

Chapter-IV

Political Organisation and Movements

Struggle for freedom, and a revolt against injustice, racialism, discrimination and exploitation of the people made both Gandhi and Mandela stand at the forefront of the political movements in India and South Africa respectively. Basically the movements led by the two leaders aimed at riddance from an unsympathetic government that was undemocratic and was at the helm only on the basis of a different caste or colour. It was the political wisdom, and also the organisational skill of these leaders that the people realised the importance of freedom and rejected to accept the presence of an unjust government that had ruled over them merely because of a different colour or race. The presence of the leaders like Gandhi and Mandela electrified the atmosphere which was hitherto that of silent submission; the people had never before tried to raise a voice so forcefully against the unlawful and unjust discrimination. Now the people yearned to breathe in a democratic world; they echoed the voices raised by their leaders in whom they saw an image of their messiah and a crusader for their cause.

Both the leaders discovered that the people had in them a potential to fight, a cause to struggle and a wish to forge ahead. But the vacuum that had existed in the field of leadership had allowed the oppressors to unleash their severities unchecked, on the ignorant masses who in the want of guidance were merely a divided lot. It was a time when the men who could lead the masses from the front, integrate them to a common cause and make the oppressors realise an awakened

strength of the masses were needed. Gandhi and Mandela filled the vacuum; they organised the masses and guided them to struggle against injustice and exploitation. The two men, in their respective countries, minutely observed the social and political problems, won the confidence of their people, organised them in a group, shaped their movements and guided the people's struggle against the unjust rulers.

The conditions of the two groups of people whom the two leaders led were similar to a considerable extent. In the earlier stage, Gandhi led the struggle in South Africa which became the work place for Mandela later. Gandhi's apprenticeship as a leader of the masses was done in South Africa where he fought for the Indians who had migrated to that country as indentured labourers or as merchants. It was here that he devised his Satyagraha, a method of protest which was to be non violent in its very inception and always needed a Satyagrahi ready to make sacrifices. The step motherly treatment, like the one given to the Blacks on their motherland, was given to the Indians also, in South Africa. Gandhi involved himself completely to a social cause and even altered his scheduled return to India to stay there and fight for the rights of the people. He integrated the strength of the people and fought for them. The methods of protest he had devised in South Africa were later applied in India against the British Raj to get liberation from the foreign yoke. He combined social work with the freedom movement and made a reach to the hearts of his men.

Mandela traced racialism at its worst in South Africa. He observed how the Blacks were denied equal rights in their own country and were subjected to the worst ignominy just because of their colour. He also, like Gandhi, did not want

blood to be spilled, and made himself available for the sacrifice of a very high degree, the parallels of which are not easy to find in the history of the world. His political movements aided by his organisational skills joined the people of South Africa together against their oppressor. The people followed Mandela and accepted him as their unquestioned leader in the end.

Strategies of Political Organisation

The influences that Gandhi had received from life, from religion, from his experiences and from the books that he had read, he applied them to the service of his fellow men. He was a spiritually awakened soul and was moved by the exploitation of the ignorant people:

Here it was that the religious spirit within me became a living force. (Gandhi 136)

In South Africa, he got the opportunity of proving his political acumen. It was here that he started putting his spiritual knowledge to his use in the fight against injustice and exploitation.

Gandhi worked on the strength of the masses. He sparked a consciousness in them of the wrongs being done to them by the unjust rulers sitting on the helm. It was not long after he got back to Durban and was preparing to return to India when the prospects of a political struggle awaited him. The moment proved useful for launching a political career that raised him to be the man of the masses, their guide and their benefactor. It was he who had disclosed to the people the ill-effects of the law for which the Bill before the Natal legislature had been proposed:

This Bill if it passes into law, will make our lot extremely difficult. It is the first nail into our coffin it strikes at the root of our self-respect. (Gandhi 143)

The Bill had proposed to deprive all Indians of the franchise and also deprived them to own land. Under the special law for Asiatics, like as it was with the coloured people of South Africa, the Indians were also not allowed to walk on public footpath and could not move out of doors after 9 p.m. without a permit. Gandhi learnt that the people were exploited without any protest or opposition on their part. Gandhi made them conscious of the wrongs done to them by the authorities and instilled in them a spirit of rebelliousness against unjust discrimination. When Gandhi gave the people an awakening call, they requested him to cancel his return to India. Abdulla Sheth and others wanted him to stay there for them:

And a chorus of voices was heard: 'Allah is great and merciful. Money will come in. Men there are, as many as you may need. You please consent to stay, and all will be well'. (Gandhi 143)

Gandhi made up his mind to stay on in South Africa for a month:

Thus God laid the foundations of my life in South Africa and sowed the seed of the fight for national self-respect. (Gandhi 144)

It was a part of Gandhi's strategy to acquaint the people of their condition in which they were living. He wanted to bring before them a true picture of their

own conditions. Meetings were arranged and through these meetings he came in contact with many people at the same time:

My first step was to call a meeting of all the Indians in Pretoria and present to them a picture of their condition in the Transvaal.
(Gandhi 130)

Gandhi wanted to earn for the Indians their self-respect. Besides earning for them their legal rights, he wanted to improve their living standard so that they could compete with the English people who had decried them as inferior. Apart from this, he wished to unite them and to make them forget their separate identities as Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis, Christians, Gujaratis, Madrasis, Punjabis, Sindhis, Kachchhis, Surtis and so on. He wanted to educate the people so that they could match the educational standards of the ruling class and believed that, with an improved educational standard, their living conditions would also improve. An integration of the masses having a common cause was sought at the meeting which he had addressed in Pretoria. It was possible only if an organisation could be formed:

I suggested in conclusion, the formation of an association to make representations to the authorities concerned in respect of the hardships of the Indian settlers, and offered to place at its disposal as much of my time and service as was possible.
(Gandhi 130-131)

Gandhi waged his fight in a non-violent manner and would form a pressure group that pressed the authorities from all sides. His knowledge of English and his legal awareness was an asset to him. The Indians of South Africa felt the need to use his

organising abilities. This was the reason that the month for which he had been retained was extended to a year. They decided to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly. It was drawn up and a copy was issued to the press that made the matter become public. Gandhi ensured the support of more and more people to oppose the authorities forcefully. Ten thousand signatures were obtained. Though the Bill was passed, yet the results were encouraging. Gandhi started realising the strength of the masses:

We all knew that this was a foregone conclusion, but the agitation had infused new life into the community and had brought home to them the conviction that the community was one and indivisible, and that it was as much their duty to fight for its political rights as for its trading rights. (Gandhi 146)

Through his fight against the disfranchising Bill Gandhi displayed his organisational zeal that distinguished the fifty years of his public life. He knew that his practice as a lawyer was now a subordinate occupation. The community of Indian traders in South Africa had their business interests but Gandhi wished to alleviate the sufferings of the indentured labourers and to restore self-respect to the Indians who were under rated only because of their colour. He knew that to continue the agitation against the authorities, it was necessary to form an organisation:

So I consulted Sheth Abdullah and other friends, and we all decided to have a public organisation of a permanent character.
(Gandhi 149)

The Natal Indian Congress was formed. Thus, Gandhi formed the first organisation to protect the rights and the commercial status of the Indians in a foreign land.

Gandhi carried with him a will to resist the unlawful and unjust. He exhibited his commitment to take the moral course of action in public life. The case of Balasundaram that he mentions in his autobiography won for him a place in the hearts of the indentured labourers. The Natal Indian Congress did not have the clerical class, the unskilled wage earners or the indentured labourers as its members. Through the incident, he came in contact with them and was able to get the “best opportunity of learning their joys and sorrows.” The Natal Indian Congress successfully got the amount of the tax reduced, which was unjustly imposed to prevent the development of the Indians whose prosperity was perceived as a threat for the White community.

Gandhi’s knowledge of English, his fearless nature and his skill of writing enabled him to disseminate his thoughts far and wide. After his three years stay in South Africa from where he had collected the full knowledge of the Indians living there, and where he had formed an active working group in the form of Natal Indian Congress, he returned to India. But while he was in India, he remained consciously active about the plight of his fellow Indians in South Africa. He used his political skill and explored contacts, devised methods and painstakingly worked to tell the people about the conditions of the Indians in South Africa. He sought an interview with the editor of one of India’s leading newspaper, the ‘*Pioneer*’, and elicited the promise to publish the conditions of the Indians in South Africa. He engaged himself in writing about the Indians of South Africa and

printed ten thousand copies of the *Grievances of the British Indians in South Africa: An Appeal to the Indian Public*. He met with the people like Sir Pherozshah Mehta in Bombay and addressed the meetings. He went to Madras to tell to the Tamils of the conditions of their brethren like Balasundaram in South Africa. Thus through the methods of propaganda, Gandhi got success in garnering the support of the Indians for the Indians of South Africa. This strategy of reaching to the people more and more, and bringing them in line with his thoughts was a part of Gandhi's strategy.

Gandhi fought for the rights of people and his fight was against the authorities. But he carved a niche for himself in the Government circles also by leaving on them the impression that he was a moderate and did not want sabotage. The officials also took him to be the representative of the masses. At the same time, Gandhi worked for the uplift of the masses by guiding them towards maintaining the proper sanitation and helping them out by providing them services in the field of health and education.

He worked with the ambulance unit during the Boer War with the help of 1100 strong corps consisting of Indians. This act won him the confidence of the Government and of his own people:

Our humble work was at the moment much applauded, and the
Indians' prestige was enhanced. (Gandhi 219)

He worked to teach his people the clean habits because he wished to press for their rights by purging the people of their blemishes first. Again his services in this field had a bi-fold benefit – it made the job of the authorities easier and, at the same time, won for Gandhi the confidence of his people. Thus, in South Africa,

Gandhi became a well known figure and was progressing to become an icon of the masses.

Gandhi devoted his strength and energy in South Africa to get rights for the Indians living there. He was simultaneously building a concept of Indian Independence also. In the earlier years of twentieth century he was preparing himself to stand at the forefront as the leader of the Independence movement. He observed that without a clear vision and a perfect strategy, the emancipation of the people from foreign rule was not possible. He was not satisfied with himself for his brief performance in 1901 at Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress.

His political aspirations were manifesting themselves in his meeting with the Indian expatriate community in London whose protests had a tinge of violence. He was impressed by their bravery but called them misguided. In the background of such early political efforts, the *Hind Swaraj* was written on board the ship while returning from South Africa. In this book, he has placed a vision of the independent India. The book contains his views of simple life that he had gathered from Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau.

Gandhi did not woo Congress leaders to mount on the political ladder as he had done before. Satyagraha was the most potent weapon that he had devised to protest against the authorities; and the Satyagraha proved itself as a means to bring Gandhi at the forefront of the battle. Satyagraha and the fight for the people made Gandhi a popular figure in political circles also. He had discussed passive resistance in the pages of *Indian Opinion* in December 1904. At that time, he had argued that if there were prosecutions for trading without a licence, the person prosecuted should refuse to pay fines. He urged that if it was necessary, they

should be ready to go to jail as he had maintained that there was no disgrace in going to jail for such a case. His emphasis was on character and spiritual strength. The name for this new philosophy he had got from a competition that he held in the *India Opinion*. The name sada-graha came from there. Gandhi himself amended it to 'Satyagraha' which meant firmness in truth. The philosophy of Satyagraha devised by Gandhi was used first in South Africa and later in India for making mass protests.

Mandela's politics comes to him from the very conditions in which he was born and brought up. He claims that every South African was exposed to politics during the White Rule. Politics had become the part of life in South Africa because of the state sponsored white-black discrimination. The conditions that prevailed in the country at that time provided a semblance of political process going on in all spheres of life. The Africans were subjected to such discriminations that pointed to a political action imposed on them by the authorities:

I cannot pinpoint a moment when I became politicized, when I knew that I would spend my life in the liberation struggle. To be an African in South Africa means that one is politicized from the moment of one's birth, whether one acknowledges it or not. An African child is born in an Africans Only hospital, taken home in Africans Only bus, lives in an Africans Only area and attends Africans Only schools, if he attends school at all. (Mandela 109)

These were the circumstances that prompted Mandela to become an active member of the struggle for the liberation of his people from the discriminatory rule. He and his fellow Africans had to undergo many indignities that would produce in him

anger and a spirit of rebelliousness against the system. The African National Congress, in his belief was the means to effect a change in South Africa; this was for him, an organisation that could fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the Black Community.

The first organisation that Nelson Mandela as a freedom fighter, contributed to form, was the Youth League. He and his friends like Lembede, Peter Mda. Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and others discussed the nationalistic issues and met Dr. Xuma, the head of ANC to form the Youth League, with an objective of mobilising mass support. The formation of Youth League took place in 1944 with about hundred men. The basic policy of the League did not differ from ANC's first constitution of 1912. The League reaffirmed the original issues which were not getting due consideration over the years:

African nationalism was our battle cry, and our creed was the creation of one nation out of many tribes, the overthrow of white supremacy, and the establishment of a truly democratic form of government. (Mandela 114)

The primary purpose of the League was to give direction to ANC with no scope for including in its ideology the communist thoughts. Some of the youth leaguers felt that the sympathetic whites may be included in the organisation but Mandela and others countered the idea:

At the time I was firmly opposed to allowing communists or whites to join the League. (Mandela 115)

The strategies of the protests that Mandela and his group adopted were inspired to a large extent by Gandhi's movements. In the white general elections of 1948, the National Party led by Dr. Daniel Malan, a former minister of the Dutch Reformed Church came into power. Malan's platform was known as apartheid which meant 'apartness'. The Nationalist Party began to implement its pernicious agenda – they curbed the trade union movement, limited the franchise allowed to the Indians, the coloureds and the Africans, prohibited the Mixed Marriages Act and so on. It was now necessary for ANC to counter the acts of the Government. The ANC embarked on an unaccustomed path to turn into a mass organisation. The Youth League drafted a Programme of Action which aimed at the mass mobilisation:

At the ANC annual conference in Bloemfontein, the organisation adopted the league's Programme of Action, which called for boycotts, strikes, stay-at-homes, passive resistance, protest demonstrations and other forms of mass action.(Mandela 130)

These methods of protest – the boycotts, strikes, disobedience and non-cooperation approved in The Programme of Action of the conference were exactly those which were devised and approved by Gandhi in South Africa and later in India. Mandela says:

Youth League members had now graduated to the senior organisation. We had now guided the ANC to a more radical and revolutionary path. (Mandela 132)

In the initial stages of his political career, it was a part of Mandela's strategy to avoid joining hands with the organisations of the Communists and the Indians. He was sceptical of participation in any action undertaken by such organisations. The

one day strike on 1 May called by the communists and Indians and supported by ANC for the abolition of pass laws and the discriminatory legislation was a success. Though Mandela supported the objectives of the strike, yet he remained wary and believed that they should concentrate on their own campaign.

As a member of the Executive Committee, Mandela played the role of a policy maker of ANC. For his presence at such a position of power in the group, his organisational skills needed rationale and wisdom that could have far-reaching effects in the organisation. In the National Day of Protest of 26 June 1950, he displayed his skills as a leader. In the preparation, Walter travelled around the country consulting local leaders. Mandela had the charge of the ANC office which was the centre of a complicated national action. He attended various leaders every day, coordinated the actions in different parts of the country and made hectic calls on phone. The Day of Protest was a success. In the cities, the majority of workers stayed at home and black businesses did not open. The success was satisfying and had set the road for him to become a mass leader:

It was the first time I had taken a significant part in a national campaign, and I felt the exhilaration that springs from the success of a well-planned battle against the enemy and the sense of comradeship that is born of fighting against formidable odds.
(Mandela 136)

In the less mature years of Nelson Mandela as a freedom fighter, he advocated a go-it-alone strategy in the fight against apartheid. Like the Africans, the Indians and the coloureds were also the victims of race hostility but any idea of a joint action against the White Rule was repelled by Mandela, though under the

pressure of his fellow comrades, he had to accept the idea of a joint battle. In 1950, two Acts supporting the apartheid were passed. These were the Population Registrations Act and the Group Areas Act. In the following year, two more laws were passed to directly attack the rights of Coloureds and Africans. These were The Separate Representation of Voters Act and The Bantu Authorities Act. In the light of the spirited protests of the Indians, coloureds and Africans, Walter Sisulu broached the idea of a national civil disobedience campaign. Mandela liked the idea but wanted the campaign to be exclusively African:

I had recently become national president of the Youth League, and in my new role I urged that the campaign should be exclusively African. (Mandela 141)

Mandela had to agree to a joint action under the pressure of his fellow Leaguers.

The influence of Gandhian principles is clear on the strategies of mass protests that Mandela initiated against the unjust rulers. Malan's dismissal of their demands in 1951 compelled them to begin earnestly a mass action. While speaking to a group of volunteers at the Garment Workers' Union, Mandela revealed his strategies of mass action based on non-violence. His thoughts exactly reveal an impression of the Gandhi's strategies:

I explained to a group of several hundred Africans, Indians and Coloureds that volunteering was a difficult and even dangerous duty as the authorities would seek to intimidate, imprison and perhaps attack the volunteers. No matter what the authorities did the volunteers could not retaliate, otherwise they would undermine the value of the entire enterprise. They must respond

to violence with non-violence; discipline must be maintained at all costs. (Mandela 146)

The arguments whether to adopt Gandhian principles be followed in totality in the campaign were presented:

We all discussed whether the campaign should follow the Gandhian principles of non-violence or what the Mahatma called satyagraha, a non-violence that seeks to conquer through conversion. (Mandela 146)

Nelson Mandela made a concession with the rigidity of the principles. He supported a compromise with the principles of non-violence if the situation demanded. He favoured the use of Gandhian principles as a tactic as per the demands of the situation:

This made non-violence a practical necessity rather than an option. This was my view, and I saw non-violence on the Gandhian model not as an inviolable principle but as a tactic to be used as the situation demanded. The principle was not so important that the strategy should be used even when it was self-defeating, as Gandhi himself believed. I called for non-violent protest for as long as it was effective. (Mandela 147)

In the aftermath of 1952 Defiance Campaign, it was imminent that the Government would declare ANC and SAIC (South African Indian Congress) illegal organisations as it had done with the Communist Party. It was Mandela's foresightedness that he sensed the designs of the Government and, in order to

continue the works of ANC, he proposed a contingency plan to face such an eventuality. It was decided to draw up a plan that would enable the organisation to operate from underground. This strategy was given the name 'Mandela Plan' or 'M-Plan' as it was the responsibility of Nelson Mandela to work on this plan.

Mandela worked for several months on his plan of forming an underground organisation. His organisational skills were best at work while he was working on this plan. He held secret meetings with the members of ANC and SAIC and discussed the parameters of the plan. A hierarchy was followed that would enable the members of the organisation communicate with the highest officials of the group:

The smallest unit was cell, which in urban townships consisted of roughly ten houses on a street. A cell steward would be in charge of each of these units. If a street had more than ten houses, a street steward would take charge and the cell stewards would report to him. A group of streets formed a zone directed by a chief steward, who was in turn responsible to the secretariat of the local branch of the ANC. (Mandela 167)

The plan had a moderate success as it had some problems. Yet it chiselled the organisational skills of Mandela who executed them later in constituting the military wing of ANC.

In March 1960, the National Executive Council again decided to work from underground, adopting a strategy along the lines of the M-Plan. It was decided that Mandela would go underground to travel about the country. Now Mandela would work in the night. During the day, he kept to his hideout and would emerge to do

his work when it was dark. To expand the organisation he travelled across the country and met with people from different areas and class:

I travelled secretly across the country: I was with Muslims in the Cape, with sugar-workers in Natal, with factory workers in Port Elizabeth. I moved through townships in different parts of the country attending secret meetings at night. (Mandela 316)

His underground movements were aimed at strengthening the liberation struggle. This was his effort to garner the strength of the people to widen the support for 'Stay-in-home' movement on 29th May.

Mandela's reputation as a leader was that of taking a decision as per the demands of the situation and the sensitivity of the circumstances. After the withdrawal of the call for 'stay-at-home' movement, he took a decision to take recourse to violence, when necessary, as the Government was suppressing with an iron hand the non-violent protests of the people. He even overlooked his executives and the organisation in the matter and asserted his ideas in public without their assent:

I was criticised by our Executive for making that remark before it was discussed by the organisation, but sometimes one must go public with an idea to push a reluctant organisation in the direction you want it to go. (Mandela 320)

At the Executive meeting in Durban, arguments in favour of violent methods of protest and against them, were placed but, in the end, the arguments put forward by Mandela were supported by the Chief Luthuli, and an endorsement by the National

Executive was received finally. The political will of Mandela as the leader of the group prevailed and the organisation shed off its old cover giving way to new course of action:

Henceforth, the ANC would be a different kind of organization.

We were embarking on a new and more dangerous path, a path of organized violence, the results of which we did not and could not know. (Mandela 324)

Mandela's capability as a leader was at a severe test when he got the task of starting a new army. It was a daunting task for him. The name of this new organization was Umkhonto we Sizwe (the spear of the nation). The group got the short name MK. Mandela made initial recruitments, talked to the experts and read the concerned literature on armed warfare and on guerrilla warfare. To inform the people of his resolve and to get their support, he released a letter to the African newspapers declaring that he has resolved to fight for freedom until his days are over.

To strengthen the new organisation, Mandela would keep on changing names, places and kept a disguised identity. He worked as a servant at different places. His skill as an expert master of running an organisation is evident from the fact that despite bans on him, he was not identified though he remained in constant touch with his fellow volunteers of ANC. The planning of the organisation was meticulous. Four types of violent activities were considered by MK: sabotage, guerrilla warfare, terrorism and open revolution. The choice of violence was selective. It was the avowed objective of the organisation to use violence as a tactic

to terrorise the Government and spare the individuals, the common men. Mandela and his group never wanted to harm the bonhomie of two races:

Because it did not involve loss of life, it offered the best hope for reconciliation among the races afterwards. We did not want to start a blood-feud between white and black. (Mandela 336)

Mandela and his co-workers like Oliver Tambo took their fight to international levels. He made it a part of his strategy to win the favour of other nations. The major part of the plan was to bring a unity of all the African states. So, Mandela travelled to other countries, explained the conditions in South Africa, told them about the history and functioning of ANC and MK, collected funds along with technical and political support for their organisation. The matter was taken to the UN also by the efforts of Mandela and his group. This resulted in the expansion of the organisation from national to international levels. The formation and expansion of the MK shows organisational skills of Mandela. His activities in MK led to his imprisonment which subsequently ended in the final elimination of apartheid from South Africa.

Mass Movements and Response of the Masses:

Apart from many movements in South Africa and India, Champaran is the case of Gandhi's attempt at organising the mass movement at a larger scale, to press upon the authorities to repeal the unjust laws. Raj Kumar Shukla, a peasant from Bihar pestered Gandhi to turn his attention to the distress of Indigo planters in Champaran. Gandhi was reluctant to visit with him but Shukla pursued him everywhere and got his consent to visit Bihar. Gandhi learnt that the farmers of Champaran were obliged to cultivate three out of every twenty parts of the land

with the Indigo plant and deliver the produce to the landlords as rent. Gandhi displayed his organisational skill by calling the lawyers who had been representing the farmers and told them to forget the court cases and impressed upon them about the need of handling the situation politically. He raised the funds from wealthy Biharis and used newspapers to make announcements. The whole nation came to know what was happening in Champaran. He used volunteers to spread his messages. The government was shaken by the force of the masses and he was asked to leave. On his refusal he was put on trial. He had written to the Viceroy and other dignitaries. When the Government wanted to postpone the case against him he was determined to plead guilty. Gandhi's Satyagraha scored a success in Bihar. The administration would not prosecute Gandhi's supporters to help the gains of the planters. Lieutenant Governor Sir Edward Gait convened a government inquiry which unanimously gave the report in favour of the farmers recommending the return of some money to farmers and abolishing the forced cultivation of indigo:

The committee found in favour of the ryots, and recommended that the planters should refund a portion of the exactions made by them which the Committee had found to be unlawful and that the tinkathia system should be abolished by law.(Gandhi 429)

In the mill hands' case of Ahmadabad, Gandhi presented an example of being a leader of masses whose call would get him the most favoured response of the masses. He asked the workers to go on strike on the condition of remaining non-violent throughout and firm on their stand. The workers followed him and his directions. But when they were on the verge of losing their confidence and he

perceived a fear of their becoming rowdy, he made to them an emotional appeal of continuing with the struggle declaring that he would remain on fast until a successful settlement was reached:

Unbidden and all by themselves the words came to my lips:
'Unless the strikers rally', I declared to the meeting, 'and continue the strike till a settlement is reached, or till they leave the mills altogether, I will not touch any food. (Gandhi 435)

He was successful in bringing the course of the workers' action to his considered path and they expressed their solidarity behind his words:

The labourers broke out, 'Not you but we shall fast. It would be monstrous if you were to fast. Please forgive us for our lapse; we will now remain faithful to our pledge to the end. (Gandhi 435)

It was the *modus operandi* of Gandhi's politics to take a plunge in those affairs where the sufferings and exploitation of the masses were increasing on account of the apathetical behaviour of the Government or the authorities. The masses would organise themselves in a group behind him and follow his voice.

Kheda Satyagraha is another example of his skill of organising mass movements and winning a favourable response of the masses to his call. A condition of famine had arisen in the Kheda district because of the failure of the crops. The Patidars wanted from the Government the revenue assessment cancelled. Under the Land Revenue Rule, if the crop was four annas or under, the cultivator's claim to suspension of revenue assessment was to be allowed. But the officials' reaction to his correspondences was not encouraging. Gandhi gave a call

for Satyagraha and a pledge was undertaken by the patidars. The reaction of the masses to Gandhi's call was, as he had desired:

Knowing that the crops of our villages are less than four annas, we requested the Government to suspend the collection of revenue assessment till the ensuing year, but the Government had not acceded to our prayer. Therefore, we, the undersigned, hereby solemnly declare that we shall not, of our accord, pay to the Government the full or the remaining revenue for the year.

(Gandhi 440)

Such was the authority of Gandhi's call that the people would accept to whatever agreement Gandhi reached for them:

However, the end was far from making me feel happy, in as much as it lacked the grace with which the termination of every Satyagraha campaign ought to be accompanied. The Collector carried on as though he had done nothing by way of a settlement.

(Gandhi 444)

But the people were more than satisfied at the outcome of the battle which their leader had fought on their behalf and this was the stamp of people's faith in Gandhi.

Mandela started growing as a leader on the strength of the principles of non-cooperation and non-violence. The Defiance Campaign of 1952 provides an ample testimony of his becoming a leader of the masses; and the principles of non-

cooperation and non-violence helped him in expanding the organisation to a large scale. The Defiance Campaign had proposed a two staged programme:

In the first stage, a small number of well-trained volunteers would break selected laws in a handful of urban areas. (Mandela 147)

The Gandhian principle was proposed for the second stage also:

The second stage was envisioned as mass defiance, accompanied by strikes and industrial actions across the country. (Mandela 147)

On the first day of the Defiance Campaign, more than 250 volunteers courted arrests. They violated the unjust laws. The violation of laws and courting arrests were strictly in accordance with the Gandhian principles of non-violence and non-cooperation. The same spirit and zeal prevailed during the days to come. In five months 8500 people took part in the campaign. These were the people from all walks of life. An enormous publicity was received by the Campaign which helped in the expansion of ANC membership from 20,000 to 100,000.

The organisation raised by Mandela, and supported by the people of South Africa gave shakes to the Government. The mass protests increased as the people were realising more and more the wrongs perpetrated against them by the Ruling dispensation. The growing restlessness of the people made the Government jittery and led to the arrests of Mandela and his fellows. The support of the masses was proving itself as the strength of the struggle. During the trial masses expressed

displeasure against the Government and expressed their solidarity behind Mandela and others:

Despite the intimidation, as many as two thousand people assembled in front of the courthouse holding banners and signs such as 'WE STAND BY OUR LEADERS'. Inside, the spectators' gallery was full, and it was standing room only for the local and foreign press. (Mandela 446)

The support of the masses to Mandela was so high that it would give jitters to the Government. At the time of Mandela's release, the Government of President F. W. Klerk wanted to make it a silent affair. They wanted to release him in Johannesburg and did not want to give much time to the masses to make a show of their solidarity to their leader:

Although the press in South Africa and around the world had been speculating for weeks that my release was imminent, the announcement nevertheless came as a surprise to me. I had not been told that the reason de Klerk wanted to see me was to tell me that he was making me a free man. (Mandela 667)

Mandela's iconic stature is evident from the fact that his release made the people jubilant:

At first I could not really make out what was going on in front of us, but when I was within 150 feet or so, I saw a tremendous commotion and a great crowd of people: hundreds of photographers and television cameras and news people as well as

several thousand well-wishers. I was astounded and a little bit alarmed. I had truly not expected such a scene; ... (Mandela 673)

People saw in Mandela an image of their messiah. The long battle fought by Mandela, the sacrifices he made and the movements he organised catapulted him into an icon of the masses. On the day, next to his release, he appeared before the masses:

We circled over the stadium, overflowing with 120,000 people, and landed in the centre. The stadium was so crowded, with people sitting or standing in every inch of space, that it looked as though it would burst. (Mandela 681)

The organisational skills of Nelson Mandela did not remain confined to the national level but expanded to the international forum after his release. He visited many countries to put pressure on the South African Government by the international community. The successful ending of the apartheid in South Africa makes Nelson Mandela a real hero of the masses, their leader and an icon of their hearts.

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