CHAPTER - VI

Quit India Movement
The Quit India Movement of 1942 represented a Milestone in the long drawn struggle for freedom and marked a significant change from non-violent methods to a tumultuous revolutionary movement, which called for quick, brave and fervent action and heavy sacrifices on the part of the nationally motivated younger generation. Greater in intensity and dimension than the first war of Independence, the movement of 1942 virtually shook the roots of the British Raj and convinced the rules of the futility and unfeasibility of continuing their stronghold over this vast, resurgent and seething subcontinent.1 It was the last, and undoubtedly, the bitterest, fight for freedom ever waged against the British in India. It was a clear to discerning eyes that Gandhiji's policy of non-violence and non-co-operation had outlived its utility for the achievement of Independence and was no longer popular with the Indian nationalists who were convinced that more radical and revolutionary methods were needed in the changed circumstances to achieve their goal.

The failure of the Cripp’s Mission gave a new turn to the Indian political situation. The Indian National Congress steadily prepared for an ultimate and desperate struggle which suddenly broke out in August 1942. The British authorities were also equally determined to deal with the situation with a strong hand. The war situation posed a great danger to the security of India, and hence the British Government took drastic steps to maintain law and

---

1 P.N. Chopra (Ed.) Quit India Movement: British Secret Documents (New Delhi 1986) P - 104.
order in the country. Mahatma Gandhi also advocated mass action to drive the British out of India. He believed that if the call to Quit India was given through agitation, the British Government might, out of fear, come to terms with the Indian. So arrangements were made by Gandhiji for drafting a resolution to that effect which came to be known as Quit India Resolution. With a view to drafting the Quit India Resolution, the congress working committee met at Wardha on July 14, 1942 where the blue – print of the Quit India Movement was prepared. There after the All India Congress Committee met on August 7, 1942 at Bombay to ratify the resolution. The Historic Quit India Resolution was finally passed on 8th August, 1942. The proposal demanded an immediate end to the British rule in India. The Congress Working Committee further resolved that in case the British Government did not immediately declare the independence of India, the Congress Committee would launch a mass moment for independence on non – violent lines on the widest possible scale under the leadership of Gandhiji.

The provincial governments were immediately consulted in this matter. In Orissa, the Governor despatched secret report to the viceroy in which he clearly expressed his views regarding the government's preparation against the possible congress rebellion. He said :

"We anticipate that we should be able without any real difficulty to meet such situation that may arise and that military help would certainly not be
needed. At the same time there is reason to think that congress themselves may be hoping to give Orissa another prominent place in their campaign.3

There were several reasons for his conjecture. The location of Orissa in a potential war zone, absence of communal problems and the existence of a coalition ministry were some of the important reasons for which Orissa might be selected as an important place for the Congress campaign.

Gandhiji believed until the last that the British Government would concede the demands of the Indian without complicating the matter any further.4 But he was mistaken. The then viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, even refused to grant an interview to Mira Ben who Gandhiji had sent to explain the matters.5 Not merely that, Gandhiji and other members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested in the morning of the 9th August 1942, the day following the passing of Quit India Resolution.6

In Orissa, as in other parts of the country, early in the morning of 9th August 1942 all important Congress leaders including the Ex-Minister and legislators were rounded up by the police. By a notification under the criminal law Amendment Act published in an extraordinary issue of the gazette on that

3 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 2 July 1942.
5 R.C. Mazumdar (Ed.) History and Culture of the Indian People : Struggle for freedom (Bombay 1969), Vol. XI, PP. 647 - 48
day; the Government of Orissa declared the A.I.C.C., Working Committee and such other bodies within the province as unlawful. The notification further declared that the office of the Pradesh Congress Committee and other allied organisations numbering 38 in all in the province to be notified places which police took possession as quickly as possible. After the arrest of Gandhiji at Poona about twenty four Congress Workers were picked up from Cuttack and other places in Orissa. prominent among them were Gopabandhu Choudhury, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Rama Devi, Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Biswanath Das, Niyananda Kanungo, Raj Krishna Bose, Surendra Nath Patnaik, Madan Mohan Patnaik Sadasib Tripathy, Radhakrushna Biswas Roy, Manmohan Choudhury, Radhanath Ratha, Acharya Harihar Das, Sudhir Chandra Ghosh, Nilambar Das, Rabindra Mohan Das and Maulana Mohammed Athar.

As there was no opposition to the arrest of important Congress leaders or seizures of Congress institutions in the province from the people in the first instance, the government officials believed that the storm in Orissa had subsided. But it was not so. It was only a lull before the storm which broke out throughout the province with all its fury in the third week of August. The novel feature of the August Revolution was the people's resistance in the far-off villages where the government was caught unprepared and its authority could not be easily defended. Of course, without proper guidance from the congress party the rising sometimes took a violent turn and government

7 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 10th August 1942
properties were destroyed. The popular revolt was aggravated to a great extent by the unprecedented sufferings of the people during the war years owing to stringent government measures and scarcity of essential commodities.  

In the first week of September 1942, Government reviewed the political situation in Orissa and stated that the situation in the district of Ganjam, Puri and Sambalpur state to have been normal but Mob violence had been witnessed in the Coastal district of Cuttack.  

**Quit India Movement in Cuttack**

The Quit India Movement in the oldest historical district of Cuttack assumed magnificent proportions. The people of this district had been worst affected by the various war time developments and the rigorous implementation of Government’s anti war measures required to keep the seat of the provincial administration safe. The Satyagrahis of all the police stations of this district participated whole heartedly in the historic August Movement and attained success in varying degree of success. Certain factors enabled the movement to achieve a remarkable degree in the District of Cuttack. One such factor was the adoption of various measures by the British Government

---

8 S.N. Patnaik, Odisare Swadhinata Andolana, P. 173.
9 K.M. Patra, Orissa Legislature and freedom Struggle (New Delhi, 1979) P. 189.
10 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 7th September, 1942.
to repulse the possible attack of Japan. Cuttack, being a coastal district the 
Government adopted all possible precautionary measures including the 
removal of all types of vehicles twenty miles in land from the coast. This 
measure plunged the people into immense suffering.\textsuperscript{11} Another factor was that 
Cuttack had been the Capital of Orissa from ages past and as such it had 
been the centre of political activities. During the freedom struggle, it figured 
prominently as by and large all the programmes and policies were formulated 
here. Furthermore, most of the prominent leaders of national stature came to 
Cuttack to preach the messages of Mahatma Gandhi in the wake of the 
movement in Orissa. Another features which worked for giving the Quit India 
Movement a great push in the Cuttack district was the initiative taken by the 
students of Cuttack. When all the frontline leaders were arrested, the students 
in thousands took up the leadership and the vacuum was never felt. Rather 
the students became the fore – runner and the parents followed the children. 
Cuttack was the administrative headquarters of the British Government in 
Orissa and a thickly populated town crowded with a number of educational 
institution like the Revenshaw College, Collegiate School, Pyari Mohan 
Academy, Cuttack Muslim School, Victoria School etc. The students of all 
such educational institution indeed played a momentous role in creating a 
sense of enthusiasm and Zeal among the people.\textsuperscript{12} The first public reaction in

\textsuperscript{11} H.K. Mahatab, History of freedom Movement in India, Vol. V. P.44. 
\textsuperscript{12} B. Parida, Mukti Sangram O' Odisa (1803 – 1947) (Oriya, Cuttack, 1979) 
P. 53
Orissa broke out in Cuttack & this acted as the signal for other regions. The entire district of Cuttack became the hot bed of an anti British agitation and Cuttack was destined to became the centre of the movement in the province of Orissa as established by law in the year 1935.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Role of Students}

When the news of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and other nationalist leaders of the congress reached Cuttack, it created an unprecedented sensation among the students.\textsuperscript{14}

The movement in the district of Cuttack began from the town itself and the student of the Revenshaw College, the premier institution in the province, launched a strike which was followed by other educational institution of Cuttack.\textsuperscript{15} Government by that time had already declared the Congress institutions like the Provincial Congress Committee office, the Swaraj Ashram of Cuttack, the District Congress Committee at Bari, Sevashram in Binjharpur Police Station, Anugul Congress Committee, Chaulliaganj Congress office, Budhpanka Congress' office, Rahama Ashram Tirtol, Taramadan Ashra, Jajpur, Alaka Ashram, Jagatsinghpur, Panikoili Congress office, Kendupatra spinning centre and the resident of Hare Krushna Mahatab, which was the main centre of Congress activities illegal. These were seized and sealed by

\textsuperscript{14} Amrit Bazar Patrika, 10\textsuperscript{th} August 1942
the police on 10th August, 1942. All the action of the British Government to Combat the Congress propaganda shocked the students of the Cuttack. From the next day the storm of the movement burst with all force and fury among the students.

As such the banner of the movement in Orissa was first unfurled at Cuttack by the students of Revenshaw college, the premier institution of the province.

On 10th August, 1942 the students of Revenshaw College tried to organise a protest meeting within the college premises.

The next day at 1 P.M. another meeting was held just outside the Gate of Ravenshaw College. Some prominent leaders like Bhagirathi Mishra and Upendra Mahanty addressed the meeting. They criticised the Government strongly for arresting the leaders and urged upon the students to join hands with the people in the movement. They asked the students to boycott school and colleges. This was the first meeting of the Quit India Movement in Orissa and was a tremendous success despite the declaration of such gathering illegal by the principal. There they advised the government not to suppress the movement. On 10th August 1942, in afternoon a public meeting was held

---

15 Balaram Mohanty, August Biplab (Oriya) Cuttack, 1946, P. 114.
16 H. Mahatab, Sadhanar Pathe Cuttack, 1972, P. 90.
17 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 13th August 1942.
18 Ibid
in Cuttack Town hall, student leaders Bhagirathi Mishra, Pradipta Kishore Das and Shyamnanda Pattanaik addressed the meeting and promised to take up the work to mobilize the people particularly in the rural areas for a movement against the Britisher. Moreover they prevailed upon the Government Servants to resign and join the freedom struggle. To begin the programme, the meeting decided to observe hartal on 11th August 1942.20

Mean while, Surendra Nath Dwivedy returned from the Bombay Session of Indian National Congress. He arrived at Cuttack on 11th August 1942 along with Malati Choudhury. Their arrival surcharged the political atmosphere of Cuttack town with rebellion spirit.21

Since all the prominent political leaders of the movement were behind the bars, Surendra Nath Dwivedy, working as the underground leader of Orissa, guided the movement from Cuttack by sending instruction to different places.

In response to the decision taken in the meeting on 10th August, the students of Revenshaw College, observed a strike on August 11. The student leaders – Biren Mitra, Bibhudendra Mishra, Durgacharan Mohanty, Binod Bihari Das, Man Mohan Mishra, Surajmal Saha and Satayabadi Mishra took

the leadership and made the hartal a brilliant success. According to the police report, nearly 90% of the students abstained themselves from the college on that day.\textsuperscript{22} The Superintendent of Police, Cuttack issued orders for the arrest of Bhagirathi Mahapatra and Upendra Mohanty. Though former was arrested the later absconded. A public meeting scheduled to be held on that day afternoon, because of heavy down pour, was deferred to next day afternoon i.e. 12, August.\textsuperscript{23} The public meeting on 12, August outside the Ravenshaw College premises was presided over by Biren Mitra, Narsingh Tripathy and Durga Charan Moanty. They urged upon the government to release their comrades and appealed to the mass for lending their heartfelt support to the Congress Movement for the attainment of Independence.\textsuperscript{24} P. Sajal, the Secretary of the Bengal Students Federation, who was present in Cuttack in Connection with Anti – Fascist Conference also attended the public meeting. He was also requested by the public to speak on the occasion. His brief speech in Hindi was really heart touching. He demanded the release of Bhagirathi Mishra and others immediately.\textsuperscript{25}

According to the police report Narsingh Tripathy and Durga Charan Mohanty exercised consider able influence over the student and exhorted them to participate the movement. Hence Superintendent police of Cuttack

\textsuperscript{22} The Samaj, 12\textsuperscript{th} August, 1942.
\textsuperscript{23} H.K. Mahatab, History of Freedom Movement, Vol. IV, P. 62
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid. P. 63.
\textsuperscript{25} Anand Bazar Patrika, 13\textsuperscript{th} August, 1942.
ordered for the arrest of Narsiingh Tripathy. Balaram Mohanty was also arrested from Nababharat Press building Cuttack for writing pamphlet entitled "Biplabi Subhas".26

August 13, 1942, was one of the most everful days in Cuttack. The junior students of different schools such as Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Pyari Mohan Academy, and Town Victoria High School boycotted their classes and joined the movement by the call of senior student leaders.

On the same day a big public meeting was held near Gourishankar part of Cuttack town.27 Nearly 2000 people including students and teachers attended the meeting despite the propitiatory order promulgated by the police. Dasarathi Behear, Secretary of the Cuttack town Congress Committee addressed the meeting and exhorted the people to violate the Government order and stop cooperating with the Government.

A short duration meeting was attended by the student Stalwarts like Surajmal Saha, Satyabadi Mishra, Sailen Mahapatra, Radhakanta Padhi, and Biren Mitra. The meeting was followed by a procession which went round the city.28 This marked the beginning of the August Revolt in Orissa.29 Dasarathi

27 The Samaj, 14th August 1942.
29 B. Mahanty, August Biplab (Oriya, Cuttack, 1946) P. 114.
Behera and Narsingh Tripathy were taken into custody from their residence at Buxi Bazar, Cuttack.

Cuttack police authority instructed to impose prohibitory order under section 5b (2) of the Defence of India Act in order to avert troubles in future.\(^{30}\)

A group of the student of Revanshaw College Cuttack organised a Secret News Service for the purpose of propaganda. On 13\(^{th}\) August, 1942 a leaflet relating to SNS was pasted on the Notice Board of the College which was caught by the Principal and reported to the Superintendent of Police.\(^{31}\)

On 14 August some student leaders of the Ravenshaw College, held a meeting in defiance of the order of the District Magistrate and set fire to the office room of the college which damaged records & furniture’s. A few students were arrested under the Defence of India Act and sent to Berhampur Jail.\(^{32}\) Despite the arrest of the student leaders, the situation did not improve and the educational institution of the town looked almost deserted.

On 15\(^{th}\) August 1942, the students of Ravenshaw College launched a strike.\(^{33}\) It was immediately followed by strikes in other educational institution of the town. The students along with some Congress men appealed to the

---

\(^{30}\) OSA, ACSN No. 30, WWCC, Confidential weekly diary (Special branch) Cuttack, 1942 D.O. No. 2782/C S.P. Cuttack to District Magistrate Cuttack; August 14,1942.


Government servants to resign from their jobs and join the movement. Loknath Mahapatra, a clerk of Ravenshaw College, immediately tendered his resignation and joined the Congress Movement. They also appealed to the people not to pay the tax to the Government and to cut the telegraph and railway line.

Thereafter the movement spread like a wild fire to the remotest areas lying under different police stations of Cuttack district. To check the momentum of the movement government arrested the principal leaders: Banamali Patnaik, Biren Mitra, Surajmal Saha, Bibhudendra Mishra, Bijay Ketan Mangaraj and Ashok Das. Thus in the beginning of the movement young students of Cuttack played a key role in giving momentum to the movement in the whole district of Cuttack.

**Government's repressive measures**

The unprecedented success of the movement in Cuttack and its adjoining areas became a matter of grave concern for the Government. It was apprehended that if the rebellious activities of the students were not curbed it

---

34 The Samaj, 15th August, 1942.
37 OSA, ACSN NO. 30 WWCC OPAI (Special Branch) 1942, Vol. III No. 31, P. 113, August 21, 1942.
would assume uncontrollable magnitude. Therefore the government decided not to give the student a long rope.\textsuperscript{38}

Along with the forceful detention and arrest of the student leaders, the authorities tried to weaken the student agitation by dividing their group leadership. It was noticed that students leaders had affiliation to two different political groups – the Congress socialist and the communist. And of these two, the former was actively behind the agitation and had kept liason with the students through Banmali Patnaik, a close followed of Nabakrushna Choudhury who was a prominent Congress Socialist leader of the province.\textsuperscript{39}

Whereas the Communist Party of India had changed its earlier stand since the Soviet Union Joined the Allied Bloc in June 1941 and was against the Quit India Movement of the Congress.\textsuperscript{40} The government naturally decided to placate the pro-Communist student leader and win them over.

The District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police of Cuttack held discussions with the pro-communist student leaders. They were Biren Mitra, Manmohan Mishra, Ram Chandra Mishra, Ram Krushna Pati, and Sailen Mahapatra. They discussed over the policy of the communist party and

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid
\textsuperscript{39} Jagannath Patnaik, Landmarks of Quit India Movement in Orissa, (Cuttack, 1922) P. 25.
\textsuperscript{40} OSA ACSN No. 30, WWCC OPAI, (Special Branch) 1942, Vol. II, No. 46, P. 120, August 29. 1942.
its student wing. The government was partially successful in their efforts. But the leaders told them that they were opposed to the present policy of the Congress, but they would organise meetings to demand the release of the Congress leaders and the formation of a national government by offering effective resistance to the Fascist enemy.

They however gave the assurance not to violate the law and order. The district magistrate of Cuttack considered it to be prudent not to press them further and accept their stand in the prevailing political situation. The district magistrate was convinced that there was "a good deal dissatisfaction regarding the present situation" and it would not be wise to allow them to ventilate their mild demands 'there was a possibility of certain sections of the people resorting to sabotage, destruction of Government properties and defence of law and authority.' By this the Government succeeded to some extent in restoring normalcy in the town within a few days and attendance in Schools and Colleges almost became normal. Elsewhere in the district, particularly in Jajpur and Kendrapara Sub-division violent activities took place in several places.

41 Ibid
43 Home (Pol.) File No. 3/16/42 Folder I, Part I.
PUBLIC REACTION

The student agitation for the cause of Quit India Movement very much affected the public of the district. The first public reaction against the repressive action of the government was manifested at Cuttack, Chouduaar and Jajpur. Shopkeepers of the town observed Hartal, declared illegal by the District Magistrate. The first public meeting protesting the arrest of Congress leaders was organised at Gourishankar park in Cuttack town. It was largely attended by the restless student mass. Armed police guard had been posted at important centres earlier and the people dispersed without showing any act of defiance.\(^{45}\) But such an action of the government could not check the spread of people's resentment.

The resentment of the people was not confined to only passive forms of protests. By the second half of August, it was manifested in the shape of violence outrage on police station, post office, canal, revenue office and P.W.D. bungalows. Such office building and its furnitures and records were burnt. Telegraph and Telephone lines were cut in several places and choukidars' uniforms were snatched away and put to flames. The situation in other parts of Cuttack mainly in kaipada kalamatia, Bari, Kendrapada and jaipur grew worse in the last part of August 1942 where people resorted to violent means to protest against the Britishers which led to police firing and

\(^{45}\) The Samaj, 14 August 1942.
five persons were killed on spot and several others were injured. Attempts have been made to give a details information on those incidents.

**Movement in JAJPUR**

Jajpur town of Cuttack district played a significant role during the Quit India movement. The local Congress leader, students and lawyers were very active in organising the people and they held a series of meetings in the town where they condemned the repressive policy of the government, demanded to release immediate of the arrested leader in Cuttack district and the opening of negotiation with them for the establishment of national Government. The novel features of the August revolution was the people's resistance in remotest part of the villagers of Jajpur where the Government was caught unprepared and its' authorities could not be easily defended. Of course, without proper guidance from the congress partly the rising sometimes took a violent turn and the Government properties were destroyed. The popular revolt was aggravated to a great extent by the unprecedented sufferings of the people during the war years owing to stringent Government measures and scarify of essential commodities.46

Some Congress leader organised a grand rally in Jaipur town and it was decided to observe Hartal protest against the repressive policy of the Government on August 10 1942. The administrative in Jaipur was paralysed
for quite a few days, Padnabha Roy, Baidnath Das, Gopinath Sahu, Duryodhan Mahanty, Santanu Kumar Das and few others took the lead in organising Hartal. They had picketing in front of the Jaipur High School in which both Congress workers and students participated. Even though the police took the picketers into custody, the students mass remain unaffected. Santanu Kumar das was arrested on August 12 1942, while he was found of taking lead in picketing. Along with him Parsuram Das, Purna Chandra Padhi, and three others students were arrested.

On 15th August, the Congress leaders held a meeting at the town hall field where the discussion to boycott the classes on 17th August was taken. A big students procession was taken out in Jajpur town. The satyagrahis burnt the post office, the canal revenue offices and the PWD Dak bungalows. Telegraph and telephone wires were cut in several places and choukidars uniform were snatched away and put to flames. The Sub. Divisional officer arrested the students leader Yusuf Ali Khan and Golak charan Mahanty because of their involvement in Sabotaging activities. But the most wanted

---

47 Ibid.
48 The Samaj, 13th August 1942.
49 J. Patnaik, Landmarks of Quit India Movement in Orissa, (Cuttack 1992), P. 30
50 OSA, ACSN No. 30, WWCC, Confidential Weekly Diary (Special Branch) Cuttack 1942, D.O. No. 3000/C S.P. Cuttack to S.P. CID (Special Branch) Cuttack, August 24, 1942.
satyagrahi named Bhagban Sahu, an illiterate young man of village Kasapa of Jajpur. Sub-Division is worth mentioning. Moving from place to place, he very secretly involved in violent activities against the government. He was arrested and put behind bars in Cuttack central jail. His case was tried in the court of special magistrate in Cuttack, who sentenced him to twenty-nine years of rigorous imprisonment. This punishment was subsequently reduced to nine years by the Court of Appeal.51

But this was not complete account of the movement in Jajpur town. After firing at Kaipada-Kalamatia the situation in Jajpur and adjoining area grew tense. When more number of satyagrahis were taken into custody.52 On 27, August, 1942. 15,000 satyagrahis assembled at Jajpur town and proceeded towards the police station and sub-Divisional officer's office violating the prohibiting order with the explicit intention of reducing them to shambles. The procession found armed forced standing at distance about fifty yards from the place. So they halted there and from among them three congressman approached the local officer to ventilate their demands. Meanwhile the police prepared to disperse the mob even by opening fire. But due to tactfulness of the police officer that firing could be averted. An aeroplane flying over head just at the moment dropped tear gas shells and

52 The Samaj, 27th August 1942.
disperse the mob. Thus was averted a serious incident which might have ended in some loss of lives. 53

In the Binjharpur area of Jajpur Sub-Division some satyagrahis got involved in violent resistance movement. They called upon the boatman not to ferry the policeman and government servant across the river. In madhupur and Sukinda the people were strongly urged upon not to pay tax or rent to the government. The entire Binjharpur areas become the worst trouble spot of the district. The situation in the entire Sub-Division was tense. The people snatched away the uniforms of their choukidar and dattadars. Secreates societies and organisation grew to mobilize men power to burnt police station, government offices and properties.54 The Sub-divisional authorities at Jajpur was put under the change of controlling the situation effectively. A fresh reinforcement consisting of twenty constables, a sergeant and a Deputy Superintendent of police was dispatched from Cuttack to help in preserving laws and order.55 Despite the preparation so made by the authorities to meet the situation, the people simply turned a deaf ear rather they carried on direct assaults on the Government institution and officials in number of places.56

53 Balaram Mohanty, August Biplab (In Oriya, Cuttack, 1946), P. 172.
55 Ibid.
56 Gopinath Mahanty, Dhuli Matira Santha (In Oriya, Cuttack, 1985), P. 250.
At Ahiyas, a group of Congressmen led by Padmanav Roy made an attempt to set fire to a school but failed because of time intervention by a rival group led by Gokul Chandra Mahanty, a supporter of British Government. The people belonging to Congress group were changed with Lathe. Two person were injured. Consequent upon which the situation becomes critical. The villagers provide no shelter nor any help to policemen and Govt. officials while they visited their village.

On 17th August the policemen of Dharmasala police station on duty at Narsinghpur main market were insulted and assaulted by the people. This act of defiance on the part of the common people caused a panic for the proprietor of the Madhupur estate. He immediately rushed to the district magistrate to despatch armed police for the protection. He also requested the Magistrate to allow him the possession of Gun for the protection of Khamars (Granaries) from irate satyagrahis. On the same days i.e. 17th August, another incident took place at Haripur market, a few miles away from Jajpur town.

In the afternoon of 14th August, a big procession was organised in the Jajpur town. It moved peacefully upto Sub-Divisional office, where it dispersed on the request of the Sub-Dicisional officers and the deputy

58 S.N. Dwivedy, August Bipiab (In Oriya, Cuttack, 1972), P. 13.
59 Ibid
superintendent of police. The authorities were apprehensive for these
development. District magistrate paid a sudden visit to Jajpur. He discussed
over the matter seriously specially on the problems of laws and order. The
armed police conducted a flag march on the street of the town in order that
the people will be conscious about the strength of the police. Administration
only warned the people. But the situation did not improve, it rather further
deteriorated and affected in the adjacent areas belonging to Kendrapara,
Jagatsinghpur and Cuttack sadar Sub-Division. There were a number of
cases of arson and mob violence in sadar Sub-Division. People consigned to
fire the record of the Government Revenue office in Dharmasala police station
area. A group of thirty villagers under the leadership of Duryadhan Mahanty
snatched postal bags, destroyed post office, and set fire to it. They also
demolished a road bridge to prevent the police force from reaching the place.
The Government took strong action against the people of the locality and a
punitive fine of ten thousand rupees was imposed.

On the same day a group of people in Barchana police station under
the leadership of Krishna Mohan Routray damaged. Gopalpur inspection

62 Balaram Mahanty, August Biplab (Oriya, Cuttack, 1946) P. 122.
63 OSA, ASCN No. 53, WWCC, Cuttack Collectorate Confidential Section,
FCR File 1942, D.O. No. 1600 / RES Collector of Cuttack to Chief Secretary
to Govt. of Orissa, September 3, 1942.
64 Diary report and Interview with Srinath Mahanty, a freedom fighter of Bari
Ramchandrapur area.
Bungalow. This group again destroyed the records of the Balichanderpur Tahasil office and canal revenue office. Also they destroyed the articles in the excise vendor’s shop and set fire the records and furniture of the post office.

Some people of Barchana Tahasil cut down the embankment of a distributory canal near Ankula and took water to their fields without obtaining permission of the authorities. Many more anti Government activities occurred at different places of the Jajpur Sub-Division on the same days, i.e. on 22 August 1942. The local students along with Congress member of Jajpur Sub-Division arranged a serious of protest meeting and took out a procession. Several leaflets entitled Congress Bulletin were pasted by them at various conspicuous place of Jajpur town conveying the message of the August revolt to the people and encouraging them to rise against the British Raj. Moving from street to street they appealed to the people to picket the courts and government officers. They distributed among the people leaflets containing the following Congress programmes, namely to plunder the salt Golas, to make the Government servants helpless by not furnishing them with any information, to close down educational institutions, to induce the

67 Interview with Akula Nanda Behera.
68 Ibid
69 The Samaj, 22nd August 1942.
Government servants to resign from their jobs; to stop payment of taxes, to break the laws though mass civil disobedience to break the forest laws and to persuade the Government servants to demand more wages. The leader who took the most prominent part in organising the movement in Jajpur were Brundaban Tripathy, Gouranga Sahu, Krushna Chandra Rout etc.71

On the evening of 23 August about 200 people under the leadership of Gouranga Sahu forced open the Kuanpal post office and burnt the records. They also snatched away the uniforms of the Choukidars and Constable guarding the post office and put it on the fire.72

On 25th August the Police Boat House at Barchana, inspection Bungalow, the Government Traing school and canal Revenue Office at Dasarathapur were set a blaze.

Thus, towards the last part of August the situation in the whole of Jajpur Sub-Division grew from bad to worse. The situation within the jurisdiction of the Barchana police station becomes grave due to the activities of the local congressmen who were organised under the leadership of Krushna Chandra Rout.73 The district administration left no stone unturned to bring the situation under control. Determined to put Krushna Chandra Rout

---

70 Interview with Surendra Nath Dwivedy at Rourkela on 28/8/1993
71 Ibid
72 Interview with Srinath Mahanty & some collection from his Personal diary.
73 Amrit Bazar Patrika.
and other leaders under arrest, the District Magistrate with the assistance of police force proceeded from Dhanmandal to Darpan and Madhupurgarh Chasing the Congressmen who were on their march from place to place. All five famous congress activist were arrested from Dhanmandal area of Jajpur Sub-Division except the most wanted congress leader Krushna Chandra Rout.

According to the police report during the end of the month of August 1942, the following cases occurred in the Jajpur Sub-Division of the District of Cuttack.

1. Burning of canal revenue offices and public works department Bungalows-10 cases.

2. Burning of the uniforms of Choukidars - 26 cases.

3. Burning of the post offices - 4 cases.

4. Burning and looting of excise shops - 6 cases.

5. Burning of Zamindari Kutcharies - 6 cases.

6. Mail rubbery - 1 cases.

---

74 Interview and diary report from S.N. Dwivdey, a Veteran Freedom fighter during Quit India Movement.

75 S.N. Dwivedy, August Biplab, P. 16.
7. Looting of Granaries – 2 cases.  

Bari – Ram Chandrapur  

The Quit India Movement gradually surfaced in other parts of the district. The people were so much stirred by the revolutionary doctrines that they indulged themselves in larger scale arson, looting and sabotage under the inspiration of the Congress workers. Bari – Ramchandrapur areas which comes under the Binjharpur police Station of the Jajpur sub – Division was the worst affected in the Cuttack district. This remote rural region, intersected by the rivers like the Brahmani, the Kharasrota, the Birupa and their branches, became inaccessible during the rainy season. Still the local people came in close contact with congress leaders of other parts of the district. The congress culture had been deeply implanted in this locality by the activities of the Congress workers under the leadership of Gopabandhu Choudhury and his wife Rama Devi. This area being isolated and due to lack of land communication, the Government officials seldom visited this place. Therefore the local people were deprived of getting privileges from the government and hence dissatisfaction continued to be saturated. Gopabandhu Choudhury,

---

76 Ibid  
77 Sri Harsha Mishra, Op. Cit., P. 103  
78 Interview with S.N. Dwivedy  
79 OSA, ASCN No. 53 WWCC, Cuttack Colectorate Confidential Section, FCR File 1942, D.O. No. 1600/ Res of Collector of Cuttack to Chief Secretary to Govt. of Orissa, September 3 1942.
keeping with the Gandhian spirit of village upliftment, started there the training centre in Khadi, imparted basic education and other constructive programmes of Gandhi.\textsuperscript{80} Thereby Gandhi’s policies and programme became popular among the people. Under his leadership there developed Seva Ghar (Congress Service Centre), Khadi Training Centre, Institute of Cottage Tannery, Basic Training School etc. The Congress workers from different parts of the province used to come to these centre for necessary training.

Moreover these centres not only acted as the centre for training the congressman but also the places from which congress policies and programmes spread far and wide of the state.\textsuperscript{81} In course of time these centres converted into one important centre known as Bari Ashram.\textsuperscript{82} It was a prominent Congress institution in the province, which was managed by Gopabandhu Choudhury. It had aroused sufficient consciousness in the minds of the people in the surrounding areas. Naturally they were not afraid of the police action. rather they inspired the people with the spirit “do or die” for the liberation of motherland. Hence Bari Ashram became a holy place for the congressmen in the state.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{80} Diary of Biswambar Parida, Freedom Fighter of Cuttack
\textsuperscript{82} OSA, ASCN No. 30 WWVCC, Cuttack Colectorate Confidential Section, FCR File 1942, D.O. No. 5093
\textsuperscript{83} B. Parida, Mukti Sangram O Odissa 1803 – 1948 (in Oriya, Cuttack, 197), P. 76.
On 10th August, the people of Bari received a shocking news about the arrest of many prominent congress leaders including Gopabandhu Choudhury, Rama Devi and Malati Choudhury at Cuttack. More alarming news for the people of Bari that the government had declared “Bari Ashram” illegal and the police would soon arrive from Binjharpur to take possession of it. Immediately after getting this news people held a public meeting in Bari Ashram on the evening of 10th August to decide the future course of action. The meeting was presided over by Sarat Chandra Maharana, the Secretary of Bari Congress Committee. At last it was decided to depute Sarat Chandra Maharana and Annapurna Maharana to Cuttack for getting instructions if any from Bombay. The congress workers also decided not to surrender the Bari Ashram to the police under any circumstances. Gunanidhi Maharana and Mangala Maharana were given the responsibility to peacefully resist seizure of the Ashram by the police.

On 11th August, 1942 the police officers from Binjharpur police station reached Bari and tried to take possession of the Ashram. On the way, they were confronted with an unexpected situation as Gunanidhi Maharana and Malati Devi vehemently protested and refused to allow the police officer to seize the Bari Ashram. Since the police had no instruction as to how to proceed against such defiant congressmen, they waited for necessary

---

84 Interview with Srinath Mohanty, Freedom Fighter of Ersama
guidelines from the Sub – divisional Magistrate, Jajpur. On 11th August, the police officers of Binjharpur police station, after obtaining instruction arrested both the leaders of Bari Ashram. The Ashram was seized and sealed by the police. This action created a stir among the people in Binjharpur police station. As a mark of protest, they held protest meeting on the evening of 11th August at Ram Chandrapur, Bari town hall and Balipal Hat. The local people promised to take drastic revolutionary steps against government official and destroyed their properties.

Thus, began the August Movement in Bari and very rapidly it spread to neighbouring villages, such as Chandanpur, Rampur, Hatsahi, Haladi Basanta, Serpur, Dharpur etc. of Binjharpur police station.

Annapurna Maharana, who had been to Cuttack, came back to Bari, with the instruction – "Do or Die", complete dislocation, paralyse the Government machinery, start parallel administration. she met the police along with some followers and Satyagrahis and demanded that the police either release the arrested or arrest them all. But the police paid no heed to her demands. On the contrary, they arrested a few more Satyagrahis. So the

85 OSA, ASCN No. 30 WWCC, Confidential Weekly diary (Special Branch) Cuttack 1942, D.O. No. 4094/C, S.O. Cuttack to S.P. C.I.D. (Special Branch) Cuttack, September 3 1942.


87 OSA, ASCN No. 30 WWCC, OPAI (Special Branch, 1942) Vol. 7, No. 31., P. 133, August 21 1942.
situation grew tense. The congress workers started their work with all vigour. Meeting were organised at different places in which the people were apprised of the prevailing situation and called upon to join the movement. They appealed to the Government servants to resign and join with the people. They tried to rouse people's revolutionary fervour through slogans, in which the British Government were asked to return to England and Indian were to form a "Death Squad". The members of this squad were expected to sacrifice their life for the cause of motherland.

The students of the educational institution were greatly inspired by the slogan a Congress leaders. In a meeting of the congress workers at Dharpur under the leadership of Bhagirathi Das, it was decided to burn Binjharpur police station. They determined to reoccupy the Ashram and resist the police atrocity. On 16th August 1942, the Congress Ashram at Bari, which had been attached by the police was invaded by the revolutionaries who then set fire to the properties that had been attached. Organisations like Rakta Bahini (Red Squad) and Marana Bahini (Death Squad) were formed to combat the police and administrative repression. Many women leaders like Godavari Devi, Harapriya Devi, Kiran Devi and Priyambada Devi joined the movement with revolutionary leaders and reoccupied the congress Ashram. The people

---

88 Interview with S.N. Dwivedy
89 OSA, ASCN No. 30 WWCC, Confidential Weekly diary (Special Branch) Cuttack 1942, D.O. No. 3000/C S.P. to Cuttack to S.P.CID, (Special Branch Cuttack, August 1942).
became violent and aggressive after the police firing incident at Kaipada and Kalamatia.\textsuperscript{90}

On 17\textsuperscript{th} August a group of people entered into the Kaipada post office and records and letters were burnt. They asked the post master to resign. Madhusudan Nanda, who had been to Kaipada to propagate the congress ideologies took its leadership.\textsuperscript{91}

On 18\textsuperscript{th} August, several people raided the bungalow of the public works department at Rampa and damaged its furniture. They organised hartals and carried on picketing infront of government offices and court but also set fire to dak bungalows and police station, cut telegraph lines and in some cases induced upon the people to stop payments to taxes and rents. They also demolished the road bridge to prevent the police force from reaching the place.\textsuperscript{92}

Virtually, Bari was a geographically isolated village which did not allow government officials to enter into it. If any officials was seen, the villagers blew conch shell and gathered around. This symboised the unity exhibited among the local people against any police or government officials taking recourse to

\textsuperscript{90} OSA, ASCN No. 53 WWCC, Cuttack Colectorate Confidential Section, FCR File 1942, D.O. No. 1990/ Res Collector of Cuttack to Chief Secretary to Govt. of Orissa, October 11 1942.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid. 3 September 1942

the concerned village. The Bari Congress office incident involved remarkable enthusiasm and spontaneity.93

**Mahanga Village**

Mahanga was the main centre of the Quit India Movement in Cuttack. Movement under the leadership of Krushna Mohan Routray & Sachi Jena took a violent turn.94 The latter being called as "Mahanga Gandhi". With the help of other associates, looted post office, set fire to the Barchana Police station, ransacked the Tahasil office and canal revenue office and caused a sort of reign of terror directed against the authorities. Some government properties at Kuanpal and Bali Chandrapur were also destroyed at the instance of Krushna Mohan Routray.95 In the region of Ersama, the Quit India Movement reached the climax. The congress workers under the leadership of Gourishyam Nayak planned to strike against the Government in a violent way. They burnt the Ersama police station and other government buildings. The people of the locality were mobilised through active but secret propaganda. Local leaders moved from place to place organising the masses.96

On the morning of 6th September about Eight hundred people under the leadership of Gouri Shankar Nayak reached Erasama police station

---

93 Ibid
94 Interview with Srinath Mohanty
95 Ibid
96 Ibid
carrying Lathis, Kerosene and crowbar. They were raising slogans against the British Govt. The Sub - Inspector of police of Erasama police station had already taken precautionary measures to meet the situation. Yet, he found it difficult with his Chowkidar and some constables. The congress workers burnt the police outpost at Erasama and a few government buildings. While they entered into the police station, they destroyed the records and furniture and uniforms of the constables. According to the official estimate the total loss of government amount amounted to Rs. 3,500/-. The burning of the police station and the retaliatory measures of the Govt. kept the situation tense.  

According to official report some of the Congress workers of the Erasama area propagated among the villagers of the coastal village that the Japanese force would invade India through coastal region. Before the arrival of Japanese force it would be wise to kill Govt. police & officials who resorted the means for suppression of the movement.

On 11th September in a big attended public meeting at Govindpur under the jurisdiction of Erasama police station, if was decided to kill maximum policemen and Govt. officials and burn the houses, and kutcheries, police station and Govt. offices. But no such incident took place.

---

97 Interview with Akula Nanda Behera
98 Ibid
99 Interview with Surendra Nath Dwivedy.
Surendranath Dwivedy, a spirited Congress leader, circulated congress bulletins to the remote areas of Orissa operating from the underground. He sent leaflets to Panchanan Rout of Kanika. Rout distributed leaflets among the people of Kerara at Rajnagar in a weekly market. He explained the message of Gandhi to the people. His activities roused excitement among the people. The police arrested him and so tortured him that he fell senseless. He was put in Kendrapara jail as a political prisoner on 1.9.42, u/s 39(5) D.I. Rules, 1939. He was transferred to Cuttack jail and then to Berhmpur and released on 31.5.1944.\textsuperscript{100} The arrest of Panchanan Rout caused concern among the congress workers of Kerara. It was decided that the Kerara congress workers would go to other areas for continuing the revolution. Congress workers of other areas would work at Kerara. While collecting workers at Bardhia, Panchanan Rout was arrested but was released after interrogation. The police, however, kept a close watch on him. As planned, two congress workers of Kerara, namely Uttam Charan Rout of Endulapur and Govinda Chandra Das of Satvaya, proceeded to Kendrapara. They were both arrested at Kendrapara and put in jail. Hadibandhu Das came from Kendrapara to Rajnagar to continue the revolution.\textsuperscript{101} He got arrested at

\textsuperscript{100} B. Parida, Op. Cit. P. 62.
\textsuperscript{101} H.K. Mahatab, History of Freedom Movement in Orissa, Vol. IV, P. 140
Rajnagar. After the arrest of the leaders, the movement could not prolong for long. There were no violent incidents whatsoever.

In 1943, Congress activities were confined largely to the organisational sector in the villages. The members of the underground organisation were arrested. In 1945, the congress launched a vigorous election campaign. India achieved her independence in 1947.\textsuperscript{102} The spirit with which the people of the remote area of Kanika plunged into the national movement forms a remarkable chapter in the history of the freedom struggle.

\textbf{In other parts of Cuttack}

In Salepur area, Manmohan Choudhury, the Secretary of the Cuttack District Congress Committee, assumed the leadership of the movement. In Barchana Police station of Cuttack District a mob broke into the Gopalpur Inspection Bungalow and damaged the crockery and glass plates there and burnt the curtain and the visitors' book on August 21, 1942. At Barada in the same Barchana Police Station, some people forced their entry into the house of Chowkidar and burnt his uniforms. Similarly two Chowkidars were stripped of their uniforms in the Kharagpur market of the Barchana Police station and their uniforms were burnt. In Dharamsala Police Station the records of the Canal Revenue Office at Neulpur were burnt. The telegraph lines were cut between Cuttack and Bengal at the mile No. 255/12. At Dhanmandal in

Barchana Police Station several congress leaders including Krushna Chandra Rout were arrested on August 26, 1942 by the District Magistrate after receiving a confidential report from the manager of the Darpawani Estate about the violent disturbances caused by some Congressmen. It was during the Quit India Movement at Kaipada – Kalamatia in Binjharpur Police Station of Cuttack District that four Satyagrahis died and nineteen were injured on August 26, 1942 in the brutal firing resorted to by the police.

In the month of September 1942 disturbances took place at Tirtol, Balikuda and other rural areas of the Cuttack District. On September 3, 1942 the Canal Revenue Office at Nuapada and the out houses of the P.W.D. rest shed at Jagannathpur in Tirtol Police Station were burnt and the furniture completely wrecked. Another event took place in Cuttack town on September 8, 1942 when about 200 to 300 students, including a few girl students of the Cuttack Medical School, took out a procession in the afternoon and raided the Hospital Compound, mobbed a professor and the Superintendent of the Hospital and forced their entry into the Nursing Sisters quarters with a view to persuading the lady students to join them. However, the gathering was dispersed by a mild lathi charge and the arrest of Six students. The agitation and strike of the students of the Ravenshaw College continued as usual. Even though some students were arrested they were all let off after they had given written undertakings not to take part in any political activity. Several hand – written posters were found pasted on the walls in different places in the Purighat area of Cuttack town. They contained exhortations to the police
officers in the name of Mahatma Gandhi, to resign from their posts and thus help the Congress Movement.

However, some prominent Congress leaders went underground and tried to lead the mass movement through secret instructions. Jayprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Ram Manohar Lohia and others took over leadership of the underground organisations in the country in those critical days. In Orissa such an underground organisation was secretly established by Surendra Nath Dwivedy, a member of AICC from Orissa. He averted arrest soon after his return from the crucial meeting of the AICC at Bombay and remained in Cuttack town itself by deceiving the Government authorities and supplying secretly cyclostyled bulletins to the Congress leaders of the province for their guidance and necessary action. For about two months he ran his underground organisations. But finally he was arrested on 12th October 1942. He and fifteen others were involved in “Orissa Conspiracy Case” and were tried in the Court of J.E. Meher, Special Judge of Cuttack in early 1943 and fourteen of them were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The British authorities took sweeping actions against the prominent Congress leaders in the state soon after the Quit India Resolution was adopted by the AICC. Within two days they were all arrested and put behind the prison bars. So, they could not provide any leadership to the movement.
Basically, the local leaders in different parts of the province carried on the revolutionary activities and agitation's according to their own ideas. Finally, the British Government emphasised upon the Defence of India Rules according to which fifteen members of the Orissa Assembly were under detention. Nand Kishore Das, Deputy Speaker of the Orissa Assembly had also been arrested under the same rule.

By the end of December 1941 some of the Congress M.I.A's who were in jail had been released. Biswanath Das, Ex-Chief Minister of Orissa came out of the Cuttack Jail on the expiry of his full term of imprisonment on 4th December 1941. H.K. Mahatab was released from the Berhampur jail on 1st December 1941. The Congress leaders including Sri Das now decided to remain prepared to attend the Assembly session in order to repeat the coalition ministry under the premiership of Maharaj of Parlakhemindi.

In the second half of 1942 the situation in Orissa took a turn towards the worse. The danger of Japanese invasion loomed large in the Orissan sea coast where, as a result of enemy action, some British ships were wrecked in April 1942. Thus, the people in Orissa were being prepared to meet the enemy if they ever invaded the province. Even the Governor admitted; "In public Congress speakers have been keeping more or less to a moderate line

---

103 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 13 October 1942
105 Amrit Bazar Patrika 16 October 1942.
and are occasionally helpful..." However, the Government did not hesitate to take strong action against the leading Congress men if their action endangered war efforts in any way Biswanath Das, the leader of the opposition in the Orissa Assembly, was arrested at his residence in Berhampur on 30th June 1942 under the Defence of India Rules in connection with his speech at Aska.107

In one of the session of the Orissa Legislative Assembly Bichitrananda Das, Deputy Leader of the Congress wanted to move an adjournment motion regarding lathi charge on political prisoners and inhuman treatment meted out of them in Berhampur jail on 26th January 1944 in connection with the hoisting of the National Flag. The speaker did not allow the matter to be discussed on that day. However, it was taken on the next day, 2nd March 1914.

The Deputy leader of the Congress Party vividly narrated the incident in the house. It occurred on 26th January 1944 between 2 P.M. and 4 P.M. and the lathi charges were made twice on the freedom fighters. Biswanath Das, Nityananda Eanungo, Uma Charan Patnaik and others sustained grievous injuries on that day. The government had not yet come to their hospitality and the premier tried to refute the allegations regarding the injury sustained by Sri Das. He said: "When a lathi charge was made, Mr. Das was caught by the crowd and most probably he was pushed over and fell down

and no injury was done to his body as a result of lathi charge. He might have fallen down and sustained the injury. I have personally gathered the information and the Officer — in — charge solemnly declared that nothing of that sort happened. However, that unfortunate incident created suspicion in the minds of Congressmen about the bad intention of the Government. Throughout the budget session, the Congress members repeatedly raised this matter in the House in order to open up the mask of the so called popular ministry in the public eye.  

Meanwhile, the Congress leaders in Orissa had been released from detention. As the province was being administered under section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935, the question of the formation of a ministry was raised once again. In that connection, Biswanath Das in an interview on 9th May 1945 said that there was no intention on the part of the Congress to form a ministry so long as the India political deadlock continued.

The India political situation took a crucial turn after the General Election in Britain in 1945. The Labour Party succeeded in defeating the conservatives and won a clear majority for forming the Government. In the Cabinet headed by Attlee, Lord Pathick Lawrence became the new Secretary of State for India. The Labour Party had considerable sympathy for the freedom struggle.

---

107 Home Political (I) File No. 95/43, Home Secretary, Orissa to Home Secretary of India.
in India and under the changed circumstances after the war, it was certain that they would grant self-government to the Indians fulfilling their long cherished desire. Soon after its assumption of power, it was announced that the election to the various Indian Legislatures would be held in early 1946. The Governor of Orissa dissolved the Orissa Legislative Assembly by a notification in September 1945. Thus ended the existence of the First Legislative Assembly of Orissa elected under the Act of 1935 after more than eight years during which three ministers had functioned, a global war and a great national upheaval had taken place.\textsuperscript{110}

The preparation for election to the Second Assembly in Orissa began towards November 1945. In the meantime, Biswanath Das, the former premier of Orissa had been disqualified to become a member of the Orissa Legislative Assembly for a period of 6 years from 28\textsuperscript{th} August 1943 for his alleged malpractice in the election of Uma Charan Patnaik from Baligua constituency in the Ganjam district. The case was disposed of when he was in jail and he had hardly any opportunity to defend himself. Attempts were made to remove this injunction order so that he could take charge of the election affairs in the province and also could stand as a Congress candidate to the Assembly. After legal scrutiny it was not found possible to remove the ban on him and therefore, he was not able to stand as a candidate in the election.

\textsuperscript{109} N. Masrgh (Ed.) The Transfer of Power Vol IV No. 552, Wavell to Amery.
\textsuperscript{110} Orissa Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Vol. IX 1943, P. 92.
However, the Central Parliamentary Board gave joint responsibility to him and H.K. Mahatab to manage the election affairs in the province. Sardar Patel asked them to recommend the names of the candidates whom they considered to be loyal and faithful to the congress. He wrote to Sri Das: "I don't know exactly when the period of your disqualification is to expire but there must be some candidate selected for the provincial Assembly who would be willing to make way by vacating his seat for you whenever he is asked to do so. We would have escaped much of these difficulties if your disqualification had not come in the way and your services had been available to us for legislative work. I know that you will do your best even from outside, but your position as the leader of the Assembly party would have spared us all this trouble".

Under the able guidance and leadership of H.K. Mahatab and Biswanath Das, the Congress did fairly well in the election of 1946. It could secure as many as 36 seats uncontested in the House of 60. It was almost equal to the strength of the Congress Party in 1937. The final party position out of 56 elective seats were as follows: Congress 47, Muslim League 4, Communist 1 and Independents 4. On 20 April 1946, the Orissa Assembly Congress party met at Cuttack to elect its new leader. 46 out of 47 members attended the meeting, presided over by Sri Das and Mahatab was unanimously elected as the leader of the Assembly Party and was authorised
to select his colleagues. Four members were nominated by the Governor out of which three were taken according to the suggestion of H.K. Mahatab. Thus the congress party in Orissa entered the legislature in 1946 with tremendous confidence and hoped not only to adopt a comprehensive programme for amelioration of the masses, but also to see the fulfilment of the long cherished goal, the achievement of freedom.112

The ministry took the office on 23rd April 1946 and H.K. Mahatab the new premier spoke with much confidence: "Independence is not now a distant object to be gazed at like star of one's choice in the distant horizon. It is now on the point of being realised and all of us believe that we will have it before the year is out. Independence is a most urgent matter for, without it, poverty and squalor of the country can not be effectively dealt with. To me independence has no political charm, if through it I can not tackle the problems of the masses i.e., their abject poverty, disease and ignorance".113

The first task of the Congress ministry after their assumption of power was the release of all political prisoners in Orissa irrespective of undergoing transportation for life for revolutionary activities during the Quit India Movement. Within a week the release of prisoners was complete. Another bold step which the ministry wanted to take was the appointment of the former

111 Amrit Bazar Patrika 3rd June 1943
113 Indian Annual Register 1943 Vol. III. P.21.
I.N.A. Medical service, the public at the same time urged that Oriya I.N.A. men who were gradually returning home from various camps or for Burma, might also be usefully employed under the popular administration.

In the first week of May 1946, the premier also announced in a press conference that collective fines realised during the Quit India Movement would be refunded to the villagers. Accordingly, orders were sent to collectors of different districts to refund the fines to the respective persons. With regard to the damage caused to the buildings and properties of various institutions, which were taken possession by the then Government in 1942, the new government considered the question of awarding compensation for the damages. There was a popular demand for the enquiry into the excesses committed by the police and other Governmental and semi-Governmental authorities during the Quit India Movement. The premier averted any vindictive action because of so many urgent problems the country faced at that time. However he said, “We are prepared to make sifting inquiry into specific cases of gross illegalities and corruption’s wherever they may have been committed and to take suitable action against and officers proved guilty of the charges”.

The second session of the Assembly was summoned on 17th July 1946 for transacting special business, the election of members from Orissa to the Constitutional Assembly. Nine members were elected to the Constituent Assembly from Orissa and they were: Harekrushna Mahtab, Santanu Kumar
Communal problem became very much acute with the decision of the Muslim League to observe "Direct Action Day" on 16th August 1946. It led to the worst holocaust in Calcutta where thousands of men and women were butchered and many more rendered homeless. The Congress Ministry of the province had to think of prompt measures not only to pacify the people of the province, but also to give necessary help to the Oriya population in greater Calcutta area in order to rehabilitate them.

It was decided to enquire into the matter and the Government entrusted the problem to Sri Das, the Ex – Premier of Orissa who volunteered to go to Calcutta in order to see for himself the condition of the Oriya population. The Government wanted him to have a semi – official inquiry to ascertain the correct position. He reached Calcutta on 5th September 1946 and submitted a report to the Government, on 15th September 1946. He visited the affected areas, gathered information from all sources and finally concluded that on a moderate intimate 750 Oriyas lost their lives and 1500 received injuries during the communal riot in Calcutta and the loss of property of the Oriyas was estimated at almost 25 lakhs. Sri Das recognised to the problems created by riots and also recommended that they should call upon

114 Indian Annual Register, 1945 Vol. II, P. 15
the Government of Bengal to provide compensation to the families victimised.\footnote{K.M. Patra, Orissa Legislature & Freedom Struggle, (1912 - 1947) New Delhi, 1969, P. 116.}

The government took prompt action to mitigate the distress of the people. Provisions were made for the maintenance of the Riot Distressed Oriya Enquiry office at Calcutta. Applications were sent to the Government of Bengal for the rehabilitation grants. The provincial government also called for applications from the relatives of the victims of Calcutta riots who were residing in the province. Such steps by the Government restored confidence in the minds of the Oriya Community working and residing in Calcutta. Much praises were offered to Sri Das in this respect for his accurate and articulate report on the said riot.\footnote{K.M. Patra, Orissa Legislature & Freedom Struggle, (1912 - 1947) New Delhi, 1969, P. 116.}

"Noakhali Day" was observed as a mark of protest against the communal disturbances in different parts of India and this protest led to further communal troubles in some parts of the country. People in Orissan observed the "Noakhali Day" on 31\textsuperscript{st} October 1946. In Cuttack, the capital of the province, it was decided to observe complete hartal and to take out a procession in the town on that day. Two days before it, H.K. Mahatab, the Premier of the province, got a secret report that some Hindus in the town had prepared themselves to murder the Muslims. But the premier in a public meeting explained the indispensable necessity of maintaining communal
harmony in the country for larger interest. He did not like that there should be any retaliation in any place in India against the Muslims as a protest of the incidents at Noakhali. His speech satisfied both Hindus and Muslims and specially the fear of the Muslims was dispelled to a great extent and communal harmony was not disturbed in Orissa for a long time.\textsuperscript{117}

The post-war development schemes assumed much importance during the days of the Congress Ministry in 1946 - 47. Of Course, tentative proposals and the first draft of the plan of reconstruction and development in Orissa had been outlined as early as January 1945. But the plan could not make any headway that year. Much importance was, therefore, attached to these projects when the popular Congress Ministry took over the administration of the province in 1946. In the budget estimates for the year 1946 - 47, H.K. Mahatab gave a detailed account of various projects to be undertaken by the Government for post - war reconstruction of the province. Though Orissa was a poor province and its budgetary position was rather gloomy, yet the premier desired to take bold steps for amelioration of the condition of the masses.\textsuperscript{118}

With the achievement of freedom, India entered a new phase of her history. The provincial legislatures began to play a different role as the

\textsuperscript{116} K.N. Patra, An Advance History of Orissa, New Delhi, 1983. P. 276
\textsuperscript{117} Orissa Legislative Assembly proceedings Vol. II 1946, P. 960.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, 1946. P. 837.
representative institutions of a self-governing people. The special session of the Orissa Legislative Assembly, which met on 27th August 1947, might be regarded as a fitting epilogue of the legislative struggles and achievements of the proceeding two generations. The Orissa Assembly passed one memorable resolution on that very day. H.K. Mahatab, the Premier, himself brought the resolution in the House as follows:119

"This Assembly expresses its heart-felt joy at the advent of Independence and ushering in of the real Provincial Autonomy on the 15th of August 1947 and records its deep gratitude to the great national leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Gopabandhu Das (who was the father of nationalism in Orissa) and to all these workers who have perished in the struggle for freedom in the course of the last quarter of a century. This Assembly hopes that the people and the Government of the Province will take necessary steps to commemorate the 15th of August by raising monuments in memory of the leaders and martyrs in suitable places in Orissa".120