenting upon the incident Gandhi remarked, "The bomb throwers have discredited the cause of freedom in whose name they threw the bombs." At the same time, he acknowledged that it was the indifference of the government to the public feelings that resulted in such outrages. But this time, the revolutionaries were mentally prepared to plead their cause and defend their actions. In fact their main aim in this period was propaganda and they had enough opportunity to present their case before the public. The trial of Bhagat Singh and Bhatukeshwar Dutt was held in Delhi on the 12th of June when they were sentenced to transportation for life. The statement of the duo in the court is worth noting as it explained the motive behind their

34. Collected Works, op.cit., vol. XL, p. 26 ; Young India, April 18, 1929.
act and their thoughts concerning non-violence as preached by Gandhi. They said, "Our practical protest was against an institution ... In spite of earnest endeavour we have utterly failed to find any justification for the existence of the institution ... ."

Our sole purpose was "to make the deaf hear" and to give the heedless a timely warning ... We have only marked the end of the era of utopian non-violence of whose futility the rising generation has been convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt ... " Explaining utopian non-violence they continued, "Force, when aggressively applied, is "violence" and is, therefore, morally unjustifiable. But when it is used in furtherance of a legitimate cause, it has its moral justification. Elimination of force at all costs is utopian ... As both the alien Government and the Indian public leaders appeared to have shut their eyes and closed their ears against the existence and voice of this movement we felt it our duty to sound a warning where it could not go unheard ... We repeat that we hold human lives sacred beyond words and would sooner lay down our own lives in the service of humanity than injure any one else ... ."

* Similar views were expressed by Gandhi, at the time of Saunder's murder, wherein, he had remarked that the system needed to be mended. Vide Infra, p. 127.

35. N.N. Mitra (ed.), Indian Quarterly Register, op.cit., 1929, vol I, pp. 78-80 ; Statement of Bhagat Singh and Bhatukeshwar Datta in the Assembly Bomb Case.
The time, premises and the opportunity chosen, by the revolutionaries, to declare their motive, explain the purpose behind their activities and their understanding of Gandhian non-violence could not have been better. The masses did hear their words, which made them ponder over the prevailing conditions in their country and motivated them to join the freedom movement in large numbers. The HSRA revolutionaries thus made it plain that they were not going to be willing partners in the oncoming Gandhian movement unlike the previous occasion in 1920.

The bomb thrown in the Assembly, however, resulted in the adoption of preventive measures by the Government, that unearthed two bomb factories, one at Lahore and another at Saharanpur. Large scale arrests followed. Sukhdev, Kishorilal, Jai Gopal, Hansraj Vohra, Shiv Verma and Jaidev Kapur were arrested. Shivram Rajguru, another accomplice in the Saunder’s murder case was arrested in Poona on 30th September. The members who evaded arrest, made attempts on the life of the approvers. Since propaganda continued to be the major aim of the HSRA group of revolutionaries, the trial carried on for a long stretch of period.

It was during the days of trial that the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners went on a hunger strike demanding the status of war-prisoners. Though the hunger strike of all the prisoners, was over by September 2, 1929, Jatindranath
Das continued to fast and became a martyr on 13th of September 1929. Praising his martyrdom Dr. N. R. Dharamvir wrote, "this brave and fearless soul has sown the seed of martyrdom with his blood and sacrificed his life on the altar of his motherland at the age of twenty-five."36

Jatindra Nath's fast and death did not go unnoticed. Almost all the fortnightly reports for September stated that the incident proved to be a cause for meetings and demonstrations at various places and even Congress utilized the incident to its advantage. The report for the second half of September from the U.P. specially mentioned, "It is, however, significant that Mr. Gandhi has so far made no public reference to the incident."37

Though, Gandhi showed great restraint and reluctance in expressing any reaction publicly on the matter, yet in a letter written to Jawaharlal, he mentioned that he considered it as "an irrelevant performance".38 In another letter he explained, "I have preferred to be silent over Jatindra Nath Das's self-immolation because any expression of my opinion at

36. Dr. N.R. Dharamvir, The People, September 26, 1929.
37. Home-Pol1/17/Sep./1929, Fortnightly Reports for September, NAI, New Delhi.
this juncture is likely to do more harm than good to the country's cause."^39

It seems that Gandhi, did not approve of Jatin's fast but he refrained from either appreciating or condemning it, because he realised that it might give a wide berth to organised violence by official machinery. He decided that it would be wiser if he could maintain silence on certain matters. His decision was further strengthened by his conviction that the cause for which Jatin had kept a fast until death was not in consonance with his own thinking. As far as Gandhi was concerned a fast was self-purificatory and was kept for the benefit of others and only as the last resort. One veteran Gandhian, however, confessed that there was hardly any difference in the fasts observed by Gandhi and the revolutionaries. According to him, the normally violent revolutionaries opted for the non-violent method of fasting in the jail when it was required under the prevailing circumstances.^40

The operations carried out by the HSRA did not, stimulate Gandhi alone to react forcing him to come out with criticism; they also affected the secret groups in Bengal where a spate of incidents - assaults on police personnels


40. Personal Interview with Nandlal Soni on November 11, 1991 at Panchkula.
and robberies occurred in 1929. The government reports for this period, too endorsed the view that the events in the Punjab and the United Provinces incited the youth of Bengal to action.

The continuing revolutionary activities, definitely did not deter Gandhi from pursuing his own path. During those months when the revolutionaries were making efforts to attract the attention of the masses, Gandhi quietly strengthened the organisation of the Congress. Enrollment of a large member of volunteers in the Congress ranks was notable at this time. When the AICC session was held on 28th of September, 1929, Gandhi’s preference for Jawaharlal as the President of the next Congress session to be held at Lahore, came out in the open. In the meanwhile Lord Irwin after returning from London, in the month of October made a declaration: "I am authorized on behalf of his Majesty’s Government to state clearly that in their judgement, it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of Indian constitutional progress, as therein contemplated is the attainment of Dominion status." The disapproval of the Labour Government, to the Viceroy’s declaration, the differences of opinion that developed amongst the national leaders and the reluctance of Jawaharlal and Subhas to accept Dominion status, clearly indicated the fate of the 'Delhi

Statement’, outlined by the leaders earlier as a sequel to the Viceroy’s declaration. The meeting between Irwin and Gandhi on December 23, 1929 sealed the fate of the proposal as the Viceroy rejected all the conditions, propounded by the Congress. In fact on the same day, the Viceroy’s train was bombed by a fuse connected with a clock work mechanism ... by Yash Pal, Bhagwati Charan and Inderpal of the HSRA.* The Viceroy, however, survived the attempt. Pattabhi Sitaramayya commented on the incident, “We had the news on our way to Lahore both of the bomb, that burst under the Viceroy’s train and the hope that burst in the Viceregal lodge ... Thus began the determination for a grim struggle in the near future.”42 The points of dispute to be settled in the Lahore Congress were many. Jawaharlal Nehru said in his stirring address that violence often brought reaction and demoralization in its train and the Indians did not have the material or the training for organised violence. He opined that any great movement for liberation must necessarily be a mass movement and a mass movement must be essentially peaceful.

The Congress appreciated the, "supreme self-sacrifice of Jatin Das" who died on 13th of September as a result of

* Gandhi condemned the attempt to wreck the Viceroy Special Train on December 23, 1929 and wrote a thought provoking article, in Young India “The Cult of the Bomb” on January 2, 1930. The revolutionaries Yashpal and Bhagwati Charan, in consultation with Chandra Shekar Azad issued “The Philosophy of the Bomb” to explain their stand. This will be dealt with in the next chapter.

42. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, op.cit., p. 354.
fasting for 64 days but it deplored the bombing of the Viceroy's train. Gandhi's resolution deplored the bomb attack was opposed by a large number - 794 voted against him but was approved by the required majority. Judith Brown mentioned, "The vote was disputed and had to be retaken, indicating both the strength of feeling on the violence issue and the narrowness of Gandhi's majority. Most provinces were fairly evenly divided on the vote but Bengal and Punjab were heavily against Gandhi's resolution ... "43 The increased opposition to his resolution on the issue of violence indicates clearly that the activities of the revolutionaries were more popular in these two provinces where they were in ascendancy. It also shows that Gandhi's influence was less on these two provinces compared to other areas.

The Congress decided to aim at Complete Independence, allowed the lapse of Nehru Report and asked the Congressmen not to participate in the elections directly or indirectly. It, then appealed to "the nation zealously to prosecute the constructive programmes of the Congress and authorised the AICC whenever it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience including nonpayment of taxes whether in selected areas or otherwise, and under safeguards as it may consider necessary."44


With the dawn of the year 1930, began a period of preparation to take on a mammoth struggle for the attainment of freedom. The masses and the congressmen alike were waiting for the movement which was to be outlined by Gandhi. He, however, perceived Civil Disobedience as a method, that would establish Purna Swaraj, affect his country-men as well as the British, weld the Indians together, gain the maximum support of the masses and would also keep the different political factions satisfied. While, Gandhi was thus trying to assess the situation and hammer out an effective course of action, the Viceroy in a speech delivered on January 25, 1930 made it clear that his earlier pronouncement of October 31, 1929 was only to define the goal of the Indian Constitutional movement. According to him, "The assertion of a goal, however precise its terms, is of necessity a different thing from the goal's attainment."45 The clarification from Lord Irwin dashed all the hopes of the nationalists and Gandhi's reaction was the strongest.

Writing in Young India Gandhi stated in no uncertain terms that the Congress will heartily participate in any conference where there is perfect freedom of expression and demand46 provided Lord Irwin would initiate some simple reforms as suggested by him.

He took exception to the threat of dire vengeance uttered against civil and criminal resisters. He said, "I know that the non-violent revolutionary like me impedes the progress of the violent revolutionary. I wish the latter would realize that he impedes my progress more than I do his, and that I, being a Mahatma, if left unhampered by him, am likely to make greater progress than he can ever hope to make. Let him realize too that he had never yet given me a fair chance. Some of them, no doubt have been most considerate. I want full suspension of his activity. If it will please him, I am free to admit that I dread him more than I dread Lord Irwin’s wrath."47

Besides answering Lord Irwin through his writing, Gandhi, for the first time before starting his mass Civil Disobedience movement thus made a direct appeal to the violent revolutionaries to desist from their activities at least for giving him a fair chance. Though he agreed that the violent and the non-violent forces hindered each others’ progress, he claimed that the party of violence had a greater share in stalling his success. He completely ignored the fact that the revolutionaries had abstained from their violent acts during his Non-cooperation movement. No terrorist crimes were reported in that period though the government had felt that the revolutionaries were reorganising their forces.

All incidents of reported violence whether in Bombay, Madras, Ahmedabad or Chauri Chaura were free of violence committed by revolutionary elements and as such therefore, it would not be correct to hold them responsible for the outbreak of violence. Finally, Gandhi a perfectionist also had looked at the revolutionaries' cooperation during his major movement as just an act of consideration on their part.

From Gandhi's writing it is also apparent that Gandhi did think about the possible outbreaks of violence even while he was contemplating about the issue on which he could start his Civil Disobedience campaign. In fact his attention was drawn towards the differences between the situations before 1920 and 1930 by Dr. M.A. Ansari, who said that before 1920, "there was a complete non-violent atmosphere and yet breaking of violence in Chauri Chaura" and before 1930 there was "obvious existence of violence, even large number of leading Congressmen believing in it and the certainty of violence breaking out." There were, however, other issues, as compelling as the use of violent methods by the revolutionaries. Gandhi's concerted effort at this juncture, therefore, was to look for an issue with least possible potential for violence, which could also succeed in bringing the diverse communal and social elements together. Gandhi thus hit upon the idea of breaking the salt law - salt

an essential item to every individual no matter to which
class or community he belonged. He wrote in Young India that
he was contemplating some method of attacking salt monopoly.
He said, "There is no article like salt outside water by
taxing which the state can reach even the starving millions,
the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless. The tax
constitutes therefore the most inhuman poll tax that
ingenuity of man can devise."49

After deciding on the issue, Gandhi once again wrote
to Lord Irwin giving him a chance to sort out the political
tangle that had come up because of the violent attitude of
the British Indian Government as well as the Indian
revolutionary elements. He wrote, "It is common cause that,
however, disorganised and for the time being, insignificant
it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making
itself felt. Its end is the same as mine ... My experience
... shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force.
It is my purpose to set in motion that force, as well against
the organised violent force of the British Rule, as the
unorganised violent force of the growing party of violence.
To sit still would be to give reign to both the forces above
mentioned."50 Gandhi also made it clear, if the Viceroy chose

50. Ibid., vol. XLIII, p. 6, Text of Gandhi’s letter to Irwin written
on March 2, 1930.
not to discuss matters with him, he (Gandhi) would carry on with his programme of breaking the salt laws.

Gandhi’s letter clearly indicated that the adoption of the Civil Disobedience movement was also largely due to the ever increasing activities of the revolutionaries. But, surprisingly, he referred to the revolutionaries as an unorganised violent force whereas the evidences make it clear that the organisation of the revolutionaries had by this time improved to a large extent and their ideology had matured. While waiting for an answer, Gandhi decided that he would, with chosen followers from Sabarmati, walk down 241 miles to reach Dandi and break the salt law. The Viceroy coolly brushed aside Gandhi’s attempt at compromise and the Dandi March began on March 12.

Thus started, the Civil Disobedience Movement of Gandhi was carried out in three phases. The first phase extended from March 12, 1930 to March 5, 1931. The second phase began on January 4, 1932 and continued until May 8, 1933. The third phase was the shortest and was carried out between August 1, 1933 to May 20, 1934.

The Civil Disobedience Movement, as launched on an extensive scale by Gandhi differed from his Non-cooperation movement started ten years earlier. The enthusiasm of the revolutionaries to participate in the movement which one witnessed before and during the Non-cooperation movement was
conspicuous by its absence. Nor did Gandhi try and make a conscious attempt to meet the revolutionaries or motivate them to join his movement. He definitely was aware of the possibilities of violence breaking out, and so chose to break the salt law which might involve the least bit of violence. He appealed to the revolutionaries to restrict their activities but did not take a concrete step to take them along, as he did in 1920.

He wrote, "On the eve of my arrest in 1922, I had warned co-workers against any demonstration of any kind, save that of mute, complete non-violence and had insisted that constructive work which alone could organise the country for Civil Disobedience, should be prosecuted with the utmost zeal ... This time on my arrest there is to be no mute, passive non-violence, but non-violence of the activest type should be set in motion ..."\textsuperscript{51}

Gandhi reached Dandi on 5th of April and technically violated the salt law on 6th by picking salt from the seashore. The symbolical violation of the salt law by Gandhi gave an outlet, to the expectancy aroused in the people through large scale preparations. The movement picked up momentum when big leaders like Vallabhbhai Patel, Sen Gupta and Jawaharlal were arrested.

\textsuperscript{51} Collected Works, op.cit., vol. XLII, p. 496.
Though this phase did not affect Punjab much, evidently because there is no sea-shore, another home province of the revolutionaries, Bengal was definitely stirred into action. One reason could have been, the acceptance of many of the revolutionaries as leaders in the Congress ranks during the non-cooperation days. Many continued to pursue the policies and programmes of the Congress and there were still others who stuck to the Congress because it provided a cover for their other overt activities. Bhabesh Chandra Nandy a Jugantar member, said, "In short, the Congress in Bengal was controlled by the revolutionaries under the leadership of Deshbandhu, Subhas Chandra and J.M. Sen Gupta who were fully sympathetic towards them ... We worked whole heartedly during the Non-cooperation movement and again the salt satyagraha of 1930." 52

It seems some revolutionaries participated in the Satyagraha because of their close links with the Congress. According to Guha, Bhupen Dutta, who was an active revolutionary earlier accompanied the Nehru’s during the Dandi March. 53 Bhabesh Chandra Nandy mentioned that the revolutionaries felt elated by the Dandi March as it awakened public consciousness and gave rise to a big movement throughout the country. Many of them went to Noakhali to the

seaside to make salt. Some of them were arrested as volunteers of the Congress. According to him some revolutionaries joined the movement because of their genuine faith while others used it as a cover and also as a tactic."

Whatever, the reasons and motives of the revolutionaries it is true that some of them did participate in the Civil Disobedience movement of Gandhi. They must, have been apprehensive of Gandhi’s reaction to the possible outbreaks of violence. Gandhi this time, however, had not spelt out any such condition at least during the first phase of the movement as he did before the Non-cooperation movement. This probably encouraged the revolutionaries to continue with their own mode of functioning.

The movement was further intensified by Gandhi’s plan of raid at Dharasana and Chharvada salt works. There was mounting pressure on Irwin who was hesitant about arresting Gandhi due to, the imminent raid at Dharasana, Bombay Government’s insistence for the removal of Gandhi, the popular upsurge in Peshawar under Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and finally the revolutionaries’ increased activity in the year 1930.

The revolutionary activities reached its acme in the Chittagong Armoury Raid successfully carried out by the

54. Bhabesh Chandra Nandy, Oral History Transcript, op.cit., p. 60.
Jugantar group on April 18, 1930. On the day of the Easter Rising, six young men, Nirmal Sen, Lokenath Bal, Anant Singh, Ganesh Ghosh, Ambika Chakrabarti and Upendra Bhattacharya were to lead the attacks on the various key points of the district. Anant Singh and Ganesh Ghosh were to spearhead the attack on the police line and armoury, Nirmal Sen and Lokenath Bal were to attack the railway armoury and Ambika Chakrabarti was to lead an attack on the telegraph and telephone exchange. As reported by Manmathnath the success of the Revolutionaries was, however, shortlived. Though, almost all the participants were caught by the police before September, there is no doubt that this incident caused great embarrassment to the government because, their vulnerability to attack was exposed by a small group of revolutionaries. Indulal Yajnik commented that Gandhi too was mortified "at seeing a most staggering blaze of the very forces of revolutionary violence which he had set out to combat ... For the Chittagong Armoury Raid ... has been described as the most astounding and successful act of the Indian revolutionary party in modern times."56

Gandhi, was arrested on 4/5th of May and taken to Yeravada prison. As expected, the arrest of Gandhi resulted

56. Indulal Yajnik : Gandhi As I Know Him, (Delhi : Daniel Mahal, 1943), p. 5.
in hartals, demonstrations and public meetings. It was then decided by the Congress Working Committee that the implications of Civil Disobedience should be widened further involving the entire nation and declared that Dharasana should thereafter be treated as an all Indian centre for salt raids. The raid at Dharasana under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu succeeded in exposing the brutal and ugly methods that the government was prepared to use on the unarmed satyagrahis and attracted world wide attention.

The Civil Disobedience movement progressed on the guidelines provided by Gandhi, though he was not around. The P.C.Cs were given the right to decide the mode of action that they would like to adopt and so it took different forms in different areas. Complete boycott of foreign cloth, picketing of liquor vends, non-payment of land revenue (in Gujarat) and Chaukidari tax (in Bihar and Bengal), contravention of forest laws (in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Central Provinces) and withdrawal of post office savings were the main methods adopted. Soldiers and police personnel were asked to treat the satyagrahis as brothers and students were encouraged to participate in the movement in general. The Civil Disobedience movement thus, posing a severe challenge to the government in its first phase continued almost in all the provinces.
The first phase of the movement also witnessed a series of revolutionary activities especially in the provinces of Punjab, U.P. and Bengal. Bihar, Sind and Delhi too were affected to some extent. The appeal of Gandhi or the method applied by him to secure swarajya at this stage seems to have had no impact on the revolutionary youth who were ready to explain their ideologies, state them clearly and stake their claims to violence being the only effective means in driving out the British.

The government was also highly apprehensive of the situation. It was mentioned in a report that, "the situation confronting the government of India was the gravest ... in the course of some twenty years and that the situation was fraught with possibilities, which if permitted ... might render it far more dangerous ... Moreover, it was pointed out that the increase in the number of revolutionaries and the encouragement and support given by the utterances of Indian nationalist leaders, were the causes for such a situation."\(^57\)

In Bengal, this period witnessed the reactivisation of the Calcutta Jugantar group first under Bhupendra Kumar Dutta and later under Manoranjan Gupta, who actively participated in the Non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. Many youngsters

\(^{57}\) Home-Poll/1930/F.No. 133, ; Note by Sir David Petrie on the present political situation with special reference to revolutionary crime and terrorism, NAI, New Delhi.
men and women attracted by the romantic appeal of the Chittagong Raid joined the revolutionary ranks.

Guha mentioned that, "they were preparing bombs, never prepared by the revolutionaries anywhere in India before then ... The Saraswathi Library, the Saraswathi Press and our residence 71, Mirzapur street were the general meeting places of our sections of the revolutionaries who were preparing for some overt activities in the course of the Civil Disobedience movement." \(^58\) He specifically mentioned that some of the Jugantar members like Purna Das, Jiban Lal Chatterji, Ashwini Ganguli and other looked after the Congress led movement, but Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, Manoranjan Gupta and Guha himself were to look after the revolutionary activities. In fact, he confessed, "We decided also to launch a campaign of violent revolutionary activities, particularly as a sort of retaliation against the repressive measure that would be taken by the government during this period to suppress the movement." \(^59\)

Both Jugantar and Anushilan members were responsible for the robberies, attempted murders and assassinations that took place in Bengal in this period. On August 25, 1930, an attempt was made on the life of Charles Tegart in the Dalhousie square Calcutta, by Anuja Sen Gupta and Dinesh

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Chandra Majumdar. Another group Shree Sangha led by Anil Roy was responsible for the firing at Mr. Lowman the Inspector General of Police on August 29. Mr. Lowman succumbed to his injuries later. The Anushilan Samiti, however, committed more dacoities and also maintained relationship with the revolutionary groups in the other provinces like Punjab, Bihar and U.P. H.W. Hale reported, "At the end of 1930, several of the most important leaders of all parties were under arrest but the organisation to all intents and purposes were still unbroken." It is apparent that the difficulty in crushing the elements entirely was due to the fact that they were also working from the side of the Congress.

In Punjab, where Gandhi's influence was not very high, the revolutionary activities were carried on by the remaining HSRA members who had not yet been arrested. The weekly review of the general political situation in the country stated clearly that the revolutionary party in Punjab had started executing a new plan of exploding bombs with a definite time interval at different places. On 19th of June this plan was put into action simultaneously in six towns of Punjab. The purpose of this plan was to terrorise the police officials by organising outrages on a large scale.


Irrespective of the success of the police in unearthing bomb factories, bomb explosions continued in Punjab. Chandra Shekar Azad, Yashpal and Kailash Pati were the leading men of the HSRA and they functioned from their headquarters in Delhi. A dacoity was committed in Gadodia stores in Delhi in the month of July before the end of the year. Kailash Pati and Dhanwantri who participated in it were later arrested.

The most significant act of this period in Punjab was the attack on the Governor of the Punjab in the Lahore University hall on December 23, by Hari Kishan, helped by Ranbir Singh, Durga Das and Chaman Lal. Durga Das revealed the circumstances that led to this abortive attempt. According to him, "the revolutionaries were inactive for sometime during 1930 but became active after the release of Pandit Motilal Nehru who met Chandra Shekar Azad. After meeting him the latter issued, instructions to the various groups in the provinces that they should become active and do whatever was possible to retrieve the national situation. As a result of those instructions, a spate of actions took place in the Punjab, Bengal, Bombay, U.P. and some other provinces. Amongst the incidents that occured in the Punjab the most significant was the shooting of the Governor ..." \(^{62}\)

From the account of Durga Das, it appears that there were occasions when the Congress leaders did take the help of

\(^{62}\) Durga Das Khanna, Oral History Transcript, *op.cit.*, p. 29.
the revolutionaries to promote their programmes. When the Punjab Legislative Council met on January 16, 1931 at Lahore - Din Mohammad "condemned the Civil Disobedience movement as having brought in its wake bombs and pistols."63 The year 1931, however, proved to be one of ill-luck for the revolutionaries from the North. On February 27, 1931 Chandra Shekar Azad died when there was an exchange of fire between him and a police party in the Alfred park at Allahabad.

The revolutionary activities in Bihar during 1931, were carried out from the Gandhi Ashram at Hajipur. Jogendra Shukul of Jalalpur was the leader and he used the Ashram as his centre. Ram Binode Singh was another leader of this Bihar group. They, together were responsible for the robberies that were committed in the middle of the year 1930 in Bihar. Their arrest and the raid of Gandhi Kutir at Malkachak led to the Tirhut Conspiracy Case.

Bombay, the storm centre of the Civil Disobedience Movement was not without its share of revolutionaries. Bomb making was taken up by the youth of this Presidency. Sind, too experienced bomb explosions towards the end of the year. Such revolutionary activities, in the Southern parts of India however were negligible. Besides the revolutionary activities, this period also witnessed the commencing of the Chittagong Armoury Raid Case before the Special Tribunal in

the month of July. But, it was the First Lahore Conspiracy Case that held the total attention of the masses and on October 7, 1930, Bhagat Singh, Shivram Rajguru and Sukhdev were sentenced to death.

The intensity of the revolutionary activities during this year makes it amply clear that Gandhi’s ideology of non-violence did not cut ice with the revolutionaries of Punjab, Bihar and the U.P. In Bengal, some revolutionaries did participate in Gandhi’s movement but it was more due to the fact that Congress activities provided a cover for their real intentions.

The British Government could find no common ground, on which it could compromise with the revolutionaries, though they realised that it was imperative for the Congress to be included in any discussion meant for bringing about changes in the Indian condition. They released Gandhi and other Congress leaders un-conditionally on January 25, 1931. The talks of negotiations were renewed between Lord Irwin and Gandhi, who was authorised by the working committee of the Congress.

An agreement, however, was arrived at after a fortnight of hectic deliberations and on March 5, 1931 the Gandhi Irwin Pact was concluded. It was decided that the government would release the political prisoners not convicted for violence; remit the uncollected fines; give
back the confiscated lands that had not been sold; permit villagers on the coastal region to make salt for consumption and give the right to peaceful picketing. The Congress was expected to withdraw the Civil Disobedience movement and participate in the second Round Table Conference.

This rapprochement between the Government and the Congress at such a critical juncture when the Civil Disobedience movement was being carried on with vigour and the revolutionary activities had been stepped up, was bound to affect the political atmosphere. The revolutionaries had ample cause to protest. They were quite apprehensive that Gandhi, a firm believer in non-violence might not take up the cause of the revolutionary prisoners too. Another major concern of the revolutionaries was the death sentence awarded to Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru in the First Lahore Conspiracy Case. As feared by the revolutionaries, the Gandhi-Irwin agreement was not favourable either to the revolutionary prisoners, or to the trio condemned to death. Sukhdev perturbed by Gandhi’s attitude had written a letter to Gandhi before being hanged and it was published in Young India along with Gandhi’s answer.*

The pact provided for the withdrawal of ordinances promulgated in connection with Civil Disobedience Movement, but it precluded the Ordinance No. 1 of 1931 relating to the

* This letter will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter.
terrorist movement. Laushey pointed out, "The younger terrorists were uninterested in the Gandhi Irwin talks or the Round Table Conference. However, some of them were angry that Gandhi had not insisted that terrorist prisoners be released as well as the Civil Disobedience Prisoners. They were disturbed because Gandhi was making deals with the very same government which was responsible for executing so many terrorists."64

The Gandhi-Irwin pact placed Gandhi in a tight spot. In spite of the message of peace projected by the pact, the hanging of Bhagat Singh and his comrades seemed imminent. There were rumours that the trio would be hanged till death soon and the whole nation was waiting to see what Gandhi would do to get their sentences commuted. But to their consternation, the condemned prisoners were hanged on 23rd of March and the revolutionaries felt that it was grossly inconsistent with the peace proposal. They vehemently decried Gandhi's failure to persuade the Viceroy for helping the revolutionary trio.

Gandhi's role in shaping the destiny of Bhagat Singh has often been interpreted by the revolutionaries to show that the Congressmen wanted Gandhi to include the commutation of Bhagat Singh's death sentence as one of the conditions for

arriving at a settlement with the Viceroy but Gandhi was not ready to make it so, though he, accepted to appeal to him (Irwin).\textsuperscript{65} Manmathnath opined that Gandhi perceived the growth of the revolutionary movement, and the effect it was having on the Congressmen. The public pressure on Gandhi to take up the cause of the condemned prisoners was heavy\textsuperscript{66} and he had no other alternative. It is true that Gandhi did not want to project Bhagat Singh’s issue or the release of all political prisoners as a condition for the settlement, but it was because he believed that it could not be made as a condition for suspending Civil Disobedience. It could be made as a condition only in a final settlement.\textsuperscript{67}

The case of Bhagat Singh was discussed on February 18, by Lord Irwin and Gandhi and both have recorded their versions. Lord Irwin wrote that Gandhi, "mentioned the case of Bhagat Singh. He did not plead for commutation, ... He also thought it would have an influence on peace. But he did ask for postponement in the present circumstances."\textsuperscript{68} Gandhi too had given a version of his own about the same day’s

\textsuperscript{65} Yashpal,\textit{Simhavlokan}, (Lucknow: Viplav Karyalaya, 1970), vol. III, p. 78,


\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Collected Works, op.cit.}, vol. XLV, p. 401; \textit{Young India}, April 09, 1931.

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 196; Interview with the Viceroy, Viceroy’s Version.
deliberations, wherein he wrote that he talked about Bhagat Singh and suggested to the Viceroy about the suspension of Bhagat Singh’s execution to make the atmosphere more favourable. He further stated that he was presenting the matter to the Viceroy on humanitarian grounds.69

Literally, both the participants had declared that the issue was around the suspension and not the commutation of the death sentence. Gandhi, however, reiterated that he had interested himself in the movement for the commutation of the death sentence of Bhagat Singh and his comrades and that, he had put his whole being into the task.70 In a statement to the press on 5th of March he appealed to the violent organisations and said that they should give the Congress an opportunity of securing the release of all the other political prisoners and may be even rescuing from the gallows those who are condemned to them, as being guilty of murder.71

On March 7, he said in a public meeting at Delhi that there was still a chance that the political prisoners might be released and Bhagat Singh be saved if they all abided by the pact.72 On 23rd of March, he wrote a letter to the Viceroy, wherein he stated that the popular opinion

70. Ibid., pp. 358-9 ; Young India, June 06, 1931.
71. Ibid., p. 255 ; Young India, March 12, 1931.
72. Ibid., p. 272.
demanded commutation of the death sentences. He wrote that
the revolutionary party had assured him that they would stay
away from overt activities, if the lives of the trio could be
saved. He pointed out that political murders had been
condoned earlier and such a decision on the part of the
Government might bring down revolutionary crimes.73

Ironically the condemned prisoners were hanged the
same evening. All the above statements by Gandhi exhibit
clearly that he did hope that the Viceroy might listen to his
appeals for saving the lives of the three men. But there are
many revolutionaries who do not believe that Gandhi's
attempts to save Bhagat Singh were genuine. Manmathnath
dealt with the whole affair in his book in a great detail to
show that Gandhi was not above board. He quoted extensively
from an article written in the "Main Stream" by Mr. D.P. Das
to prove his point that Gandhi played a dual role because of
his love-hate relationship with the revolutionaries. He
opined that, "had Gandhi insisted on the release of all
prisoners including Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries
... and on the refusal of this demand had he given the call
for a revolution of the "do or die" type of 1942, he would
have atleast shortened our struggle by a decade."74


74. M.N. Gupta, Gandhi and His Times, op.cit., p. 144. He was referring
to D.P. Das' article published in the Main Stream on August 15,1970.
While Gandhi was trying to insist that the approval of the pact by the revolutionaries would go a long way in sobering the government's attitude towards them, the revolutionaries like Guha reminisced thus, "If Gandhi would have been able to secure atleast, the commutation of the death sentence of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues then I think we would have accepted the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and started afresh. But having failed there we felt that we were abandoned by Gandhi. He cared only for the salt satyagrahis..."\(^75\) There was another section of the revolutionaries who were under the impression that Gandhi's principle of non-violence did not allow him to ask the Viceroy for the commutation of the death sentence.\(^76\)

Irrespective of all these arguments and counter-arguments, one can not overlook the fact that it was an imperialist government that had to take the decision regarding the hanging. It would be too much to expect that such a government would ever think about the public opinion regarding a specific incident. But Gandhi on the other hand, being the leader of the masses had to respond to their outcry, in supporting the cause of the revolutionaries. He

\(^75\) A.C. Guha, Oral History Transcript, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 297.

\(^76\) Personal Interview with Dr. Dev Raj Vohra (26.01.92). He opined, "Gandhi did not appeal to the Viceroy ever about the hanging of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues, rest his non-violence movement would have got a set-back."
adopted a public posture through a fusillade of writings and speeches and kept up the public expectations. In comparison, his personal attempts to persuade the Viceroy were too feeble to evoke any response from him. Gandhi, under the circumstances was therefore, forced to bow before the dictates of the government largely due to the fact that he did not want the "Delhi Pact" to be scuttled midway.

His appeal to the revolutionaries to desist from its violent activities out of expediency and also to give him a chance to work out the plan of non-violence and truth on the ground that they should have by now realised its mass appeal, fell on deaf ears. The revolutionaries in the month of March itself continued with their programmes vigorously, probably to show that non-violence definitely was not yet acceptable to them. The report compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, mentioned two robberies, three dacoities and five attempted murder cases in Bengal alone and two bomb throwing incidents in the U.P. in the month of March itself. Almost all these attempts were directed towards police officials in their respective provinces. The failure of the Gandhi-Irwin pact to satisfy the revolutionaries in any way, was one of the major reasons for the spate of overt activities, that took place in the year 1931.

Amidst all these developments the Congress met once again for its regular annual session at Karachi, passed a
resolution on Bhagat Singh and his comrades Sjt.s. Sukhdev and Rajguru ... It also expressed the opinion that the government had lost the opportunity ... of winning over to the method of peace, the party, which being driven to despair, resorts to political violence. Both Jawaharlal and Madan Mohan Malviya too praised the bravery and courage of Bhagat Singh. They later stated that the young men of India should have the courage of Bhagat Singh but use it in Gandhian non-violence. The Congress also endorsed the Gandhi-Irwin pact and authorised Gandhi to represent it at the Round Table Conference, Gandhi did attend it and came back empty handed, towards the end of 1931.

The political situation in India, in the meanwhile had altered. In his absence the differences amongst the Congress leaders had widened; the crisis in the NWFP had deepened; the campaign in the rural areas of U.P. for withholding rent and revenue due to a sharp fall in agricultural prices, had started and finally there was a crisis in Bengal where a chain of Revolutionary terroristic activities broke out. A government report stated that the total number of crimes committed in Bengal alone were about 81 which included 8 murders, 23 attempted murders and 41 dacoities. The


assassination of Mr. Peddie, the fatal attack on Mr. Garlick, the sessions judge in July, and the daring murder of Mr. Stevens, the D.M. of Tippera on December 14, by Shanti Ghose and Suniti Chaudhary, show how deeply, the province of Bengal was affected by the violent Revolutionary movement.

While the government said that the murder of Mr. J. Peddie "was committed in furtherance of the accepted policy of the terrorists who consider that the Irwin-Gandhi Pact leads them nowhere and that they can only get what they want by continued violence." Gandhi was motivated to explain to the public that his appreciation of Bhagat Singh's bravery and spirit of sacrifice was not meant to promote such acts. It was rather for teaching the people that the deeds as such should be detested, however lofty the motive may be. While writing about Garlick's murder Gandhi expressed the view that it was an act of disgrace to the perpetrators and reiterated that it was a serious delusion to think that violence could ever help non-violence.

This deteriorating situation led to the adoption of adequate measures by the government. Two ordinances arming the government with the power of arresting and detaining

79. Home-Poll/18/IV/31, Fortnightly Report for April from Bengal, NAI, New Delhi.
80. Collected Works, op.cit., vol. XLVI, p. 1; Young India, April 16, 1931.
81. Ibid., vol. XLVII, p. 256.
terrorists without trial and the cooperation of the Civil and military authorities in rounding up terrorists in Chittagong, were passed.

This phase of the revolutionary activities in Bengal was marked by certain factors. The Home Department records give evidence of fear amongst the British officers for the safety of their lives. While, it was mentioned in a telegram, "Owing to series of outrages and general terrorist activities, the prestige of local government is low and morale of officers seriously affected. There is disquieting lack of confidence and definite tendency towards inaction ..."82, it was written in a Demi-official letter, "Although the services, especially the Imperial Police, have stood up to the strain remarkably well, it will be idle to pretend that the strain is not having its effect."83 This accounts for, the adoption of harsh methods by the government. Another notable factor was the induction of women in the revolutionary organisations. Even the Civil Disobedience Movement witnessed large scale participation by women, in most of the provinces.

Punjab and the U.P. also did not lag behind in their secret activities. The culture of the bomb was wide-spread

82. Home-Poll/F.No. 291/ 1931, Telegram to the Secretary of State for India, NAI, New Delhi.

83. Ibid., Letter to D.R. Prentice, ICS. Home Member, Bengal Government, to the Hon'ble Sir. James Crerar, Home Member, Government of India.
and on innumerable occasions bombs were used. H.W. Hale said, "No less than 163 persons had been charged with bomb making or bomb-throwing, the collection of arms for murderous purposes, the dissemination of leaflets inciting to murder, conspiracy to murder, murder and similar crimes." The HSRA also tried to reorganise itself and revive its activities.

Surprisingly, the Champaran district in Bihar, the place of Gandhi's first local satyagraha witnessed a dacoity in a monastery on December 26, 1931. It also appears that the Madras Presidency free from revolutionary crimes until now faced problems in this year. Pratibada Bhayankara Venkatachari had started a revolutionary society and had also developed connections with the well-known revolutionaries of the United Provinces, Bombay, Punjab and Bengal. Poona, too witnessed a serious crime when an attempt was made on the life of Earnest Hotson, the acting Governor on July 22, 1931 by Vasudev Balwant Gogate.

No wonder, Gandhi, by the middle of 1931, had started feeling that he had not succeeded in diverting the revolutionaries from their chosen path. He felt that just by admiring the bravery of Bhagat Singh he had provided enough reason for the overt activities to be enhanced. He admitted in the AICC session, that probably by praising Bhagat Singh, he had reached the limit. He expected that his actions would

84. H.W. Hale, op.cit., p. 73.
have a sobering effect on the youth but he did not succeed in his attempt.85

Even while, attending the Round Table Conference in London, it appears that Gandhi was perturbed by the activities of the revolutionaries that resulted in the adoption of various ordinances as repressive measures by the Government. While acquiescing in a speech that there was a common cause between him and the school of violence Gandhi held that he had endeavoured to win them over from what he considered to be an error. He insisted that they were an embarrassment to the Congress.86 In another place he confessed that he had no sympathy with the terrorist school, a foreign growth in India, in any shape or form. He also denied that the Congress was in any way responsible for terrorism. He expressed the opinion that he hoped to succeed in keeping such forces under check.87 A week later he admitted that terrorism would be rooted out only if the nation attained full freedom and that the Congress had adopted a method that could keep the terrorist crime under check.88


88. Ibid., p. 376, Gandhi's Statement to the Press, London, December 1, 1931.
When Gandhi returned to India on 28th of December 1931, he found that the political condition in India had worsened and the repression of the government through its provincial ordinances had increased manifold. The decision to resume Civil Disobedience therefore was taken by the Congress Working Committee on December 29, itself. Gandhi as usual tried to meet the Viceroy Willingdon who had replaced Lord Irwin but the latter refused to comply.

A Government report mentioned that, "Once the issue had been decided, the Government of India and local governments took strong and immediate action. Four ordinances were promulgated on January 14, the Emergency Powers Ordinance, conferring certain special powers for the maintenance of law and order ... so as to permit action against the publication of matter calculated to encourage the Civil Disobedience Movement (2) Unlawful Instigation Ordinance, directed against no-tax campaigns; (3) the unlawful Association Ordinance, aimed at Congress buildings and funds; and (4) the Prevention of Molestation and Boycotting Ordinance, directed against picketing and the boycotting of public servants. Mr. Gandhi and other leaders were quickly arrested and a direct attack made on Congress organisations." 89

In fact, the leaders of the Congress hardly had any time either to prepare the people for the movement or motivate them to participate, in the second phase of the Civil Disobedience movement even if their leaders were arrested. The Congress, in fact, was taken aback by the swift reaction on the part of the government. But the Congress decided to carry on with a more intensive fight and it was decided that the stress of the second phase was again going to be on non-violence whatever the provocation may be.

Though there were disturbances in some parts of Madras, United Provinces, Bengal, Bihar and even Orisa, the civil resisters continued to carry on with their stipulated activities. According to a Governments' report, "The three main features of the opening stages of the campaign were picketing, the observance of particular "days" in celebration of some selected event, and the boycott of British goods and institutions ... It accounted for many arrests in the early days and on the whole was free from violence."\(^90\)

The public interest was kindled by the observance of Independence day, Frontier day and Gandhi day. But the boycott of British goods still was the most popular activity because it appealed to the emotions of the people. The defiance of the salt laws was also observed in certain areas.

The boycott of the post offices started in 1930 was perfected in the second phase. The highly repressive measures of the Government, the ban on Congress and its allied organisations, the arrest of peaceful picketeers, and the lathicharge on the processionists had a cumulative impact on the movement which definitely started showing a continuous decline beginning from the middle of the year 1932. The Congress made concerted efforts to revive and extend the movement in spite of the odds and difficulties it faced. But the government struck back by occupying its offices and Ashrams and arresting the Congressites in large numbers.

The ordinance of the government to curb the activities of the Civil resisters resulted in blocking the further advancement of the movement. it, however, was not diluted. Another parallel force that occupied the attention of the government at this stage was the Revolutionary movement that had reached its peak by then. The number of incidents involving the revolutionaries was enhanced and outrages were committed at regular intervals. The policy of individual murders of British officials by young men and women found its full potential in 1932. The number of crimes committed in Bengal alone rose alarmingly to 94. Out of these 10 were murders, 27 attempted murders and 57 dacoities.

The attempt of Bina Das to assassinate the Governor of Bengal in February, the murder of Mr. Douglas, the
District Magistrate of Midnapore, in April, the attempt on the life of Sir Alfred Watson, the editor of "The Statesman" twice—once in August and again in September, the organised attack on the railway institute at Pahartali in September and finally the number of dacoities committed speak for the extent to which the revolutionary activities had expanded in Bengal alone. The most important incident Bihar was the murder of Phanindranath Ghosh, an approver in the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

According to the U.P. Police Administration Report for 1932, "The failure of Congress to make good their promises led to increased revolutionary activity. There were no less than 25 bomb outrages during the year ... During the first six months of the year there were 22 cases under the Explosive Act, eleven of which were the work of revolutionaries ... No less than fifty revolutionaries were convicted under ordinary law during the year while an additional eighty revolutionaries and their associates, went to jail for offences committed in pursuance of the Congress campaign."\(^1\)

This report shows clearly that some revolutionaries of the United Provinces also participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The raids carried out by the Special

Branch, however, resulted in the recovery of bombs and firearms. Yashpal, an important member of the HSRA was arrested in the beginning of the year itself. In Punjab, the first half of the year saw many bomb outrages. The intensive raids carried out, in that province resulted in the recovery of arms, ammunitions, leaflets and literature.

Thus, one finds that during the second phase of the Civil Disobedience movement, the revolutionary terroristic activities were as prominent, if not more than the activities of the Congress. The violent and the nonviolent movements proceeded side by side with the revolutionaries of certain areas participating in the Gandhian movement too. But the statements of some of these revolutionaries and the fact that the government had to deal with both the forces manifest the fact that the efficacy of non-violence was still not fully acceptable to them and they had no faith that it would result in the freedom of the country.

The declining number of arrests under the Civil Disobedience movement brought to light the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the people. The ban orders on the Congress organisations promoted secret activities by the Congress leaders and it pained Gandhi greatly. The Congress met in Calcutta and reaffirmed its faith in Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi started a purificatory fast once again on May 8, 1933 and asked for a period of 21 days for directing
his energies to study the Civil Disobedience Movement. He also suggested to the President of the Congress, Mr. M.S. Aney that he could suspend the movement either for a full month or 6 weeks if he so desired. Thus, the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement came to an end on May 8, 1933 to be resumed once again on August 1, 1934.

The period of Mass Civil Disobedience thus almost came to an end, but Gandhi could never give up satyagraha completely. He had to reach an honourable settlement. Therefore, an informal conference of some Congress leaders was convened in Poona. It was decided that Gandhi should seek an interview with the Viceroy. When the Viceroy refused to comply with Gandhi’s request for a meeting, Gandhi made up his mind to start the individual satyagraha, authorising people who were willing to offer satyagraha to do so. It was further decided that all the secret activities of the Congress organisations should cease because satyagraha depended on openness for its success. Gandhi planned to march to Ras on 1st of August 1933 but was arrested. Following the lead given by Gandhi, the third phase of the movement commenced but never took a serious turn and lingered on for some time before it was officially called off on 20th of May.

The years 1933 and 34 simultaneously witnessed the decline of revolutionary activities because, once again the
government adopted extraordinary measures to curb it. In the first half of the year 1933, many revolutionary leaders like Surjya Sen, Tarakeshwar Dastidar and Kalpana Dutta of the Chittagong Armoury Raid fame were arrested and Surjya Sen and Tarakeshwar were given death sentences. The Viceroy while giving a comprehensive review of the current affairs in the Indian Legislature stated, "The improvement in the situation in Bengal in regard to the terrorist movement of which there were some signs last February, has, I am glad to say, continued and there has been no serious outrage in recent months. But the movement though checked, is still active ... But, while the conditions in the Bengal are slowly improving, we have had a reminder recently of the manner in which the infection of these poisonous doctrines may spread to the other parts of the India which have hitherto happily been free from this form of crime. Recently terrorist outrages or attempts at outrages have occured in the Madras presidency." He was probably referring to the looting of a bank in Ootacamand in April and the unearthing of a society started in 1931. Towards the end of the year in September B.E.G. Burge District Magistrate Midnapore was shot dead.

By 1934, however, the activities of the revolutionaries were really on the wane. Leaving aside, the

execution of Surjya Sen, there was hardly any incident that could have stirred the people. The attempt on the life of Sir John Anderson, governor of Bengal on May 8, attracted the attention of Gandhi who condemned the attempt and said in an interview to the Press, "Every minute of life's experience further confirms me in the belief which I hold that non-violence is the only remedy for all ills of life, to deal with which violence is practised to-day. It is a great tragedy that some young men will not see that there is no short cut to deliverance from evils."  

Laushey opined, "The year 1934 may be taken as the date of the end of the terrorist movement in Bengal ... The Civil Disobedience Movement was officially terminated by the Congress on 20th May 1934, thus completing the almost perfect contemporaneity of the fourth outbreak of terrorism in Bengal and the second Gandhian movement."  

In fact both the Gandhian and the revolutionary movements lost their edge around 1935, due to varied reasons. While Harijan upliftment became Gandhi's primary concern ever since the announcement of Communal Award by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald in 1932 which Gandhi consider to be an attack on Indian unity and nationalism, the issue of

94. David M. Laushey, op.cit., p.121
Hindu-Muslim unity and new constitutional structure engaged his attentions. He had to devote a major part of his time in handling these issues. On the other hand the attention of the revolutionaries was diverted towards the new theories of Socialism and Communism which convinced them that the new movements would bring about a mass revolution that they ardently desired for. The revolutionaries, therefore, left their old path to join the new pastures and got diversified to merge with different channels.