CHAPTER V

THE RESPONSIVE CO-OPERATOR AND THE POLICY OF

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The third phase of the working of the fourth Council the last under the Government of India Act 1919 lasted from 1930 to 1937. It witnessed the second mass movement, launched by the Congress, the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Congress did not participate in the elections but the Responsive Co-operators and the Loyalists did. An attempt has been made in the following pages to analyse the role of the Responsive Co-operators in the fourth Council in the context of the Civil Disobedience Movement. It is also proposed to study the role of the Responsive Co-operators in the enactment of some important legislations pertaining to the social, economic and administrative problems. These legislations benefitted the province in many ways and prepared it for provincial autonomy under the new constitution.

The movement started on 5 March 1930 when Gandhiji commenced the famous Dandi March. Within a few days the Government of India arrested him and imprisoned him at Yervada, near Poona. The All-India Congress Committee called upon the people to throw themselves into the movement. The call was responded to all over the country with much enthusiasm.

In the Central Provinces and Berar, as in other parts of the country a large number of people responded to the All India Congress Committee's call. In addition, the economic distress of the masses in the province also formed a suitable ground for the agitation. The poor harvests caused famine conditions in the Mahakoshal region and low prices and reduced demand for cotton adversely affected the agriculturists and urban traders in the Vidarbha region.\(^1\)

The first phase of the campaign lasted from January to March 1930. During this period the nationalists adopted various means to arouse the spirit of the masses such as the withdrawal of the Congressmen from the Central and Provincial legislatures, the celebration of 'Independence day' on 26 January 1930 and the organisation of processions, meetings and conferences.\(^2\)

In various parts of the province the pledge of Independence was taken on 26 January. On that day 'in far away villages and hilly areas, in the forest regions of Bilaspur, Mandla and Chanda, not to speak of the more accessible parts of the state, groups of men, women and

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children gathered in an open place in the early hours of morning, hoisted the tri-colour Flag, sang the National Song and listened to the Message of Independence.\(^3\)

In February 1930 the district Congress leaders were directed to actively participate in the movement and to spread the message of Purna Swarajya. In obedience of the directives, the district Congress leaders, held tahsil conferences and urged the educational staff of the District Councils to spread the message of Civil Disobedience.\(^4\)

Nationalists organised mass meetings and processions at Nagpur, Jabalpur, Akola, Amraoti and Bilaspur and the Tri-colour Flag was hoisted.\(^5\) Similar flags were also hoisted on the Municipal buildings at Yeotmal and Wun. The District Council of Amraoti requested the Minister for Agriculture to visit Amraoti for the purpose of performing a similar ceremony on the District Council's building.\(^6\) These activities aroused the interest of the different sections of the people and paved the way for launching the Civil Disobedience.\(^7\)

Three War Councils were formed in the province. One was in the Mahakoshal region and two in the Vidarbha

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4. The Hitavada, 23 February 1930, p.11


7. The Indian Annual Register, No.1, 1930, p.27.
region— one each for Nagpur and Barar. On 16 March 1930
Barer Provincial Congress Committee converted itself
into a War Council with Ramnarao Joshi as the President
and Brijlal Bivani as Secretary. Among the members were
Vaidya, R.R. Deshpande, Ambulkar, Purshottam, Zunzunwalla
and Krishna Rao. On 16 April 1930, a Nagpur Pradesh
War Council was formed at Nagpur with M.V. Abhyankar as
President. Among the other members were Jamnalal Bajaj,
N.B. Khare, Mahatma Dhagwandin and Poonam Chand Ranka.

On 30 March 1930, the Mahakoshal Congress Committee
constituted the Mahakoshal War Council at Jabalpur, with
Seth Govinddas, D.P. Mishra, Ravi Shankar Shukla, Makhanlal
Chaturvedi, K.R. Khandekar, G.S. Gupta and B. Patel as its
members. Every District Congress Committee was
transformed into a War Committee. The War Councils were
authorised to formulate a scheme of Civil Disobedience
and organise an effective campaign in their region.

The second phase of the campaign started almost
immediately after these preparations. The War Councils
splashed the message of Civil Disobedience by organising
a salt satyagraha in every corner of the province.

8. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
10. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
12. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
13. The Hitavada, 3 April, p.3.
On 6 April 1930, the day Gandhiji broke the salt law at Dandi, at Jabalpur, 'a huge procession...organised... (and) led by Seth Govinddas and D. P. Mishra... wended its way to the historic Samadhi of the warrior-queen Rani Durgavati, about thirteen miles from the city. There the assembled multitude took a solemn vow to carry the struggle for independence to a successful conclusion. Batches of volunteers went forth and symbolically broke the salt law... Sihora, Katni, Mandla and Damoh (also) witnessed the same spectacle. In hundreds of villages the ritual was performed with solemnity'.

On 15 April 1930, the agitation took place in Raipur where it coincided with the opening of a Political Conference in which the Congress leaders decided to launch the salt agitation and other forms of Civil Disobedience. At the conference, too, the leaders revived the ancient name of the Hindi region—Mahakoshal. In doing so, they aroused in those who heard the name 'host of sacred memories, legends and stories', and spurred them to restore the region to freedom and glory. On return from the Raipur Conference all prominent leaders gathered at Jabalpur to launch the

intensive phase of the campaign. On 20 April 1930, a large mass meeting was held at Jabalpur in which Seth Govinddas, D.P. Mishra and others read selected portions from Pandit Sunderlal’s Bharat Men Angrezi Raj, which had been proscribed, and broke the salt law. On that very day the government responded by arresting Seth Govinddas, D.P. Mishra and others. Makanlal Chaturvedi, who was staying with a friend in Jabalpur was also arrested. Ravi Shankar Shukla who was on his way to Balaghat, was arrested before he reached his destination and brought back to Jabalpur. They were all tried on three charges, including sedition, and four of them were sentenced to two years’ rigorous imprisonment under each count; the sentences were to run concurrently. V.D. Bhargava was awarded one year’s rigorous imprisonment.

This meeting marked the beginning of a series of agitations in the various districts of the Mahakoshal region during May and June. At first it was confined to towns, but in later stages it spread into the countryside. At places the movement resulted in violence. In Raipur the merchants refused to sell foreign cloth, women announced their readiness to spin, and almost all the labouring classes decided to boycott foreign cloth.

20. Ibid., pp.387-88.
In addition, the volunteers picketed the shops of those merchants who refused to support the boycott. Volunteers also boycotted liquor shops in Raipur and other towns in the Chhattisgarh division.22

In the vidarbha region, the salt agitation began in the early April 1930. Dahiinda, a place in Akola district, was selected as the centre for this campaign.23 On 9 April 1930, the first batch of satyagrahis led by V.G. Sasrabudhe proceeded from Nagpur to Dahiinda, where they were to prepare salt.24 On 14 April 1930, Abhyankar inaugurated the salt agitation in Nagpur by auctioning 'one tola of salt for Rs.225'.25 In Berar division, the agitation was organised mostly in the towns and rural areas of Amraoti and Akola. Volunteers prepared salt at Dahiinda and then distributed it for sale in towns throughout the division.26

Public reading from Bharat Ben Angrazi Raj became popular. On 10 May 1930, the nationalists launched the campaign at Akola by reading it.27 During the ensuing week, Biyani accompanied by Mrs. Durgabai Joshi28 made a successful tour of the district and

22. The Hitavada, 1 June 1930, p.9
23. Ibid., 10 April 1930, p.9.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 17 April 1930, p.9.
26. Ibid., 13 April 1930, p.7; 17 April 1930, p.10; Home Affairs, No.18/V/1930, F. R. First Half of the April 1930, p.1, NAI.
28. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A
organised meetings to whip up a large scale agitation against the government. According to an observer, 'the large assemblage of over ten thousand that gathers at those meetings over which the workers like Biyani and Mrs. Joshi speak is really a sight to see as to how this movement is now permeating the masses.'

During May 1930, an intensive campaign against the liquor trade was started at Akola. The women of the town assisted by pleaders, merchants and volunteers picketed liquor shops. Simultaneously, the agitation began to intensify again in Amraoti where Wamanrao Joshi and Abhyankar delivered 'bad speeches which made no pretence to conceal their appeal to violence.' The government arrested both the leaders. During June 1930 the merchants of the town organised a boycott of foreign cloth and the Congressmen held a number of demonstrations. The government immediately arrested the leaders bringing the second agitation to a standstill.

Interestingly, to regain their political leadership, the Responsivists also participated in the salt satyagraha. In April 1930, M.S. Aney joined the war council and offered himself for Satyagraha.

29. The Hitavada, 15 May 1930, p.2
30. Ibid., 25 May 1930, p.15.
31. Home Pol, No.18/VI, FR, Second Half of the May 1930, p.1, NAI.
32. P & M, 302/CDK, 1930, p.8, MPS
33. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
34. The Hitavada, 13 April 1930, p.7
Prominent Responsivists followed Amey. On 19 April 1930 at a meeting in Amraoti they declared that the 'civil disobedience campaign started by Gandhiji is quite legitimate and has (our) . . . full support'. Accordingly, they joined Congressmen in breaking the salt law in the Amraoti district and were among those who prepared salt at Dahihanda.

The measures adopted by the government to suppress the movement formed a prelude to the third phase of agitation in the province. The main programme of this phase of agitation consisted of forest satyagrahas launched throughout the province. The campaign lasted from July to November 1930 and got a wide support from all sections of the people, including villagers and members of aboriginal tribes of Gonds and Korkus.

Apprehending the dangers of the situation, the government tried to check the movement in its early stages by arresting its leaders - J.K. Mehta, C.S. Gupta, and Seth Dipchand Gothi. But the satyagrahas proliferated and immediately spread with great rapidity to Betul, Durg, Seoni, Chhindwara, Jabalpur, Mandla, Raipur and Nimar in the Mahakoshal region.

36. Ibid., 20 April 1930, p.10; 1 May 1930, p.7.
In many districts, the agitation was attended by serious violence. At Betul, on 19 September 1930, the police arrested some forest satyagrahis in the district and were bringing them to Borehani. As they halted at village Kundara, "about 400 persons came armed with lathis and forcibly recovered the gun and seized the enquiry papers, which they tore up on the spot. The district Superintendent of Police and the Divisional Forest Officer immediately proceeded to the spot with a police party and made eleven arrests. Returning to Jambara Railway station they were overtaken by a group of about 400 villagers who intended to rescue the arrested men. They, however, dispersed as soon as the police made as if to charge. An hour later, about 700 villagers, all armed with lathis, came to the station with the same object and hurled stones at the police party". 39

An incident which took place at Turia in Seoni district is typical of the hysterical manner in which the police behaved. One Muka Lohar and his followers announced that they would break the forest law by cutting grass at a place called Khawasa on 9 October 1930. The police at once decided to act and about a dozen armed constables with an Inspector proceeded to the site accompanied by a range officer. The Deputy Commissioner of Seoni had sent a note to the Inspector expressing

39. CPLC, Vol.1, 27 February 1931, See Appendix, p.400
great annoyance; it read, 'I had thought that Turia had been taught a lesson'. Roving around the forest, they could not find the agitationists. Seeing the police movement 'about 400 villagers and Adivasis came towards the camp as they heard that their leader, Muka Lohar, had been arrested by the police. Some people in the crowd no doubt had with them sickles with which grass was to be cut, but they were clearly non-violent and had not attacked the police party. But the constables were only waiting for the crowd and as soon as they saw this large crowd advancing towards them, they became panicky and opened fire killing three women and men and injuring about 30 others'.

Another incident took place at village Khorai in Seoni district on 8 October 1930, when 'a large body of Gonds made an unprovoked attack on a police force which was on the march homewards after dealing with an attempted case of forest satyagraha'.

The satyagraha further spread to other places in Wardha, Chanda, Bhandara, Akola, Buldhana and Amraoti districts. Thousands of people participated in satyagraha and in many places violence attended the agitation.

41. Ibid., 389-90
42. CPLC, Vol.1, 27 February 1931, p.400.
The forest satyagraha was launched in Arvi taluq in the Wardha district on 1 August 1930. The District Superintendent of Police of Wardha reported on 20 July, 'About 1200 palm trees have been cut so far in the district and the present position is that the volunteers merely go and direct villagers to cut the trees and their orders are complied with'. A typical incident occurred in Chanda on 24 August 1930 when '25 youths, who cut and stole trees from government forests in obedience to the orders of Congress, were arrested in Chanda. The small police party carrying out the arrest was almost overwhelmed by the mob. Stones were freely thrown and many officers, including the Circle Inspector, were hit'. The government, however, took effective measures to suppress the satyagraha and by November it had declined considerably. The forest satyagraha resulted in a great damage to forests amounting in 1930 to Rs.7,00,000. This campaign also affected the revenue from timber and grazing leasees whose loss amounted to Rs.8,85,564.

Apart from the satyagraha movement launched by the Congress, the Responsivists had already begun their own forest satyagraha at Gusad and Yeotmal in Nagpur and Berar divisions respectively. The satyagraha consisted of cutting wood and grass in government forests.

44. P. & H., 272/CDM 1930, Proceedings of a meeting held at Nagpur at the Home Member's Bungalow on 20 July 1930, M/s.


47. Report on the Forest Administration of the Central Provinces and Berar for the year ending 1931, p.18 Nagpur, 1932.
in defiance of the regulations. In Berar division the leader of the campaign was M.S. Aney. He believed that in launching a forest satyagraha his party would have the support of many of the poorer people in the villages of Berar who considered the regulations unduly repressive. 48 At Yeotmal Aney and his followers inaugurated the forest satyagraha on 10 July 1930. 49 On 13 July 1930 the police arrested Aney and, on succeeding days, the leaders who replaced him.

The fourth and last phase of Civil Disobedience lasted from October 1930 to February 1931, until a truce was reached between the Government of India and the Congress. This phase consisted of boycott of foreign cloth, an antiliquor campaign and the boycott of the elections to the provincial legislature held in November 1930. 50 But these offered little challenge to the government, except the boycott of elections.

The Congress, in keeping with the Civil Disobedience Movement, boycotted the elections while the Respon- sive Co-operatives and the Loyalists took part in it. To organise the successful boycott of the elections, the Congress

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48. Forest Department (Forest), 1-41, 1931, orders of Government that forest grievances be checked etc. Note by Mr. De, Commissioner of Berar, Forest, 1-42 1931, Correspondence relating to the forest grievances, M.P.S.

49. Ibid.

leaders appealed to the masses to abstain from seeking elections.\textsuperscript{51} These appeals had the desired effect. Many prominent nationalists either did not stand for elections or withdrew their candidature. In the East constituency of Nagpur all the five candidates withdrew their candidature and the government was compelled to call fresh nominations.\textsuperscript{52} In addition, a number of dummy candidates of lower castes had been put up in several constituencies by the Congress with the objective of discrediting the Council. Thus, in Jabalpur city constituency Balraj Jaiswara was put up a dummy candidate against Rai Bahadur F.C. Bose, Former Minister for Education.\textsuperscript{53}

Moreover, Congress volunteers were also determined to make boycott of elections a success by persuading voters not to vote for those persons who had betrayed the national cause, by picketing the polling booths. In Nagpur, the Congress volunteers, including many women, picketed polling booths at several places. This resulted in violence and police had to resort to lathi-charge on two occasions. Mrs. Ansuiya Bai Kale and four other women picketers were arrested.\textsuperscript{54} This boycott was astonishingly successful in urban and rural electorates alike. In all, only 7 per cent voters exercised their franchise in the

\textsuperscript{51} Home Pol., No.18/XI, FR, First Half of October 1930, p.25, NAI.

\textsuperscript{52} Home Pol., No.18/XI, FR, Second Half of October 1930, p.1, NAI; Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1929 and 1930, p.28, (London, HMSO, 1931); AICC Papers, No.248, 1931, Mahakoshal Annual Report 1931, NML.

\textsuperscript{53} Home Pol., September 1930, No.18/X/1930, FR, Second Half of September, 1930, p.18, NAI.

\textsuperscript{54} Home Pol., 1930, No.18/XII, FR, First Half of November, 1930, pp.22-23, NAI.
Nagpur-Comptee urban seat and 3 per cent in Nagpur west rural seat. 55 As for Nagpur, according to the Hitavada of 10 November 1930, 'it was a day of victory for the Congress as over ten thousand Congress voters out of a total of eleven thousand and odd did not go within a furlong of any polling station... Some were genuine Congressmen, some professing platonic sympathy with the Congress (;) some did not take any interest in the... candidates... Some did not like to cause annoyance, to the women picketers, while many did not like to be hooted out and booed by the vigilant crowds that kept on waiting all the times in front of every polling... booth'. 56

During the picketing in the towns of Berar division the boycott campaign was most successful without any violence. Although 50-60 per cent of Muslims voted, not more than 20 per cent of the rest of the electorate did so. 57 Out of 55 constituencies, 28 were uncontested and out of 98,292 voters in contested constituencies, 32,110 voters or 33.3 per cent exercised their franchise. The poor percentage was due to the boycott movement. 58

55. Home Iol., No.18/XII, PR, First Half of November, 1930, pp.22-23, NAI; P & M, 302/CDM, 1930, pp.11-12, MPS.
56. The Hitavada, 13 November 1930, p.1
57. Home Iol., No.18/XII/1930, PR, First Half of November 1930, p.1, NAI.
58. Returns showing the Results of Elections in India, 1929 and 1930, pp.28-29 (London, HMSC, 1931); Home ppl., November 1930, No.18/XII/1930, PR, First Half of November 1930, p.1, NAI.
Responsive Co-operators and

Some prominent responsivists lost the elections. F.C. Bose did so in Jabalpur city while R.K. Deshmukh in Amraoti Central. The significance attached to Deshmukh's and Bose's defeats in the elections was far-reaching. On the one hand the defeat of both men ruled out any possibility of either making an early return to the ministry; on the other, it coincided with the re-emergence of Rao as a commanding force in provincial politics both inside and outside the legislature. As the dominant power in the legislature, he controlled the ministries formed between 1930 and 1937.

Rao's re-emergence had a rather dramatic quality. The Governor, Sir Montague Butler, had a high opinion of Rao's political ability, and had long desired to bring him into the government. The defeat of Rao's ministry in 1929, and Tambe's occupancy of the Home Membership, however, made this difficult. In October 1930 Tambe retired from the Home Membership, and Butler seized the opportunity to appoint E. Raghavendra Rao as the new Home Member. The appointment was made permanent in January 1931.


appointment as Home Member heralded the permanent elevation of the Mahakoshal region to place of power in the government. It also marked the beginning of an extraordinary political relationship between Rao and Butler and helped the province to weather the storms of political instability and prepare for the introduction of the reformed constitution in 1937.

Following the successful boycott of the elections, Congressmen organised a number of small demonstrations in Nagpur. In Berar division, Congress volunteers organised a boycott of the excise auctions. In Amraoti, women also joined the campaign. As the government reported, in Amraoti 'the Congress arranged to picket the auctions on the first day . . . by women; and it was found necessary to arrest . . . Mrs. Joshi . . . and a number of other women picketers who flung themselves prostrate in front of motor vehicles conveying bidders to the auctions'.

Such arrests ultimately led to a boycott of the British goods and the non-payment of taxes in the region. In the towns of Mahakoshal region, the merchants organised a boycott of foreign cloth, and the Congress volunteers conducted an anti-liquor campaign.

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63. Ibid.

64. Home Pol., November 1930, No.18/II/1930, FR, First Half of November 1930, p.1, NAI. In Jabalpur, the boycott secured a decline of 40% in the revenue under liquor compared with the previous year.
The Congressmen advocated non-payment of taxes at the meetings held in Nagpur at the conclusion of the Bardoli week. It was aimed at the overthrow of the British administration. But with the signing of a truce between Gandhiji and the Viceroy, the Congress had abandoned the attempt to stir up a no tax-campaign in the province.

The campaign of Civil Disobedience in the province gradually came to a halt and with the signing of the truce, ceased altogether for the sometime.

Within a year of the agreement, however, the Congress was once again at war with the government. The second phase of Civil Disobedience Movement was resumed from January 1932. At first the Congress and the Government of India made strenuous efforts to observe the terms of the agreement, but during 1931 each side accused the other of breaching these terms. Furthermore, despite Gandhiji's participation in the second Round Table Conference in London, the delegates did not reach any agreement on the question of communal representation. As a result, relations between the nationalists and the government worsened. By December 1931 these had deteriorated to such an extent that Congressmen in the United Provinces had launched a

no-tax campaign in the province. This time, the government was determined not to give a chance to the Congress to organise a campaign and replied by promulgating ordinances similar to the ones promulgated in Bengal.

The Congress Working Committee met on 1 January 1932 at Bombay and adopted a resolution stating 'the Committee is prepared to render co-operation to government, provided the Viceroy reconsiders his Thursday's telegram to Mahatma Gandhi. ...' In case no such response was received from the government, the Working Committee would call upon the nation to resume Civil Disobedience.

This was treated by the government as a threat and the signal was given for putting in motion the whole machinery of repression, already prepared and kept in readiness. A long memorandum stating the government's case was released from Delhi on 4 January 1932 and the next day Gandhi and other leaders were arrested.

Following the arrested of Gandhi and other leaders, the campaign of Civil Disobedience began in the Central Provinces and Berar. All the Provincial and District Congress Committee were dissolved and in their

place war councils were formed with a President and secretary for each. Seth Govinddas and D.P. Mishra occupied these positions in the Mahakoshal region, Namanrao Joshi and Brijlal Biyani in Berar and M.V. Abhyankar and Funam Chand Ranka in Nagpur. Protest meetings were held at many places to condemn the arrest of Gandhiji and other leaders. The meetings were dispersed by the police and the leaders were arrested.

In early January 1932 the government outlawed the Nagpur war council, arrested Abhyankar and Ranka and enforced an ordinance to prevent boycott in the Nagpur district. In addition, to deter other leaders from stirring up the people, the courts imposed severe sentences and excessive fines on Abhyankar and Ranka. Then, on 13 January 1932, Butler issued a public statement expressing government's attitude towards the campaign, stating that 'during the last Civil Disobedience Movement, government took a lenient view of the picketing . . . and interfered only when it became forcible or was such a nuisance that the public cried out for intervention. . . . That policy failed and this time we have decided to take all measures necessary to secure the right of all members of the public to pursue their lawful avocations without interference to

their liberty. . . . we have the will and the power to protect you'.

Within a month the government had applied the ordinance against picketing to the Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara districts, and under this ordinance a large number of volunteers were arrested. In addition, to nip the nationalist activity in the bud, the government declared in January 1932 all organisations other than the Congress unlawful and seized the property and funds of institutions like the Nawa Jawan Bharat Sabha of Jabalpur and the Asahayoga Ashram of Nagpur which trained volunteers.

At Wardha and Hinganghat, the police attacked groups of demonstrators. On 16 February 1932, there was again a serious lathi-charge at Wardha. The government also prevented assembly of people and prohibited newspapers from publishing any matter relating to the campaign of civil disobedience.

73. The Hitavada, 14 January 1932, p.7.
At Akola, a succession of boycotts was organised until June with the assistance of merchants and volunteers. Similar agitations took place in Buldhana, Amraoti, Jabalpur, Khandwa, Sagar, Raipur and Durg districts. Forest satyagraha was also revived in Betul. In dealing with these agitations the government first arrested important leaders like Seth Govindadas, Mishra, Shukla, Laxman Singh Chouhan and Baba Hiralal and then promulgated ordinances to enable it to arrest volunteers on a large scale. It also suppressed by ordinances the printing of hostile news items and prohibited meetings and conferences scheduled to be held in Jabalpur and Sagar.

In spite of the repressive measures adopted by the government, however, the satyagraha went on and did not completely stop until it was called off by the Congress in May 1934.

78. The Hitavada, 6 March 1932, p. 9; 7 April 1932, p. 9; 21 April 1932, p. 8; 1 May 1932, p. 5.
80. See Biographical Account, Appendix A.
The fourth Council, as constituted after elections and nominations in December 1930, consisted of 74 members including 55 elected members, two ex-officio members (two members of the Executive Council—one European and one Indian) and 17 nominated officials and non-officials (9 Indian and 8 European). 83

As regards the representative character of the Council, the elected members of the legislature could hardly be called people's representatives. It has been shown that during the elections the Congress leaders and volunteers had enforced boycott of elections and persuaded the voters not to vote for the persons who had betrayed the national cause. Consequently, in 28 out of 55 constituencies there was no contest, while in 27 constituencies in which contest took place, out of 98,292 voters only 32,110 or 32.3 per cent went to the polls. 84 Thus, as was the case with the first Council, this Council also could not claim to be really representative of the public opinion.

The 64 elected and nominated Indian members, classed on an occupational basis, comprised of 34 pleaders and landholders, one journalist, seven big zamindars, two bankers, one money-lender, four merchants,

83. See Appendix - F
84. Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1929 and 1930, pp. 28-29.
Seven agriculturists, two government servants, 1 priest and 6 members belonging to miscellaneous occupations. 85 Thus, as was the case with the preceding Councils, this Council was also dominated by pleaders and landholders, a class traditionally known for seeking office to influence the government on matters affecting their interests.

The age groups into which Indian members both elected and nominated could be categorized are shown in the following table. 86

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Elections of 1929-30</th>
<th>Under 30</th>
<th>30-49</th>
<th>50-69</th>
<th>70-89</th>
<th>Age not known</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
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</table>

From the above table it is clear that 51 out of 64 Indian members or more than 79 per cent were below fifty years of age. Thus, as was the case with the second and the third councils, the fourth Council also had some young members who wanted to solve some important problems including those pertaining to the social, economic and administrative spheres.

85. See Appendix - F
86. See Appendix - F
The Council consisted of 37, or more than
50 per cent, Indian members, both elected and nominated,
who had no earlier experience of the legislative business.
Thus, as was the case with the first Council, the
proportion of inexperienced members was high. This was
to some extent, due to the influence of Civil Disobedience
Movement.

The level of education of the Councillors is
shown in the following table.

Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fourth Council</th>
<th>Law Graduates</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Matri-</th>
<th>Under</th>
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<td></td>
<td>culates</td>
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<td>not known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>64</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is clear that more than
50 per cent of the Indian elected and nominated members
were graduates or law-graduates. Thus, it can be conclu-
ded that this Council, like the preceding Councils, was
also composed mostly of the middle class nationalists.

This Council consisted of 20 Brahmins, four
Rajputs (Kshatriya), two Kayasthas, four Banias (Vaishyas),
two Jains, one Kalar, eleven Marathas, one Teli, one
Satnami Chamar, three Mahars, eight Mohammedans, 1 Parse
and 6 belonging to the miscellaneous castes.

67. Ibid.
68. See Appendix-
69. Ibid.
The communal and territorial groups remained more or less the same as in the third Council. Legislators were divided into four groups, the Brahmins, the non-Brahmins, the Mohammedans and the Depressed Classes.

There were four political parties, viz., the Democratic Party, the Nationalist Party, the Non-Brahmin party and the Independent Party combined with the Liberals. Later, on 14 August 1931, T.J. Kedar left the Democratic Party and formed his own party, the People's Party. The Democrats were the largest group and were led by K.J. Naidu. The Nationalist Party consisted of Co-operators from the Vindarbha region and led by B.G. Khaparde. The proportion of the responsive in the Council was greater and they dominated the legislature during the period under review.

The period under review is significant in the history of the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council in as much as unlike the previous years, it began to respond to popular demands. It is indeed remarkable that the fact of their not being representative of the people's will did not prevent most of the members from functioning as if they were truly representative. When the Civil Disobedience movement was at its peak, the first session of the fourth Council started on 9 December 1930. The Legislators, either

91. Ibid., Vol. I, 9 December 1930, p. 1
under the pressure of public opinion or under the Congress aspiration, denounced the repressive policy of the government and demanded the release and improvement of the living conditions of the political prisoners in jails. They raised the issues by way of resolution, adjournment motions, cut-motions and interpellations.

The immediate issue that agitated the responsive members during the first session of the fourth Council was the question of the release of political prisoners who had not been convicted of offences involving violence to person or property or incitement to such violence and were still in jails. The government was prepared to release all political prisoners who were not convicted of violence on the condition that they give an undertaking that they would not participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement in future. The responsive and loyalist members, however, declined to support such a step which was tantamount to an apology from the prisoners for their participation in the heroic struggle. They strongly disapproved of the government's policy towards the prisoners, and in a resolution moved by T.J. Kedar on 17 January 1931, made an attempt for getting their release. The resolution read: 'This Council recommends

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92. Home vol., August 1931, No. 10/II/1932, P.R. Second half of August 1932, p.61, NAI.

93. CILC, Vol.I, 12 January 1931, p.4 and 5. Address delivered by his Excellency, Sir Montague Butler, the Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar in the Council.
to the Government the release of all political prisoners who have been sent to jail for practising Civil Disobedience, not involving acts of violence." While moving his motion, Kedar referred to the address that was delivered by the Governor at the beginning of the session. The Governor had said that he would be happy to release the political prisoners the very next day provided they made it clear that they would take no further part in the movement. Kedar thanked the government for its frankness but regretfully observed that the assurance was not generous enough to satisfy even those loyalists who were against the Civil Disobedience Movement. He pointed out that the release of N.B. Khare had not been followed by any untoward consequences. Khare had not gone back to the movement and there was no fear that other persons would rejoin the movement after their release. He said that no good would be served by detaining political prisoners in jail till the expiry of their term. He further observed that it would be unwise on the part of the government to extract from the prisoners a humiliating undertaking that they would not participate in the movement in future. He appealed to the government to grant a general amnesty to all those prisoners. At the end of his speech he sought co-operation from the members for carrying the motion.

94. Ibid., 17 January 1931, p.223
95. Ibid., p.225
R.A. Kanitkar moved an amendment to Kedar's motion. The amendment read: 'This Council recommends to the government the release, and remission of fines that may be still unrecovered, of all political prisoners who were sent to jail for participating in civil disobedience not involving acts of violence.' In support of his amendment Kanitkar said, 'if the political prisoners are to be released on account of the grant of amnesty to them . . . and if they are asked to pay fines still and if they are not able to pay, they are to be asked to go back to the jails and serve sentences in default, what is the use of this grant of amnesty'? He observed that if amnesty had to be granted it should be granted in its complete sense and not in half measures.

Seth Sheolal, S.M. Rahman, R.S. Dube, K.M. Dhamadhikaree, G.R. Joshi, Naik D.Y. Rajurkar, C.B. Parakh, S.G. Sapkal and B.G. Khaparde strongly supported the resolution and disapproved the government's policy of conditional release of political prisoners. S.M. Rahman, representing the Muslim community, while supporting the resolution said, 'as representative of a community which has not taken part in the movement I rise to extend my hearty support to the resolution'. He observed that unconditional release of political prisoners would

96. Ibid., p. 226
97. Ibid., pp. 226-27
98. Ibid., pp. 227-42
receive the good-will of the people, the good-will of the intellectualia and the good-will of the masses to work the reforms under the new constitution. 99 B.G. Khaparde while supporting the motion held that the unconditional release of political prisoners would create friendly feelings between the government and the people. 100

On behalf of the government, the Home Member, Rao, while defending the government's stand, declared that it would be difficult for it to release political prisoners unless it was clear that they would take no further part in the movement. He requested the mover not to press his motion. 101 The resolution, as amended by K.A. Kanitkar, was unanimously accepted by the Council. 102

Moreover, several questions were asked during 1931 and 1932 relating to the same matter. These constituted another instrument for expressing popular discontent and disapproval of the government's acts. For instance, questions were put enquiring about the persons, including some members of the provincial legislature, who had participated in the movement and were arrested and convicted. 103

99. Ibid., pp. 228-29
100. Ibid., pp. 241-42
101. Ibid., pp. 235-36
102. Ibid., p. 245
A series of questions were also put in protest against the promulgation of ordinances, the arrest of volunteers in large numbers, the passing of prison sentences or heavy fines against the Satyagrahis who had participated in the movement, resort to firing, the lathi charges and whipping by the police in dealing with the movement, the police oppression while realizing fines from the accused in forest satyagraha and flogging restorted to by way of punishment to the persons convicted for movement.\footnote{104}

The nationalists often put questions expressing their annoyance at the action taken by the government under the Legal Practitioners Act against the pleaders who had directly or indirectly participated in the movement. The government admitted that action had been taken. This was very embarrassing for it.\footnote{105}

Quite often nationalist members asked questions to elicit information regarding participation of persons in the forest satyagraha and loss suffered by the forest department from it. On behalf of the government, H.C. Gowan, while replying admitted that forest department suffered loss amounting to Rs. 1,975-10-6.\footnote{106}


\footnote{106. \textit{Ibid.}, 28 February 1931, p.459. Question asked by R.S.Dube.}
Another opportunity to raise the question of repression arose in the Council between 1931 and 1934 when the province was going through the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement.\textsuperscript{107} One such occasion arose on 18 January 1932 when K.P. Rande sought adjournment of the House to discuss the serious political situation which had arisen throughout the province on account of the harsh measures adopted by the government to suppress the movement. While moving an adjournment motion, Rande castigated the government on several points. First, he charged the government with severe and unjustified lathi charges which had taken place in many of the towns and villages in the province. Secondly, he condemned the negligence of the district authorities such as District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police. On all such occasions these officials were generally absent leaving the responsibilities to their subordinate officers when their services were needed most at the spot. Thirdly, the proper medical arrangements were not made for the people injured during the lathi charges. He said, 'It is unjust from all points of view that you break the heads of people, but you do not make adequate medical arrangements for the dressing of the same'. Fourthly, the courts imposed severe sentences and excessive fines on some of the leaders who participated in the movement. In support of his contention he referred to the cases of Abhyankar and Poonamchand Ranka.

\textsuperscript{107} CPLC, Vol. III, 18 January 1932, p.35-36.
who were awarded three years rigorous imprisonment. The Court also fined Abhyankar to the tune of Rs. 10,000 and auctioned his car. Fifthly, he pointed out that the political prisoners were ill-treated in jails. He appealed to the government to give up the repressive measures and become human in dealing with the movement. 108

Pandey's motion was strongly supported by Smt. Rahman, Behnolal, P. G. Vheparde, T. J. Kedar, R. M. Fulay, Smt. Ramabai Tambe and C. B. Karakh in unequivocal terms. They criticised the government's tactless handling of the movement and the excessive use of the police force. Smt. Ramabai Tambe observed, 'I do not wish to see my sisters badly treated'. 109

On behalf of the government, the Home Member, Rao, while opposing the motion, defended the government's stand. Replying to the charges, he blamed the Congress for the existing crisis and tried to justify the government stand on the ground of maintenance of law and order. 110 But he could not satisfy the Council. Thus, the debate on the motion lowered the prestige and popularity of the government among the people.

One month later, there was another adjournment motion before the House. On 1 March 1932, T. J. Kedar

109. Ibid.
110. Ibid., pp. 42-47
moved an adjournment motion condemning the police repression at Wardha and Hinganghat on 16 February 1932. The motion was debated at length in the Council. The Council, owing to the weakness of the opposition, succeeded in getting the motion passed by 29 votes to 23.

A few cut-motions were introduced during the budget session of 1932-33, under the head 'Police', protesting against the methods resorted to by the police in dealing with the movement.

Many questions were raised during 1932 and 1933 enquiring about the intensity of the political movement, attachment of immovable property of political prisoners for the realisation of fines, the number of lathi charges made for dispersing meetings and processions and the total number of arrests made in connection with the movement. The replies given by the government had to be in the affirmative because it could not hide the facts. This highlighted the government's repressive policy all the more in the people's eyes.

111. Ibid., 1 March 1932, pp.632-34
112. Ibid., pp. 666-84
113. Ibid., 632. Cut-motions were moved by M.P. Kolhe and G.C. Singhal.
The case of ill-treatment of political prisoners was again taken up by the Nationalist members in the Council during 1931 and 1932. Having put all the leaders and volunteers in jail, the government appeared to feel that it was necessary further to terrorise them by brutal treatment. The political prisoners, however, continued their struggle against ill-treatment, for better living conditions and other rights in jail. When the government refused to provide facilities to them some of the prisoners went on hunger strike in protest.

The affairs in Raipur and Amraoti Jails became particularly notorious. Harvey, who was transferred to Amraoti jail as Superintendent only on 19 April 1932, began a series of atrocities which roused the whole province. Some Civil Disobedience prisoners were kept in solitary cells for three days, with neither food nor water, and were then taken out and beaten. In Raipur jail some, prisoners who asked for Khadi clothes were whipped; others were tortured in many ways and kept in solitary cells.¹¹⁵

inhuman and barbarous treatment of the Civil Disobedience prisoners in the Amraoti jail. 116 The resolution was supported by C.P. Parnell, B.G. Khaparde, G.S. Deshmukh and R.A. Kanitkar. 117

The resolution was opposed by official members, M.Y. Shareef 118 and G.C. Rogers. E. Gordon, while defending the Harvey's actions, said that the Superintendent of the Amraoti jail was placed in a position of exceptional difficulty. He was faced with a situation in which the prisoners were determined not to observe jail discipline. The situation in the jail improved by the action taken by Harvey without any loss of life and without even a single person suffering in any serious way from the steps which he took. In opposing the motion M.Y. Shareef said that the acts of Harvey should not be condemned without giving him a hearing. He should be given a chance to prove his own innocence and to plead his own case. 119

G.C. Rogers, a nominated member representing the European and Anglo-Indian community, while defending Harvey's actions who was also an Anglo-Indian, said that the charge against Harvey was that he deprived certain prisoners of water and food. If that was true, it was inhuman, and if Harvey was guilty of any such inhuman conduct, he should be punished. But that was not so.

117. Ibid., pp. 672-81.
118. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A
If in a jail out of 900 prisoners 200 of them or more could get food and water, why the rest could not get the same? It was their own free will that certain prisoners refused to take food and water. In those conditions the Superintendent should not be held responsible for that. He further observed that for maintaining discipline and carrying out the Jail Manual rules he might be guilty of some indiscretion, but he should not be held guilty of any inhuman or barbarous conduct. He further, said, 'I am a school master and with the greatest goodwill in the world I do not want to cane a single boy in my school, but I cannot help it. I do not want to cane any boy but sometimes that cannot be helped. None can deny my love for my lads. I have worked for 26 years as head master of one institution, but at the same time I can never admit that a little stick is not necessary'. He concluded by appealing to the House to give Harvey a hearing which was necessary for fair play and justice.  

The motion was however, withdrawn on an assurance by the Home Member that he would make personal enquiry into the allegations, at which some members of the Council would be invited to be present.  

During this session, few motions of adjournment were also tabled on the same issue. The motion moved

120. Ibid., pp. 699-80.  
121. Ibid., p. 687.  
122. CPLC, Vol. IV, 27 August 1932, pp. 213-16. The motions of adjournment were introduced by C.B.Parakh and B.G.Khaparde.
by B.G. Khaparde read: 'This council adjourns for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the inhuman and barbarous treatment of prisoners convicted for Civil Disobedience in the jails of Central Provinces and Berar with particular reference to Raipur and Amraoti jails.'\textsuperscript{123} It was allowed by the President for discussion. During the course of discussion it received considerable sympathy from the nationalist members. They spoke in strong terms against the government's policy to suppress the movement in the province by pursuing a policy of deliberately subjecting the political prisoners to especially harsh, inhuman and humiliating treatment in the Raipur and Amraoti jails in the month of April 1932 and after.\textsuperscript{124}

On behalf of the government Rao, the Home Member and E.Gordon, Chief Secretary, took part in the debate. While defending Harvey’s actions they opposed the motion. The government was determined to break the spirit of the people. The motion was withdrawn after an assurance was given by the Home Member for an impartial inquiry.\textsuperscript{125}

Several questions enquiring about the denial of interviews with political prisoners, handcuffing them

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, p.213-16
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.245-72. The speakers were B.G.Khaparde, K.W.Pulay, V.B.Chaobal and Thakur Manmohan Singh.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.250-72.
the class and diet fixed for them, the supply of inedible food to them, their transfer from one jail to another, their health, the expenditure incurred on them, and the ill-treatment meted out to them in jails were raised for several months in 1932. These questions exposed the government for its acts. 126 The members were, however, not satisfied with the replies and continued to pester the government with questions and supplementary questions about the plight of the prisoners.

Another issue which dominated the Council's proceedings was the participation of local bodies in the freedom struggle. Outside the legislature, political life was centered in the Municipal Committees and District Councils which were particularly active. Most of these bodies were vigorously nationalistic. These bodies insisted on flying the National Flag on their buildings and allowing their employees to participate in the activities of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The District Councils of Mandsa, Raipur, Betul, Barati and Jabalpur were engaged in these activities. 127 Especially the District Councils of Raipur and Betul employed their educational staff to carry on nationalist


propaganda and preparing the ground in favour of the picketing of liquor shops and the breach of forest laws. According to the government, the activities of District Council of Raipur caused it considerable headache. This estimate was correct. The Council played a vital part in the campaign of Civil Disobedience, urging people in urban areas to participate in agitation, and through its teachers, spreading the message of Civil Disobedience in the rural areas. The Councils had been warned by the government to desist from such activities. But the District Council of Raipur in its reply to the government declined to change its ways. Finally, by June 1930, the government considered the Council too great a menace to law and order in Raipur to go unchecked, and it decided to take immediate action. Accordingly, on 12 June, 1930 the government superseded the District Council of Raipur and placed it under the supervision of a government officer. These


130. Home Pol., No.18/VI/1930, FR, First Half of April, 1930, p.3, NAI.

131. Ibid., June 1930, No.18/VII/1930, FR, First Half of June 1930, p.4, NAI.

132. The Hitavada, 26 June 1930, p.15; Home Pol., June 1930, pp.41-42, NAI.
measures achieved the desired effect and the agitation quietened in the region.133

The District Councils of Raipur and Betul also joined in the attack on the government during the last phase of the Civil Disobedience. In October 1930, the government dissolved both the Councils for fomenting the Civil Disobedience and ordered them to elect fresh office bearers. The Councils obeyed, but signified their opposition to the government by electing men who were still in jail for offences committed during the Civil Disobedience. As a result, in November 1930, the government pronounced the Council's 'incompetent' and suspended them - that of Betul for two years and Raipur for three - to prevent them from causing any further trouble.134

After the supersession of the District Council of Raipur, 25 teachers of the Council were dismissed from service on the charge of their participation in the activities of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The nationalist members strongly opposed the government's policy towards the teachers and in a resolution moved

133. LSG, 1-95, 1930, Dissolution of the District Council Raipur, Resolution No.CS 97, 12 June 1930, PP.,1945-49, MPS.

by Khan Bahadur P.F. Tarapore, demanded the appointment of a committee to inquire into the matter. The resolution read: "This Council recommends to the government to appoint a Committee consisting of K.P. Pande, G.C. Singhal, Rai Sahib B.P. Fujari and W.Y. Deshmukh and the mover to inquire into and report on the cases of those teachers of the District Council, Raipur, who were dismissed for their political views after the supersession of the local body." 135

While proposing his motion, the mover agreed that some of the teachers had neglected their teaching and had carried on propaganda in favour of the Congress. However, their participation in the movement was not really voluntary. They were merely the subordinates of the officers of the District Council and they could not but obey the commands of their masters. The dismissed teachers had also submitted to the government that what they did was beyond their control and they were bound to carry out the orders of their superiors. Tarapore further observed that some teachers were dismissed on flimsy grounds. While referring to the grounds of their dismissal he stated that in one case a teacher was dismissed because he was found spinning Takli after the school hours. The second instance related to a teacher who was charged

under section 353 of Indian Penal Code for assaulting a public servant. The teacher was put up before the court but was discharged. At the same time police reported against him and the officer in-charge of the District Council dismissed him. The third instance related to one head master named Umer Beg. He had been a servant of the District Council for over 30 years and wielded a great influence in the area where he resided. In one riot case a large number of people had assembled with the intention of attacking the police. But because of the influence of the head-master the mob was dispersed. Thus, he actually helped the police, but unfortunately the police mistakenly reported against him, and the officer in-charge of the local body dismissed him without paying any heed to the representation made by the teacher. At the end of his speech he requested the government to reconsider their cases and reinstate them in their former position.\textsuperscript{136}

The resolution was supported by B.P. Pujari.\textsuperscript{137} Dadu Dwarkanath Singh, however, speaking on behalf of the loyalist group, opposed the motion. In opposing the motion he pointed out that mere appointment of a committee would not serve any purpose. There was no provision in the Local Self-Government Act under which these appeal from local bodies could be entertained and considered.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 287-89.
\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 290-91
\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 289-90
G.P. Jaiswal, Minister for Local Self-Government, speaking on behalf of the government, averred that in spite of the government's warning many teachers took active part in the movement at the cost of their legitimate duties. Twenty-five teachers were dismissed, some were fined and others were demoted after holding departmental inquiries against them. Their participation in the movement was a gross insubordination and disobedience of orders. The Minister, however, assured the Council to reconsider sympathetically some of the cases in which flagrant injustice had been done and requested the mover to withdraw the motion.  

On an assurance given by the Minister for Local Self-Government, the mover agreed to withdraw the motion. The motion for withdrawal of the resolution was put to vote and at the instance of B.G. Khaparde, votes were taken by division. The motion for withdrawal of the resolution was lost and the original resolution was carried. Almost all the nationalist members voted against the withdrawal of motion.

A number of members in the Council raised questions on the issue of the participation of local bodies in the movement either to elicit information or to harass and expose the government. T.J. Kedar asked the government

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139. Ibid., pp. 291-92
140. Ibid., pp. 293-94
to state the number and names of the Municipalities, District Councils and local bodies that had hoisted the National Flags on their buildings in the province since the beginning of the movement. 141 On behalf of the government, G.P. Jaiswal showed the government's awareness of the issue. It was also given out that government did not consider it necessary to make enquiries on the subject. Kedar further asked whether government's decision not to enquire into the subject indicated that the government would have no objection to the hoisting of the Congress Flags on the buildings of the local bodies. Jaiswal expressed his inability to answer the question. 142 S. N. A. Risvi wanted to know the date when the District Council, Raipur was superseded and, if so, for what period? He further elicited the names of the teachers under the District Council who were dismissed from service since the supercession, the reasons for their dismissal, their appeals to the Local Government for re-consideration on of their cases and the name and designation of the officer who had passed the orders of their dismissal. In response to the first part of the question, it was disclosed that the District Council, Raipur, was superseded on the 11 November 1930 for 3 years. In reply to the remaining parts of the question, R. N. Banerjee replied that Umer Beg approached the local government for reconsideration of his case and the government declined to interfere in the matter. Muniruddin, Extra Assistant Commissioner, was the officer-in-charge of the District Council, Raipur. 143

142. Ibid., p. 315.
B.P. Fujari wanted the government to lay on the Council table a copy of orders given to Umer Beg which were defied by him. R.N. Banerjee, while giving the substance of the order, said that inspite of previous warnings he took part in anti-government movement neglecting his legitimate duties. He was first transferred from Balodabasar to Pithora with a warning to abstain from taking any further part in the movement. Inspite of the second warning he attended a political meeting and delivered anti-government speeches. 144

On 2 September 1930, W.Y. Deshmukh enquired from the government whether it contemplated re-appointing the dismissed teachers under the terms of the truce between Gandhiji and the government of India. If, no, would the government state its reasons? G.P. Burton replied that the terms of the agreement do not cover the cases of the servants dismissed for disobedience of orders. Their reappointment would be prejudicial to the maintenance of discipline and adequate control of the staff. 145 F.F. Tarapore sought further elucidation of this point by asking if the government would appoint a committee consisting of one official and two non-officials to enquire into the merits of each individual dismissal. The answer given by E. Raghavendra Rao was in the negative. 146

144. Ibid., p.34
145. Ibid., Vol.II, 2 September 1931, p.421
146. Ibid.
T.J. Kedar again raised the issue by asking if those cases were examined by the government from the standpoint of the Gandhi-Irvin Pact prior to the receipt of this question. It was given out that they were enquired into and discussed with the representatives of the Mahakoshal Congress Committee at Raipur.\textsuperscript{147}

On the same day D.T. Mangalmoorti wanted to know the government's intentions regarding the reconstitution of the District Councils at Betul and Raipur in view of the resolution passed at the Provincial Conference of the Mahakoshal region, held at Sagar in the preceding summer. He further wanted to know whether the government would take early steps to reconstitute both the District Councils in view of the changed political situation after the Gandhi-Irvin Pact. The answer to the first part given by R.N. Banerjee was in the negative. In reply to the second part of the question, he explained the government's stand by stating that the supersession of both the District Councils was the result of their failure to perform their legitimate duties and as such they were not affected the pact. Government considered it premature to constitute the District Councils.\textsuperscript{148}

The budget for 1931-32, presented by the Finance Member in the Council on 25 February 1931, like the budgets introduced in preceding years, had to encounter much criticism.\textsuperscript{149} During the discussion on the budget the

\textsuperscript{147} CPLC, Vol.II, 2 September 1931, p.422
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., p.423.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., Vol.I, 25 February 1931, pp.284-96
members generally charged the government for excessive expenditure on General Administration and Police Departments, lack of funds for medical facilities and nation building activities and non-abolition of the Commissionerships. The excise policy of the government was also bitterly criticised and a cut motion for Rs.100 under Demand No. 2 Excise Department (Transferred) was introduced by G.C. Singhal on 28 February 1931. The objective of the mover was to focus attention of the Council on the matter and to force the government to control and reduce the consumption of country liquor in the province. The cut motion was discussed in detail in the House and was accepted by 38 voters as against 15.

The conflict of regional interests was evident in the discussion of this budget and on the occasions of the presentation of the subsequent budgets, too. The Berar members charged the government for the non-observance of the Sim Formula and demanded strict application of the quota of divisible revenue to Berar. Furthermore, they charged that the government had failed to protect the interests of Berar. In evidence they pointed out that the government had refused to suspend the revised land settlement, despite insistent demands from the agriculturists of Berar. They attacked the

151. Ibid., 28 February 1931, pp. 508-44.
152. Ibid. 26 February 1931, pp. 322-57. The speakers were Naik D.Y., Rajurkar, Y.M. Kale, R.A. Kanitkar and S.G. Sapkal.
government for not granting remission and suspension of revenue to help farmers in Berar to cushion the effects of depressed market conditions and a run of poor seasons.\textsuperscript{154} They further pointed out that since their exclusion from the government, the Sim ratio had fallen to a lower level.\textsuperscript{155} For this development they blamed P.S. Deshmukh, the Minister from Berar.\textsuperscript{156} During the discussion on the budget on 28 February, a member from Berar revealed that 'since the present minister from Berar has been installed on the ministerial gadi, we are watching how far he has proven himself to be a failure. He could not raise the proportion of the Sim Formula so far. The percentage has still gone down this year. . . . (I desire) to bring to the notice that the government should guard the interests of the Berar people who are in hopeless minority in this house'.\textsuperscript{157}

Another important feature that characterised the Council's proceedings was the dominance of sectional interests and personal ambitions, evident in the

\textsuperscript{154. Ibid., Vol.III, 29 February 1932, pp.568-69}

\textsuperscript{155. Ibid., Vol.VII, 26 February 1934, p.451. In 1930-31 the proportions of divisible revenue shared by the Central Provinces and Berar respectively were 66 per cent to 34 per cent; in 1931-32, 70 per cent to 30 per cent; in 1932-33, 69 per cent and 31 per cent; in 1933-34, 66 per cent and 32 per cent; and in 1934-35, 66.5 per cent and 31.5 per cent.}

\textsuperscript{156. Ibid., Vol.I, 26 February 1931, pp.322-23.}

\textsuperscript{157. Ibid., Vol.V, 28 February 1933, pp.660. The member was U.S. Patil.}
combinations promoted for the formation of ministeries in a kaleidoscopic manner. As the dominant personality in the legislature, K. Raghavendra Rao controlled the ministeries formed between 1930 and 1937 from behind the scene. The key to Rao's power lay in the legislature. For the greater part of this period, Rao enjoyed the support of a majority of the members in the Council, who came together to form the Democratic Party; this party was formed by Rao in 1928. Rao gained this support partly by his own qualities of leadership, and partly, by a skilful distribution of patronage. 158 Among the groups from which Rao particularly drew support were the Mahakoshal section of the Democratic Party, and some of the Mahakoshal members who were elected to the Council in place of the Congressmen from that region who had resigned their seats in 1930. 159 From 1930 onwards, Rao also continued to draw support from the Depressed Class members, the Muslims, some non-Brahmins from the Vidarbha region, and the official block which the Governor brought to strengthen Rao's position in the Council. From this pool of members, Butler and Rao formed their successive ministeries. Three different ministeries held office between 1930 and 1937. From 1930 to 1933, P.S. Deshmukh of the non-Brahmin Party and the Mahakoshal politician G.P. Jaiswal constituted the ministry. From 1933 to 1934, V.B. Chaobal, 160 a Maratha pleader and a Muslim barrister

158. The Hitavada, 22 March 1931, p.1
159. Ibid., 27 November 1930, p.1; 4 December 1930, pp.1 and 9; 7 December 1930, pp. 1 and 8; 14 December 1930, p.8; 18 December 1930, p.8.
160. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
M.Y. Shareef held office. In 1934 Rao himself undermined this ministry because it was unstable, and replaced it with one consisting of B.G. Khaparde from Berar and K.S. Naidu, the leader of the Non-Brahmin Party.

The first ministry was formed from the Democratic and the Non-Brahmin parties. On 15 December 1930, the Governor appointed G.P. Jaiswal as Minister for Industries and Punjab Rao Deshmukh as Minister for Education. But soon personal ambitions and sectional interests created tension among its supports leading to attempts to remove the ministry. There were two major assaults on it. The first, was led by B.G. Khaparde and T.J. Kedar, Rao’s former colleague in the ministry, who was still a member of the Democratic Party in 1931. These men or their supporters moved resolutions against the government in January 1931, and attacked the budget in March. In the following August, Kedar launched another attack against Rao, because the latter had prevented him from becoming the President of the Council after the death of B.M. Chitnavis in June 1931. Kedar wanted the position, but Rao outmanoeuvred him, securing the office.

for S.W.A. Risvi, a Muslim Councillor. By doing so, he
drew a number of Muslim members into the Democratic Party.
To oppose Rao, Kedar formed his People's Party consisting
of some members of the Democratic Party, and joined the
opposition. 164

In 1933 a group of non-Brahmin Democrats launched
the second assault on the ministry. The leader of the
dissident non-Brahmin Democrats was K.S. Naidu, who was
also a leader of the Democratic Party in the House. In
1931 and 1932 Naidu had gradually weakened in his allegiance
to the Democratic Party. In 1933 he launched a full scale
operation to dislodge the ministry. 165 The reason for
Naidu's withdrawal of support from the Democratic Party
and his attack on the ministry was the non-Brahmin
movement. Naidu and P.S. Deshmukh were both members of
the Non-Brahmin Party. However, in 1932-33 differences
developed between them because Deshmukh was allegedly
giving preference to members of the Maratha community in
making government appointments and nominations. Moreover,
he was leading a non-Brahmin agriculturists' association,
the Shetkari Sangh, which Naidu considered hostile to the
interests of the Non-Brahmin Party. 166 The Responsivists
of the Vidarbha region took advantage of this rift to
ally with Naidu and defeat the ministry. Accordingly,

164. The Hitavada, 7 June 1931, p.7; 12 July 1931, p.10;
13 August 1931, p.7; 20 August 1931, pp.7 and 8;
27 August, 1931.

165. Ibid., Vol.II, 31 August 1931, p.303; Ibid., P.316;
Ibid., 1 September 1931, p.387; Ibid., Vol.III,
1 March 1932, pp.673-74.

several notices of expressing lack of confidence in the ministers were sent to the president. Both the ministers, however, forestalled the motions and resigned from the ministry before the Council could meet for a discussion on them. The motions thus became infruc-
tuous. The first ministry thus collapsed and paved the way for the second Democratic ministry.

In promoting the second Democratic Ministry, Rao secured the support of the People's Party, the Muslims, the Depressed class members, the Mahakoshal members and some non-Brahmins. The ministers proposed were Muhammad Yusuf Shareef, a Muslim barrister from Nagpur, and V.B. Chaobal, a young non-Brahmin lawyer from Amraoti. The Governor, aware perhaps that combinations and personalities behind the proposed ministers would ensure some continuity in the administration, accepted the nominees and, on 5 August 1933, he installed the minister in office. Nonetheless, the second ministry had also many weaknesses. These were divisions among its supporters.

In 1934, K.S. Naidu continued his alliance with the Responsivists of Vidarbha, while the latter remained grimly determined to retrieve lost ground and reinstate

167. Ibid., Vol. VI, 26 July 1933, pp. 232-34; Notices of no-confidence motions were given by B.G. Khaparde and M.G. Kolhe.
168. Ibid., 31 July 1933, pp. 382-93.
169. The Hitavada, 25 May 1933, p. 1; 30 July 1933, p. 7 and 8; 3 August 1933, pp. 5, 6 and 8; 6 August 1933, p. 8.
170. Ibid., 6 August 1933, pp. 7, 8 and 9.
171. Ibid., 3 August 1933, p. 6; 23 November 1933, p. 1; 22 February 1934, p. 1.
themselves in the office. The Responsivists got an
opportunity to do so in 1933 when the government issued
a memorandum warning local bodies against permitting their
employees to participate in the activities of the
Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. During the thirties
the Sangh caused the government some concern owing to
the increasing tendency of its leaders to take part in
political activities. This concern was reflected in
the government report on the demonstration organised by
the Sangh in Nagpur on Dashahra in 1932, when 1,000
uniformed volunteers marched past. On 15 December
1932, the government issued a circular prohibiting
government servants from participating in its activities.
The Responsivists could not welcome the circular because
the Sangh was a predominantly Brahmin organisation whose
ideology closely resembled that of the Responsivists from
Vidarbha. During 1933, the government discovered
that some teachers in the schools controlled by the
District Councils were members of the Sangh. Accordingly
in December 1933, it issued a memorandum through the
Department of Local Self-Government warning the local
bodies against permitting 'those servants to be associated
with any private organisation of a communal nature'.

172. Ibid., 29 October 1933, p.9; 19 November 1933, p.5;
B.S., Moonja Papers, Diary 6, 27 November 1933, NLI.
the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh*, p.10, New York:
International Secretariat, Institution of Pacific
Relations, 1951. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar formed
the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh in Nagpur in 1925
175. Home Pol., No.18/13/1932, FR, First Half of October
1932, p.1, NAI.
Incensed by the memorandum, the Responsivists made a determined effort to overthrow the ministry. Another reason for their chagrin was the fact that the memorandum was signed by the Muslim minister, M.Y. Shareef. Intense politicking among the Responsivists and other members of the National Party followed the publication of the memorandum. The inspiration behind it was Moonje, who urged that the Responsivists must either ask Shareef to withdraw the circular or turn him out.  

R.M. Deshmukh, Naidu and the leader of the Depressed class members in the Council were also in favour of demanding the withdrawal of the circular. The government, however, stood firmly by the memorandum. In response, Moonje and his followers tried to win the support of the Democrats, the People's Party, and a small group of the Mahakoshal Councillors when these attempts did not succeed, the Responsivists planned to defeat and demoralise the ministers and their supporters on the floor of the House.

Rao countered these tactics during March 1934. The opposition time and again challenged the ministry for division and compelled the government to use all the

178. B.S. Moonje Papers, Diary 6, 15 January 1934, NLI
179. Ibid., 15 January 1934; 20 January 1934, 22 January 1934.
181. B.S. Moonje Papers, Diary 6, 22 January 1934; Ibid., 26 January 1934; Diary 7, 7 March 1934; 8 March 1934, NLI.
means at its command to save the ministry from defeat. Earlier divisions proved unfruitful but in subsequent divisions the government was defeated. 183 Despite this, the ministry refused to resign. This so inflamed the opposition that they brought a vote of no-confidence against Shareef, on 9 March 1934. There were frenzied scenes in the House when the motion was put to vote, but the President saved Shareef by his casting vote. 184

It was clear to Rao that the government could not operate for long under such conditions. His own position as a leading member of the government was also in danger. Considerable tension existed between Rao and some of the senior British Officials, perhaps owing to the power that Rao had acquired during the regime of Montague Butler. 185 For instance, there was a friction between Rao and Eyre Gorden, the Revenue Member, possibly due to Rao’s known aspiration to the Revenue portfolio. There was also bad blood between Rao and Hyde Gowan, Chief Secretary, who in 1932, was a member of the Executive Council. 184 Consequently, although Rao believed that Shareef's ministry ought to give way to a more stable ministry, the British Officials decided to support the tottering ministry. In doing so, they aimed to 'humiliate Rao and teach him a lesson'. 187 Rao's position was further

184. Ibid., Vol.VII, 9 March 1934, pp.1104-51
185. B.S.Moonje Papers, letter Pad 68, B.S.Moonje to Dick, 30 November 1933; Ibid., Diary 7, 8 March 1934, NLI
187. B.S.Moonje Papers, Diary 7, 8 March 1934, NLI.
weakened by the fact that in 1933, Nye Gowan, the former Chief Secretary, succeeded Butler as Governor of the province. Gowan lacked Butler's political flair and found it difficult to work with Rao. 188 Rao finally decided to re-assert his power and create conditions for a stable government at the same time. Accordingly, during March 1934 Rao abandoned Shereef and Chaobal for a ministry of his own choice. 189 The immediate result of Rao's decision was evident in the successful vote of no-confidence against Chaobal in the Council on 9 March 1934. 190

A week later, the third Democratic Ministry took office. S.G. Khaparde became Chief Minister with K.S. Naidu as the other minister. 191 The ministry worked successfully and remained in the office until 1937. During this period the ministry remained under constant attack, but Rao's tactical skill averted any defeat.

Co-operators

The co-operators played an active role in the enactment of some important legislation pertaining to social and economic advancement of the province. The most important social measure discussed and carried through the Council was the Hindu Religious and Charitable Trust Act. The Central Provinces Hindu Religious and

188. AICC Papers, p.13, 1937-38, Note of S.D. Kishra, Member of the Bilaspur Enquiry Committee, 17 March 1937, NML.

189. Khaparde Papers, Diary 4 April 1934, NAI.


Charitable Trust Bill 1933 was introduced in the Council by P. S. Deshmukh, Minister for Education, on 24 July 1933. Speaking on the bill, Deshmukh observed that there were 550 villages dedicated to religious endowments in the province, some of which were held free of revenue. They were not properly managed by the priests and mahants in charge of those temples. They kept no accounts and utilised the funds in any way they choose, which gave rise to grave abuses. He observed that for the satisfactory management of religious and charitable endowments the bill empowered the local government to appoint a provincial board consisting of not less than four and not more than eight members, including a Chairman. The board had to supervise and administer all trust properties.¹⁹²

The bill was welcomed with enthusiasm by its supporters and attacked as violent, unconstitutional and expropriatory by its opponents. The sectional conflict was also evident in the discussion of the bill.

The bill was supported by almost all the non-Brahmin members, such V. B. Chaobal, M. F. Kolhe, S. G. Sapkal and C. B. Parakh. However, it was strongly opposed by the Brahmin members except R. M. Fulay, a nominated member to represent labour. The Brahmin members opposed the bill probably because the Act encroached upon the private management of such assets, which in many cases were in the hands of Brahmins.¹⁹³

¹⁹³. Ibid., The Brahmin members were B. G. Khaparde and K. P. Pande.
Besides this, two other important resolutions viz., the raising of age limit to 30 for entry into public service in the case of Backward classes and motion regarding throwing open all Hindu temples to all Hindus including, depressed classes were carried by the Council. 194

The significant economic legislation passed through the Council were the Central Provinces Debt Conciliation Act of 1932, the Money-lenders Bill of 1934, the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act 1934, the Games Act 1934 and the Court Fees Amendment Act 1935.

The first two Acts related to the indebtedness of the agriculturists. The Central Provinces Debt Conciliation Act 1932 proved useful measure and of permanent assistance to the agriculturists of the province. 195 The money-lenders Bill 1934 proved supplementary measure to the Debt Conciliation Act of 1932. It placed restrictions on the money lenders power of charging unconscionable interests from the poor debtors. It also extended privileges of the law of damdupat or double interests to the Mohammedans. 196

The Motor Vehicles Taxation Act 1934, The Games Act 1934, the Court Fees Amendment Act 1935 were designed

to lift the province out of the financial doldrums.
The Court Fees Amendment Act established the High Court and proved to be a significant taxation measures to finance the project. Consequently, on 2 January 1936, the Secretary of State issued letters constituting the High Court of the Central Provinces and Berar.

While the second phase of Civil Disobedience was in progress, British Prime Minister MacDonald announced the Communal Award on 16 August 1932. Under the Award not only the Muslims but the Depressed Classes also were granted separate electorate for representation in the provincial Legislatures. An attempt was made to widen the gulf between the upper castes and the untouchables among the Hindus. The announcement of the Award divided the population of each province into various sections and sub-sections.


198. GAD, 32-31, 1935, Letters patent constituting a High Court of Judicature at Nagpur, p.37, MPS.

This is evident from the following table showing the seats allocated to the various communities in the Central Provinces and Berar legislature:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed Classes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammedans</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backward Tribes</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landholders</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Indian</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Scheme of granting communal representation to the Depressed classes disturbed the minds of all classes and communities in India. It had an echo in the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council too. On 26 August 1932, R.A. Kanitkar moved an adjournment motion in the Council and demanded adjournment of the House as a mark of protest against the Communal Award.

While speaking on the motion he castigated the British Prime Minister for imposing poisonous segregation for

201. Ibid., p. 130.
twenty years and thus barring the future progress of
the province. 202

The motion was supported by D.T. Mangalmoorti,
K.S. Rau, Seth Sheolal and C.B. Parakh. 203 G.A. Gavai,
nominated to represent the Depressed Classes, however,
felt shocked at the allotment of only 10 seats to the
Depressed Classes; they had demanded 22. Moreover, the
government had promised to protect the minorities and
the Depressed Classes were recognised as a minority
community. Yet no protection was granted by the Award
to them. Gavai further said that through the provision
of separate electorate to the Depressed Classes the
government intended only to keep one community separate
from the other. He rightly observed, 'to separate the
Depressed Classes who are Hindus, from the Hindus,
whose mode of living is exactly similar to that of
Hindus, whose language is also same as that of Hindus,
and who have to live among the Hindus, is, I submit,
nothing short of cruelty'. 204 He further observed
that the scheme enunciated in the Communal Award would
make the Depressed Classes politically untouchables. 205
The contradictions in Gavai's position are too glaring
to need explanation.

202. Ibid., pp. 131-34
203. Ibid., pp. 136-150
204. Ibid., p. 139
205. Ibid., pp. 139-40.
The Mohammedan and Anglo-Indian members predictably opposed the motion and supported the Award. Mirza Rahman Beg while speaking on the motion held that it was the best course under the existing circumstances. G.S. Rogers, member nominated to represent Anglo-Indian community, asserted that the Award was the best that could be given to our country. R.A. Kanitkar's motion, however, was talked out.

After the Communal Award, there was one more short session of the Round Table Conference lasting from 17 November to 24 December 1932. Insipite of the resumption of the Civil Disobedience by the Congress and its non-participation in the last and third session of the Round Table Conference, the British authorities had proceeded with the business of framing a new constitution for India. The decisions taken by the government in the light of the conference were published in the White Paper in March 1933 and presented to the various Legislative Councils for discussion. It was almost unanimously condemned by the public opinion in India. The Congress, the Liberal Party and the Muslim Conference rejected the scheme. The scheme was not only hedged in with a number of safeguards and reservations, it did not even mention Dominion Status as an objective of the reform.

206. Ibid., pp. 134-44. The speakers were M.Y. Shareef, Khan Bahadur Mirza Rahman Beg, S.M. Rahman and G.C. Rogers.
207. Ibid., p. 141.
208. Ibid., pp. 142-44
209. Ibid., p. 150.
As the Leader observed, 'The scheme may be anything, but is certain it is not a scheme of self-government'.

In the Legislative Council of Central Provinces and Berar there was two-day debate on the White Paper towards the end of July 1933. Raghavendra Rao, the Home Member, proposed that the White Paper containing proposals for the Indian Constitutional Reforms be taken into consideration. Introducing the motion he said that copies of the document were made available to the members of the House but as desired by the Council the government had allowed a general discussion on it at an early stage. No official member would take any part in the discussion.

After the motion was adopted for discussion, V.B. Chaobal proposed an amendment: 'and on such consideration this Council requests the Governor General to convey to the authorities that the proposals of His Majesty's Government as finally adumbrated by the Secretary of State before the Joint Parliamentary Committee are inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing, and have created deep mistrust in the minds of millions of His Majesty's loyal subjects as to the motives of the present British Government...'

210. Indian Annual Register, 1933, No.1, p.61
212. Ibid., 26 July 1933, p.161.
213. Ibid., p.163.
Chaobal gave a long speech elaborating his views on every aspect of the proposed constitutional changes. The first thing that was strikingly significant to him was that there was absolutely no reference in the White Paper to Dominion Status for India and he suggested that India's political status should be raised to this level. Another point of omission related to the fundamental rights, a subject on which Indian opinion had always been insistent. He strongly criticised the proposed powers of the Governor General and the Governors. He said, 'special powers and special responsibilities of the Governor General and the Governors will make Indian and Provincial autonomy a mockery'.


G.R. Kothare, elected from the Commerce and Industry constituency, while supporting the amendment complained that White Paper had completely ignored the proposals regarding the representation of Commerce and Industry in the Council and demanded more seats for it. Smt. Ramabai Tambe gave vent to the feelings of women. She protested against making a pass in Matriculation examination a qualification for the

216. Ibid., 28 July 1933, pp. 246-48
enfranchisement of both men and women and demanded a change in the qualification.\textsuperscript{217}

Thus, the White Paper proposals had been criticised nearly by every section of the Council. In the two-day debate, no member of the Depressed Classes and no official expressed his opinion on it. In the end, the amendment of V.B. Chaobal was adopted by the House without any division.\textsuperscript{218}

At the close of the sixth session of the fourth Council on 1 August 1933, it was announced by Sir Hyde Clarendon Gowan, the Governor that he had decided to extend the life of the Council. Perhaps the government was not prepared to hold another general election till the constitutional reforms were finalised. In fact, the fourth Council was not dissolve till 1937 when the final touch had been given to the new constitutional set-up.\textsuperscript{219}

We have seen how the White Paper on Indian Constitutional reform was received in India. But the British Government went ahead with constitution-making and appointed a Joint Select Committee of the Parliament under the Chairmanship of Lord Linlithgo to examine the proposals contained in the White Paper.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., pp. 248-49
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., p. 255.
\textsuperscript{219} CPLC, Vol.II, 18 January 1934, p.4
The Joint Select Committee Report, submitted in November 1934, accepted broadly the proposals of White Paper. In some vital respects, however, it was even more retrogressive. Naturally, it was condemned by almost all sections of public opinion in India. The Congress asked the people to reject it outright. The Muslim League and the National Liberal Federation also could not accept its proposals. However, the Government brought the matter to the Legislatures for discussion in order to ascertain their views.

In the Legislative Council of Central Provinces and Berar, the Home Member, Rao, moved the resolution on 2 February 1935 for bringing into consideration the Report of the Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms.220

Immediately after the motion was adopted for discussion, nationalist members, while condemning the retrograde recommendations of the Report, characterised it as highly unsatisfactory and falling short of the Indian demand.221

Representing the Mohammedan view, S.M. Rahman declared, 'there was no sense in the talk of rejection of the constitution'.222 G.A. Gavai, representing Depressed classes, expressed gratitude to the British Government for conceding adequate representation to his community in the legislature.223 G.C. Rogers.

representing Anglo-Indian community, paid a tribute to the Joint Select Committee for its labour and appealed to all to work the new constitution in a spirit of goodwill and sincerity in the interest of social justice. In the end the discussion on Joint Select Committee Report was petered out.

In the meantime, the British Government, however, did not wait for the views of the legislature in India; in fact subsequently, it paid scant attention to them. The Government of India Bill, based on the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee was introduced in the Parliament on 1 February 1935 and received the Royal assent on 4 August 1935. The Congress at its Lucknow session in April 1936, passed a comprehensive resolution rejecting the new constitution entirely. Of course, it later on participated in the elections for the provincial legislatures.

The elections to the new Legislative Assembly of the Central Provinces and Berar, took place in February 1937. The Congress won an overwhelming victory. Its candidates gained sixty-one per cent of the votes cast and seventy of the 112 seats in the legislature. As the Congress at first refused to allow its members to take office under the new

224. Ibid., p.245.

constitution, on 28 March 1937 Sir Hyde Gowan invited Rao to form a ministry. Consequently, Rao formed a ministry, although he had the support of a small minority in the Assembly. Within a few days he assumed office as Prime Minister. The ministry held office on a caretaker basis until 14 July 1937. On that day a ministry formed by Congress took office. The freedom struggle in the Central Provinces and Berar and the provincial politics entered a new phase.

Thus, the study of the period under review makes it clear that the activities of the Responsive were dominated by regional and sectional interests as well as personal ambitions. They participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by the Congress. The reason for their participation in the movement was to win the public support in the forthcoming elections to the provincial legislature. Inside the legislature they neglected wider national issues and concentrated on forming a ministry and protecting their regional and sectional interests. These activities weakened their position and they could not get public support in the elections to the Legislative Assembly held in February 1937 under the Government of India Act 1935.


However, their contribution in the fields of social and economic reforms was notable. The Hindu Religious and Charitable Trust Act marked a notable advance in the field of social reforms. The Central Provinces Debt Conciliation Act 1932 and the Money-Lenders Act 1934 proved useful measures to the poor agriculturists in the province. The Motor Vehicles Taxation Act 1934, the Games Act 1934 and the Court Fees Amendment Act 1935 were designed to lift the province out of the financial stringency. The establishment of High Court in the province was a significant measure.

The activities of the Muslim and Depressed classes members were directly only towards securing the interests of their respective community. They showed neither personal ambitions nor any awareness of the regional needs.