

**VOLUNTEER CORPS, HINDUSTANI SEVA DAL AND YOUTH
LEAGUES ORGANISATION AND ACTIVITIES
1923 - 34**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirement
for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

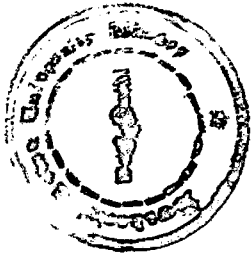
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1987

TO

" My Parents "



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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "VOLUNTEER CORPS, HINDUSTANI SEVA DAL AND YOUTH LEAGUES - ORGANISATION AND ACTIVITIES(1923-34)", submitted by Ms MADHU MENDIRATTA in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, has not been previously submitted for any other Degree to this or any other University, and all the sources used in this Dissertation have been duly acknowledged.


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, my sincere gratitude to my teacher and supervisor Dr. K.N. Panniker for being equally a source of inspiration and criticism in my work.

Thanks are also due to the staff of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and National Archives of India, for all facilities and friendly help they have given me.

I am also grateful to Prof. Bipin Chandra and Dr. Bhagwan Singh Josh for their valuable suggestions in the writing of this dissertation.

I am also very thankful to Mr. Bharat Malawat who has helped to bring this dissertation in its final typed form.

I owe the responsibility of errors, if any.

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Abbreviations

AICC	-	All India Congress Committee
CDM	-	Civil Disobedience Movement
CP	-	Constructive Programme
CWC	-	Congress Working Committee
DCC	-	District Congress Committee
HSD	-	Hindustani Seva Dal
INC	-	Indian National Congress
INM	-	Indian National Movement
NAI	-	National Archives of India
NMML	-	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
PCC	-	Provincial Congress Committee
VB	-	Volunteer Board

Introduction

"----- Service is no mushroom growth. It presupposes the will first and then the experience" 1. In other words, the will to serve first is to be inspired in the minds of young men. Experience is to be sought later.

The above statement implies the relationship between swaraj and the volunteer service. Quoted from the speech made by Gandhiji on volunteers in 1927, it answered many of the doubts and difficulties faced by the volunteers in the realization of the ultimate political goal - freedom. Gandhiji emphasised that "it is not for the Congress session only that we need volunteers. They are our National Guards" 2.

The youth who had offered themselves for satyagraha were not wanting in grit, patriotism, courage and spirit of sacrifice. They had all these qualities almost in full. Yet, there was something lacking in individual and collective behaviour of these patriots. It was hard for them to efface their personality and personal elements for the sacred cause for which they had volunteered themselves as servants. This could be done only by discipline, which could be had only through a regular course of training.

1 The Volunteer (microfilm), Vol III, No. 5, May 1927, p 123, NMML.

2 Ibid.

The volunteers were there in the Indian National Congress from its inception. However, with the non-cooperation movement, more permanent groups of volunteers were formed. Little need was paid to discipline and drill. More time and energy was spent in exhortations and appeals. Over the time, with mitigation of official repression, the weakness of the volunteer organisations came to the fore. These organisations could not endure the repressive measures taken by the Government and gradually neared their end. Thus, in consequence was established the volunteer corps and Hindustani Seva Dal.

Young men and women, were the members of these organisation. The volunteer Corps, Hindustani Seva Dal and the youth leagues acted as the outlets through which the youth in the country could channelise their discontent and despair, which was very much prevalent after the petering out of the non-cooperation movement.

The kind of activities in which these young men and women participated were multi-dimensional i.e. political, social, economic and cultural. Moreover, while discussing the activities the term 'volunteer' has been used in a general sense and the distinction among the different voluntary organisations viz, volunteer corps, Hindustani Seva Dal and Youth Leagues seldom appears. The developments

are discussed in a chronological order, and an effort has been made to highlight the different forms of activities of volunteers in such a way so that the way the passive masses were brought into political activity also comes to the fore. These volunteers devised such programmes of action which helped in politically mobilising the passive masses and thereby helped them to participate in the movement.

The contribution of the volunteers in the struggle for freedom is immense. This includes not only those belonging to either of these organisations but also the non-congressmen who were co-opted for satyagraha activities during the movement phase and their contribution to the cause of the nation should also be taken into consideration.

How far the voluntary organisations were successful ?, how a new cadre of workers was coming into being ? The relationship of these voluntary organisations with the Congress and how through their activities both in the active and passive phases of the movements, these volunteers were able to induct the passive masses into political activities ? All these form the basic theme of this dissertation. This dissertation has been divided into three chapters. The chapters are further divided into sections.

The early volunteer activities, the organisation aims

and ideas of the volunteer corps, Hindustani Seva Dal, Youth Leagues and their relationship with the Congress forms the first chapter of the dissertation.

The different activities of the volunteers first at an All India Plane and later in Bombay city and suburbs in the non-movement phase i.e. from 1923-27, form the second chapter. This period could also be called the Preparatory Phaze.

The different activities of the volunteers in Bombay city and suburbs in the active phazes i.e. during the Simon Boycott and Civil Disobedience Movement forms the third chapter.

In a nutshell, the volunteers and the masses were the different sides of the same coin. If on the one hand the activities of the volunteers such as demonstrations, boycotts, picketing etc, were successful, it was because of the masses who gave them the support. But on the other hand, these masses reacted and participated only when they were made aware of certain issues, and for this full credit goes to the volunteers who devised such programmes of action which were not only helpful in educating the people and thus activising them into political action but at the sanetime made them aware of social and economic

problems facing the country. Their combined effort is the basic theme of the dissertation and with the passage of time there is an increase in participation of both the masses as well as the volunteers.

The sources relied upon for the activities of the volunteers both during the movement and non-movement phases, and also dealing with the organisational aspect are AICC Files, The Bombay Chronicle, Home Political files, fortnightly Reports and Private Papers. The secondary sources used are duly mentioned in the foot notes and the bibliography.

Chapter I

Volunteer Corps, Hindustani Seva Dal and Youth Leagues - Aims and Perspectives.

The Indian National Movement (INM) was primarily directed towards achieving freedom from the British yolk and had passed through various stages before gaining success in 1947. Pre-eminently political in nature, the national movement gradually gained momentum and embraced many facets of national life by imbibing the different activities of Indian people i.e. social, cultural, and economic.¹

The movement for freedom, therefore was not static. The growingly impatient youth could not be kept under control for long. The masses were becoming conscious and assumed a definite role in the march towards Swaraj. They could not be ignored and therefore the old mode of constitutional agitation was bound to be affected by the intrusion of this new element into politics. For eg - Swadeshi, boycott, national education, passive resistance were the weapons already tested and had shown results in

¹ Bisheshwar Prasad, Changing Modes of Indian National Movement, p1

restricted spheres during the Swadeshi movement, Non-cooperation movement, Khilafat Movement etc.

Slowly and gradually the participation of masses in national movement changed the very nature and character of this movement and at the sametime the strategies to be deployed also varied at each stage. How this transformation came about ? How the passive masses were being politicised and how the mass activity eventually led to formation of volunteers ? All these issues form the theme of this chapter.

At the turn of the century, the INM took a great leap forward. Women, students and large sections of urban and rural population of Bengal and other parts of India came into active politics for the first time. This was the Swadeshi Movement and it was a change from Moderate tradition to political extremism, from the technique of petitioning and public speeches to that of boycott, passive resistance, all found reflection in this movement.¹

1. i) See Sumit Sarkar, Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-8.

ii) Karunakaran K.P., Continuity and Change in India Politics. A study of the political philosophy of Indian National Movement, 1983-1921.

The Swadeshi Movement had its genesis in an anti-partition movement which emerged as a result of British decision to partition Bengal. The partition was aimed as a blow at what was perceived as the nerve centre of INM. The message of Swadeshi and boycott soon spread to the rest of the country.¹

The Indian National Congress (INC) took to the Swadeshi programme and in Benaras session of 1905, presided over by Gokhale, supported the swadeshi and boycott movement for Bengal.² The militant nationalists led by Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai, were however, in favour of extending the movement to rest of India and carrying it beyond the programme of swadeshi and boycott to a full fledged mass struggle. The aim was swaraj. However, the twin slogans of swadeshi and boycott, received much attention and recognition at the Calcutta session of the INC in 1906 under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji.³ The boycott of foreign goods for example, met with greatest

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

visible success at the practical and popular level.

Mass public meetings and processions emerged as other major methods of mass mobilisation and simultaneously as forms of popular expression. These forms of mass mobilisation were to retain their importance in the latter phases of national movement. ✓ Volunteer corps or Samitis as they were called was another major vehicle of mass mobilisation used widely by swadeshi movement. These samitis comprising of volunteers took the swadeshi message to the villages thru the medium of giving lectures the swadeshi songs. They also gave physical and moral training to their members, did social work during famines and epidemics. The swadeshi period also saw the creative use of popular festivals, melas or fares, folk tradition in music and theatre as the means of reaching to masses.¹

The Swadeshi Movement hence with its multi faceted programme and activity was able to draw for the first time large sections of society into active participation in modern nationalistic politics. The swadeshi movement

1 Ibid.

created the conditions and necessary strength for next movement to come.

Besides this, the decade also witnessed the phenomenal rise of extremism in Indian nationalist politics particularly in Bengal and Maharashtra. A new political programme developed as a result of ceaseless efforts of Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai. This type of development led to the split in the ranks of INC which actually took place at its Surat Session in the year 1907.

The Morley - Minto reforms of 1909 intended to afford strength to maintain British hold over India further divided the nationalist forces. It failed to afford any kind of constitutional solution to the existing political problems facing the country. The demands of the radicals for attainment of swaraj raised with full enthusiasm in the year 1907 remained totally unfulfilled which led to dissatisfaction in many quarters. This led to much bitterness in the coming years amongst Moderates and Extremists. In this difference in reaction of the two different ideological groups, in the INC lay the success and fulfilment of the cherished objective of Morley and Minto.

As a result of all these developments the echo of Tilak's famous and popular declaration "Swaraj is our birth right and we shall have it", began to reverberate in every nook and corner and his name and fame became dominant in the political firmament of the country.¹ Under his leadership and guidance the Congress secured a broad base and lower middle classes were brought to its fold. This was the spectacular result of his hurricane political tours in various parts of India. His propoganda for swaraj and Home Rule was a danger signal for British Bureaucratic steel frame.²

The emergence of Gandhi with his unprecedented successes in the initial stages changed the entire tenture of non-cooperation movement (NCM), yet to be launched by

1 Dhananjay Keer, Lokmanya Tilak : Father of our Freedom struggle, p 350.

2. B.G. Tilak, His writings and Speeches, pp 104, 207, 235, 317, 332.

Mahatma. Gandhiji gained more strength and power from well known provincial leaders and numerous voluntary workers. For these voluntary workers a pledge of discipline, non-violence and complete sacrifice for their motherland was essential at the time of inauguration of movement. Indeed Champaran and Ahmedabad were two significant milestones in career of Gandhi¹ which elevated him to prominence.

Gandhi took up the Khilafat issue to establish Hindu Muslim unity. Gandhi became critical of British action in connection with Khilafat and advised the Hindus and Muslims not to take rest until the problem of Khilafat was solved.² By the middle of 1920 Mahatma Gandhi's alienation from British Raj was complete. The Khilafat issue supported by Gandhi ensured the fullest cooperation of Muslims who pledged to help Gandhi by their full support in the NCM.

The NCM was inaugurated with a month's tour of the

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1. i) See David Hardiman, Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda District 1917-34.
 - ii) B.R. Nanda, Mahatma Gandhi, a biography
 - iii) Mahatma Gandhi, an autobiography or the story of My Experiments with Truth.
 2. i) K.P. Karunakaran, opcit - pp 127-133
 - ii) See Gail Minault - The Khilafat Movement. Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India.

country by Gandhi and the Ali Brothers. They made contacts with the people of the country by meeting them, discussing political problems with them, addressing numerous public meetings and exhorting them to prepare themselves for ensuing battle of freedom. Besides, Gandhi's writings in his journal, the Young India, proved very effective amongst the intelligentsia in each and every nook and corner of the country.

In November 1920, Gandhi gave a very clear direction to the Congress volunteers regarding their taste to be pursued by them during the movement. The theme of his statement was : "If I am arrested" and the path to be followed by the Satyagrahis.¹ If I am arrested Rivers of bloodshed by the Government cannot frighten me but I would be deeply pained even if the people did so much as abuse the Government for my sake or in my name. It would be disgracing me if the people lost their equilibrium on my arrest. The nation can achieve no progress merely by depending upon me.²

1. Home Political A, File No. 183, December 1920,
NAI, New Delhi.

2. Ibid.

After the Nagpur Congress, the provincial Congress Committees (PCC) issued a special directive laying emphasis on the cult of non violence. The theme of each and every utterance in the public and the writings in the pamphlets was that of non-violence. The masses were thus getting bold, fearless and determined in their political aims and objectives and the prestige of the Government among the people was declining fast. The Government waited for an opportune movement to scotch the agitation. But the Congress was pledged to keep the exuberance of masses within bounds.

The declaration of NCM was with a bang and in fact, is was a revolutionary step tantamount to the proclamation of war with this difference that it was purely non-violent in its nature. Being quite a unique phenomenon, it inflicted neither pain nor any kind of injury upon the opponent, thus reserving every suffering, pain and sacrifice for the satyagrahi. Undoubtedly, this struggle whose duration was unknown at the time of its inauguration, demanded greater discipline, greater endurance, greater bravery and greater patience, other requirements were unity of action and mutual help and refusal to obey any state made laws. It was thus more dangerous than the armed rebellion as it could not be put down by any kind of severe action and moreover, the Satyagrahis were prepared to bear even the

severest hardship inflicted on them by police or any other executive authority.

I. 1

Early Volunteer Activities

Simultaneous to the mass mobilisation taking place in swadeshi movement, Khilafat movement and NCM, volunteer organisations also arose parallel to the congress organisation. Volunteers, however, were not a new phenomenon in the Congress. They were there right from the beginning. For eg, there were volunteers for social work and menial work. With the NCM more permanent groups of volunteers were formed.

The weekly and monthly reports of the activities of the volunteers during the non-cooperation phase were sent from the various provinces regularly. For example, the weekly report of the Maharashtra PCC stated that, "not less than 500 persons have defied the law and deliberately violated the prohibitory orders about liquor picketing in Poona City alone.¹ In yet another report on liquor picketing it says that, "44 volunteers picketed liquor shops in the city of Poona and were fined from

1. AICC file No. 6/1922, Weekly report of the Maharashtra PCC, (Manuscript section), NMML.

Rs. 10 to Rs. 55¹.

The important fact to be noted in the examples cited above is that, the volunteers no matter how small their number was, participated in different activities like, picketing and disobeying of laws. Their number and power grew till the Government anxious to check their growth applied the criminal law Amendment Act and declared them unlawful.

This Act was promulgated on 23 November 1921.

"But even before this Act came into force, the volunteer Corps like the Khilafat volunteers, the Muslim Volunteer corps and the Askari Islamia comprising of 500 men were declared unlawful assemblies early in December 1920 and disbanded".²

This act of repression by the Government gave a great fillip to the national volunteer efforts in general. Also at the town and district level the Congress and Khilafat volunteers merged with each other. However, the number of Khilafat and Congress volunteers is difficult to calculate separately as there was not always a clear distinction between local Khilafat and Congress divisions.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

The process of formation of a new cadre i.e. the volunteers after the 1920's was initiated to undertake the responsibility of mobilising or activating the masses for participation in politics. These volunteers were basically young men and students. This process of recruiting the volunteers for political purposes was mainly accomplished through the formation of Hindustani Seva Dal (HSD); Youth Leagues and Volunteer Corps.

I.2.

Lessons from early experiences

The need for an organised band of trained volunteers was felt as the volunteer organisations ceased to exist when the active movements came to an end.

Jawaharlal Nehru analysed the reasons:

We paid little heed to discipline and drill and spent our time and energy in exhortations and appeals. We forgot that courage without discipline is of little avail, and a mob however brave is powerless before a trained army. Our object was not to have a body of trained volunteers. We merely wanted to create an atmosphere of sacrifice and to infuse courage into many of our nerveless brothers. We succeeded wonderfully in our endeavour

but this success would have been greater and more lasting if our people had been disciplined.¹

The remedy suggested by Nehru was "to make every effort to have a trained and disciplined body. Without this training our strength will be waster and our courage will bear little fruit. Above everything, we must concentrate on training, and having given this training we shall have fitter men and women for constructive work and civil disobedience".²

Moreover, "discipline and obedience, goodwill and courtesy, physical fitness and steady energy, can be secured only by an adequate band of volunteers in each Congress area".³

The need to have a more disciplined volunteer corps was thus felt.

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1. The Volunteer (Microfilm), Jan 1925, Vol I No I, pp 5-8, NMML.
 2. Ibid.
 3. The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No 1, May 1925, p 83, NMML.

I. 3

Hindustani Seva Dal - Origin, aims and perspectives.

The old methods of enrolling volunteers were considered inadequate, wasteful of energy and enthusiasm as the same process had to be repeated everytime without any substantial results. The lack of training resulted in want of efficiency and still more so in the temporary volunteers forgetting very soon what little they had learnt. In spite of repeated attempts there were hardly any well trained volunteers and disciplined body of men and women in the country. Therefore, the idea of forming a nation wide volunteer organisation was finally formulated by Dr Hardiker, Dr Chandulal Desai, Dr Ghia and Nilkanth Rao Deshmukh in Nagpur Central Jail in 1923.¹ "They were convinced that proper training for volunteers was a must and decided calling an All India volunteer's Conference and forming a nation wide volunteer organisation, for the purpose of training and disciplining the volunteers."²

1. See The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No.I,
Jan 1925, NMML.

2. Ibid.

Thus the idea of a volunteer organisation - the Hindustani Sewa Dal (HSD) was conceived in the Central Jail of Nagpur.

On their release Dr Hardiker was asked to call a preliminary meeting of satyagrahis and other volunteers at Delhi. This idea of forming an All India Volunteer Organisation was then put before the leading volunteers from all provinces. This meeting also decided to hold an All India Volunteers Conference at Kakinada in 1923 and for this purpose a representative Provincial Board was appointed.¹

The Provincial Board urged the Districts and Provinces to organise volunteer conferences and meetings in their respective areas. The Provincial Board also urged them to support the volunteer movement both morally and financially. Consequently, more than fourteen out of twenty Congress provinces responded to the call. However, it was not that the remaining six

1. What is a Provincial Board ? Who constituted it and who were its members ? For this, see the next subsection Constitution and Organisation of HSD.

provinces were against this movement or were indifferent to it, but the prevailing conditions in their provinces at that time did not allow them to achively support and cooperate.¹

The outcome of all these developments resulted in convening of the first All India Volunteers Conference held at Kakinada in 1923 under the able Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru. This conference undertook the responsibility of framing the constitution for the HSD and further got the constitution recognised by the Kakinada Congress.²

The Kakinada session of national congress welcomed the formation of Dal and passed the following resolutions -

This Congress was of opinion that in order to train the people of India and to make them effective instruments for carrying out the national work on the lines laid down by Congress, it is necessary to have trained and disciplined body of workers. This Congress therefore welcomes

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

the movement for the formation of an All India Volunteers Organisation and calls upon the working Committee to take all necessary steps to form such a body of trained workers in cooperation with organisers of the movement and to keep control and supervision over it while giving it freedom of internal management and administration.¹

The Seva Dal thus conceived as a fully autonomous body. However, as per the above resolution, inspite of its independent autonomous status, it was affiliated to National Congress, and therefore in matters of general policy it followed the lead given by national Congress.

Constitution and Organisation of HSD²

The INC at Kakinada framed the constitution for HSD

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol II, pp 87-88, Speech at Kakinada Congress. Report of 38th Session of INC, 1923, pp118-119. Original in Hindi.
2. This subsection deals with the membership rules, pledge, organisation of the dal etc. See AICC file No. G8/1929 (Manuscript section), NMML, for General Rules Regarding the Organisation of HSD.

in 1923. It went into every minor detail for the efficient functioning of the Dal. The Dal was an autonomous body but it followed the lead given by the Congress. The rules, regulations and the constituent parts of the Dal, its relationship with the congress, etc, every aspect was dealt with in details with no room left for any ambiguity whatsoever.

To be enrolled as a volunteer or individual had to fulfil a very important condition and that was the signing of the pledge. The pledge was, "I shall endeavour to promote to best of my ability, peace and goddwill among all class and communities of India. I shall abide by Rules and Regulations of the HSD of which I shall be Member Associate and shall carry out the orders of my superior officers.¹

Moreover it was stated very clearly that every Indian who was above the age of seven years, man or women, shall be eligible for membership provided that all such as are above 18 years of age, shall subscribe to creed of INC. The membership rules also set three categories

1. AICC File No. G8/1929 (Manuscript section), NML.

of age groups viz - Balaks - Balikas - 7-13 years of age, Kumar-Kumarikas - 13-18 years of age, Sevak-Sevikas - 18 years of age and above.¹

Yet another important requisite for being enrolled as a member was that every associate shall pay an annual fee of rupee One when he or she signs a pledge and every member shall pay an annual fee of anna four when he or she signs a pledge.²

The Dal consisted of six constituent parts. They were as follows :

1. All India Board

The All India Board of the Dal comprised of 12 members consisting of 3 office bearers and 9 other members elected by annual conference of Dal. Moreover any province having 500 members and associates or more had the right to nominate an advisory member for the All India Board for the year. This advisory member was to be chosen by Provincial Board and he had the right of membership except for the right to vote.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

The All India Board was considered the executive of the Dal. For the efficient functioning of Dal and to carry out its objectives, the All India Board took such steps i.e. it was within its powers to frame new rules and regulations and at the same time make changes wherever necessary. It was also clearly stated that in case of vacancy on Board the same would be filled by Co-option.

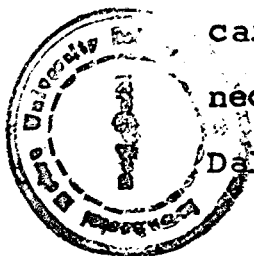
2. Provincial Board

The Provincial Board which was the second constituent part of Dal, comprised of 5 members appointed by All India Board. The Provincial Congress Committee (PCC), however had the right to appoint three additional members on the Provincial Board. The President, for the Provincial was to be elected from amongst their members. He was to be called Dalpati. The secretary and the Treasurer for the Provincial Board were to be elected from amongst its own members.

The main function of provincial Board was that it was the sole agent of the Dal. It was to be responsible to All India Board in all matters concerning the Dal in the province.



"The Board shall organise subordinate boards, form Dal's units in its jurisdiction, form rules and regulations subject to the approval of all India Board for carrying out its functions and to take such other necessary steps for carrying out the objectives of the Dal in the Province".¹



3. District Boards

The District Boards of Dal worked on similar lines as those of the provinces.

4. Annual or special conference of Dal constituted the fourth part of the Dal.

5. The reception Committee of annual or special Conference of the Dal.

6. Units of Dal

a. Dasta- A dasta was to consist of an officer at the rank of a Nayak alongwith 10 members or associates of Dal. Any 11 members or associates living as far as possible shall form a dasta and ordinarily elect one member as its Nayak.

1. Ibid.

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- b. The Company - The company shall consist of an officer called the Subedar, his associate called the Nayab Subedar and 10 dastas. The 10 Nayaks belonging to 10 Dastas in the company could ordinarily elect their Subedars and Nayab Subedars.
- c. Battalion - The battalion consisted of an officer called the Sardar and his assistant called the Nayab Sardar. The battalion had four companies under it. The subedars of these four companies could elect their Sardar or Nayab Sardar subject to approval of Provincial Board.
- d. Regiment - The Regiment consisted of an officer called the Hazari, his assistant was called the Nayab Hazari. There were 3 battalions under the regiment. The Provincial Board had the right to appoint the Hazari and Nayab Hazari.
- e. Dal - A Dal consisted of an officer called the Dalpati, his assistant called the Nayab Dalpati. These two officers were to be elected by Provincial Board according to the constitution of the Dal. As far as grouping was concerned, the separate dastas which were formed in the various

districts were to be grouped under the designation of that district alone. As far as dastas were concerned it was emphatically stated that there were to be no inter district formations. The dastas were to be numbered and as per the rules it had to bear the names of the towns or villages.

A pertinent point to be emphasised at this juncture is that various units of Dal were unable to fulfil the required quota of its members. In that case, would the units as a whole or individually cease to function? No Dal, regiment, battalion, company or dasta shall cease to function by reason of the fact that it does not consist of its full quota of members.

The provincial board was also to authorise the officers and members of Dal in its jurisdiction to enrol members or associates of HSD and if necessary a special recruiting officer could also be appointed for that purpose. The Provincial Board also sought to make suitable arrangements for the training of members under direction of All India Board.

The Provincial Board also decided the uniforms to be used by Dal members and associates. The uniform was to be

hand spun and hand woven Indian cloth. It had to be simple, inexpensive and convenient for drill and other outdoor work.

The election of president of annual conference of Dal was to be made by All India Board in consultation with Provincial Boards of Dal. The President of Conference shall be President of HSD for that year. He was to be called the Senapati and was to be President of All India Board for the coming year. The General Secretary and the Treasurer were to be elected at annual conference of Dal and as regards the office bearers and members of all boards of dal shall be either associates or members of dal.¹

Dr Hardiker started Volunteer the organ of the HSD. According to him, the only backing in launching upon this adventure is the infant All India HSD and the Provincial Branches of that organisation in the various Congress provinces _ _ _ _ _.

There is no literature on this subject. There is nothing by way of history to guide us in our attempts to build up this organisation_ _ _ _ _

1. Ibid.

We propose to humbly devote our pages mainly to record to the best of our ability the history, however broken and meagre it may be, of the HSD and thereby help to make it the best trained, disciplined and organised body in Hindustan.¹

The fact that the Dal had got the recognition at the hands of the INC, therefore it was necessary that it had as its mouthpiece an organ to record its history, achievements and the kind of work which the Dal members undertook. The Volunteer tried to bridge this gap and undertook the task to enlighten the masses and thereby make them aware of the political developments, and thus politicise them. This helped in politically educating the masses to a great extent.

The effort of the organisers of the HSD was to evolve a workable and efficient organisation. As early as March 1924, Nehru in a letter to Dr Hardiker categorically stated that :-

Different provinces have varying needs and it is neither possible nor desirable to attempt to force

1. The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No. I,
Jan 1925, p 1, NMML.

them into adopting a rigid volunteer constitution which may not wholly suit them. Volunteer organisation must largely be local work with a town or villages as a Centre. The province will coordinate the work in the various districts or smaller centres. The All India Board can generally supervise and guide the movement. The real thing to start is a number of good centres for training and disciplining is the primary thing we are aiming at. Large numbers need not be brought to begin with but those that join must be given a sound training.¹

The notable features in the above letter lay emphasis on efficiency, involvement of the masses in volunteering activities at village, town or provincial level and above all emphasis was on training and discipline. The rules and regulations of the constitution were not all that rigid and could be moulded so as to suit the different conditions at different points of time.

1. N.S. Hardiker Private Papers, Correspondence with Nehru, letter dt 3 March, 1924, p 17, (Manuscript section), NMML.

I.4

The Congress and the HSD

From the very time the HSD was established, it was made very clear that the "Volunteers cannot be independent of the Congress", that, "it would be difficult for the movement to succeed without the fullest support from Congressmen and even if it happened to prosper there would always be danger of friction and conflict."¹

The resolution passed at the Kakinada Congress in 1923, clearly stated that :-

This Congress is of opinion that in order to train the people of India and make them effective instruments for the carrying out of the national work on the times laid down by the Congress, it is necessary to have trained and disciplined body of workers. This Congress therefore welcomes the movement for the formation of an All India Volunteer Organisation and calls on the working Committee to take all necessary steps to form such a body of trained volunteers in

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol II,
pp 83-86.

Cooperation with the organisers of the movement and to keep control and supervise over it, while giving it freedom of internal Management and administration.¹

Here questions arise as to the nature of the organisation. Who will manage it ? Will it not turn against the Congress itself ? Or will others interfere in its organisation ? What was the attitude of the Congressmen when the HSD was established and was considered subordinate to it ?

The Congress had given recognition to the Dal, but not much encouragement. In some quarters suspicious were entertained whether Seva Dal would always remain non violent. Some even imagined that under the cloak of non violence, large number of youths were being trained for violence. For this suspicion the following reasons were put forward by Maulana Shaukat Ali.² The movement had started in Kamatak which had played a very brilliant part in the past and had added a glorious page to the Indian History.

1. Ibid, pp 87-89.

2. President Elect of the HSD for 1925.

The organising secretary¹ not only belonged to Karnatak but was trained in America and the West, the home of anarchists, bomb - throwers and other revolutionaries.²

Moreover many Congressmen also felt that the dal was "unnecessary or premature".³ Probably the opponents of the volunteer organisation believed that the handful of Congressmen can achieve Swaraj or that the attainment of Swaraj is so easy and so near as to require no future workers. It is however hard to understand the mentality of such persons. They failed to realise that the ideal of service without expectation of reward cannot be attained without preliminary training. That the schools, colleges and universities had no provision for training young men and women for social and national service, nor could any training imparted in institutions modelled after western types suit Indian ideals.

The national institutions which were the product of

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1. Dr. N.S. Hardiker
 2. See the volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No. 2, Feb 1925, p 9, NMML.
 3. See the Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol O No 1, Jan 1925, NMML.

the awakening of national consciousness were too few in number to turn out even the thousandth part of the number of trained, disciplined workers that India required. And this fact alone furnishes a sad commentary on the doleful history of Indian National consciousness. That the institutions require reverification and replenishing with courageous men dedicating their lives for the service of humanity. For all this HSD is the only answer.¹

Moreover, on the ground that HSD is an organisation of the military type not suited to the creed and ideal of the congress would be pushing the interpretation of the creed of non violence to an absurd and ridiculous length.-

We may require no armies, no battleships and no munitions; but we cannot certainly do without fearless, selfless workers. Moreover is not social service a necessity even under Swaraj ? Why then grudge protection to an unassuming, unostentations and highly useful organisation which supplies an immensely great desideratum.²

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1. See Jawahar Lal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol V,
 2. N.S. Hardiker Private Papers, (Manuscript section), NMMI.

Another question which aroused suspicion about the Dal and its relationship with the Congress was, was the Dal a revolutionary body ? Was the Dal run on Military lines?

Revolution per Se may be carried out in two different ways, the one being the 'Bloody Revolution and the other 'Bloodless or peaceful Revolution'. The members of the Dal had to accept the Congress creed, which also was the creed of a volunteer organisation.

The members of the Dal accepted the Congress creed and thereby retained the Ahmedabad pledge of non-violence. "Both physically and temperamentally Indians being unfit as yet even to think of a bloody revolution. The youths definitely desire to bring about a revolution by physical and mental training in a disciplined manner and organising for all kinds of selfless sacrifices".¹ Therefore on the basis of these arguments it could be said that the Dal is not run on military lines. But that drill and discipline form an important part of the course outlined by the organisation.

1. N.S. Hardiker Papers, Subject File No. 4
(Papers and Press Clippings), (Manuscript Section),
NMML.

To whom is a volunteer subordinated, Congress authorities or Board authorities ?

" A Sahayak or a volunteer is not at all subordinate to Congress officials. He is subordinate to the Dal officials, while the Dal as an organisation is subordinate to the Congress"¹.

What is the relation between the Provincial Congress Committee (PCC) and Provincial Volunteer Boards (PVB), District Congress Committees (DCC) and District Volunteer Boards (DVB) ?

" PVB are to be appointed by PCC. Members of the volunteer Boards (VB), therefore, are responsible representatives of the Province - some of whom are members of the PCC also. The primary business of the PVB is to carry on Congress propaganda in the province in cooperation with the provincial committees"². Thus there is a relation between the Congress Committees and the volunteer Boards. Moreover in the absence of any Congress work the

1. AICC File No. G8/1929, (Manuscript Section),
NMML.

2. Ibid.

Boards are at liberty to carry on any social, religious, educational or economic activities without of course jeopardising the interest of the Congress.

"In the internal administration the PVB are directly responsible to the All India Board while the Provincial Committees have no hand in it. The Provincial Boards may frame their own rules and bye laws but must submit them for approval to the All India Board."¹

It would, however, not be out of place to raise another important issue i.e., whether at any point of time, the PCC showed an indifferent attitude towards the Dal ? If so, then why ?

This was the kind of problem which even the Dal organisers were aware of. The explanation which they put forward was "individuals have varied interests in life; so have organisations and committees. Those who realize the necessity for such an organisation for the emancipation of the Indian people, may help us directly as well as indirectly _ _ _ _ _ But with all this

1. Ibid.

we must work and work incessantly if we believe in a programme. Perseverance is bound to change the mentality of the people and their leaders"¹.

" For eg. there is dissatisfaction of some of the POC members who think that just because Bengal is not represented on the All India Board, the Dal organisation is not meant for them and therefore they are indifferent towards the activities of the Dal.

" However everyone forgets that there are 20 Congress Provinces and only 12 seats on the All India Board. Further the seats are filled by election in the open conference of volunteers every year. If in such a conference no nominations of any candidate of any province are either suggested or a prominent worker in that field is visible to any delegate of the conference, who is to be blamed ?² Local patriotism is healthy when it is

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1. The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No 4, April 1925, pp 54, NMML.
 2. Ibid.

an impetus to the vie with other Provinces in point of view of progress. But it is surely regrettable when it batches jealousies. There is no ban on any province. An executive body has got to have only a small number if it means to work. To increase the number just in order to satisfy the whims of local patriotism would make it somewhat more representative but rather unwieldy.¹

Even for the funds one sees that the Dal was always in deficit and depended heavily on the support from the Congress. Dr Hardiker requested in all his letters for funds. Nehru felt that he was being "greedy"². But Dr Hardiker replied "How can I run the organisation ? Why do you blame me for being greedy ? Whom shall I tell the real situation if I don't tell you ?"³

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1. The idea has been borrowed from The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No 4, NMML
 2. AICC File No. G8/1929 to Panditji, (Manuscript - Section), NMML.
 3. Ibid.

The Seva Dal is certainly entitled to help from the AICC. But the tendency has been for the Seva Dal to carry on an independent existence. This is the right tendency but it necessarily involves a less frequent recourse to grants from the AICC. This was the explanation put forward by Nehru.¹

The Seva Dal continued to function in various parts of India and gradually but effectively built up a trained body of volunteers. The stress was always on training camps and efficiency and not on numbers. For eg, "the Dal membership figures in 1926 in different provinces were as follows -

Karnatak - 613 , Bombay - 50
United Provinces -99, Maharashtra - 25
Central Provinces-77, The Punjab - 15

The total number of volunteers of HSD in different provinces in 1926 was 879."²

Why was the Seva Dal reorganised as the Central Volunteer Organisation of the Congress ? Why was the

1. Ibid.
2. The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol III No 2, Feb 1927, p 38, NMML.

Seva Dal brought under the authority and control of the Congress ?

From its very inception the Seva Dal sought to function under the control and supervision of the Congress. At the sametime it was given freedom of internal management and administration. For six years the Seva Dal continued to function in various parts of India and gradually but effectively built up trained bodies of volunteers. As is evident from the example cited above, the work was not spectacular and the progress not rapid, as stress was always laid on training camps and efficiency and not on numbers. However, inspite of all this, the standard of volunteer training was raised considerably.

In December 1929, after six years of its coming into being, following the lead of the national congress the Seva Dal made the "Independence" of India its objective and subsequently the Dal threw all its resources into the great national struggle which was to follow in the 1930's.¹

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol V
p 233.

After the Delhi Truce, the working Committee considered the whole question of volunteering and the HSD in the light of new developments and the experience gained during the civil disobedience campaign. It was clear that the training of volunteers on a large scale for national service had become an essential and immediate work for the Congress. The working committee thereupon passed a resolution on the 11th July 1937, recognising the HSD as the Central volunteer organisation of the Congress and bring it directly under its own authority and control.¹

The Seva Dal gladly accepted this fundamental change in its constitution which put an end to its separate autonomous existence and made it the volunteer department of the Congress. The first success, for eg, came when in accordance with the working Committee's resolution of 4 August 1931, the Khudai Khidmatgars became the Congress volunteer Organisation in the N.W.F.P.²

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

I.5

Formation of Youth Leagues - Aims and Perspective

The excitement generated by the non-cooperation programme was followed by a period of frustration and indecision.

Gandhi's own energies and those of his closest disciples went into what was called the 'constructive Programme' in contrast to the work of those who entered the councils and engaged in political activities on the national and provincial level¹

The youth, everywhere in the country were feeling discontented with the whole system, and were just waiting for an opportunity to channelise their discontent/activity. " It was in this mood, not as before of novelletish romanticism but of thoughtful commitment to revolutionary change that Jawaharlal returned to India".² "Nehru alongwith Subhas Bose brought fresh ideas and new vitality into the Congress, for both had been influenced by contemporary European Socialist and Marxist thought, and more than any other of the congress leaders, they saw

1. Ainslie T. Embree, India's Search for National Identity, p2

2. S. Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru, a biography, Vol I, p 110.

* Michael Breeher, Nehru - a political biography, p122
Nehru - an autobiography, p 166-167.

Indian politics in terms of ideology"¹.

The political impatience of the youth was fully grasped by Nehru. During the Madras session of the INC in 1927, the meaning of true Swaraj was made clear. "It was often said that we wanted freedom, Swaraj, terms which were not intelligible to everybody. The independence resolution made clear so far as the Congress was concerned, what sort of freedom we wanted"².

It was in response to this that there was a massive influx into the Congress of young men and women. The youth of the country took upon itself the task of mobilising its ranks in the national movement as a group. The fortnightly reports of this period are full of details showing that youth leagues were springing up in one province or the other frequently, whether it was in Assam, Moradabad, Baroda, Bombay or Utmanzai the home village of Ghaffar Khan in the N.W.F.P.³

Origins of Youth Leagues.

Nehru had returned to India with the project of

1. Ainslie T. Embree, op cit, p.17.
2. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol III, p8
3. For more details see Home Political, Fortnightly Reports from 1927 onwards, NAI.

widening the horizon of the I.M. He emerged as the main spokesman of this growing tendency within the national movement.

Nehru did not have an iota of doubt that only a youth gripped by a revolutionary spirit and ideas would be capable of building a new nation. And for this, "first of all a revolutionary temper had to be promoted. Only a spirit of revolt would create a generation of youth with sensitivity to the broader issues of exploitation - of man by man, nation by nation and class by class."¹

Before one could preach what to replace the present system it had to be preceded by the spirit of utter disgust and revolt against an antiquated system. "The world changes and progresses because of those who are disaffected and who are not prepared to tolerate the evils of injustice of things as they are or have been."²

In all his messages and addresses to the youth, Nehru focussed on two major themes. Firstly a cultural revolution against all divisive and fragmented consciousness

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1. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol III,
p 203.
 2. Ibid.

had to be waged. Secondly, simultaneously they must raise the question, what kind of nation would they strive for ?

Here he brought to the fore the necessity to grasp the socialist ideas. As he had outlined in the first theme that India was a nation in the making, therefore given the nature of problems connected with it, he said, "Socialists fight in the country were going to be a stiff fight, but they would have to fight against a number of prejudices courageously."¹ But on the other hand, they could more successfully remove the communal spirit ----- and work for the unification of different groups in the provinces",² as socialists.

Secondly, in the context as to what kind of nation they were to build, time and again Nehru emphasised that "Youth must appreciate that anti-imperialism as mere hatred of foreign rule was not a sufficient end, The youth must learn that imperialism was a world system

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

and its roots lay in the development of capitalism. Correspondingly the struggle had to transcend narrow nationalism and gradually transform itself into anti-capitalism".¹ Again, "world imperialism is the direct outcome of _ _ _ _ _ capitalism. We must aim at reconstruction of society on the basis of _ _ _ _ _ socialism."²

Within this framework, Nehru was trying to bring before the youth a kind of new consciousness, thereby initiating an ideological process in which social and economic awareness would be created.

Throughout the year 1927 efforts however small were being made in different provinces to revive non-cooperation and satyagraha. The Madras session of the INC brought together the already developing radical tendency within the congress. The sum total of the resolutions passed at this congress was a great advance over the barren political stretch between

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1. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol III, pp 188-196.
 2. Jawaharlal Nehru, op cit, p 206.

1922 and now.¹

The immense significance of the Madras session lies not in how many delegates were deeply committed to and grasped the resolutions that were passed, but in the sudden and fresh air that was released into the political atmosphere and the new climate it helped to generate over the next two years. The Madras session of the Congress thus brought to fruition the already developing radical tendency within the Congress. By formally enunciating the true meaning of Swaraj, it also brought to a head the massive influx into the congress of a completely new generation of young men and women, who saw in Nehru the epitome of their politics for the future.

1. The resolutions approved official participation of INC at Brussels against Imperialism, expressed resentment for Indian troops being sent to further imperialist designs in China and resolution on was danger and refusing to participate and in any kind of cooperation in was that furthered Britain's imperialist aims.

This was the signal the youth of the country was waiting for, and youth associations all over the country now flooded the INC. The barren political stretch since the non-cooperation days resulted in the political impatience of the youth. This was fully grasped by Nehru and it nourished his new insight into the future of Indian politics.

A determination to do something for the country was getting the first priority with the youths. Nationalism foreshadowed all the other aspects. The first political speeches and calls specifically aimed towards them were made by youth leaders in 1928. It was for the first time the youth took upon itself the task of mobilising its ranks in the national movement as a group and not as individuals as in the non-cooperation days. The first youth leagues and associations had been formed, though as yet, no All India Organisation or contacts existed. The fortnightly reports from 1927 onwards are full of details showing that youth leagues were springing up in one province or the other frequently.¹

1. See Home Political, fortnightly Reports
from 1927 onwards, NAI.

The significant feature observable in the political life was the "interpenetration" between the youth Leagues, Seva Dals and the Volunteer movements. The young, were flooding all these organisations and most of them were members of two of these bodies simultaneously. The Home Political files and the fortnightly and weekly reports from the various provinces for the year 1929 show clearly that the new recruitments in the Seva Dals or the volunteer movement were being chiefly filled by young men and women.

It was in this background that the youths who were otherwise not so active in the national movement, got a chance to undertake activities. The stage for political activities was set up by the Simon Boycott Call, and this acted as a Catalyst to enable them to be active throughout 1929 and after. Although the anti-simon commission agitation did not immediately lead to a wider political struggle because Gandhi was not yet convinced that the time for struggle had come. But popular enthusiasm could not be held back for long for the country was once again in a mood of struggle.

The Lahore session of the Congress gave voice to

the new, militant spirit. It passed a resolution declaring Poorna Swaraj to be the Congress objective. on 31 Dec 1929 was hoisted the newly adopted tri-colour flag of freedom. 26 Jan 1930 was fixed as the first Independence Day, which was to be celebrated every year with the people taking the pledge not to submit any longer to the British rule.¹

Moreover, following the lead given by the National Congress, the Seva Dal too made the "Independence" of India its objective and subsequently, the Dal threw all its resources into the national struggle of 1930-31.

Aims and Perspective of Youth Leagues.

The aims and ideals of a youth league as perceived by Nehru, was that the youth league" should consist of young men who are dissatisfied with present conditions and seek to better them _ _ _ _ _ the

1. See Bipin Chandra Freedom Struggle.

principal objective of the league should be, self education by discussions, study circles and by developing contacts with the masses. The members should prepare themselves for future work rather than take up active work before they are clear in their own minds what to do and how to do it. The preparation itself may involve some active work but the object should not be so much the work as the training and knowledge that the work gives. Some kinds of activities should be undertaken even at this stage, for ef, boycott of foreign cloth and occasional participation in national demonstrations and the like. Occasionally also, activities are thrust on the league by repressive measures of the Government"¹.

Inspite of there being a big political organisation like the congress, why there arose the need to have different institutions like the youth leagues ?

This has been very well argued by Subhas Bose :

There cannot be any conflict between the youth leagues

1. AICC File No. G39/1928, Part I, letter by Nehru to Bhagwat Dayal, pp 153-59, (Manuscript Section),

and the Congress. As a river is fed by rivulets so is the congress composed of youths, women, peasants and labourers with small organisations representing their social problems. The object of the youth league is to make genuine citizens of them as the youths are the heirs of the future. The prime desire of the nation is to win political freedom of India _ _ _ _ _ In advancing the cause of freedom of India the different organisations would be serving the parent institution - The Congress.¹

Bose opined "that they must train youth to bring all round development. The ultimate goal would only then be reached. They were in no way inferior to the people of the ruling class and in some respect they were actually their superior. That the new sense of responsibility would give them added strength and a sense of self respect".²

The aims and ideals of the youth league movement as

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), 18 June 1929, NMML.
2. Ibid.

was visualised by Nehru and Bose resulted in the formation of the youth leagues which were springing in in the different provinces and attracting many young men and women to its fold.¹

In Bombay, "the first session of the Bombay Presidency youth conference was held in Bombay on 21st and 22nd January 1928, K.F. Nariman presiding"² The membership being open "to any youth of either sex under 30 years of age being eligible to become a delegate on paying four annas and a member of the reception committee on paying Re 1/-."³

It had developed on progressive lines and brought out "The Young Liberator" to voice its views. The aim, however, was to mobilize the intelligentsia. Moreover the success of every movement depends upon the regular dissemination of its ideals. To give expression to the thoughts of youth and to guide and direct their dynamic

1. See Shashi Joshi "The left and the Indian National Movement 1920-34", Ph.D Thesis, JNU, for youth movements.
2. Home Poll, Fortnightly Report, Jan 1928, NAI
3. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), 14 Jan 1928, NMML.

energy in proper channels an organ was essential. Hence the Vanguard¹ was published. The purpose as defined by Yusuf Meherally to Nehru in 1929 was as follows that, while the workers were being organised, efforts were being made to win over the intelligentsia to the principles of socialism. Vanguard will try to fill this gap.

The essential programme put forward by the Bombay youth league was complete Independence, radical and forward policy of social amelioration and national liberation, promotion of Swadeshi and championing the cause of labour.²

In Bengal the youth movement was personally directed by Subhas Bose and several youth meetings were held each month. "At many of these self sacrifice and even violence was advocated."³ "The drilling of volunteers was done regularly and it was clear that the movement was gaining strength and the tendency towards violence increasing".⁴ The volunteers were frequently involved

1. Vanguard was the organ of the Bombay Presidency youth league.
2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), 9 Jan 1928, NMML.
3. Home Poll, Fortnightly Report for April 1929, NAI.
4. Ibid.

in clashes with the police and several new units of the youth leagues were formed each month. The volunteers being recruited were young men and women and therefore were enrolled in the youth leagues apart from Seva Dals.

"Thus the personnel of all the three organisations of the Congress i.e., the volunteer Corps, the youth leagues and the Seva Dal consisted of young people."¹ In Bengal around the theme of complete Independence, slogans raised were "self sacrifice and Death is at our Door".²

Similarly the Lucknow youth league called upon its members to play a prominent part in political, social and economic revolution. The major aspects of its programme were, fight against communalism, abolition of antiquated social and religious customs, developing the habit of sound study of public questions and movements all over the world, study of economic conditions and practical work among workers and peasants.³

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1. Home Poll, Fortnightly Report for June 1927, NAI
 2. Home Poll, Fortnightly Report for July 1929, NAI
 3. AICC File No. G39/1928, Programme of the Lucknow Youth League (Manuscript Section),

These aims, it was asserted, "were essential prerequisites to overcome social and cultural backwardness and helping the growth of a modern secular attitude."¹

Despite the generally felt need for the voluntary and youth organisation they were hardly organised on an All India scale. They were local in character. The process of formation of a new cadre, which would undertake the responsibility of mobilising the masses was quite evident.

1. Ibid.

Chapter II

Activities of Volunteers, 1923-27

The main task of the workers belonging to the volunteer Corps to HSD and Youth Leagues was to devise programmes of action which would produce a solid band of trained and disciplined volunteers and simultaneously to mobilise the passive masses, enabling them to understand, appreciate and then to participate in the freedom struggle.

Their activities were primarily directed towards achieving the Poorna Swaraj or complete Independence and therefore were political in nature. However, the young workers also took part in activities which were social, economic and cultural.

Their activities covered a wide range of issues. They were not only helpful in politically educating the masses but brought to their notice the economic, social and cultural issues. The contribution of activities in which these young men and women belonging to the various organisations and also the ones who were coopted during the active phases of movement to the freedom struggle was immense.

The new generation of workers undertook the task of

mobilising and activating the passive masses. They helped in creating a strong public opinion on the issues on which they were fighting. This kind of mass mobilisation was taking place all throughout, irrespective of the fact whether the national interest was passing through a period of passive phase or an active phase.

The period following the withdrawal of non-cooperation movement (NCM) was one of relative political passivity. In such circumstances the volunteers undertook, the following different activities.¹

II. 1

Activities of volunteers at All India Level (1923-27)

The initial activities of the Seva Dal was to organise

1. Section II.1 of this chapter briefly discusses the different activities of the volunteers at all India level. In doing so, there is more emphasis on certain provinces. This is because the workers were more active in these regions and in II.2. their activities in Bombay city and suburbs. The underlying idea being to briefly highlight the activities in preparatory stage and how through them the passive masses were being mobilised.

annual conferences during the congress sessions. Many training camps were organised to give a thorough training to groups of boys and young men.

For example, in Andhra a camp was opened. They chose a Jatra¹ time and had selected about 40 volunteers to train them in a fortnights camp during this Jatra.²

The second attempt in this direction was made in Karnataka. The Director of the HSD of this province took upon himself the responsibility of organising and supplying the volunteers on behalf of the HSD branch of this province to the 39th INC. An earnest call to the youth of Karnataka to join the camps and classes was made.³

However, at the start the response was not encouraging. The movement of the HSD being still at its initial stage, the course of training was not perfect. Moreover,

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1. Jatra is a form of Nautanki prevalent in Bengal and takes place more frequently during the Pooja time. During the National movement it took the political form and by means of songs, nautanki mobilised the masses.
 2. See The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I, No I, January 1925, p 16, NMML.
 3. Ibid.

sufficient number of youths willing to leave their homes, and stand the rigours of camp life for 3-4 weeks at their own expense was not coming forth. The various congress committees would not render their financial help either because their treasury was empty or they could not appreciate the movement. Some were sympathetic but owing to financial stringency could not render any monetary help. Yet, inspite of these obstacles, the spread of the movement in Karnataka was very encouraging.¹

For example, in the course of four months i.e. from the middle of August 1925, some 14 camps were opened in various places, viz, Sitimani 3 camps, Belgaum 2 camp, Dharwar 1 camp, Bangalore 1 camp. A number of classes were also conducted in various places of the province. Nearly 300 Sahayaks received their training

1. Ibid, See the article, "Sahayaks Training Camps and Classes conducted by the Karnataka Branch of the HSD, and their aims and objects; p 15.

in these camps and about 300 more were trained in classes.¹

Karnataka along with the other Congress Provinces was called upon by the Dal Head Quarters to establish Provincial Branches. A scheme embodying the following items was put before the Reception Committee office at its meeting held in Hubli. It embodied the recruiting of Sahayaks, Sahayikas and Kumars; helping the organisation concerned; training of Kumars and volunteers by opening camps and classes all over the province; organising them by a method of centrifugal training i.e. every trained volunteer training ten in turn and so on. This scheme was accepted in toto.²

The Dal Headquarters, had, no doubt great expectations of the organisation in this Province, going ahead of all other provinces as it had to organise its forces for the Belgaum Congress in 1924 and show some solid work.

1. Ibid.

2. See, The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No. 2
February 1925, p 22, NMML.

The departments of the Reception Committee were approached for giving the Dal some idea of their duties and the number of volunteers required for that purpose. However the departments pleaded inexperience_ _ _ _ _ . Consequently a pamphlet which identified some duties under different departments at the time, of the congress was published by the Dal office. They were night patrol, crowd and traffic control and guard duty. These duties required experience, patience and perserverance in their handling.¹ This was accomplished by collecting information from various sources.² Though incomplete this pamphlet did serve to give some idea of the work required from the volunteers.

Volunteers were active in other provinces also - for example, the United Province PCC appointed a volunteer Board consisting of the following gentlemen :

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.

Pt Gouri Shankar Mishra, Pt Jyoti Shankar Dixit,
Mr Birbhadra, Sardar Indar Singh, Mr Mahabir Tyagi,
Pt. Raghubir Dayal Misra, Mr Ganesh Gangadhar Jog
(Convener). All of them were excellent volunteer workers.
Their immediate work was to enrol volunteers and train,
discipline and organise them for the coming Congress at
Kanpur. The board met on Feb 5 and it was decided
to start a Central Training Camp at Kanpur.¹

The second Bihar Provincial Seva Samiti Conference
was held at Patna under the Presidentship of Pt. Hridayanath
Kunzru of the Servants of India Society. This conference
met on 3rd and 4th May 1925. Besides passing resolutions
about the establishment of Seva Samiti in various
localities of the province and also forming scout troops,
the conference resolved to train 200 volunteers during
the course of the year. They had also affiliated the

1. See The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol
No. 3 March 1925, p 41, NMML.

Provincial Samiti with the All India Seva Samiti whose Headquarters was in Allahabad and which had branches in the Punjab and Rajputana.¹

In one of the messages to the Seva Dal camp at Nawakot,² Nehru stated that the volunteer camp had been started to train volunteer instructors for the coming session of the Congress. It not only had to do social work at the time of the congress, but also had to show their powers regarding organisation and discipline on a large scale. Therefore, keeping this in view, he urged the volunteers to train themselves thoroughly and be ready for all emergencies.³

The encouragement of Physical Culture was an important part of the Dal's activities. For this purpose, an academy of Physical culture was started at Bagalkot in Karnataka.⁴ This academy was open to people from all parts of India. The date for its inauguration

1. See The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No 6, June 1925, p 114, NMML.

2. Message delivered at Lahore on 18th September, 1929

3. See Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol IV, p 133.

4. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected works, Vol V, p 233 see also The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), 21 Oct 1931, NMML.

was well chosen i.e., 1st August which was the death anniversary of Tilak. On that day also was launched the NCM. This date was chosen to remind the members and associates of the Seva Dal, that they may draw inspiration from the genius and life work of a great countryman, and may always remember the gallant days when the masses of India asserted their right to freedom and came near to achieving it.¹

Another important activity in which the volunteers engaged themselves was the hoisting of the "national flag". The lead given by the Seva Dal was eagerly taken, and the last Sunday of each month became the recognised day for this observance.²

The great campaign for freedom had brought honour to the flag. As Nehru put it, "under its shelter men and women have performed deeds of heroism, and it has become a source of inspiration, a symbol of yearning for freedom".³

In accordance, therefore, with the resolution of

1. The Volunteer (Microfilm), July-August 1928, NMML.
2. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol IV, p 133.
3. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol V, p 221.

the Calcutta Conference held on December 30, 1928, whereby it was resolved that the Flag Salutation Programme should be observed at least once a month at 8 a.m. and Vande Mataram be sung by the participants in the function.¹

The reports of the three monthly flag salutations held reported that, of the first flag salutation programme 50 places observed the same, of the second 62 places and of the third programme reports were received from 72 places who had observed Flag Salutation.² The number of places which had observed the third programme were according to the provinces viz, Karnatak 17, Behar 7, Bombay 2, C.P. Marathi - 1, C.P. Hind - 9, Sindh - 1, United Provinces -5, Assam - 1, Punjab - 10, Maharashtra - 5, Tamil Nadu -2, Bengal - 8, Andhra - 2, Berar - 1, Gujarathi -1.³

1. See AICC File No. G8/1929, (Manuscript Section),

NMML.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

The national flag became a symbol for the masses to gather for political activities. It became a symbol for freedom, an emotional and psychological link which was helpful in politically activating the masses to a great extent.

The workers of the HSD also took part in the affairs outside India. Dr Hardiker suggested that the HSD should try to render some active help to Chinese comrades, who were struggling for freedom not only against reactionary and predatory militants at home but against the ill-concealed interference and partisanship of imperialist powers. This suggestion was well received. Jawaharlal Nehru argued that the HSD should do all in its power to convert this vague sympathy and goodwill for China which every Indian felt, into something more effective and helpful. He felt that every member of the Dal should actively help in creation of a strong and intelligent public opinion on this question so that the Government of India would realize that its policy leads to danger in India.¹ Nehru also stressed the need to

1. See The volunteer (Microfilm) April 1927, pp 85-86

send to China an ambulance Corps of trained volunteers carrying the message of goodwill to the Chinese comrades and rendering such help for the relief of pain and suffering.¹

Following these sentiments the leadership the HSD took a strong anti-imperialist stand. Consequently in the Calcutta Session of the HSD on December 30, 1928, under the presidentship of Mr Subhas Chandra Bose, it passed the following resolution that, " this conference places on record its appreciation for the services rendered by the League against Imperialism and calls upon the All India Board of the Dal to take steps to get the HSD affiliated to the league. That this conference further recommends to the All India Board to make necessary arrangements for sending Dr Hardiker, General Secretary, or a member of the All India Board, as the Dal's representative

1. Ibid.

to the ensuing congress of the league to be held at Paris in July 1929.¹

It was further requested to get the Dal affiliated to the league and also to get the name of Dr Hardiker registered as the Dal's representative to the ensuing congress of the league. However, because of want of funds, Dr Hardiker could not go and attend the congress and Nehru who was the representative of the Congress, represented the Seva Dal also.²

Yet another activity associated with the Dal was Rovering. This was a Senior branch of Scouts, which included boys above 17. Experimental psychologists have ascertained that this is the best period for the formation of ideals. This period may also be termed as the "stormy Epoch" when youth are likely to be led astray. For these psychological causes this was the

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1. AICC File No. G8/1929, (Manuscript Section),
NMML.
 2. Ibid.

right time to attract the youth to a excellent movement like that of the true brotherhood of scouts.¹

Provinces like Mysore and Bihar took lead in establishing the Boy Scout Association. In Mysore, for example, these associations conducted three or four camps for training Scout Masters during the year and a monthly called 'School and Scout Magazine' was issued.² In these camps members belonging to other states could also avail of the training facilities.

An effort was made in this section to highlight the different kinds of activities in which the Dal engaged itself. In doing so, one observes that in certain provinces like Andhra, Karnataka etc, the Dal members were more active. In others like Bombay, United Provinces, although volunteers were recruited yet the activities of the volunteers were limited in scope. The reason put forward was that as far as the activities of the Dal organisation

1. See The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No. 5,
May 1925, p 77, NMML.

2. The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No.7,
July 1925, p 149, NMML.

were concerned, organisations and committees had varied interest. Those who realised the necessity for such an organisation for the emancipation of the Indian people, helped directly or indirectly. Those who abhorred the very words 'Drill, Discipline, army etc, however went to the extent of working against the Dal.

For eg - In Bengal, there was dissatisfaction prevalent among some of the PCC members who thought that just because Bengal was not represented on the All India Board, the Dal organisation was not meant for them and therefore they were indifferent towards the activities of the Dal.¹ The explanation tendered in the case of Bengal holds good in the case of Tamil Nadu as well.

This, however, was happening because there were 20 congress provinces and only 12 seats on the All India Board. These 12 seats were filled by election in the open conference of volunteers every year. There was no ban on any province. An executive body has got to have only a small numbers if it means to work. To increase the number just in order to satisfy the whims of local patriotism would make it somewhat more representative

1. The Volunteer (Microfilm), Vol I No. 4, April 1925, p 53, NML.

but rather unwildly. Nevertheless the HSD offered its whole hearted services during the time of preparation as well as for the day of action.

II.2

Activities of Volunteers in Bombay City and Suburbs, 1923-27

In the following section attempt to present the different activities of the volunteers in Bombay City and suburbs and how through these activities the masses were mobilised ?

The quality of politics in Bombay prior to 1920, and the role which the local leaders played in Nationalist politics, has already been described in a number of excellent studies.¹ These studies focus, in the

1. See (i) C. Dobbins, Urban Leadership in Western India;
- (ii) J. Masselos, Aspects of Bombay City Politics in 1919 in R. Kumar (ed) Essays on Gandhian Politics.
- (iii) R. Cashman, The Legacy of the Lokmanya

first instance, on the activities of the Bombay presidency Association, a body representing the interest of the leading industrialists, merchants and professional men in the city. During the years of the first world war, however, the leaders of the Presidency Association were eclipsed by a new class of political activists who commenced an agitation for Home Rule, and who were successful in reaching out to the middle and lower middle classes of Bombay. The agitation for Home Rule, in turn prepared the ground for Rowlatt Satyagraha which Gandhi conducted in April 1919, in city of Bombay and in the rest of the country.¹

Although the Rowlatt Satyagraha was a remarkably successful agitation in the subcontinent as a whole, there is little reason to believe that it marked a political breakthrough in Bombay. The leading men of the city, who were attracted to the Satyagraha were men already

1. See H.F. Owen, 'Towards National Agitation and Organisation : The Home Rule leagues' in D.A. Low (ed) Soundings in Modern South Asian History.

active in the affairs of the Home Rule leagues. However all the men who were prominent in the affairs of Home Rule league did not lend their support or associated themselves with the Satyagraha. They had their reservations because of the style of Gandhi's politics.

So far as the Muslims of Bombay were concerned, the discontents which were to draw them into nationalist politics in 1920 were already at work during the war years. The Muslim concern for the Khalifa, and for the integrity of Islam, partly found expression in the participation of a sprinkling of Muslims in the Home Rule Movement and in the Rowlatt Satyagraha; it was reflected to an equal degree in the growing Militancy of the Muslim League and similar organisations. The most clear cut expression of Muslim hostility towards the British Government, however, was to be found in the creation in Bombay, early in 1919, of a Khilafat committee with the object of giving a lead to the community in defending the integrity of Islam.¹

1. (i) See R. Kumar, 'From Swaraj to Purna Swaraj : Nationalist politics in the city of Bombay, 1920-32' in D.A. Low(ed) Congress and the Raj.
Facets of the Indian struggle 1917-47
- (ii) See Gail Minault, 'The Khilafat Movement, Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization.
- (iii) K.P. Karunakaran, op cit, pp 127-133 (On Khilafat issue)

Moreover with the formal inauguration of non-cooperation under Khilafat auspices on 1 August, Gandhi moved from strength to strength in the politics of Bombay, and of the country as a whole. The special session of the INC at Calcutta, on 8 September 1920, was a personal triumph for Gandhi. He now set on a collision course with the British Government and sought to shape all available political institutions for the purpose of Swaraj. He put an end to the Home Rule League which was renamed the Swaraj League.¹

The different facets of non-cooperation, as they were introduced in Bombay, one after another, were by no means as successful as Gandhi wished them to be. The most enthusiastic response to Gandhi's call came from the student community. The real success of the Swadeshi movement lay in persuading large number of the rich particularly the women, to discard foreign cloths for Khaddar, and huge bonfires marking the burning of foreign cloths by the rich were among the more spectacular

1. R. Kumar, op. cit.

sights of non-cooperation in Bombay in 1921.

Thus, it is evident that the city of Bombay was very active in politics. After the withdrawal of the NCM there was a continuous effort to enrol the volunteers who could take part in the activities in Bombay City and suburbs. This was not only a practise prevalent in this particular region but was a common feature all over India.

The activities of the volunteers were multi-dimensional and could be classified as under -

The appeals for the enrolment of volunteers was made through the public meetings, public lectures etc. for eg, the Girgaum DCC, under its auspices announced a public lecture to be held in Marwadi Vidyalaya, when messrs Khadiker, Puntambeker, V.J. Patel, Bharucha, Padbidri and Oza would speak.¹

The residents of the Girgaum ward were requested to help the Girgaum DCC by enrolling themselves as National Congress volunteers. This enrolment was to be

1. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),

7 April 1923, NMML.

accomplished after these residents had understood and signed the Ahmedabad Congress Pledge.¹

In yet another public meeting held under the auspices of the Rashtriya Stree Sabha, a public meeting was held at the Marwadi Vidyalaya to celebrate the Gandhi Day with Mrs Sarojini Naidu presiding. Mrs Naidu said that they were celebrating the Gandhi Day with a view to taking stock of the work done during the month for the country. She hoped that they were not lagging behind. She further reiterated that the congress had asked the country to register 50,000 volunteers and collect Rs. 25 lakhs for the purpose of winning Swaraj. Mrs Pramila Mehta appealed to them to register their names soonest possible and to give their mite towards the national cause. It was however not easy to become a volunteer, it meant hard work and untold suffering.² The duty of women too were defined in this mighty struggle. It was to spin and

1. Ibid.

2. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
Jan 19, 1923, NMML.

weave and use nothing but Khadi.¹

Just to mention a few instances, the newspaper reports throughout this period carried appeals by means of advertisement, public lectures, public meetings, urging and requesting the people to come forward and enroll themselves as volunteers.

The Bombay PCC passed the following resolution stressing the necessity "to concentrate the Nation's energy on the constructive Programme and strengthening the Congress Organisation _ _ _ _ _".² Khadi being one of the main items of the constructive programme (CP), therefore its promotion started in full swing.

" The Bombay Provincial Khadi Board started in cooperation with a number of local Khadi workers, intensive khadi hawking propaganda to be carried on throughout the Gandhi month"³. This work of Khadi propaganda required a large number of volunteers, both men and women willing to hawk khadi regularly and earnestly.

To accomplish this, the organisation of Swadeshi

1. Ibid.
2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
Dec 22, 1923, NMML.
3. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), Feb 22, 1924, NMML.

and Khadi Exhibitions became a regular feature during the Gandhi week celebrations from 10th to 18th March 1923 and even at a later stage. Khadi became a symbolic representation, which enabled the masses who were otherwise not so active to take part in the movement.

Moreover, under "the auspices of the Vile Parle Congress Committee, Nagar Kirtans were organised".¹

"Everyday at night Rashtriya Bhajan Mandli under Prof. Lalit would go through all the streets and visit every chawl singing National Songs for the collection of Tilak Swarajya fund and Congress Propaganda work".²

" Meetings were also to be held in all places recording the determination of the country to carry on the non violent struggle until the country's demands were conceded".³

For every small issue whether it was political in nature or otherwise, mass meetings were held and the people attended

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1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), 7 April 1923, NMML.
 2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), 10 March 1923, NMML.
 3. Ibid.

it in large numbers. This way they were being politicised and were also made aware of the unfavourable happenings around them. The passivity of the initial phases of the masses was slowly giving way to reaction in some form or the other. The awareness generated was forcing the passive masses to react, whether it took the form of non-violent demonstrations, processions, public meetings etc.

For example, there was "mass meeting organised at Chawpatty where prayers for Mahatmaji's health took place".¹ "This was organised under the joint auspices of BPCC and City Khilafat Committee" _ _ _ _ _ "when prayers would be offered for the speedy recovery of Mahatma Gandhi, with M.R. Jayakar presiding".²

Enthusiasm in the city was also generated in the form of the celebration of National Thanks Giving Day,

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
Jan 17, 1924, NMML.
2. Ibid.

where Mahomed Ali delivered a message. There was also appeal made for Khaddar, Congress membership and Tilak Swarajya fund.

These activities were a regular feature till the time, when the country was again preparing itself for another national struggle.

The programmes of action which were devised were such which helped the masses to actively participate in them, even though most of them were as yet not political in nature. But then, their importance should not be minimised as they were helpful in generating mass awareness.

Chapter III

Activities of Volunteers During Active Phase, 1928-34
in Bombay City and Suburbs

III.1

The General Political Situation between the
years 1927-34.1

The year 1927 witnessed many portents of National recovery and evidence began to gather that the people were waiting for a lead. Politically this force and energy found reflection in the rise of a new left-wing in the Congress under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru.

1. Before discussing the activities of the volunteers in Bombay City and Suburbs in Anti Simon Commission Agitation (see section III.2) and during the Civil disobedience period (Section III.3), I have briefly tried to bring to the fore the general political situation between the years 1927-34. The political developments have been discussed so as to enable the task of the reader to be made easier in understanding how the volunteers were inducting the passive masses into political activity by the different kinds of activities in which they participated ?

and Subhas Chandra Bose. The two soon toured the country preaching the new ideology of socialism.¹

Nehru and Bose led a campaign against imperialism, capitalism and land lordism, and told the people that if freedom had to be won by the people, it would not come as a gift from the British Government. They soon came to be idolised by the students and other young people.²

Indian youths were becoming active. All over the country youth leagues were being formed and student conferences held.³ The first All Bengal Conference of students was held in August 1928 and was presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru.⁴ Moreover the young nationalists

1. Shashi Joshi, op. cit, See the section on the Youth Movements.

2. Subhas Chandra Bose, op. cit, pp 153-155

3. Ibid.

4. Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works, Vol III, pp 188-196.

began gradually to turn to socialism and to advocate radical solutions for the political, economic, and social ills from which the country was suffering.

The peasants and workers were also once again stirring.¹ There was a rapid growth trade unionism

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1. For eg. In Uttar Pradesh, there was large scale agitation among tenants for the revision of tenancy laws. The tenants wanted lower rents, protection from eviction, and relief from indebtedness. In Gujarat, the peasants protested against official efforts to increase land revenue. The famous Bardoli Satyagraha occurred at this time.

under the leadership of the All India Trade Union Congress. Many strikes occurred during 1928.¹ Moreover, the failure of the first non-cooperation movement had led to the revival of the terrorist movement.

Thus a new political situation was beginning to arise by the end of the twenties. The Government was determined to suppress this new trend. The terrorists were suppressed with ferocity. The growing trade union movement and communist movement

1. For eg. There was a long strike lasting for two months, in the railway workshop at Kharagpur. The South Indian Railway Workers went on strike, The most important strike of the period was in Bombay textile mills. Nearly 150,000 workers went on strikes for over five months. This strike was led by the communists.

were dealt with in same manner.

In November 1927, the British Government appointed the Indian Statutory Commission, known popularly after the name of its Chairman as the Simon Commission, to go into the question of further Constitutional reform. All the members of the commission were Englishmen. This announcement was greeted by protest from All Indians. What angered them most was the exclusion of Indian from the Commission and the basic notion behind this exclusion that foreigners would discuss and decide upon Indi's fitness for self-Government.¹

At its Madras session in 1927, presided over by Dr Ansari, the national congress decided to boycott

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1. i) R.C. Majumdar, / (ed) Struggle for Freedom, p 454
 ii) S.C. Bose, op. cit, pp 142-158
 iii) Judith Brown, op. cit, p 264.

the commission "at every stage and in every form". The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha decided to support the Congress decision. In fact, the Simon Commission united, at least temporarily, different groups and parties in the country.¹

The Anti-Simon Commission Movement did not lead to a wider political struggle because Gandhiji was not yet convinced that the time for struggle had come. But popular enthusiasm could not be held back for long for the country was once again in a mood of struggle.

The National Congress soon reflected this new mood. Gandhiji now began to consolidate the nationalist ranks. The first step was to reconcile the militant left wing of the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru was

1 Ibid.

now made the President of the Congress at the historic Lahore Session of 1929. The Lahore Session passed a resolution declaring Poorna Swaraj to be the Congress objective. On 31 December 1929 was hoisted the newly adopted tri-colour flag of freedom. 26 January 1930 was fixed as the first Independence Day.¹ The Congress Session also announced the launching of a CDM. But it did not draw up a programme of struggle. That was left to Gandhiji. The country was again filled with hope and the determination to be free.

The second CDM was started by Gandhi on 12 March 1930 with his famous Dandi March. Together with 78 chosen followers, Gandhi walked nearly 200 miles from Sabamati Ashram to Dandi, a village on the Gujarat sea-coast. Here Gandhi and his followers made salt in violation of the salt laws². This act was a

1. R.C. Majumdar,^(ed) op. cit, pp 464-466

2. i) B.R. Nanda, op cit, pp 292-293

ii) R.C. Majumdar,^(ed) op. cit, p 469

symbol of the Indian people's refusal to live under British-made laws and therefore under British rule.

The movement spread rapidly. The Government's reply to the national struggle was the same as before—an effort to crush it through ruthless repression, lathes charges and firing on unnamed crowds of men and women.

Meanwhile, the British Government summoned in London in 1930 the first Round Table Conference of Indian Leaders and spokesmen of the British Government to discuss the Simon Commission Report. But the National Congress boycotted the Conference and its proceedings proved abortive.¹

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1. i) B.R. Nanda, op. cit, pp 301 - 307
ii) Subhas Chandra Bose, op cit, pp 198-199
iii) R.C. Majumdar, op. cit, pp 478 - 482
iv) Judith Brown, op. cit, p 283.

The Government again made attempts to negotiate an agreement with the Congress so that it would attend the Round Table Conference. Finally, Lord Irwin and Gandhi negotiated a settlement in March 1931.¹ The Government agreed to release those political prisoners who had remained non-violent, while the Congress suspended the CDM and agreed to take part in the Second Round Table Conference. Many of the Congress Leaders were opposed to the Gandhi Irwin Pact for the Government had not accepted even one of the major nationalist demands.²

1. Ibid.

2. The younger left-wing section were opposed to the pact. The Government had not agreed even to the demand that the death sentence on Bhagat Singh and his two Comrades be converted to life imprisonment.

However, Gandhiji's concept of Satyagraha included the need to give the opponent every chance to show a change of heart. He prevailed upon the Karachi Session of the Congress to approve the agreement. The Karachi Session is also memorable for a resolution on Fundamental Rights and the National Economic Programme.¹

Gandhi went to England in September 1931 to attend the Second Round Table Conference. But inspite of his powerful advocacy the British Government refused to concede the basic nationalist demand for freedom on the basis of the immediate grant of Dominion Status. On his return, the Congress resumed the CDM.

The Government now headed by the new viceroy Lord Willington was fully determined and prepared to crush

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1. R.C. Majumdar, /op cit, pp 489-492.

the Congress. Government repression succeeded in the end. The CDM gradually waned and political enthusiasm gave way to frustration. The Congress officially suspended the movement in May 1933 and withdraw it in May 1934.¹ Gandhiji once again withdrew from active politics.

III. 2

Activities of Volunteers during Anti-Simon Phase (1928-30)

The youth got a chance to march into the political stage on the occasion when the Simon Commission landed at the Port of Bombay on February 3, 1928.²

" Public meetings of protests and demonstrations chiefly by the youth were held in every province"³ The Government reports on the contrary treated boycott day as a damp squib - "The much advertised hartal was more or less a failure."⁴ "Bombay and Madras which were

1. Ibid.
2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), February 6, 1928, NMML
3. Ibid.
4. Home Political, Fortnightly report, February first half, 1928, NAI.

the scenes of protest, as were Lucknow and Kanpur in U.P. were shrugged off as half-hearted and partial successes".¹

However, one thing which is amply clear from the Government reports of this period is that, wherever the boycott made a significant impact it was the youth entirely which was responsible.²

In December 1927, Nehru had appealed to the Seva Dal and Volunteer organisations to associate themselves

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1. Home Political, fortnightly report, February second half, 1928, NAI.
 2. See Home Political, fortnightly reports from 1928 onwards, at NAI.

and cooperate with the youth movements.¹ He chafed at the inactivity of the PCC who had been empowered to start volunteer Boards. He appealed to young men and women to join these organisations for "the struggle for Swaraj is bound to become keener in the future and the burden will fall on our young men. It will be for them to face the dangers and difficulties in a spirit of courage and resolute daring".²

He urged the youth to transform the Congress and thus the destiny of India.

It was in this background that the youths who were otherwise not so active in the national movement, got a boost to trigger off their activities. Although the Anti-Simon Commission Movement did not immediately lead to a wider political struggle because Gandhi, the unquestioned leader of the national movement, was not yet convinced that the time for struggle had come. But popular enthusiasm could not be held back for long.

1. See Jawaharlal Nehru, Selected Works,

Vol III, p 159

2. Ibid.

The reasons why the youths in the Bombay City were organising themselves was because they felt that the youth in India were without any organisation or ideals, and therefore drifted alongwith the sensational waves of times. They did not care to mobilise and strengthen themselves, nor cared to have fixed ideals and aims. Therefore the youths who are rightly considered to be the citizens of tomorrow should organise themselves and look after their own interests and discard age worn and fantastic ideas which have outlined their case.

Therefore, the first session the Bombay Presidency youth conference with K.F. Nariman was formed. This conference was the first attempt to bring the youth of the Presidency together to discuss the problems which affect the well being and in which they are vitally interested, to develop amongst the youth disciplined freedom and civic sense of the responsibility. This conference was intended to promote union among the youths of the Presidency by the pursuit of common ideals in a common organisation.¹

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), Jan 9, 1928,

The kind of activities in which the youths participated, came to the fore with the arrival of Simon Commission. Newspaper reports enthusiastically hailed the people's response to its arrival. The editorial of Bombay Chronicle, for eg, said: "The national heartal and boycott demonstrations were a magnificent success. This agitational scale has not been seen since non-cooperation".¹

However, no agitation on the pattern of non-cooperation movement emerged before the Government's eyes to disturb them - "No foreign cloth bonfires; foreign goods are selling in the markets, no picketing etc" - remarked each Provincial officer, reporting to the Home Department in relief. "They have'nt been successful, thank the Lord" ! "The boycott practically began and ended with the meetings and resolutions. In the market and other places there is no picketing and British goods are being freely sold as before".² "There are meetings and oratory but no cloth bonfires etc".³ The youth played a significant role in the movement that grew around the boycott of Simon Commission. With the passage of time, the activities of the youth had an upward progression.

1. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), Feb 5, 1928, NMML

2. Home Poll, Fortnightly Report, February Second half, 1928, NAI

3. Ibid.

The period from 1928-30 was a period of great events in India. It was a period of ceaseless activity and in the year 1928, no less than 300 meetings were convened, which helped to focus public opinion on the current topics, political, social, economic and cultural.¹

However, " the first real breakthrough for specifically Gandhian methods of rural organisation and agitation came with the spectacular success story of Bardoli in 1928. Gandhian constructive work centres had carried on extremely successful humanitarian and organisational work since 1922 in this taluka of 137 villages with a population of 87,000. The dominant peasant landholding caste of Kanbi-Patidars had been organised from 1908 onwards under local leaders like Kurvarji and Kalyanji Mehta through the Patidar yuvak mandal the journal Patel Bandhu, and a Patidar Assama running a student hostel at Surat. The Patidars filled their land with traditional debt-serfs, who were Dubla tribals known as Kaliparaj and who constituted 50% of the population of Bardoli. The Kaliparaj bonded labourer was assured of a minimum of food and clothing by the Patidar, and the realities of exploitation were some what veiled by an

1. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), Aug 6, 1929, NMML

element of traditional mutuality. Gandhian constructive workers had been active, among the Kaliparaj from the early 1920's¹

When the Bombay Government announced a revenue hike of 22% in Bardoli in 1927, even though cotton prices had been declining, the Mehta brothers persuaded Vallabhbhai Patel to organise a no-revenue campaign which proved as determined as it was peaceful. Patel and other local leaders made extremely skilful use of caste associations, social boycott, religious appeals and bhajans. Tribal audiences were told that their Gods, Siliya and Sinialiya, had become old and had now deputed Gandhi to look after them - and did not the Mahatma wear a coin cloth like them, and drink goat's milk rather than the more expensive buffalo milk ?²

Bardoli soon became a national issue and the Bardoli battle was fully supported by the Bombay youths. For eg, a party of Bombay youths with Mr Yusuf Meherally

1. See Sumit Sarkar, Modern India, 1885-1947, p 277
2. Ghanshyam Shah, 'Traditional Society and Political Mobilisation', contributions to Indian Sociology, 1924) in Sumit Sarkar, Modern India, 1885-1947.

visited various centres in the Bardoli Taluka and returned full of admiration and praise for the wonderful organisation of Sarkar Patel and even more wonderful determination of the Bardoli peasantry to carry the fight to the finish.

"There was not a day without one or more propaganda meeting or demonstration. Leaflets and handbills were broadcast by thousands. The lady volunteers surpassed themselves in the collection of funds and the whole of Bombay was roused to a pitch of enthusiasm and activity that it had not known since the memorable day of NCM".¹
The Bombay youths celebrated 'Bardoli Day' on 4th July 1928. This marked the high water mark of the campaign.
"The youth league collected about Rs. 16,000 for Bardoli".²

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1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
Aug 6, 1929, NMML.
 2. Ibid.

The fact that the youth league volunteers were taking part in such activities, at no point of time spared them from the vigilant eye of the police. The wholesale arrest of the labour leaders had its repercussion and the youth league Head Quarters in Bombay was raided. The search lasted for eight hours and all the files - correspondence file, membership file and register, account books and vouchers file, press cutting albums and copies of other propaganda literature were either seized or destroyed. The reaction in retaliation to such an act on the part of the Government was a large number of public meetings which condemned the repression launched by the bureaucracy.¹

1 See Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),

Aug 10, 1929, NMML

The Bombay Youth League also launched attacks on the moves of the Government, to increase the school and college fees. This step immediately received the attention of the League and a vigorous propoganda was set on foot. "In only five days, no less than twenty six protest meetings were held".¹ The result was that the Government yielded and dropped the question of increasing the fees. The Bombay Youth League become Presidency wide in its intensity.

The activities of the Youth League were further widened by an intense pgogramme of boycott. The Youth League volunteers, undertook " an intense Swadeshi boycott propaganda and inaugurated the Boycott Programme."² A campaign for boycotting selected British goods and all foreign cloth and popularising Khaddar and other Swadeshi articles was launched.

1. Ibid.

2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), March 10, 1928,
NMML.

"It was also announced that singing parties of youths chanting specially composed boycott songs will parade the streets of Bombay armed with boycott banners, boycott handbills and boycott literature."¹ With each day passing the propaganda for the boycott of British goods launched by the Bombay Youth League took more vigorous turn. "Propaganda meetings proclaiming the message of boycott and volunteers of the Youth League carried it from door to door."²

The most important contribution to practical boycott was the opening up of the Swadeshi Bazar. In this kind of venture, "a large number of genuine Swadeshi manufacturers and dealers cooperated with the youth league making the bazar a varied and bright show."³

The volunteers were farsighted to the extent that

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), March 16, 1929, NMML.
2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), April 2, 1929, NMML.
3. Ibid.

they realized that this kind of a Swadeshi Bazar could be utilized as an excellent shopping opportunity for the ladies. "They fully realized that if the boycott is to be made successful its implications and significance must be fully grasped by ladies".¹ With that view a very large number of lady volunteers were enrolled to facilitate purchases for lady visitors.

Apart from the sales, the local Swadeshi Bazar provided an excellent opportunity in two dimensions. Firstly, the Swadeshi Manufacturers and dealers whose advertisements compared very unfavourably with the booming and boosting advertisement of foreign goods, got a chance to make known to the public their products and thereby popularise them. Secondly, an array

1. Ibid.

of youth league slogans and boycott posters caught the visitors eyes and if one looks at them carefully, one notices a kind of change in the temper of the youth, a kind of new consciousness is seen emerging.

These posters not only educated the people i.e. they also made them aware of the social and economic problems of the country. They also throw light on the changed mood of the youth. For eg, the poster at the entrance of the Swadeshi Exhibition which was organised says, "Boycott British Goods" gospel in a nutshell and shows how the economic blockade of Britain will eventually tell. "When Youth Knocks, the doors of freedom shall open", "Do you want freedom" ? Then boycott British goods, "India for Indians", "Swaraj for masses", were some of the arresting posters that claimed the persistent attention of the visitors. And the slogans, "We will touch the untouchables", "we will leave the Purdah",¹ conveyed the feelings of young India changing under the shackles of social bondage.

1. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
April 8, 1929, NMML.

One point which needs emphasis here is the fact that the youth leagues in particular were to give whole hearted cooperation to the special committee appointed by the Bombay PCC, to carry " on an intensive programme of boycott of foreign cloth and popularising Khaddar. For the present the committee consists of representatives of the DCC, but it is expected to coopt workers even from among non-congressmen believing in the boycott."¹ This was done so as to enable it to become thoroughly representative committee "capable of coordinating the efforts of various institutions carrying on the boycott propaganda."²

The primary focus thus far, in this section dealt with questions like the organisation of the youth league movement in Bombay, the different activities in which the young volunteers participated till the

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm)
March 16, 1929, NMML.
2. Ibid.

launching of the CDM and how masses had started getting involved, whether these were demonstrations boycotts, organisation of Swadeshi Bazars and protest meetings. An important point to be kept in mind is that if on the one hand the youth were taking the lead, their success was mainly because they were getting the mass support.

III.2

ACTIVITIES OF VOLUNTEERS DURING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE
MOVEMENT IN BOMBAY CITY AND SUBURBS - 1930-32.

The call for the CDM was given by Gandhi on April 6, 1930, and he urged the congress volunteers "to watch developments and render aid, wherever needed"¹ They were expected to be on the forefront, and in case of violent eruptions, the volunteers were expected to die in the attempt to quell violence.

The civil disobedience was apparently directed not towards creating an insurrectionary situation, or the armed seizure of political power from the colonial state but towards permeating the minds of the various sections of the population with anti imperialist consciousness.²

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1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), April 4, 1930, NMML
 2. i) For CDM, See SC Bose, op cit, pp 176-197.
ii) Judith Brown, op cit - p 266.
iii) -"Gandhi and Civil Disobedience, The Mahatma in Indian Politics, 1928-34" in D.A. Low (ed) Congress and the Raj, Facets of the Indian Struggle, 1917-47.

The satyagraha activities¹ were to be started in different provinces from April 8. The PCC were therefore at liberty to go ahead from that day onwards. A call was given to them by Nehru, "to begin satyagraha in such areas as they might have selected on 8th or any date suitable to them in the national week. With full faith in our cause we go ahead to redeem the pledge we took on January 26. By that pledge of independence we shall stand come what May."²

From the very first day when the different provinces were given the green signal to go ahead with satyagraha activities, attempts were made by the colonial authorities to put checks on the movement. The prominent leaders were either arrested or sentenced.

1. I will only concentrate on the kind of activities in which the volunteers participated. This will be done in the chronological order, and simultaneously. The changed tactics of the police would also be discussed, and also how the masses were being mobilised for political activity.

2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
April 7, 1930, NMML.

In case of Bombay City, K.F. Nariman got one month's SI, Ali Bahadur Khan got one Month's SI, and Jaganlal Bajaj two years RI and a fine of Rs. 300/-.¹

"The incarceration of the three leaders consequently resulted in the organisation of a mammoth meeting. The audience took a vow never to use foreign cloth again. Another significant development during this time was the participation of women to a large extent"²

One more important point which needs added attention is the fact that the volunteers were now being reorganised on a new basis.³ The numbers about 2,500 would be distributed among the seven wards and each ward would have a camp of its own like the camp now being maintained at the Congress House. There would be eight camps

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1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), April 9, 1930, NMML.
S.I.- Simple Imprisonment
R.I.- Rigorous Imprisonment.
 2. Ibid.
 3. This was the arrangement to conduct their activities in Bombay City.

including the Congress House Head Quarters. The volunteer allocated to each ward would be classified according to the kind of service they were willing to undertake.¹ The movement on the whole was well organised and remained non-violent with no retaliation whatsoever, except for a few random cases of throwing stones.

With the movement progressing, the volunteers took part in different kinds of activities. The Satyagraha committee announced its intention to break the salt laws. Uppu Satyagraham in Telugu, Namak Andolan in Hindi - in whatever language it is recalled, it brings the same light to the eyes and it means the same - the politics of salt and freedom.

Through the summer heat of April and May, the rank and

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
May 3, 1930, NMML.

file volunteers defied the salt laws. A well orchestrated and disciplined phase of the salt satyagraha began in May and early June when the Congress started raids on salt works. Gandhi was arrested before he could lead his announced raid on the Dharasna Salt works on the South Gujarat Coast.

Sarojini Naidu finally led the assault. "On May 21, about 3,000 volunteers from Gujarat and Bombay led by her marched together half a mile away from the salt depots. Picked columns marched in turn towards the fencing separating them from the salt pans and the waiting policemen rained blows on their heads with steel shod lathis. Unresisting men were methodically and mechanically beaten and bashed into bloody pulp"¹.

In Bombay, the police under the Deputy Commissioner raided the Congress House to dismantle the salt factory

1. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
May 22, 1930, NMML.

and arrested three prominent congress leaders - Mr Abid Ali Jafferbhai, Mr Sadik and Mr Meherally. Abid Ali was sentenced for six months, Meherally for four months and Mr Sadik for two months. Salt pans and utensils were trampled under foot, but the satyagrahis were true to the Mahatma's creed of non-violence and under the greatest provocation remained calm and patient. The 'war council' which was another organised effort decided to raise the number of volunteers to sell the contraband salt from 300 to 500. It was felt that time had come, when the people should reply to these challenges in a more determined and effective manner.¹

Salt mobilization was the route through which wider layers of the peasantry were aroused and organised and this process was continued by the streams

1. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
April 11, 1930, NMML.

of volunteer who conducted civil disobedience jathas from village to village. The defiance of laws and courting of arrest on the salt marches levelled down artificial geographical boundaries by their political impact. Enroute, tens of thousands of peasants were stirred and were drawn into the campaign. Thus, as each section of Indian society grieved over its own condition, the people were certainly not fighting to make salt but salt was the issue around which they asserted their existence as political beings.

Moreover, the satyagraha committee apart from directing the activities was also responsible for the enrolment of the volunteers and time and again there were advertisements in the issues of the Bombay Chronicle,¹ appealing to the youths to join the national militia and the satyagraha volunteers. The appeal was for women too.²

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1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
April 12, 1930, NMML.
 2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
April 14, 1930, NMML.

The result was that women of Bombay under Gandhiji's instructions banded together to carry on a temperance campaign and called themselves the Desh Sevika Sangha.¹

The reason as to why Gandhiji insisted on women being enrolled as volunteers for picketting comes out clearly in his article in 'Young India', where he says that the picketting of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops by men though it succeeded beyond all expectations up to a point of time, in 1921, failed because violence crept in. Picketing must never be a matter of coercion but conversion, moral persuasion; who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than women. The wisdom of allowing women to guide and conduct the movement had been amply justified.

1. Ibid.

Women both literate and illiterate joined the new army. The result was that the Government and the liquor sellers lost their nerves because women were so non-violent.

With the passage, the , movement kept progressing. Gandhi's arrest in May, was followed by an overwhelming mass movement throughout the country - a wave of lartals and demonstrations ensued. It is from now that the Muslims also joined in large numbers. Mass meetings became a regular feature. " The start was made by observing the Peshawar Day"¹ "The Peshawar Day firing had produced a Hindu Muslim Unity in Bombay. Upto now the Muslim community had kept aloof from the congress movement"² But now they had been taking a conspicuous part in the demonstrations. On the 4th May Morning, for eg, a procession of Hindu

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm)

May 4, 1930, NMML.

2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),

May 5, 1930, NMML

and Muslim volunteers went to Chowpatty and fetched sea water, then returned to Mandir and Manufactured salt.

The first phaze of the CDM from April to October was predominantly an urban phenomenon though many villages participated in the salt. manufacture and bitter confrontations with the police in several areas. The forms and incidents of political activity that involved the urban masses were wide ranging, "from the manufacture and sale of salt, joining salt marches and raids on salt works"¹, "holding street corner as well as large public meetings, hartals, demonstrations outside the courts where arrested leaders were on trial"² to daily processions, organising picktting

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1. The newspaper reports are full of such reports, of the large number of volunteers violating the salt laws and in return being arrested and confined in the vacant developing chawls - See the Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm), May 19, 1930, NMML.
 2. This was outside the Sirgaum Police court where the three leaders, Meherally, Mr Sadik and Abid Ali were kept.

and flag hoisting. The organisation of mammoth processions on a scale and in members hitherto unknown was the first step in mobilizing public opinion in the cause.

These perfectly peaceful and orderly demonstrations were usually illegal and always defiant, and gave the first assurance to the mass mind that the authority could be rendered helpless. The quiet assertion of popular strength into a brilliant non-violent offensive - a test between the capacity of the police to inflict physical injury and the capacity of the congress volunteers to bear it.

The organisation of the boycott campaigns and intensification of picketting kept up a steady and crushing pressure on the authorities. As a result of hartals, picketting and self imposed closures by businessmen, all business and work came to a standstill.

From September 1930, a new beginning was made in the picketting activities. The War Council placed women volunteers for picketting foreign cloth shops in

the forts.¹ " The efforts of the fair pickets were so successful that a number of Indian customers who were inside the shop purchasing goods left it without making a single purchase. The pickets ignored the European customers and only persuaded the Indian clientele not to buy British goods".² The police on the other hand were conspicuous by their absence and decided not to arrest the lady pickets.

Efforts now again were specially devoted to recruiting of volunteers to the militia,³ and in general popularising the militia movements amongst the

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1. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm)
Sept 5, 1930, NMML.
 2. Ibid.
 3. It being the National Militia week
commencing from 4 Sept 1930.

youths of the city.

This was also the time when the workers had started taking part in the national movement. The labour week was organised by the Bombay Congress Committee. It was celebrated as the Congress day and was more devoted to the enrolment of workers as congress members. "From early morning prabhat pheris of workers were active in the labour area selling national flags and singing labour songs. A huge meeting of the workers numbering 10,000 was held at Madanpura. It was organised as a part of the labour week programme. 8,000 audience were muslims".¹ Slogans like "Hindi - Muslim Ki Jai, Inqualab Zindabad, Vande Mataram, Mazdoor Ki Jai were echoed".²

Mr Meherally emphatically stated that the "fight for

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm)

Aug 22, 1930, NMML.

2. Ibid.

Swaraj was a fight for bread for the workers. He exhorted Muslims to join the congress, to cement Hindu Muslim Unity and carry on boycott of British goods."¹

With the arrest of Gandhi, Gandhi Day Celebrations took place every month in the city. In the month of June all the mills in Delisle Road Section numbering 29 were closed down and about 56,000 men working in these mills stayed at home to celebrate the Gandhi day.²

The whole idea of the Congress volunteers organising the labour week, Meherally's speech gives us an insight into socialist views. The fact that workers were imbued with nationalist ideas there is no doubt about it. How far were they influenced by the socialist ideas is a thing which has yet to be seen.

1. Ibid.

2. See The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
June 6, 1930, NMML.

October 1930, witnessed some modifications in the plan of the congress. Greater attention was now being paid to the constructive work.¹

There were drastic offensive against the congress volunteers and the fresh engine of repression started off. The number of congress houses in the city increased daily and the police seemed to be puzzled over this as they did not know how to check it. There is again the Swadeshi drive in Bombay.²

1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),

Oct 10, 1930, NMML.

2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),

Oct 15, 1930, NMML.

The fact that continuous arrests of picketers and a series of lathi charges in the vicinity were taking place had added to the enthusiasm. The enthusiasm was too much to be ebbed down by repression.

Ban on processions brought out many ¹ and if one looks at the statistics and the Medical Union's Report, one notices that there was an overall increase in the number of head injuries within a span of five months and 700 persons were treated for the lathi charges.

"For eg -	<u>Lathi Charges</u>	<u>% of Head Injuries</u>
	21 June 1930	10%
	11 July 1930	13%
	2 August 1930	19%
	18 September 1930	20%
	26 October 1930	62% ²


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1. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
Nov 27, 1930, NMML
 2. The Bombay Chronicle (Microfilm),
Oct 30, 1930, NMML.

Inspite of such heavy repression launched by the police, there was no retaliation in any manner, and this is a tribute to Gandhi's army who were non-violent so much so that the army was called out in January 1931 and normal life was paralysed. With the unconditional release of the leaders also came a change in techniques of the police and they allowed the programme for celebration of independence day to pass - off without any interference and in March after the Delhi Truce the movement was called off.

The higher British Officials in India had drawn their own lessons from the political impact of Delhi Part¹ of which had tremendously raised the political prestige of the congress and the political morale of the people and undermined and lowered British prestige. They as well as the new Viceroy believed that the Government had made a major error in negotiating and signing a truce with the congress, as if between two equal powers. They were now determined to reverse it all.²

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1. The pact was that the Government agreed to release those political prisoners who had remained non-violent, while the congress suspended the CDM and agreed to take part in the second Round Table Conference.
 2. Bipan Chandra, 'Social issues come to the fore' Telegraph, 25 Oct 1985, Vol IV No. 104.

The British policy was non dominated by three major considerations :

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- a) Gandhi must not be permitted to build up the tempo for a massive and protracted mass movement, as he had done in 1920-21 and 1930.
- b) The Government functionaries (village officials, police and higher bureaucrats), and the loyalists (our friends') must not feel disheartened that Gandhi was being 'resurrected as a rival authority to the Government of India; and that the Government was loosing the will to rule. As the Home members, H.G. Haig, puts it : 'We can, in my opinion, do without the goodwill of the Congress, and in fact, I do not believe for a movement that we shall ever have it, but we cannot afford to do without the confidence of those who have supported us during the long struggle against the Congress".
- c) In particular, the nationalist movement must not be permitted to gather force and consolidate itself in rural areas, as it was doing all over India, especially in U.P., Gujarat, Andhra, Bihar, Bengal and North-Western Frontier Province"¹.

1. Ibid.

The Government of India was conspiring for secret plans for the coming show down with the nationalist forces. It drafted a series of ordinances which were no less than the martial law.

The shape of things to come had been foreshadowed by what happened in U.P. and N.W.F.P. and Bengal during the truce period.¹

On 29th December, the Congress

1. In U.P. the Congress was leading a campaign for reduction of rent, remission of arrears of rent and prevention of eviction of tenants for non-payment of rents. By the first week of December, the Congress had launched a no rent, no revenue campaign in five districts. The Government in return arrested Jawaharlal on December 26. In N.W.F.P. the Government continued its severe repression against the non-violent Khudai Khidmatgars and the peasants they led against the Government's policy of extracting revenue through cruel methods and torture. On December, 24, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was arrested and Peshawar district occupied by the army. In Bengal, the Government was ruling through ordinances and detaining thousands of political workers in the name of fighting terrorism.

working committee (CWC) met and decided to resume civil disobedience. The Government in turn launched its attack against the national movement by arresting Gandhi. It also promulgated various ordinances which gave the Government unlimited power and thus was initiated a period of "Civil Martial Law". The consequences were that within a week of promulgation of such ordinances, the leading congressmen all over the country were behind the bars.

The Indian people responded with angry patriotism even though the congress entered the battle unprepared, popular response and mass mobilization was massive.

For eg, the report for Bombay city for the months from August to December 1932 and the Government action was as follows -

Arrests and Convictions

<u>Arrests</u>	<u>Convictions</u>
August 304	169
September 290	153
October 270	-
November 225	-
December 205	-

Total number of convictions upto the end of August came to 3,550¹.

Lakhs of people took part in the activities of the kind. In addition to the monthly flag salutation ceremony and Gandhi day, the demonstrations organised took the form of raids on Congress Houses, bonfires of foreign cloth and Court demonstrations. For example "on the 4th August (Gandhi day) 34 persons were arrested in connection with bonfires of foreign cloth and lighted throughout the city. On the 12th August, 21 volunteers were arrested in the High Court and

1. AICC File No. P-35/1932, pp 95 - 103,
(Manuscript Section), NMML.

the various police courts of the city for court demonstrations and the distribution of thousands of Congress Leaflets.

The Gandhi week was also devoted to picketing activities. The foreign cloth shops were picketed and bonfires of foreign cloth were all over the city. The office of the British Indian steam Navigation Company, Posts and Telegraph Offices, Railway Stations were also picketed and volunteers arrested.

The publications of the congress bulletin was a regular feature " and it appeared daily in English Gujarathi and Marathi. A boycott supplement to the Bulletin had also appeared every Sunday".¹

In addition to these, leaflets were from time to time issued under the authority of the emergency council.

1. Ibid.

Also" during this period, the orientation of Congress Broadcast caused a sensation in the city. These broadcasts were made during the Civil disobedience phase and were relayed through All Indian Radio. In spite of several arrests and raids, the broadcasting which was in English, Hindi and Gujerathi continued for few days. The Congress Stations had broadcast no less than 30 times."¹

As can be seen from the above facts of the different activities of the volunteers, an effort was constantly made to keep the boycott before the public. Not only this, the volunteers were engaged in such activities which involved mass participation like demonstrations, public meetings, processions etc. Moreover, there can also be no doubt, that the Congress boycott of foreign cloth and British goods helped in keeping down the figures of imports which

1. Ibid.

would otherwise have scored very high owing to the manipulation of the exchange and the dumping of the British goods.

For eg, " A situation in the cotton market where the British firms and some others had been on the boycott list, came to a head. The officials of the East India Cotton Association broke the boycott by doing business with firms in the Boycott list. The result was picketing and therefore total cessation of business which brought the British traders and their Indian counterparts to negotiate with the Congress. In the end boycott of British firms was lifted after their agreeing to the Congress demand. They also issued a statement to the press expressing sympathy with the Indian National aspirations, their intention to work for the repeal of ordinances and willingness to observe Monday as a non-working day as protest against the ordinance Raj.¹

1. See. AICC File No. P35/1932, (Manuscript Section),
NMML.

Following the cotton settlement messrs Strauss and company, a British firm signed a statement similar to the one signed by the British firms in the cotton market, and the boycott of their firm was thereupon lifted. Such was the impact of boycott, just to mention a few instances.¹

Moreover, the following organisations were declared illegal in the city of Bombay under the Government of India notification, Home Department (Political) No. 58 dt the 5th January 1932, They were " Bombay PCC, Estate and Finance Sub Committee, Labour Sub Committee with Labour Welfare Centres, Foreign Cloth Boycott and Swadeshi Sub Committee, Anti-untouchability Committee, Prohibition Committee, Volunteer Sub Committee,

1. Ibid.

Constitution Sub Committee, Bhuleshwar Swadeshi
Pracharak Mandal, Bombay Congress Prabhat Pheri,
Colaba Wadi Brabhat Pheri, Bazaar Gate Prabhat Pheri
Sangh, Kamatipura Prabhat Pheri Mandal, Rashtriya
Stree Sabha, Desh Sevika Sanga, Bombay Provincial
Volunteer Board, Central Board of Volunteer Corps."¹

The affiliated Volunteer Corps which were
declared illegal under the same notification were -
"Tambakanta Yuvak Mandal, Cutchi Lubana, Cutchi Desh
Osval Mangaldas Market, Bhavsar fort Seva Samiti,
Gulalwadi Visa Nagar, Japanese Bazar, Volunteer Corps,
Halai Lohan, Bhatia Jain Volunteer Corps, Azad Party
Volunteer Corps, Kumar Mandal, Bharat Seva Mandal,
Gandhi Seva Mandal, Parsee Rajkiya Sabha, Bombay Sikh

1. AICC File No. G34/1935, pp 43 and 45
(Manuscript Section), NMML.

Association, Bombay Akali Dal, Nationalist Muslim Party, Nationalist Christian Party, Nationalist Municipal Party, Committee of Action for Independence, Bombay Parsee Youth League, Marwari Youth League, Bombay Students League, Naujawan Bharat Sabha, HSD Volunteer, HSD Women's Central Training Camp, Volunteer Literature Publishing House, Mahim Seva Ashram, Rashtriya Mahila Mandal".¹

As is evident from the above example, the non-violent movement was met by relentless and savage repression. The congress and its allied organisations were declared illegal. The people fought back the repression most valiantly. But Gandhi and other leaders had no time to build up the tempo of the

1. Ibid.

movement which could not be sustained for long. The movement was effectively crushed within a few months. The number of volunteers rapidly grew thin and the movement gradually waned. However, the activities like boycott, picketing, demonstrations, processing continued to linger till early April 1934 when the inevitable decision to withdraw it was taken by Gandhi.

Moreover political enthusiasm and exhilaration now gave way to demoralization and despair among political activists, while the other leaders needed a movement to sustain their sense of political activism, Gandhi channelised his energies in the implementation of the constructive programme. The capacity to attain the political goal was now to be achieved through the constructive programme.

CONCLUSION

The activities in which the volunteers participated were primarily directed towards achieving the goal i.e. of 'Purna Swaraj' and therefore were political in nature. However, the youth workers also undertook part in activities which were social, economic, cultural and so on.

These multi-dimensional activities covered a wide range of issues. They were not only helpful in politically educating the masses but also brought to their notice the economic, social and cultural issues.

The new generation of workers undertook the task of mobilising and activating the masses. They helped in creating a strong public opinion on the issues on which they were fighting. This kind of mass mobilization was taking place all throughout, irrespective of the fact whether the nation was passing through a period of passive phase or the active phase.

Initially, for example, after the withdrawal of the NCM, there was discontent prevalent everywhere in the country. This was also the time when the weaknesses of

the various voluntary bodies operating in the country came to the fore, and therefore a need was felt to have a nationwide voluntary organisation which could act as a single unit guiding the young enthusiastic workers. Thus the volunteer corps and HSD saw the light of the day, which were autonomous bodies, but were subordinate to the National Congress.

The main aim of these organisations was to recruit young men and women, train them and inculcate in them the spirit of non violence and discipline, thus preparing them to participate in the coming National Struggle. Apart from the organisation of camps and annual conferences, an academy of physical culture was also opened at Bagalkot to train them effectively. There was more emphasis on training and discipline and consequently the quality and the standard of volunteers had greatly improved.

These voluntary bodies devised such programmes which involved mass participation. A beginning had already been made by Tilak and Gandhi in this direction. These programmes further helped to widen their sphere of activity. For example, activities like picketing, boycott, not only involved mass participation and were always keeping the public opinion alive on these issues but at the same time

they also helped in creating anti-imperialist feelings amongst the masses and were always reminding of the fact that it was the Britishers and the Raj who were doing them wrong.

The picketting and boycott further widened the sphere in yet another way. They were helpful in educating the masses and at the same time were also helpful in opening up avenues for the Indian business class. These programmes not only made the people aware of their position as political beings which was a subordinate one but at the same time highlighted the dreaded social evils like untouchability, purdah, communalism etc- -, prevalent in the country. This kind of awareness was generated amongst the masses through posters and banners which found a prominent place in the Swadeshi bazaars, prabhat pheris and public meetings.

Another activity i.e. Flag Salutation indulged in at that time, was yet another factor aimed at cementing the bonds between the nationalists and the masses. It acted like a binding force, an emotional and psychological anchor giving nationalism the top priority. Freedom being the key factor and the masses flocked under the fold of

the tricolour and were prepared for any sacrifice.

The organisation of Swadeshi Bazaars was a regular feature. This was seen to be an excellent opportunity where the masses could participate to a large extent. These Swadeshi Bazaars displayed and sold the indigenous products and opened up, avenues for them. These bazaars were organised in such a way that they enabled the womenfolk also to step out of their houses and participate in them.

With the Simon Boycott, there was an increase in mass participation to a great extent. Processions, demonstrations, public meetings, prabhat pheries became a regular feature. With the launching of the CDM, picketting and boycott activities were further widened.

Salt Satyagraha became a symbol around which masses began to rally. They were beginning to become aware of their political status to a large extent.

The HSD was formed, for example, with the principal aim of providing the Congress with a solid band of trained

volunteers. But somehow the participation in the Congress work at the time of annual sessions had been progressively getting less and less and in the Madras Session held in December 1927, the Dal had been overlooked. There were several reasons for this negligence on part of the congress.

Firstly the Congress was reverting back to its old practise of enrolling at the last moment large number of untrained people for the work of the session and as soon as the session was over they drifted back to their ordinary work and not even a nucleus of trained volunteers remained. These temporary volunteers no doubt worked hard willingly but this willing service did not fructify into permanent volunteers.

Secondly, the financial position of Dal was not very strong. It was always deficit and depended heavily on the support from the Congress. Dr Hardiker persisted frequently in all his letters for funds.

The Seva Dal, Nehru felt was certainly entitled to help from the AICC. But the tendency had been for the Seva Dal to carry on an independent existence. This being

the right tendency but necessarily involved a less frequent recourse to grants from the AICC.

In spite of the lack of funds and lack of encouragement from the Congress, the Seva Dal sought to function under the control and supervision of the Congress. It was given freedom of internal management and administration at the same time. For six years the Seva Dal continued to function in various parts of India and gradually but effectively built up trained bodies of volunteers. In December 1929, following the lead of national congress, the Seva Dal made the 'Independence' of India its objective and subsequently threw all its resources into the great national struggle of 1930-31.

The contribution of the volunteers was immense during the active phase of the movement. Therefore, soon after Delhi Truce, the working committee considered the whole question of volunteering and the HSD in the light of new developments and the civil disobedience campaign. It was clear that the training of volunteers on a large scale for national service had become an essential and immediate work of the Congress. The

Working Committee thereupon passed a resolution on the 11th July, 1931, recognizing the HSD as the Central Volunteer Organisation of the Congress and bringing it directly under its authority and control.

The old Seva Dal gladly accepted this fundamental change in its constitution which put an end to its separate autonomous existence and made it into the volunteer department of the Congress. For seven and half years it had sought to serve the Congress and through it the nation and had drawn repeated attention to training and efficiency. The time had come when its sphere of action be enlarged and the Congress itself took the charge of its great work.

The Seva Dal no doubt built up trained bodies of volunteers. However, the work was not spectacular and the progress was not rapid, as stress was always laid on training camps and efficiency and not on numbers. There were several reasons accounted for the fact and the following points were to be taken into consideration for the efficient working of the volunteers.

Firstly, for example, the Dal although had worked for 5 years, though useful, yet had not borne as much fruit as

it ought to have done. The simple reason, was that, the whole structure was made top heavy. The training was given to a few hundred persons, out of whom, most of them got lost in their cities or villages and the gain had not been too much, while the cost had been considerable.

This was in stark contrast to the Khudai Khitmutgars. These had grown up from below, chiefly from the village and had spread with remarkable rapidity. They had hardly cost anything. No doubt they varied greatly in efficiency and otherwise there may have been undesirable amongst them. But generally speaking, they represented a higher kind and they helped greatly in keeping the people upto the mark. They represented an ideology of disciplined service and to the extent they understood it of non-violence. It were these Khudai Khitmutgars who had been the backbone of the movement in the NWFP and it is they who had helped to keep it peaceful. This was not the case with the HSD as it was basically a product of centralized authority and with too much emphasis on training and discipline, very few persons came forward to avail of this opportunity.

Secondly, the Youth Leagues were like rivulets of the

river i.e. the Congress. They followed the lead given by the Congress and never tried to come in its way or ever opposed it.

These organisations and the people belonging to them participated in the activities and contributed greatly once Congress gave a call to the Nation to rally around it and support the nation's cause. At the same time when the movement was withdrawn they engaged themselves in the silent work and contributed immensely in this work. This was the Constructive Programme (CP) launched by Gandhiji and which had the full support of the Congress.

However, inspite of the weaknesses prevalent in the voluntary organisations and partially due to certain other reasons viz - the goal as being an interruption in the CP activities, there is not an iota of doubt that the training and discipline was the strength of the volunteers and above all their belief in the creed of non-violence and their faith in mass participation which led them to be successful in their endeavour and finally in the cause of the nation's struggle. This was only possible with the support and encouragement they got from

the people. All these combined efforts proved to be fatal for the Raj in the years to come, and herein lies their contribution in the struggle of freedom.

These different activities of the volunteers as well as the masses had an upward swing i.e. with each movement there was an increase in the number of the volunteers who participated and also the mass participation increased immeensely.

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