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# Nonviolent Resistance in India 1916–1947

**David Hardiman**

*Emeritus Professor of History, University of Warwick, UK*

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## Introduction

In recent years, nonviolent forms of protest have been used, to a powerful effect, in bringing down some highly oppressive regimes, as well as in fighting for civil rights and other issues within many societies. There has been a wave of books in response, mainly coming from a tradition of writing that originated in peace studies, but has evolved into what we can now distinguish as a separate field—that of the study of the strategy of nonviolent protest, or, as it is sometimes described, 'people power'. This literature aims to reveal the growing efficacy in modern times of nonviolent methods as against violent ones. It examines the strategies that have been adopted in such movements, with the emphasis being on discovering the most effective techniques and methods that can be applied in future campaigns. This writing has an activist purpose—being designed to demonstrate the most effective methods and forms of organisation that protestors can adopt. Some, indeed, are written as manuals of nonviolent protest.[1] The literature in this field has celebrated Gandhi as the first major theorist of strategic nonviolent resistance, citing his leadership of the Indian nationalist movement against British imperial rule as providing some exemplary

* Lecture delivered at a conference titled 'Non-violent Resistance in South Asian History' held at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 20–21 February 2014.

[1] Notably Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*, The Albert Einstein Institute, Boston 2002. This has been translated into at least thirty-one languages, and has been used as a handbook in protests from Serbia in 2000 to the Arab Spring of 2011.

lessons in the technique and practice of the method. In this paper, the author shall focus on the movement led by Gandhi in India, arguing that it is often misrepresented in this literature. The focus is in particular on something that tends to be ignored in these studies, namely the difference in quality between the national-level anti-British movement that spanned India as a whole and a large number of local-level campaigns and protests.

The study of strategic nonviolent resistance is a relatively unknown field amongst those who study the history and politics of India. For example, the work of Gene Sharpe has been almost entirely ignored. This was not necessary because his books lacked scholarly rigour—he has full references and citations. Also, he taught the subject at Harvard University. It was more because the Gandhians in India who did take account of Sharp and other western writers on the theme were generally not taken seriously as academics. Mainstream historians and social scientists tended to be either liberal nationalists or socialists-cum-Marxists. While the former admired Gandhi as the 'father of the nation', they did not see his protest techniques as having a place in the modern parliamentary democracy of India. The latter tended to acknowledge that Gandhi was a brilliant mass mobiliser, but believed that his philosophy of nonviolence ensured that he was unable to push what he had started to its logical end in a revolutionary—and if necessary violent—upheaval, so that in the end he let his supporters down. They have therefore focused in their research and writing on the gap between popular demands and what the Gandhian movement was prepared and able to actually deliver. They were not interested in any serious analysis of Gandhi's techniques as a guide to future action. Indeed, some depicted Gandhi as the 'mascot of the bourgeoisie' who deployed the energy of the masses to pressurise the British, and then let them down once power was gained.[2] On a more positive note, attention has also been paid in recent years to the culture of nationalism during the Gandhian period; with its forging of a distinctive national

[2] The classic statement in this respect is by R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, Victor Gollancz, London 1940. See p. 323 for the phase 'mascot of the bourgeoisie', and pp. 512–17 for a sustained critique of Gandhi in this respect.

identity represented in certain symbols, institutions, forms of dress, and so on.[3] Alongside this, there has been an attempt to rescue Gandhi from his critics with a focus on his highly original and radical thinking that may point us towards a postmodern future.[4] These scholars do not address his work as a political strategist. In addition to these two major strands, there were a few scholars in India who were interested in popular movements by the poor against the economic development policies of the modern Indian state, such as the Chipko Andolan and Narmada Bachao Andolan. These often had a background in the Sarvodaya movement, in particular the strand associated with Jayaprakash Narayan. They did not, nonetheless, pay any attention to the literature on strategic nonviolent resistance. In general, therefore, we find a lack of critical engagement between the western writers in the field of the study of strategic nonviolent resistance and historians and social scientists in India.

## Gandhi in Strategic Nonviolent Resistance Studies

The study of nonviolent resistance in its recent form has been situated primarily in the USA, and it has arisen in particular from departments of peace studies. These have tended to be somewhat self-enclosed areas of research and writing with their own journals and publishers; and they have not been taken particularly seriously by mainstream social scientists, historians and political theorists. There

[3] See for example, Emma Tarlo, *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1996; Arundhati Virmani, 'National Symbols under Colonial Domination; The Nationalization of the Indian Flag, March–August 1923', *Past and Present*, No. 164, August 1999, pp. 169–97; Sadan Jha, 'Charka, 'Dear Forgotten Friend' of Widows: Reading the Erasure of a Symbol,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 28, 10 July 2004; Lisa Trivedi, *Clothing Gandhi's Nation: Homespun and Modern India*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2007.

[4] See for example, Ashis Nandy, 'Gandhi after Gandhi', *The Little Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May 2000; the various essays in Debjani Ganguly and John Docker (eds), *Rethinking Gandhi and Nonviolent Relationality: Global Perspectives*, Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi 2009; Faisal Devji, *The Impossible Indian: Gandhi and the Temptation of Violence*, Hurst, London 2012.

are similar institutions of this sort in other western countries, and in some cases—particularly in the UK and Australia—scholars in these departments have provided a rather different view, as we shall see later in this paper. So, what do the most influential writers in this field say about the Indian nationalist movement led by Gandhi?

Gandhi's techniques were studied in the West from the second decade of the twentieth century onwards. The first such person was Clarence Case, an American theologian who in 1923 sought to place Gandhi's nonviolence within a long religious tradition, eastern and western, bringing out what he saw as Gandhi's original contribution to the method.[5] Richard Gregg, a Quaker lawyer who spent some years in India observing the Gandhian movement at first hand between 1925 and 1930, focused on the recent history of the use of nonviolent techniques in political protest, and analysed in detail the way that Gandhi deployed the method.[6] Krishnalal Shridharani had participated in Gandhi's salt march in 1930, and subsequently migrated to the USA where he became a promoter of Gandhi's methods for the emerging civil rights movement. He published his manual of the method in 1939.[7] After Gandhi's death, Joan Bondurant, a political scientist at Berkeley, wrote an influential book that examined five of Gandhi's campaign that he had led between 1918 and 1930, placing them within Hindu and western political traditions and emphasising their rationale as an important modern 'philosophy of action'.[8] This was all consolidated by Gene Sharp, a conscientious objector against the Korean War (for which he was jailed) who went on to study Gandhi, and who then became the most prolific writer on this theme from the late 1960s. His first book, published in 1960, was titled *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power*.[9] He provided case studies of two of Gandhi's

[5] Clarence Marsh Case, *Non-Violent Coercion: A Study in Methods of Social Pressure*, The Century Co., New York 1923.
[6] Richard B. Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, James Clark, London 1959 (1st ed. 1935).
[7] Krishnalal Shridharani, *War without Violence: A Study of Gandhi's Method and its Accomplishments*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York 1939.
[8] Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1958.
[9] Gene Sharp, *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad 1960.

campaigns—Champaran in 1917 and Civil Disobedience 1930–31—and also his fast in Delhi in January 1948. The 1930–31 movement provided the highlight, with four of the seven chapters in the book being on this—with the other two subjects being given one chapter each. This set a pattern for his subsequent writing, with the focus being on an analysis of the strategy that Gandhi adopted, with lessons being learnt for application in future struggles. It is thus an activist-oriented literature. Not being works of history, they made no attempt to analyse the way that the Indian national movement developed in its long course under Gandhi's leadership over three decades.

This emphasis on the strategy of protest is found particularly strongly in the seminal book that Gene Sharp subsequently went on to write—a massive study, 902 pages in length, of 'the politics of nonviolent action'. This was published first in 1973 and it is still in print. In it, Sharp has multiple references to Gandhi and his techniques—requiring for reference a page and a half in the index.[10] The book examines Gandhian methods in an exhaustive way, with almost every protest technique endorsed by Gandhi over the course of his life being mentioned at some point. In his second chapter, Sharp provides a history of nonviolent resistance that begins with a brief glance at the 'pre-Gandhian' development of the method from the eighteenth to the early decades of the twentieth century, before going on to examine Gandhi and the Indian nationalist movement. He provides brief sketches of two Gandhian satyagrahas—Vaikom in 1924–25 and the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930–31. In the latter section, he analyses only that element of the protest that involved breaking the salt laws, namely the Salt Satyagraha of 1930.[11]

In these writings, Sharp depicts Gandhi as devising an unconventional approach to politics that operates by mobilising the power of the masses nonviolently, in contrast to the top–down form of political power that ruling elites have in general sought to impose. Many Indian nationalists before Gandhi are seen to have had such an

[10] Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Porter Sargent, Boston 1973, pp. 856–57.
[11] Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, pp. 76–87.

elitist approach.[12] Sharp also brought out how Gandhi maintained discipline in nonviolent struggles. Sharp is interested primarily in ends, arguing that nonviolent resistance is preferable not so much because it is morally preferable but because it is more expedient in both taking on an opponent and ensuring a more lasting result subsequently. This is in contrast to Gandhi, who insisted that the means were what mattered above all, rather than the ends. For Sharp, nonviolent means are important because they get better results, not because they are intrinsically superior morally or spiritually.

This set the pattern for much subsequent writing in this field. Historical examples were often cited in a simplistic manner; one that was tailored to fit the overall argument. When referring to the Indian nationalist movement led by Gandhi, such studies have tended to focus on his most notable successes and in particular the Salt Satyagraha, while marginalising or ignoring his failures. We find this the case in a very influential book in this field—Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*.[13] Besides one general chapter, this book contains six case studies of what the authors see as important nonviolent struggles between 1905 and 1981. The second of these is the Civil Disobedience Movement in India that Gandhi led in 1930–31. They chose this episode in the much wider movement because it is 'of particular interest to those interested in strategic nonviolent conflict'.[14] It is taken to be exemplary because it involved a clear-cut strategy that had well-defined goals. They claim that it mobilised more Indians in the struggle for independence than any other single campaign.[15] They argue that it above all revealed Gandhi's

[12] See Gene Sharp, *Gandhi as a Political Strategist*, Porter Sargent, Boston 1979, pp. 43–59.

[13] Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*, Praeger, Westport, Conn., 1994.

[14] Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, p. 157.

[15] This has been disputed by some Indian historians, who have argued that although the Civil Disobedience Movement was particularly well organised and focussed, it excluded many social groups that had been mobilised in the Non-cooperation Movement of 1921–22. For example, see Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, pp. 290–91.

strategic acumen, and that it was this, rather than either his charisma or the supposed benevolence of British rule—or even an assumed propensity of Indians towards nonviolence—that provided the conditions for all that this campaign achieved.[16]

In this chapter, Ackerman and Kruegler rely a lot on the writing of Gene Sharp, in particular his book of 1960 *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power*. Before describing the actual events of 1930–31, the two authors sketch out the pre-history of Indian nationalism up to that juncture. In this, many important aspects of the history are ignored or skated over.[17] In their treatment of the Civil Disobedience Movement itself, they emphasise the clarity of Gandhi's programme, the depth of his preparation, all of which was designed to prevent any violence, and the brilliance of his choice of salt as the focus for the protest.[18] While most attention is on the Salt Satyagraha, they mention other protests at that time, such as the exemplary movement of the Khudai Khidmatgars in the North West Frontier Province, the campaign to refuse land-tax in Gujarat, the boycott of foreign cloth, and the anti-liquor movement. They argue that the British were forced by the strength of the movement to offer to negotiate with Gandhi in early 1931, and that 'after a year of struggle, the Congress retained the initiative'.[19] They go on to note that the resulting Gandhi-Irwin Pact and Round Table Conference achieved relatively little for the nationalists, and the resumed civil disobedience of 1932 failed badly. Nonetheless, the 1930–31 movement had laid 'the groundwork for subsequent struggles for independence that ended in success'.[20] The last part of this chapter provides a structural analysis of the movement, in which they set out the strategic lessons that could be learned from Gandhi's leadership of this campaign—both positive and negative.[21]

[16] Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, pp. 157–59.
[17] Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, pp. 159–68. There are some elementary errors; for example, it is stated on p. 164 that G.K. Gokhale died when Gandhi was in jail 1922–24 (he had in fact died in 1915).
[18] Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, pp. 168–72.
[19] Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, p. 192.
[20] Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, pp. 192–99.
[21] Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, pp. 199–208.

This general approach continues to be seen in the burgeoning literature on nonviolent resistance over the past two decades. Not one of these studies has examined the history of Gandhian nationalism in India in depth. The movement is generally referred to in the introduction or an early chapter on the evolution of the method, with the focus being on his particular techniques.[22] Stephen Zunes thus emphasises the strategic importance of Gandhi's work, arguing: 'While his nonviolence was rooted in his deep religious faith, Gandhi was also a sophisticated political strategist who greatly advanced nonviolence as a successful method of struggle even by those who did not share his entire moral framework'.[23] For Sharon Nepstad, the importance of Gandhi lies in what she defines as the six strategies that he provided for his followers for withdrawing their consent from authoritarian regimes in a way that could bring about their downfall.[24]

The only person I am aware of in this field of study who has sought to provide a sustained critical analysis of such an approach is Bob Overy, who wrote an excellent Ph.D. thesis at the University of Bradford in 1982.[25] This remains unpublished. It was written before the real explosion occurred in the strategic nonviolent resistance literature, and its critique was of the pioneer thinkers in this field, such as Gregg, Shridharani, Bondurant, and above all, Gene Sharp. It is

[22] For some recent examples, see Howard Clark, 'Introduction', in Howard Clark (ed.), *People Power: Unarmed Resistance and Global Solidarity*, Pluto Press, London 2009, pp. 6–7; April Carter, *People Power and Political Change: Key Issues and Concepts*, Routledge, Abingdon 2012, pp. 18–19; Tim Gee, *Counter Power: Making Change Happen*, New Internationalist Publications, Oxford 2011, pp. 41–57; Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Columbia University Press, New York 2011, p. 56.

[23] Stephen Zunes, Lester Kurtz and Sarah Asher, 'Introduction' in Zunes, Kurtz and Asher (eds), *Nonviolent Social Movements: A Geographical Perspective*, Blackwell, Malden, Mass 1999, p. 3.

[24] Sharon Nepstad, *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century*, Oxford University Press, New York 2011, pp. 9–10.

[25] Bob Overy, 'Gandhi as Political Organiser: An Analysis of Local and National Campaigns in India 1915–1922', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Bradford, 1982.

nonetheless a substantial critique that can be applied to much of the more recent writing in this field, and one—moreover—that has not been seriously engaged with for the most part.[26]

Overy argues that these writers on nonviolent resistance have focused on a set of protest techniques that they attribute to Gandhi, while neglecting some key elements of his method. In addition, they fail to contextualise the strategies that Gandhi adopted in their time and place in Indian history. In particular, Overy argues, they fail to see that nonviolent action depended for Gandhi as much on constructive work as campaigns of civil resistance. For Gandhi, success could be achieved only through intense constructive work at the heart of every campaign. This was carried out by local-level activists organising a range of activities such as hand-spinning and weaving of cotton cloth, running nationalist schools, holding local arbitration courts, fighting untouchability and religious antagonisms, promoting village sanitation and agricultural improvements, improving the living and working conditions of industrial workers in the cities, and so on. Classically, such work would be centred on local *ashrams* where Gandhians lived and worked amongst the people. Such activities could be carried out by anyone, however poor and marginalised, and thus linked the middle-class leaders with the people. It allowed a firm network of local leaders to be forged who could lead protests at this level that fed into either local or national-level campaigns. Gandhi saw this as building swaraj from the bottom-up, rather than the top–down methods used hitherto by elite politicians.[27]

Overy shows how the early theorists on Gandhi's nonviolent methods marginalised this aspect of his programme. For example, while Richard Gregg devoted the last two chapters of his *The Power of Nonviolence* to the training needed for nonviolent resistance, and talks

[26] Of the more recent authors in the field of NVR-studies, only a few British scholars who are familiar with Overy and his work at Bradford University have applied his critique of Sharp. For example, see Howard Clark, 'Introduction', in Clark (ed.), *People Power*, pp. 6–7. Otherwise, Overy's work has been entirely neglected in this field.

[27] These arguments are advanced in Overy, 'Gandhi as Political Organiser', pp. 336–37.

of the need for satyagrahis to engage in manual labour and social work projects, he fails to relate these prescriptions to the analysis of nonviolent resistance that he has carried out in the previous chapters. There, the constructive programme is absent from the text. Overy also notes that although Joan Bondurant, in *Conquest of Violence*, defined satyagraha as 'a technique for social and political change' and as 'an instrument of struggle for positive objectives and for fundamental change',[28] she depicted the constructive programme as largely feeding into particular campaigns, being expendable once the issue was resolved or the movement was suspended. Her real concern was to analyse the protest techniques deployed by Gandhi in nonviolent protests, and in the end, Overy argues, she fails to bring out the importance of the constructive programme as a crucial component of Gandhian satyagraha in its own right. As for Gene Sharp, while in his earlier writing that was focused on Gandhi he mentioned the constructive programme as being important in Gandhi's whole approach, in his later magnum opus *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*,[29] the role of constructive work was almost entirely missing.[30]

Overy believes that the main reason for this lacuna is that these writers were trying to impress their views on western political theorists who had not only neglected nonviolent forms of protest in their analysis, but often denied their legitimacy. An emphasis on Gandhi's constructive work would have allowed such theorists to have dismissed his approach as being too idiosyncratic and 'Indian', and thus irrelevant in a western context. The main aim of such theorists thus became one of demonstrating to a western readership that there was another way of struggling and exercising power that was not violent. Because of this, there is in their work an unrelenting emphasis on nonviolent conflict, and particularly civil disobedience. This narrows the focus in a way that makes it hard to understand how Gandhi's campaigns were built up and sustained. A crucial element in mobilising people before any conflict is, Overy argues, missed in all this.[31]

[28] Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, pp. 3–4.
[29] Sharp, *Gandhi as a Political Strategist*, pp. 219–21, 77–86.
[30] Overy, 'Gandhi as Political Organiser', pp. 337–40.
[31] Overy, 'Gandhi as Political Organiser', pp. 340–41.

The other main problem for Overy is that the approach seen in such studies fails to contextualise Gandhi's decisions and actions. In his detailed analysis of the protests that Gandhi led in India between 1915 and 1922, he shows how Gandhi was constantly adapting and modifying his methods in reaction to changing political circumstances. He brings out the dynamism and sheer flexibility of the Gandhi's approach in a way that the nonviolent resistance theorists fail to do. They tend to focus on what they regard as particular exemplary campaigns that are seen to typify the Gandhian method; most notably the Salt Satyagraha of 1930. The emphasis is on acts of national-level mass civil disobedience—something that Gandhi was in practice reluctant to sanction. Indeed, he did so only on two main occasions —during the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919—which for Gandhi proved a disaster and the successive Civil Disobedience Movements of 1930–31 and 1932–33. The 1930–31 campaign—the chief focus of much of the NVR literature—succeeded to the extent it did largely because of a decade of preceding constructive work. During the other two main mass movements—Noncooperation in 1920–22 and Quit India in 1942—Gandhi adopted very different strategies. These two protests are generally absent from the strategic nonviolent resistance literature. Overy concludes that national-level campaigns of carefully-choreographed civil disobedience can hardly be taken as typifying Gandhi's approach. What we require, he argues, are studies that bring out the subtlety and adaptability of Gandhi's method. He does this in his thesis by studying Gandhi as an organiser taking decisions in particular historical situations and in reaction to ongoing events. He also emphasises the importance of the scale of different protest campaigns, whether they were local and thus more easily directed and controlled, or national-level, and thus very difficult to co-ordinate in a way that conformed to Gandhi's intentions.[32]

In this paper, the author applies the approach that Overy adopted to argue that we need to pay careful attention to the phases that Gandhian activism went through over the course of thirty years. We also need to address the issue of the scale of protests—namely their extent in area, and the width of their demands. Some of the protests

[32] Overy 'Gandhi as Political Organiser', pp. 351–53.

that Gandhi, his co-workers and other leaders led in India during these years were in limited spaces and over very particular issues. Other campaigns were for India as a whole, with very ambitious demands. Their relative success or failure was often determined by this. Given this, it is not altogether helpful to claim that important lessons can be learnt regardless of the time, place and extent of any particular movement. We need, in other words, much more historical context that brings out the vicissitudes of Gandhi's method over time and space. In particular, we require an approach that takes account of the crucial distinction between local and national-level protests; and the various problems that this posed for Gandhi and his followers. We also need to engage with something that is relatively ignored in the literature on nonviolent resistance, namely Gandhi's constructive programme.[33]

The author adds to this another critical point that Overy does not address, namely the general impression conveyed in the study of strategic nonviolent resistance that British rule was brought to an end above all by Gandhian protest. Given such 'success', why—we may ask—did violent forms of resistance continue to be valorised with such enthusiasm by so many Indian nationalists? How do we square this with the general emphasis among historians of the British Empire that Britain was so weakened politically and economically by World War II that it no longer had the will or ability to continue to try to rule India?[34] Or, with Clement Atlee's statement that his main consideration in granting independence was that the British could no longer rely on the loyalty of the Indian army after the revolts of the Indian National Army in World War II and the Royal Indian Navy mutiny of 1946, and that Gandhi's nonviolent protests had a 'minimal' impact on his

[33] Of the more recent authors working in this area of study, only Howard Clark has pointed out the importance for Gandhi of the constructive programme, going on to note that Gene Sharp focused almost exclusively on political strategy. Clark, 'Introduction', in Clark (ed.), *People Power*, pp. 6–7. Clark gained his insight in this respect from Overy's thesis, which he refers to.

[34] For example, P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688–2000*, 2nd ed., Pearson Education, Harlow, U.K., 2002, pp. 560–61.

decision?[35] Moreover, if nonviolence was so potent a force in India, why was independence noted for an explosion of the most brutal violence, when Hindus and Muslims set about killing each other so viciously? These all are, both awkward and difficult questions for those who study strategic nonviolent resistance. What we need, in other words, is a history that situates Gandhi's nonviolent method in a clear historical context, analysing both the successes and failures of his method. This is something that is attempted in this paper.

## Efficacy of Different Resistance Strategies

In a recent book that has attracted much attention in this field of study, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan have argued that over the course of the past century nonviolent forms of resistance to oppressive regimes have been more likely to succeed than violent forms of insurrection and armed struggle.[36] They have put this proposition to the test by comparing 323 campaigns that occurred all over the world between 1900 and 2006, the majority of which were predominantly violent, with about one-third being predominantly nonviolent.[37] They evaluated each movement in terms of whether or not it was a success, a partial success, or a failure. They accept that success and failure are complex issues, but decided to define 'success' as meaning: (1) the full achievement of the stated goal within a year of the peak of the protest, and (2) that the outcome was clearly because of the movement.

[35] R.C. Majumdar, *Jibaner Smritideep*, General Printers and Publishers, Calcutta 1978, quoted in Ranjan Borra, 'Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian National Army, and The War of India's Liberation', *The Journal of Historical Review,* Vol. 3, No. 4, 1982, p. 438.

[36] Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Columbia University Press, New York 2011.

[37] They accept that there is generally a mix of violent and nonviolent elements in all resistance movements—what matters is the respective predominance of each method. They chose the movements on the basis that they were well-known and have been studied by historians and political scientists, accepting that there are probably many more movements of both types in all parts of the world that were either supressed quickly or failed to gain wider attention. Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 12–15.

Thus, to take one example, they did not deem the violent Greek resistance to Nazi occupation in World War II as a success in such terms, as it was not the chief cause for the end to Nazi occupation. The campaigns that they have looked at could last for varying lengths of time, ranging from a few days, to years, and even decades (as was the case of the movement that Gandhi led against the British in India, which they record as lasting from 1919 to 1945). They usually had names, unlike occasional outbursts such as a spontaneous street riot, and had clear beginnings and endings. They found that of the violent movements, 25% succeeded, 13% partially succeeded, and 62% failed. Of the nonviolent movements, 53% succeeded, 25% partially succeeded, and 22% failed.[38] In other words, over this period nonviolent campaigns were more than twice as likely to succeed or partially succeed as violent ones. Despite this, they note, many historians and political scientists continue to depict armed insurrection as the stronger option.[39]

Chenoweth and Stephan examine the reasons for this difference. Most important, they believe, is the fact that far more people are mobilised in nonviolent struggles than in violent ones. They aim to engage as many people in the population as possible, rather than just a few able-bodied young people—normally male—who can act as armed insurgents. There is as a result greater civic disruption. Repression in such circumstances is likely to cause popular outrage and further alienate the people from the ruler. Regimes also tend to be more willing to negotiate with nonviolent opponents. Violent insurgencies, by contrasts, tend to look to external help, and this is often not forthcoming. Despite this, however, just over a fifth of nonviolent movements since 1900 have failed, and this is usually because they did not enjoy wide enough support, were not adequately robust, or adopted poor tactics. A quarter of violent insurgencies had succeeded, and this was usually when they had managed either to attract foreign intervention or gain mass support.[40]

[38] A chart that shows these percentages is provided on p. 9 of Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*. As this does not provide the exact percentages, I worked these out myself through analysis of all 323 movements set out in the appendix, pp. 235–42.

[39] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 6, 14.

[40] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 10–11.

The movements studied by Chenoweth and Stephan were those that opposed an entire regime, sought to oust a foreign occupier, or secede from a particular territory. They note that such aims are usually associated with violent resistance, while civil rights and other human rights movements are normally considered to be the chief domain of nonviolent movements. This they show to be an unjustified belief—many important and successful anti-regime movements have been nonviolent.[41] They observe that many theorists and analysts equate nonviolence with pacifism—e.g. the idea that nonviolence is adopted purely as a principled method by idealists who work on the principle that their moral stance will win the sympathy and understanding of their opponents. Such commentators regard this as a naïve and inevitably futile strategy for opposing hard-hearted, ruthless and violent opponents. Chenoweth and Stephan argue that there is a misunderstanding in all this, stating: 'Our perspective does not assume that nonviolent methods can melt the hearts of oppressive regimes or dictators.'[42] Nonviolence works rather by imposing sanctions on the regime. They argue, following the important work by Kurt Schock, that nonviolent methods can succeed under even the most repressive regimes and that success depends less on the structure of oppression and more on the tactical decisions taken by the leaders of protests. The regime does not even have to be undergoing a crisis that has weakened it, for there are many cases in which a very strong oppressor has been brought down by nonviolent methods.[43] They therefore see this as above all a pragmatic, rather than moral method.

The significance of this book is that it is the first to attempt a systematic analysis of the outcomes of violent and nonviolent movements over the past century. It builds on the findings of scholars such as Sharp, Helvey, Ackerman, Kruegler, Duvall and Schock, all of whom gradually developed a better understanding of the mechanisms involved in nonviolent resistance. Following them, it claims to provide

[41] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 13–14.
[42] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, p. 18.
[43] Kurt Schock, 'Nonviolent Action and its Misconceptions: Insights for Social Scientists', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 36, no. 4, October 2003, pp. 705–12.

a more rigorous proof of their argument that governance rests on the consent of the civilian population and that this consent can be withdrawn to powerful effect.[44]

In their analysis of the figures, they look at variations and patterns. They find that the frequency of nonviolent movements has been increasing over time, and similarly their success rate. By contrast, the success rate of violent insurgencies has declined. They also find that when the number of participants in a nonviolent movement rose above 1.5% of the population, the success rate rose to over 80%.[45] They find also that movements that provoke defections in the police and armed forces have a much higher rate of success.[46] They also obverse that there is no correlation between the ruthlessness of a regime and the success or failure of a movement—even the most brutal governments have been toppled nonviolently. As it is, the vast majority of anti-regime nonviolent campaigns have emerged in authoritarian countries.[47]

In their list of 323 movements in the appendix, two pre-1947 cases are cited for India, namely the movement against British rule that they say lasted from 1919 to 1945, and which they judge a 'partial success'. The other is a violent outbreak, that of the 'Moplah rebellion 1921–22', which targeted local Hindu landlords and which is judged a "failure". As it is, the Indian nationalist movement only appears once in the text of the book, in a brief reference to Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha of 1930 on p. 56. The choice of the period 1919 to 1945 is not therefore explained. 1919 is a fairly obvious date to choose, as it was the date of Gandhi's first all-India campaign, the Rowlatt Satyagraha. The reason for the choice of 1945 is not however clear. The final mass nationalist campaign was the Quit India Movement of 1942, and independence was gained only in 1947. If 1942 had been chosen, the movement may have been deemed a 'failure' (as independence was not won in the following year), while if 1947, the movement could

[44] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 21–25.
[45] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, p. 40.
[46] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 46–48, 58.
[47] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, p. 66.

have been categorised a 'success'. The choice of 1945 rather fudges the whole issue.

As it is, the Indian nationalist movement went through a number of agitational phases, so that it is often regarded as an incremental series of protests interspersed with periods of relative quiescence. These were:

1. Home Rule League agitation of 1917–18. Target: home rule for India as a dominion of the British Empire.
2. Rowlatt Satyagraha 1919. Target: repeal of the Rowlatt Act.
3. Non-cooperation/Khilafat movement 1920–22. Target: 'swaraj in a year'/restoration of the Turkish Caliphate.
4. Simon Commission protests of 1927. Target: boycott of tour of India by all-white commission deliberating on future constitutional reforms for India.
5. Civil Disobedience Movement 1930–31. Target: 11 point programme of 31 January 1930.
6. Civil Disobedience 1932–33. Target: democratic self-rule in India.
7. Individual Civil Disobedience campaign of 1940–41 (though 'individual', about 20,000 people broke the law, and were arrested and jailed, so it has elements of a mass movement). Target: to gain a promise from the British that they would grant Indian independence after the war was over.
8. Quit India 1942. Target: British to leave India immediately.

In Chenoweth and Stephan's terms—namely whether or not a movement achieved its stated target within a year of its end, few of these movements were a 'success' or 'partial success'. Indeed, only the protest against the Simon Commission of 1927 can be judged a complete 'success', as the commission never achieved legitimacy and its recommendations soon became a dead letter.[48] The Civil

[48] This is the view of Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, p. 308.

Disobedience Movement of 1930–31 can be judged according to such a criteria as a 'partial success', as its target was set out in Gandhi's 11-point programme of January 1930, and some of these were met to a greater or lesser extent in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931. Only if we conflate all the movements between 1915 and 1947 and argue that independence was the outcome can we claim that the campaign was a 'success'. This observation about the eight particular movements does not invalidate Chenoweth and Stephan's findings more generally —for they argue that nonviolent campaigns have been increasingly successful over the course of the twentieth century. India was a relatively early case, so this is perhaps relevant here. They also note that what they describe as 'anti-occupation' movements, which include anti-colonial struggles, have in general had a much lower success-rate during the period than movements against indigenous authoritarian regimes.[49] Also, they find that movements situated in Asia have had lower success rates than elsewhere in the world.[50] India might fit these patterns also.

Chenoweth and Stephan discuss a range of elements that determine the success or failure of movements, both nonviolent and violent. We may go through these, seeing how they apply in the case of the Indian nationalist movement.

The first issue concerns the nature of the regime that the movement opposed. It is commonly believed that it is harder to topple highly repressive regimes by nonviolent methods than more mildly authoritarian ones. Hannah Arendt stated this clearly in her *On Violence*, a book that in general sought to valorise nonviolent methods. She stated that in a head-on clash between state violence and people power, the outcome is hardly in doubt. 'If Gandhi's enormously powerful and successful strategy of nonviolent resistance had met with a different enemy—Stalin's Russia, Hitler's Germany, even pre-war Japan, instead of England—the outcome would not have been decolonisation, but massacre and submission'.[51] According to Chenoweth and Stephan,

[49] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 69–73.
[50] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, p. 74.
[51] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego 1970, p. 53.

their figures reveal that the opposite has happened, as the vast majority of nonviolent campaigns have emerged in highly authoritarian countries and the degree of repression has not determined the rate of success. Extreme repression creates what is known in the literature as the 'backfire effect', in which people are outraged by the callous violence of a regime against its own citizens, and support the opposition. This effect may extend to security forces, who are no longer willing to carry out such atrocities, and withdraw their support for the regime. Such repression also attracts international attention, and possible sanctions against a regime and support for the opposition. In the cases examined by the two authors, 88% of all campaigns were countered by state violence. However, the regime was more likely to get away with this in the case of violent resistance. In the case of nonviolent movements, the data suggested that a violent crackdown enhanced the probability of success by a factor of 22%.[52] If this was the case, then the supposed 'mildness' of British rule would have dampened rather than stoked the movement.

Was this the case? The British were in fact guilty of carrying out a number of massacres of unarmed demonstrators by soldiers. The most notorious was that of Amritsar in 1919, and this undoubtedly created an atmosphere of outrage in India that contributed directly to the strength of the Noncooperation/Khilafat movement of 1920–22. There were other massacres over the years, not all of which had this effect. One such occurred in 1922, when a British-led militia gunned down a crowd of Bhil adivasis in north-eastern Gujarat, but which was not made an issue by nationalists as it came just at the time that Gandhi wanted to dampen the movement after the killing of 22 policemen by nationalists at Chauri Chaura.[53] Another such massacre occurred in April 1930 in Peshawar, when British soldiers fired on a crowd of unarmed Khudai Khidmatgars. The authorities claimed that about thirty died, while nationalist estimates ranged from 200 to 250.[54]

[52] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 50–51.
[53] For this, see David Hardiman, 'A Forgotten Massacre: Motilal Tejawat and his Movement among the Bhils', in David Hardiman, *Histories for the Subordinated*, Permanent Black, New Delhi 2006, pp. 29–56.
[54] Sarkar, *Modern India*, p. 288.

This was against a background of brutal police lathi-charges on khadi-clad protestors at that time, with heads being cracked open and a few resulting deaths. Even women and children were not spared such treatment—to the horror of many who had until then been sitting on the fence.[55] The Quit India movement was also suppressed very brutally, with 57 battalions of soldiers being turned on crowds, with shootings and even strafing from the air by the Air Force. The government estimated that 1,060 were killed by such means, almost certainly a gross underestimate.[56] In this case, nonetheless, the violence by the state helped suppress rather than fuel the protest.

Despite this unseemly record, the British did permit a certain amount of opposition to its rule, except during the relatively brief periods when the Indian National Congress was banned, as in 1932–33 and 1942. They were slowly devolving representative forms of government on a restricted franchise at the local and provincial levels during this period. The sort of extreme polarisation that can develop rapidly due to massive outrage at murderous and uncompromising repression did not occur in general. The army and police on the whole remained loyal to the British-run state, with only a few cases of defiance of orders to shoot at or beat up demonstrators (Peshawar in 1930 was one such isolated case, when some of the soldiers refused to fire and were court-martialled and jailed as a result). The only serious mutinies were those of the Indian National Army in Burma, which was beyond the borders of India, and the Royal Indian Navy in 1946. Both of these mutinies occurred late in the day and had a profound impact on the British, as Clement Atlee later admitted. Otherwise, most bureaucrats continued to serve the British, most landlords continued to profess their loyalty, big businessmen—with a few notable exceptions—did their best to calm agitations that threatened their business-interests, while the majority of Indian princes who ruled one-third of the land mass of India remained strongly attached to a colonial state that appeared to provide the only bulwark against their subject's demands for democracy. There are thus some grounds for arguing that the movement failed to generate an explosive momentum because of the British ability to temper repression with concession.

[55] Sarkar, *Modern India*, p. 290.
[56] Sarkar, *Modern India*, pp. 295–96.

Another aspect of protest movements that Chenoweth and Stephan deem very important for success is the degree of support that they enjoy from the population as a whole. They found that when about 1% of the population was mobilised about 25 % of nonviolent movements succeeded, while when the figure rose to 1.5% or more of the population, the success-rate was 80% or over. A relatively small increase in percentage terms thus improved the odds of success to a massive degree.[57] Unfortunately, no meaningful figures are available of this type for the bigger mass agitations in India. Even at the regional level, historians have not attempted to estimate any such figures, and the obstacles to doing so are formidable. In sheer numbers mobilised, the Noncooperation/Khilafat Movement of 1920–22 and the Quit India Movement of 1942 almost certainly come out on top, and both failed in their immediate objectives. The mass movement with probably the third-highest proportion of the population mobilised was the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930–31, and this can be judged a partial success, in that some of the demands of its 11-point programme were met. There does not therefore in this instance appear to be a correlation between the proportion of the population mobilised and success or failure.

The resilience of a movement in the face of repression is also seen as being of major importance by Chenoweth and Stephan. In the best cases, resilience grows over time. The regime may target the leaders and remove them through imprisonment or even execution, and the movement has to be able to survive and thrive despite this.[58] In general, the Indian nationalist movement was resilient in this way—it continued strongly even after the leaders were arrested and jailed. Indeed, Gandhi's arrest in 1919 provided the spark for the protest to escalate. The exception to this was in early 1922, when Gandhi's arrest and sentence to six years in prison coincided with the effective demise of the movement. He had however already called off civil disobedience, and we may argue that it was this that caused much of the loss of momentum and disillusion among his followers and supporters, rather than his arrest as such. In other words, it was a tactical decision rather

[57] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works,* pp. 39–40.
[58] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 57–58.

than repression that was the chief cause here. In other cases, the reverse occurred. Most dramatic was 1942, when the arrest of the entire high command of the Congress led to an explosion of protest throughout India.

Another issue that Chenoweth and Stephan look at, and which is another element often featured in the literature on strategic nonviolent resistance is that of the radical flank effect. Some commentators argue that a radical flank that typically deploys violent methods, such as bombings, assassinations and armed insurgency, can help a nonviolent movement, as the regime finds it easier to compromise with it as the lesser evil. It is argued therefore that the two wings—nonviolent and violent—have a symbiotic relationship in this respect. The anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa is often cited as a good example of this effect.[59] Chenoweth and Stephan argue that the contrary is in fact more often the case. A violent threat is more likely to encourage the elites and key supporters of the regime to unite together to counter the threat, using force. They fear that once in power a radical group that deploys violence would attack their privileges more strongly and even threaten their lives as compared to nonviolent protestors. There is also far less room for negotiation, compromise and power sharing with violent opponents. In the case of the armed forces, they feel more comfortable in having an obviously violent opponent that they can crush without any qualms.[60] Is this true in the case of India at this time? There were throughout much of this period small and active groups of radicals organised in clandestine cells that carried out bombings and assassinations directed at British power. These were groups such as the Hindustan Republican Association that was active in Bengal from 1925 to 1929, and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army in the Punjab in 1928–29. None of them posed any significant threat to British power as such. It can however be argued that this was not their aim.

[59] Chenoweth and Stephan cites a number of scholars who have argued this in *Why Civil Resistance Works*, fn. 18, p. 246. For South Africa, see Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies*, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 2005, pp. 158–61.

[60] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 43–44.

Theirs was more a politics that sought to frighten the British, to reveal the oppressive nature of the regime, as well as to invite their own self-sacrifice for the cause. In achieving what was projected as martyrdom, they were vindicated on their own terms. They succeeded in creating a pantheon of heroic freedom-warriors who continue to be celebrated to this day—figures such as Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekhar Azad—who are often depicted on posters juxtaposed with nonviolent freedom fighters such as Gandhi and Nehru. In the popular imagination, all worked together in symbiosis to achieve freedom for India. In his study of such radical freedom-fighters, Peter Heehs has argued that their activities benefitted the nonviolent nationalists at certain junctures due to this effect.[61] At the Round Table Conference in London in 1931, Gandhi argued that if the British did change their attitude towards the nonviolent Congress, what he called 'terrorism' would come to the fore. He noted the distrust that the British had of the Congress, and went on to say: 'I invite you to trust the Congress ... If you will work [with] the Congress for all it is worth you will say goodbye to terrorism'.[62] He himself therefore appealed to the British to neutralise the radical flank by working with the Congress. As it was, the British did the exact opposite in 1932, when civil disobedience was resumed and the Congress was banned and its meetings broken up. Clearly, they did not in 1932 believe that the violent nationalists were so serious a threat as to be soft on the Gandhian Congress at that juncture. There was however one occasion on which this effect worked particularly powerfully, namely that of the Indian National Army. We may view this as a radical flank of a rather different sort to the small secret cells that operated from within India, in that it involved recruiting captured Indian soldiers to fight alongside the Japanese in their attempt to invade India. This was led by Subhas Chandra Bose, who is another key

[61] Peter Heehs, *Nationalism, Terrorism, Communism*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1998, pp. 6, 9 and 33.

[62] M.K. Gandhi, 'Speech at Plenary Session of Round Table Conference', 1 December 1931, *CWMG*, Vol. 48 p. 365. Gandhi was clearly very perturbed by the activities of the violent nationalists at this time, as he examined the issue in some depth on several occasions in London at this time. See for example his 'Speech at Meeting of Commonwealth of India League', 30 October 1931, and 'Speech at Federal Structure Committee Meeting', 25 November 1931, *CWMG*, Vol. 48, pp. 249–53 and 336–42.

figure in the pantheon of nationalist heroes celebrated in India to this day. The fear of another such mass defection within the armed forces appears to have been a major element in the British decision to transfer power in India in 1947. Here, the radical flank effect certainly operated to the benefit of the nonviolent nationalists.

The literature on strategic nonviolent resistance has in general placed much emphasis on the importance of good strategy in achieving success in nonviolent struggles. The issue here is one of agency versus structure. Some commentators, such as Gene Sharp, emphasise the importance of human will and agency in overcoming an oppressive regime. If you can get the strategy right, it is argued, success may be achieved against seemingly overwhelming odds. Ackerman and Kruegler developed this by applying twelve key principles, arguing that good strategy greatly enhances the chances of success.[63] This has been criticised by some theorists, who argue that this approach is far too individualistic and voluntaristic. They prefer to focus on the social conditions that may either help or constrain a movement, and inhibit individual choice.[64] Empirically, it has proved hard to use actual cases to prove the case one way or the other, as there are so many variables. It is rare that strategy is deployed to optimum effect. In the case of the Tiananmen Square protest in China in 1989, for example, the strategy analysts focus on particular strategic decisions and their limits and failures.[65] Others focus on the fact that China lacked a strong civil society and had a very strong ruling class, with few elite divisions.[66]

Chenoweth and Stephan argue that what is important in all this is the ability of dissidents to be flexible and innovative in their tactics and strategies. They argue that the potential is much greater for this in

[63] Ackerman and Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, pp. 21–53.
[64] For a discussion of this, see Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections*, p. 44.
[65] For example, Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, Palgrave, New York 2000, p. 426.
[66] For example, Timothy Brook and Michael Frolic, (eds), *Civil Society in China*, London 1997, p. 3. Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections*, pp. 91–119, 148–54, has examined this issue for China in some detail, bringing out the importance of both structure and agency in determining the outcome.

mass nonviolent campaigns than in violent insurgencies. The former have more diverse participation, and thus many more people acting in a range of ways, all of which adds to the mix of tactics. It allows for shifts between concentration and dispersion. By concentration is meant large numbers protesting in particular spaces. This was the case in Gandhi's Salt March, and in the occupations of major sites such Tiananmen Square, the main square in Kiev during the Orange Revolution of 2004, and in Tahrir Square in Egypt in 2011. Such concentrations make a powerful point, but they render a crowd vulnerable to repression, as was the case most notably in Tiananmen Square. Dispersion involves things such as consumer boycotts, stay-aways and go-slows and disruption in workplaces. The banging of pots and pans all though the city in the anti-Pinochet movement in Chile was like this, and very hard to counter. With dispersed action, people can participate at less personal risk. They argue that what matters above all is the diversity of forms of protest, with rapid switches from one method to another so as to throw the opponent off-balance. Diversity, they argue, always enhances the efficacy of a movement of whatever sort, and nonviolent campaigns have the great advantage of being generally much more flexible in this respect.[67]

As it was, the all-India nationalist campaigns led by Gandhi failed to dislodge the British in the intended way in the short term, and may thus be judged from the standards adopted in many works on strategic nonviolent resistance as being a 'failure'. Nonetheless, it is clear that in many important respects they were a great success. They largely destroyed the legitimacy of British rule for large numbers of Indians, and they severely hollowed out British control in a range of localities, with powerful middle-class groups that had supported the struggle coming to the fore. They helped forge a range of distinct ways of being in the world that signified a new and assertive Indian identity. They gave a boost to Gandhi's constructive activities, leading to some significant—though never adequate—social and economic changes. The ongoing constructive work also continued to lay a base for strong agitational strength in each succeeding movement. The protests ensured

[67] Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, pp. 55–56.

that the Congress could be regarded as a credible alternative government, allowing it to operate the reins of power in an effective and stable manner once democratic control was conceded at the provincial level in 1935 and independence at the centre in 1947. Congress won by far the largest vote in the elections of 1937, building on the legacy of civil disobedience at the start of that decade; and then again dominated the polls in 1946, with a popular reputation enhanced by the 'August *Kranti*', or 'revolution' of 1942. The latter insurrection also provided a warning to the British as to what might happen again should they continue to refuse to step down. Such conflagrations would in future have to be supressed in a peacetime situation in which far fewer troops and resources were available for the task, and in which publicity of atrocities by policemen and soldiers could no longer be concealed to the outside world through draconian wartime-style censorship. By 1945, few British officials had the stomach for such a fight.

## Local-level campaigns

So far we have focussed on national-level campaigns against British rule, and it is these sorts of movement that seek to replace one ruler by another at state level that form the subject of most of the literature on nonviolent resistance. There were however a large number of protests inspired by Gandhi and led in most cases by his co-workers that also occurred in localities throughout India during this period. These were on specific issues of generally a socio-economic, rather than narrowly political sort. What we observe, in other words, is a firm focus in the study of strategic nonviolent resistance on the state and the techniques and strategies that may be adopted to wrest control of it in what becomes in many respects a nonviolent *coupe d'état*. In this section it is argued that we need to pay attention also to the many disparate struggles that occurred in the localities of a country and fed into and strengthened the movement as a whole. These tended to be directed at shifting forms of local socio-economic oppression. Cumulatively, it is argued that they added up to a much more profound change than could be achieved by a transfer of power at the centre alone.

This sort of approach has been seen probably at its best in writing on strategic nonviolent resistance in studies of the Civil Rights Movement in the USA. This was not a struggle directed against the American state, but at racist institutions that were taken on locality-by-locality. From the late 1940s onwards, activists such as Bayard Rustin, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, James Lawson, and many others carried on a series of local campaigns—often focussing on particular southern cities. They represented a number of linked-up civil rights organisations, rather than an overarching national-congress type of body. It is interesting in this respect that while the mainstream strategic nonviolent resistance literature tends to focus in general on state-level campaigns,[68] the Civil Rights Movement is sometimes inserted as a case study, even though it is a qualitatively different sort of protest. This is the case with Ackerman and Duvall's influential book *A Force More Powerful*, with its accompanying documentary film. Twelve individual movements are examined in this book, and all except one are focused on the capture of the state power. The exception is the US Civil Rights Movement. Here, the focus is very local, with the lunch-counter protests in Nashville in 1960 being analysed in depth.[69] It is perhaps significant that in the more scholarly work that gave rise to this book, namely Ackerman and Kruegler's, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, no place is found for the Civil Rights Movement in its six case studies. Only when addressing a wider audience is it considered necessary to include an exception that exemplifies the nonviolent method in the US public imagination. It is as if the book has to include this to gain any wider credibility.

What is grasped here—perhaps just intuitively—is that nonviolence is expressed in its most compelling and effective form in local and particular campaigns on a disparate range of issues. In such campaigns, we generally observe nonviolent activists working with local

[68] For example, see the recent publication edited by Maciej Bartkowski titled *Recovering Nonviolent History* (Lynne Reiner, Boulder, 2013), which includes fifteen case studies, all of which are on 'liberation struggles'—as if this somehow represents 'nonviolent history' as a whole.

[69] Ackerman and Duvall, *A Force More Powerful*. The Nashville protest is described and analysed on pp. 312–28.

communities to apply people power to bring about real shifts within the local socio-economic status quo. These struggles have wider implications, in that they encourage similar protests elsewhere, so that local campaigns often have a snowball effect that cumulatively bring about a much wider shift in the society as a whole.

The argument here is that the local-level campaigns that occurred in India during periods other than during the major anti-British struggles were just as significant in the period between 1916 and 1947, if not more so. Being focussed on specific demands that could be met through concessions by those in authorities, they had a much higher rate of success than the periodic all-India campaigns. They were also far more likely to gain their objective than violent insurrections. Lists of mass protests movements and revolts have been complied—violent and nonviolent—that occurred both in British and princely India between 1916 and 1947 at junctures during which no all-India campaign was going on. They are mentioned commonly in the historical literature, and they have a name, e.g., the 'Mahad Satyagraha', or the 'Rampa-Gudem Revolt'. They are set out in full in the appendix. The lists do not include industrial strikes, or violent action by crowds of the sort that the authorities labelled as 'riots', such as attacks by one religious community on another or a sudden and brief insurrection against an oppressor. Neither does it include acts of clandestine insurgency, as these were carried out by small secretive groups who operated according to a particular rationale that has been mentioned above. They could not be classed as mass movements, even though many nationalists sympathised with them. In the case of the local-level struggles, these lists should be considered provisional—others can no doubt be unearthed by a diligent historian. However, it is believed that they are fairly representative and we can draw meaningful conclusions from it. In all, 46 local-level stand-alone movements were identified as occurring when no national-level campaign was going on, of which 34 were nonviolent and 12 violent.

The periodic all-India nonviolent campaigns that were directed directly against British rule have already been examined. There was one other major all-India campaign that was predominantly nonviolent, and that was the Kisan Sabha movement that was led by socialists and

communists in the 1930s and early 1940s. Two of its most prominent leaders were Swami Sahajanand and Indulal Yagnik. This was a movement that fought for the rights of the poorer peasantry, being directed for the most part against Indian landlords and Indian employers of agricultural labour. It was most powerful in Bihar, Andhra, Bengal, Gujarat, the Punjab, but had an impact in other regions also, and was at its height between 1933 and 1941. It can be judged to have had considerable success, as it undermined to greater or lesser degrees the local power of oppressive landlords, and in some cases gained better working conditions for landless labourers. There were two violent revolts that extended beyond provincial boundaries and which targeted the British rule directly. The first was that of the Ghadar movement in the Punjab and Bengal 1914–16, which was led by Bengali and Punjabi revolutionary nationalists. It was supressed before it could gather much momentum. The second was the revolt of the Indian National Army in 1943–45, led by Subhas Chandra Bose from Japanese-occupied Burma. It fought alongside the Japanese in an unsuccessful attempt to conquer India, and it collapsed when the Japanese were defeated in August 1945.

While it would be possible to try to compare the percentage rates of 'success', 'partial success', or 'failure' of these various movements and insurrections in the manner deployed by Chenoweth and Stephan—e.g., using the criteria of whether or not they achieved their stated aims either fully or in part within a year of their conclusion—the author does not feel that this is a particularly helpful sort of exercise, as success or failure is a matter of judgement, and though a movement or revolt may not have achieved its immediate aim, it may have had profound longer-term consequences. All that has been done is to indicate in the lists whether or not they 'succeeded', 'partially succeeded' or 'failed' according to this particular narrow—though in some respects significant—criteria. A few things become apparent from these lists. First, we find that such protests were more likely to win immediate concessions from the authorities in British India than the princely states. This difference may be explained by the fact that the princely states were ruled in highly autocratic ways, with little tolerance for dissent. The strategic nonviolent resistance literature suggests, however, that success is not determined by the degree of autocracy as such. So

there are perhaps other reasons for this difference. One possible explanation could be that until 1938, the official policy of the Congress was not to support protests in princely states as they were directed against fellow-Indians rather than the British. As it was, official Congress support for a campaign does not seem to have made much difference. Such a movement failed to achieve its immediate target even when Gandhi personally took the leadership, as he did in Rajkot State in 1938.[70] It could be argued that because authority tended to be more dispersed in the states than in large parts of British India, it was harder to attack the rule of the prince directly. This hypothesis is again not borne out by the evidence which reveals that there were in practice relatively few nonviolent movements in the princely states that were directed against landlords or other such locally-dominant groups. Most of the significant struggles were directly against rulers and their system of governance and taxation. The most probable reason why most movements in the states failed to gain their immediate targets was that the princes enjoyed strong backing from the British, even when they suppressed their subjects harshly. Indeed, the British were prepared to deploy their own troops to suppress agitations that the prince feared were getting out of hand, even if they were nonviolent. Because of this, the princes did not have to rely in the final instance on the loyalty of their own armed forces and other functionaries, and there was therefore no compelling reason for them to act in a responsible way towards their subjects. Despite all this, a fair number of such movements gained their short-term objectives either fully or in part, which shows that such struggles had a chance of going either way.

We may also examine the difference between movements in British India that were led by mainstream Indian National Congress leaders and those in which leadership came from outside this mainstream. There was somewhat of an advantage for the former as against the latter in this respect, but it was not a very significant difference. After all, once

[70] For a study of this satyagraha, see John Wood, 'Rajkot: Indian Nationalism in the Princely Context: The Rajkot Satyagraha of 1838–39', in Robin Jeffrey (ed.), *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1978, pp. 240–74.

activists had observed the Gandhian Congress leaders in action, they were likely to deploy similar tactics. This was certainly the case in the KisanSabha movement—many of its leaders had previously participated in Gandhian-led protests.

The local-level nonviolent movements were fought over a wide range of issues. The single most common was that of high land-tax demands by both the British and princely rulers. Eight of the thirty-four protests were on this. Land-tax had historically been the largest single source of revenue for the British, though by the early twentieth century it was being displaced in this respect by excise on liquor. Realising high land-tax demands often entailed considerable use of coercive methods by local tax officials. Each district was a local autocracy controlled by a Collector who was usually a white civil servant. He ran a government that was rife with abuse by subordinate officials and the police. In this respect, land-tax protests provided a focus for what was also a movement for local-level democracy in which these officials would have to conform to the letter of the law. All of these movements in British India occurred before 1937, the year in which land tax came under the control of popularly-elected provincial governments under the 1935 Act. British civil servants were now under the authority of Indian ministers, who were often Congress stalwarts. As it was, even before that date, the British had largely abandoned attempts to raise land-tax rates in the periodic settlements due to the well-publicised agitations of the 1920s—and most notably the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928, which proved a turning-point in this respect.[71] These movements were thus in effect movements for local democracy for the dominant landowning groups, and this had to an important degree been obtained by 1937.

The second most common issue—with seven movements—was that of the demand for democratic and civil rights in Indian princely states. In contrast to the land-tax movements, these were clustered in the later part of the period, with six being waged after 1937. Although not generally successful in their demands before 1947, once

[71] For more on this, see my *Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda District 1917–1934*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1981, pp. 183–89.

independence was gained at the centre in that year the existence of such movements meant that the princes crumbled quickly as their rule was no longer propped up by the British. In the end, only in a few cases did the independent government need to depose an obdurate prince by sending in the army. Hyderabad and Junagadh were the most prominent examples.[72]

The next most common issue—with five protests—was that of rights for untouchables. The first major satyagraha of this sort occurred at Vaikom in Travancore State in Kerala in 1924–25. This was over the right of untouchables to use a road that ran past a Hindu temple. It was started by local Gandhians, and supported strongly by Gandhi, who was just out of jail. The temple priests eventually capitulated in 1925, allowing untouchables to use the road.[73] This sent out a powerful signal throughout India, and most importantly it encouraged the up-and-coming untouchable leader, B.R. Ambedkar, to himself launch a series of satyagrahas for the rights of his community. The first was over the right to use the town lake at Mahad in Maharashtra, and the second and third were over the right of access to temples. Gandhi did not support the latter two campaigns, as he believed that the tactics deployed were unnecessarily confrontational. Perhaps because of this, the first protest succeeded, while the latter two failed. This caused bitterness, leading to his historic break with Ambedkar.[74]

Next, we find four cases of protest by cultivating tenants against high rents and other charges levied by oppressive landlords. They all occurred in princely states, and while two succeeded, two failed. As it is, these four stand-alone campaigns represent just the tip of an iceberg, for there were a large number of such protests that accompanied the major all-India campaigns, and from 1933 onwards this was the classic issue that was fought for by the KisanSabha in many regions of India—something that has been classed as an

[72] See V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, Orient Longman, Madras 1961.
[73] The Vaikom Satyagraha is analysed by Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, pp. 46–52.
[74] For more on this, see Anupama Rao, *Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*, University of California, Berkeley 2009, pp. 83–107.

'all-India movement' due to its geographical spread. Gandhi himself was reluctant to give his blessing to such protests, as the opponents in this case were fellow-Indians—albeit often people who were strongly pro-British and anti-Congress. The Congress leaders had thus to be wary about leading such protests in British India, so that most of the campaigns there occurred despite Gandhi, with leadership coming increasingly from the Kisan Sabha. As a whole, such protests helped shift the balance of power in rural areas, leading up to the land reforms of the post-independence period (which were however often very inadequate), and can be deemed in general a partial success.

Six other protests addressed a disparate range of agrarian concerns, such as oppressive land-tax demands in a year of harvest failure, exploitation by indigo planters, high water-tax rates, the building of a large dam that would flood the ancestral lands of peasants, and low wages for agricultural workers. Three were on religious issues, namely over the control of Sikh Gurdwaras by the British, corruption by temple administrators, and oppression of Hindus by a Muslim princely ruler. Two were on nationalist issues: the right to fly the Indian national flag in public, and the removal of a memorial commemorating the alleged mass killing of British people in the so-called 'Black Hole of Calcutta'. There was also a protest against a punitive poll-tax levied in Gujarat, and a campaign to remove the elected but landlord-dominated government of the Punjab in 1940. In these various campaigns, protestors were in the majority of cases making demands of the state at both provincial and princely-state levels. The protests provided an invaluable training in a democratic politics in which rulers and power-holders would be held to account for their deeds by the direct action of the people.

This was not how many British jurists and Indian moderate politicians saw it. They disputed the right to engage in civil disobedience, arguing that such mass protest opened the floodgates to 'anarchy'. The Indian liberal R.P. Paranjpye thus argued that civil disobedience destroyed respect for law and order, and 'all the criminal elements in the population are led to think that they are becoming patriotic by imitating the so-called patriots in their actions'. He went on to fulminate that Gandhi and other leaders were sowing seeds of disobedience that

would come back to haunt them once they tried to rule the country. Taxes had to be paid under any government, but once people learnt that it was patriotic to refuse taxes, the task for a future government would become almost impossible.[75] Indians should—rather—learn that power was best exercised through the ballot-box in elections. This argument took no account of the very slow rate at which such power was being granted (or non-existent rate in the case of most Indian princely states), the very restricted franchise (at that time mainly propertied males), and—most important of all—the many inadequacies of constitutional democracy that Gandhi had exposed so powerfully in his *Hind Swaraj* of 1909. Gandhi—following Thoreau—insisted that the right to protest, including carrying out acts of civil disobedience, was a necessary element of a healthy democracy. This was especially the case when minorities were oppressed by laws and policies supported by the majority—when the electoral system could provide no redress.

Although the author has singled out the campaigns that stood alone during periods when mass protest against British rule was in a state of temporary suspension, many of them also fed into these anti-British movements. For example, the peasants of Bardoli who refused to pay their land-tax in the very successful protest of 1928, again refused to pay such tax during Civil Disobedience of 1930–31. This helped to consolidate the power of such peasants in local affairs, putting them in a position to become the dominant rural class in an area once independence was gained. In this way, many power-struggles were pursued at the local level through engagement with nationalist politics, with some important dominant castes and communities becoming associated with the Indian National Congress. This in turn gave rise to a new politics of protest, in which those who were oppressed by such groups aligned themselves with socialist organisations such as the Kisan Sabha. In Bardoli Taluka, for example, a thriving Kisan Sabha movement emerged in the late 1930s led by the former Gandhian

[75] See R.P. Paranjpye, *Selected Writings and Speeches*, 1940, pp. 176–77, quoted in Dharampal, *Civil Disobedience and Indian tradition with some early nineteenth century documents*, Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, Varanasi 1971, pp. liv–lv.

stalwart-now-socialist, Indulal Yagnik, which fought for the rights of *adivasi* tenants and landless labourers who were ruthlessly exploited by the dominant castes that were now firmly aligned with the Congress. A very successful protest march was staged at the Haripura Congress that was held in this area in 1938, with poor and landless *adivasis* parading around the Congress camp shouting 'Inquilab Zindabad!' ('Long Live Revolution'). The Gujarat strongman, Vallabhbhai Patel, was furious, denying even that landlordism was an issue in that region, while the left-leaning president of the Congress for that year, Subhas Chandra Bose expressed his sympathy. Sustaining such pressure, the Kisan Sabha managed to gain an agreement from the Congress-controlled Bombay government in 1939 that rents to landlords would in future be a third of the crop, rather than a half, as was the case previously. This encouraged the activists to demand even more, and in some cases tenants refused to pay any rent at all.[76] This all provided the grounds for the land reforms of the post-independence period, in which land ownership rights were transferred from landlords to the tillers. Nonetheless, the tenants had to wage a further struggle in this region under socialist leadership—the Pardi Satyagraha of 1950—before such rights could be wrested from the landlords in full.[77] What this case brings out is that nonviolent methods were never the monopoly of one class, but were rather an invaluable resource that could be used to express popular demands in ways that were liable to transgress the agendas of Gandhi and many of his fellow nationalist leaders.

## Conclusion

In this paper, it has been sought to bring out the great importance of local-level acts of nonviolent resistance. Gandhi had first proved his method of satyagraha in India in the districts of Champaran in 1917 and Kheda in 1918, and stand-alone local campaigns such as these continued to exemplify his nonviolent method throughout this whole period. Then, after Indian independence in 1947 and Gandhi's

[76] For details of this, see my *The Coming of the Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 1987, pp. 211–17.
[77] Hakumat Desai and Kiran Desai, *The Pardi Annakhed Satyagraha: Adivasi Assertion for Rights*, Centre for Social Studies, Surat 1997.

assassination in early 1948, the very thing that the Indian liberals and 'moderate' politicians had anticipated came to pass—nonviolent protest became institutionalised in India. However, while for these liberals it was something to be feared, from an alternative perspective this may be considered a matter for celebration, in that they indicate that active democracy is being practiced at every level. There have been all-India protests designed to bring down the central government (as in the JP movement against Indira Gandhi), or on specific national-level grievances (as in the Anna Hazare movement against corruption); state-level campaigns, as in the movements for linguistic states in the 1950s; local-level issues, such as opposition to land-grabbing by the state to construct dams and carve out free-trade zones, the plunder of forest resources by financial concerns with the connivance of government officials, and the continuing exclusion of untouchables—or Dalits—from temples; and even personal issues, as when individuals have performed satyagraha by fasting in front of the government offices or other institutions that they have held responsible for various injustices committed against them personally. Success has of course been very mixed. Nonetheless, as Gandhi always insisted, nonviolent resistance can be a potent method to resolve disputes in a wide range of social and political contexts, from that of the state right down to that of the family.[78] This fact is glossed over in much of the mainstream literature on strategic nonviolent resistance, with its firm focus on state-level protests.

The main agenda of this literature is that of revealing the benefits of deploying nonviolent methods in capturing state power with the aim of establishing constitutional democracies. The originality of this approach lies in its revelation that this result is achieved more often and in more long-lasting ways through such means rather than through violent insurrection, even in the most repressive situations. It also reveals

[78] As it is, some of the most interesting work on nonviolence found in the West today is that addressing conflict resolution at an inter-personal level. Nonviolence in everyday life in the family and community is seen to be something that has to be learned through careful practice and daily repetition. For an example of such an approach, see Marshall B. Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, Puddle Dancer Press, Encinitas, CA, 2003.

how important is careful planning and strategy, and sets out some rules and techniques in this respect. Nonetheless, the focus on the state is characteristic of much social science and history-writing that is informed by an agenda that emerged in Europe at the time of the Enlightenment, namely that of the idea that human society is progressing slowly towards universal governance through systems of constitutional democracy. The originality of the strategic nonviolent resistance literature lies in its emphasis that this is best achieved not through the sort of violent revolutions celebrated in the British Whig, French Republican, communist revolutionary and other such traditions, but through nonviolent movements. The agenda thus becomes one of determining the optimum ways in which modern forms of constitutional democracy may be instituted in countries throughout the world. This is in many respects a worthy agenda, for it is undoubtedly better to live in a democracy in which government rests on the periodic vote of the people rather than under a dictatorial and oppressive form of government. Nevertheless, the general assumption of the studies of strategic nonviolent resistance is an optimistic one, namely that the more that people embrace nonviolent forms of resistance, the better their chances of forging vibrant constitutional democracies. This formula is a hostage to fortune. How do we, for example, relate such optimism to what appears increasingly to be the general failure of the Arab Spring of 2011 to shift power-dynamics in a democratic direction in West Asia? Or to the fact that the governments formed through many popular movements become soon corrupted or even revert to the old oppressive ways, as has often proved to be the case in the areas of the former Soviet Union?

Here we may turn to Walter Benjamin, who had little time for optimism in the writing of history. In his posthumously-published mediation 'On the Concept of History', he held that rather than being a story of human progress over time, history was characterised by discontinuity, frequent catastrophe and constant crisis.[79] Benjamin

[79] The text of Benjamin's essay is published in full accompanied with an excellent commentary in Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'*, Verso, London 2005. Thesis VII, pp. 46–47, deals with the issue of progress and the need to write a history 'against the grain'.

pointed out that those who celebrated 'progress' focussed generally on the successes and victories of states or state-building forces, as if these represented the essential history of humankind. 'Success' here had a very statist cast. Benjamin argued, rather, for a history 'against the grain'—a formula of great historiographical and political significance. It entails the writing of a history that goes against the grain of official histories that celebrate the triumphal procession of the present ruling order, which is a task that is bound up with the political project of struggling against the tide in the here and now.

While writing on strategic nonviolent resistance might appear superficially to be 'against the grain', in that it celebrates revolt against oppression, it continues for the most part to be informed, as has been argued above, by a statist mentality. Capturing state power and transforming a society through the work of a constitutional government that is responsible to an electorate is regarded as the panacea. It celebrates a form of popular *coup-d'état* while downplaying the fact that all too often the interest-groups that gain office by such means start to misappropriate resources for themselves and govern in corrupt and repressive ways. Without ongoing resistance that builds new institutions from below, there is no genuine democracy—at least not in the sense that radical critics of constitutional democracy (such as Gandhi) have understood it.[80]

From this perspective, what matters most is the ongoing process of nonviolent struggle, rather than any superficial 'victory'. In this, creating a fair and egalitarian society can never be brought about by capturing only the higher echelons of power; it is rather something that has to be continually recreated through people addressing the various problems that confront them in assertive ways, which may include protest. Successes are only provisional, and reverses only too common. In writing our histories of nonviolent resistance 'against the grain', our main agenda, the author believes, should be to record the acts of nonviolent resistance that have lit up our many pasts. They may reveal that what we are doing now in our own struggles for dignity, better

[80] For Gandhi's critique, see his *Hind Swaraj*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad 1938, pp. 31–34.

human relationships, and emancipation has continuities with the actions of many people in the past. For Benjamin, remembrance and redemption are indissolubly connected, as in theology. He argues that if we get the memory wrong, we disable present struggle. There is also the possibility that we may lose a past irretrievably, to our present loss. Benjamin did not claim any monopoly of historical understanding, or impose it on society; he understood that historical truth was not changeless, but always in flux, and it was not something that should be imposed by a state—the historian is an individual who should take the risk of being misunderstood in his or her own time. Benjamin's stress on the memory ancestors who rebelled against the status quo and were normally defeated, often killed, accords with the Jewish imperative: *Zakhor*—remember! Unlike the statist pantheon of heroes, such figures are remembered for their subversive significance, though their memories can be appropriated and tamed by the state also. Such figures are 'a source of moral and spiritual energy for those in the struggle today'.[81]

What is therefore being argued here is that in studying nonviolent methods we should remember the struggles of the poor and oppressed against the authority of the state and the ruling elites at every social level, whatever the eventual outcome. Such histories may reveal for us, the tactical and moral superiority of nonviolent methods as against violent ones. As it is, such resistance is seen at its best and most profound, in addressing clearly-defined and often very particular issues in powerful ways. It is here that we may find the exemplary figures who may continue to inspire and guide us to this day. This is true whether those people are obscure or well-known. It is not perhaps without significance in this respect that what has been described as Gandhi's 'finest hour' occurred when he was putting his life on the line in a very personal manner in struggling individually for the rights of Muslims who were being persecuted around the time of Partition in 1947 and early 1948.[82] We know about his sacrifice because of his prominence and the tragedy of his resulting assassination. There were however many other such brave people in India who risked their all

[81] Löwy, *Fire Alarm*, pp. 79, 83.

[82] On this, see Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1993, pp. 139–67.

in upholding their principles at that time and subsequently. Whether or not they 'succeeded' is a matter of debate; what is important is that they reveal what the human spirit is capable of in times of adversity. Sustaining their memories, and thus rescuing them from the obscurity into which much history seeks to cast them, is in and for itself a task to be valued.

## Appendix: Movements in India 1916–47

### National-level campaigns

### Nonviolent

1. Home Rule League agitation of 1917–18. Target: home rule for India.
2. Rowlatt Satyagraha 1919. Target: repeal of the Rowlatt Act.
3. Noncooperation/Khilafat movement 1920–22. Target: 'swaraj in a year'/restoration of the Turkish Caliphate.
4. Simon Commission protests of 1927. Target: boycott of tour of India by all-white commission deliberating on future constitutional reforms for India.
5. Civil Disobedience Movement 1930–31. Target: 11 point programme of 31 January 1930.
6. Civil Disobedience 1932–33. Target: democratic self-rule in India.
7. Kisan Sabha Movement in Bihar, Andhra, Bengal, Gujarat, the Punjab, and elsewhere 1933–41. Leadership: Swami Sahajanand, Indulal Yagnik, and socialists and communists. Target: abolition of landlordism and improvement of working conditions for agrarian labourers.
8. Individual Civil Disobedience campaign of 1940–41 (though 'individual', about 20,000 people broke the law, and were arrested and jailed). Target: British promise to grant Indian independence after war was over.
9. Quit India 1942. Target: British to leave India immediately.

### Violent

1. Ghadar movement in the Punjab and Bengal 1914–16. Leadership: Bengali and Punjabi revolutionary nationalists. Target: British to leave India.
2. Indian National Army in 1943–45. Leadership: Subhas Chandra Bose. Target: winning power in India.

**Local-level stand-alone campaigns**

Note: These were the protests that occurred when there was no national-level Indian National Congress campaign going on. 'Success', 'partial success' or 'failure' is judged according to the criteria of whether or not a protest achieved its stated target within a year of its conclusion. In the longer term, the target may have been met, or the protest may have had other consequences—e.g., the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny of 1946 failed to gain its stated target in the short term, but certainly had an impact on the British decision to relinquish rule in 1947.

**Nonviolent**

1. Bijolia movement in Mewar State, Rajasthan 1916–22. Leadership: Vijay Singh Pathik and other local nationalists. Target: high land taxes. Success.
2. Champaran Satyagraha in Bihar 1917. Leadership: Gandhi. Target: British indigo planters. Success.
3. Kheda Satyagraha in British Gujarat 1918. Leadership: Gandhi. Target: remission of land tax for that year. Partial success.
4. Akali Movement in the Punjab 1920–23. Leadership: Akali Dal Sikhs. Target: popular control of Sikh Gurdwaras. Success.
5. Mulshi Satyagraha in Maharashtra 1920–24. Leadership: local Gandhian Congress. Target: prevention of building of a big dam. Failure.
6. Nagpur Flag Satyagraha in Maharashtra 1923. Leadership: prominent nationalists (not Gandhi). Target: permission to fly Indian national flag in public. Success.
7. Borsad Satyagraha in British Gujarat 1923. Leadership: local Congress under Vallabhbhai Patel. Target: removal of punitive poll tax imposed by British. Success.
8. Tarakeswar Satyagraha in Bengal 1924. Leadership: local Congress under C.R. Das. Target: corruption in a local temple. Partial success.
9. Petlad Satyagraha in Baroda State of Gujarat 1924. Leadership: Baroda state nationalist. Target: lowering of land-tax hike. Failure.
10. Water-rate protest in the Punjab 1924–25. Leadership: local Congress. Target: cancellation of hike in water rate. Success.

11. Vaikom Satyagraha in Travancore State of Kerala 1924–25. Leadership: local Gandhians. Target: allowing untouchables to use a road near a Hindu temple. Partial success.

12. Neemuchana protest in Alwar State, Rajasthan in 1925. Leadership: local peasants. Target: lowering of land-tax hike. Failure.

13. Mahad Satyagraha in Maharashtra 1927. Leadership: B.R. Ambedkar. Target: allowing untouchables to use a reservoir. Success.

14. Kisan movement in princely states of Rajasthan 1920–28. Leader: local nationalists. Target: oppression by landlords. Failure.

15. Bardoli Satyagraha in Gujarat 1928. Leadership: local Congress under Vallabhbhai Patel. Target: lowering of land-tax hike. Success.

16. Peasant protests in six districts of the central Punjab 1928. Leadership: local Congress. Target: remissions in land-tax and water-rates. Success.

17. Punjab princely state agitations, particularly in the states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, and Faridkot 1928–35. Leadership: Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal. Target: oppression in princely state and demand for civil and democratic rights. Failure.

18. Coastal Andhra in 1928–29. Leadership: local Congress. Target: lowering hike in land-tax. Failure.

19. Pune Satyagraha in Maharashtra 1929. Leadership: B.R. Ambedkar. Target: allowing untouchables to use Parvati Temple. Failure.

20. Nasik Satyagraha in Maharashtra 1930. Leadership: B.R. Ambedkar. Target: allowing untouchables access to Hindu temples. Failure.

21. Guruvayur temple satyagraha in Malabar District in Kerala in 1931–32. Leadership: local Congress. Target: access to temple for untouchables. Partial success.

22. Peasant protest in Sikar estate of Jaipur State 1935. Leadership: local peasants. Target: ending oppression by the jagirdar. Success.

23. Peasant protest in Lyallpur district of the Punjab 1933–35. Leadership: Zamindar League. Target: reduction in land-tax. Success.

24. Rent-protest in the Garo Hills in 1937–38. Leadership: Moni Singh. Target: demand for reduction in rents paid to landlords. Success.

25. Mysore State in 1937–39. Leadership: Mysore State Congress and Non-Brahman Movement. Target: recognition of opposition parties and popular government. Partial success.

26. Rajkot Satyagraha in Gujarat 1938. Leadership: Gandhi. Target: popular government in an Indian princely state. Failure.

27. Travancore State protest in Kerala in 1938–39. Leadership: Travancore State Congress. Target: democratic rule. Failure.

28. Peasant protests in princely states of Orissa in 1938–39, including the Dhenkanal Satyagraha of 1938. Leadership: local Congress, including Congress socialists. Target: lowering taxes and ending oppression by princely rulers. Partial success.

29. Hyderabad Satyagraha in Andhra 1939. Two elements: (1) leadership: RSS, Hindu Mahasabha, Arya Samaj with target of 'religious freedom' for Hindus in a Muslim-ruled princely state; and (2) leadership: Hyderabad State Congress with target of democratic rule in the state. Failure.

30. Khaksar agitation in Punjab 1940. Leadership: Mashriqi. Target: change of provincial government. Failure.

31. Calcutta Satyagraha in Bengal in 1940. Leadership: Subhas Chandra Bose. Target: removal of memorial to British victims of the alleged 'Black Hole' massacre. Success.

32. Varli movement in Umbargaon and Dahuna Talukas of Thana District in Maharashtra 1944–46. Leadership: local Kisan Sabha. Target: fair wages for agricultural labourers. Success.

33. Tebhaga Movement in Bengal in 1946–47. Leadership: Bengal Kisan Sabha. Target: two-thirds share of the crops to be kept by tenant cultivators. Failure.

34. Quit Kashmir movement 1946–47. Leadership: Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference. Target: end of rule of Maharaja. Success.

**Violent**

1. Adivasi rebellion in Orissa and Chhota Nagpur 1914–15. Leadership: local adivasis. Target: independence for adivasis. Failure.

2. Santal rising in Mayurbhanj, Bengal 1917. Leadership: local adivasis. Target: opposition to labour recruitment for the British army. Failure.

3. Thadoe Kuki revolt in Manipur 1917–19. Leadership: local adivasis. Target: British oppression. Failure.

4. Rampa-Gudem Revolt in Andhra 1922–24. Leader: Alluri Sitarama Raju. Target: oppressive forest laws and exploitation by moneylenders. Failure.

5. Revolt in Kashmir State in mid-1931. Leadership: National Conference. Target: demand for democratic rule. Failure.

6. Mass uprising in Pudukottah State of Tamil Nadu in mid-1931. Leadership: no clear leadership. Target: opposition to new taxes. Partial success.

7. Anti-moneylender insurgency in coastal Andhra in September 1931. Leadership: local peasants. Failure.

8. Risings by adivasis in princely states of Orissa in late 1930s. Leadership: socialists and communists. Target: oppression by rulers. Failure.

9. Street riots in Calcutta 1945–46. Leadership: Forward Bloc and communists. Target: release of Indian National Army prisoners. Partial success.

10. Telengana Movement in Hyderabad State 1946–48. Leadership: communists. Target: end to oppression by landlords and the rule of the Nizam. Partial success.

11. Punnapra-Vyalar rising in Travancore State in 1946. Leadership: communists. Failure.

12. Royal Indian Navy mutiny, largely focused on Bombay but spreading to some other naval ports in 1946. Leadership: Indian naval crew members. Target: end to racial discrimination in the navy and better pay and work-conditions. Failure.