CHAPTER - II

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The year 1920 witnessed two momentous events in the history of India. First, the introduction of constitutional changes in the wake of the implementation of the Government of India Act, 1919. The second, and more vital, event was the beginning of the first mass movement, the Non-Violent Non-Co-operation Movement, initiating qualitatively a new phase in the freedom struggle of India.
The reforms of 1919 met with mixed reaction by the Indian nationalists. The moderates in Indian politics welcomed the reforms as a token of British goodwill and took part in the elections while the Indian National Congress rejected the scheme and boycotted the elections. An attempt has been made in this chapter to analyse the attitudes of the Liberals as well as the Congress towards the introduction of the reforms of 1919. An effort has also been made to throw light on the development of political awakening and the growing complexities in the provincial politics of the Central Provinces and Berar.

At its Calcutta session of December 1917, the Indian National Congress decided to hold a special session in August 1918 in Bombay to consider the Montague-Chelmsford Report. The rising Liberal-Nationalist tension over the Montague Scheme during the spring of 1918 made it likely that Montague's proposals would face denunciation at the special session. In fact, the nationalists dominated the Subjects Committee of the special Congress. This made it
likely that the Report could be repudiated by a majority. Both the Liberals and the nationalists felt that the government proposals fell considerably short of the Congress-League Scheme. But while the Liberals were prepared to accept the proposals to give the Montague-Chelmsford scheme a fair trial and use their influence with Montague to secure whatever improvements they could extract, the nationalists were determined not to entertain anything short of the Congress-League Scheme. The liberals, therefore, faced the certainty of a dispute with the nationalists. It was also certain that the Liberals would lose ground to the nationalists at the Special Session of the Congress. A statement of Chintamani's precisely enunciates the Liberal views: 'I do not think that any member of the Congress can in fairness be accused of want of loyalty if instead of wasting time over vain regrets... he proceeds to business by accepting the official scheme as the only possible basis of discussion and making suggestions for its amendment and improvement.'

On 20 July 1918, it was reported that the nationalists would dominate the Special Session and would work for the rejection of the Montague-Chelmsford Scheme. Consequently,

1. See Biographical Account, Appendix- A.
2. The Leader, 27 July 1918, p.5.
Dinshaw Wacha, other Bombay Liberals and the Liberals of the other parts of the country decided to 'abstain' from it. 3

On 12 and 13 August 1918, the Berar Provincial Conference at Akola representing the Central Provinces, met and dispersed in a flurry of recriminations between the Central Provinces Liberals and nationalists. Consequently, the Liberals walked out of the Conference when they could make no impression there. 4

As a result, the Liberals declined to attend the special session of the Congress which was held on 29 August 1918 to consider the Reforms Scheme. They organised a special session of their own newly formed Moderates Party where their own ideas were put forward in a series of resolutions. They also abstained from the annual Christmas Session of the Congress in Delhi in 1918 and continued to keep aloof from the older organisation. The Liberals were against revolutionary ideas and changes. They advocated a gradual and peaceful evolution of self-government in India by strictly constitutional, lawful and parliamentary means. 5

As was the case with the other moderates of the country, the Central Provinces and Berar Liberals provided a lone voice welcoming the reforms. 6 An appeal signed,

3. The Leader, 24 July 1918, p. 5
4. Ibid, 12 August, 1918, p.5; 15 August, 1918, p.6
5. Naik, R.V.N., Indian Liberalism, a study, pp.1, 14 F, 17, Bombay, 1945
among others, by R.K. Bose, R.N. Dravid, Somorpat Joshi
and all the other knights and esquires of the province,
was issued on 22 October 1918 at Nagpur by way of a
justification for their abstention from the Special Session
of the Congress held in Bombay in August 1918. It pleaded
for the acceptance of the reforms. 'It is', they said,
'only by the goodwill of the British people that India
can attain what is the best attainable future, the United
States of India under the aegis of the British empire, a
step towards the poet's idea of federation of the world.
In this eager desire for self-government let not the
impatient idealist forget the solid advantages of being
a member of the British Empire, the Pax Britannica within
India's borders . . . . .10 It was like an echo from
the forgotten words of 'prayers, petitions and protest'
of the late nineteenth century which had become an
anachronism in a changed and different world where
stayagraha stood face to face with the might of the Empire.

The first Conference of the Moderates was held on
1 and 2 November 1918 in Bombay.11 The Central Provinces
and Berar was represented by B.K. Bose, R.N. Mudholkar,12
G.M. Chitnavis13, M.V. Joshi and others.14 It was presided

7. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. The Leader, 2 November 1918, p.5
11. Reed, Sir, Indian Year Book and Who's Who: A Statistical
and Historical Annual of the Indian Empire, with an
Explanatory of the Principal Topics of Day, 1918, p.640.
12. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
13. Ibid.
over by Surendra Nath Banerjea. The tenor of speeches delivered there was entirely in accord with the Liberal thinking. It accepted the Montague-Chelmsford Scheme as a distinct measure of advance over existing conditions. But the acceptance, though warm, was also critical. Three key resolutions were passed in the Conference. The sixth and seventh resolutions proposed improvements in the Central and Provincial governments, respectively, which the Liberals wanted to be included in the Scheme. The eleventh resolution provided for a committee to nominate a delegation to England to plead the Liberal views on the reform bill, which they expected to be introduced in the Parliament, and to take steps to form a properly constituted permanent organisation of the party with branches in the various provinces. They realised, as S.N. Banerjea urged in his presidential address, that between the extremists of the Indian left and the British right they must take a bold and strong stand. For party organization in the Central Provinces and Berar the Committee nominated B.K. Bose, R.N. Mudholkar, G.M. Chitnavis and M.V. Joshi as secretaries, with power to add to their number.

About the Montague-Chelmsford Report, the Liberals' main concern was to extend dyarchy to the Central as well as

15. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
16. Indian Year Book, 1918, p.644. A resolution was moved by N.M. Samrath.
the provincial spheres of government and to have more authority extended to the popular ministers and legislatures in both cases. It demonstrated a willingness to negotiate with the British as much as possible on common grounds, but always in the interests of India. Such an approach was to mark the Liberals as middle-men, an unenviable position. They were neither dogmatic patriots nor unprincipled collaborators. The Liberals, therefore, could not become peculiar either with the nationalists or with the majority or their country-men.

From the beginning of 1919 onwards the Liberals began to organise their party with branches in all the provinces and to prepare plans for the second All-India Moderate Conference. Some organisational efforts in the Central Provinces and Berar were made. Attempts were made in March 1919 in the province to form the Liberal Association. B.K. Bose, M.V. Joshi and M.B. Dadabhoy led the way.

At Nagpur, a 'Central Provinces Liberal Association' was formed with B.K. Bose as its President, N.A. Dravid and V.T. Mangalmurti as the Honorary Secretaries and G.K. Chitnavis, M.G. Deshpande, V.K. Kelkar, S.K. Pandit, N.G. Kinkhede and H.C. Barkar as members of the working Committee.

19. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
20. The Leader, 21 March 1919, p.3; 22 March 1919, p.11; 28 March 1919, p.4.
21. See Biographical Accounts—Appendix-A.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. The Leader, 3 April 1919, p.5.
The Second Conference of Liberals was held at Calcutta on 30 December 1919, with 650 delegates, and about an equal number of visitors were present on its opening day. Sir Vinode Mitter, as Chairman of Reception Committee, gave a rousing address claiming that only the Liberal deputation to England had done any good for the Indian cause. He asserted that the Reform Act 'ought to satisfy our aspiration for the present.'

P. S. Sivawam Aiyar in his presidential address likewise covered the entire field touched by the Reforms: Congress demands, Liberal nationalist differences, the Panjab situation, and issues like Indians in Africa, education and economic developments. He, like Mitter, emphasised the Liberals' creed to adopt a line or policy of 'Co-operative Association' that is, cooperation with the British whenever possible and opposition to them when necessary. Such a policy was to be followed both outside and inside the legislatures for the success of the constitutional reforms in the interests of India. Three important resolutions were passed, one of which welcomed the Reforms Act of 1919 as 'a definite and substantial step towards the progressive realisation of responsible government'. Its mover, Banerjee, supported by Castri,

27. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
29. Ibid., pp.678-79.
tapru and others, called on all sections of Indian leaders to cooperate for the successful working of the Act. 30

The second important resolution, moved by Sapru, condemned the excesses of both, government officials and Indian mobs, in the Panjab but called for amends and reparations on the government's part, indicating the government more severely. 31 Sapru, while reserving his judgement on the justification of the Hunter Report, frankly condemned the excesses committed there under the martial law. 32 It was a typically self-conscious restraint characteristic of the Liberals when placed in positions of difficulty between antagonistic official and popular viewpoints.

The third significant resolution was moved by Sivaswami Aiyar, and it advocated that the All India Moderate Federation to re-christened as the National Liberal Federation of India. 33

In this manner the Liberals prepared themselves for a permanent separation from the Congress, a keen contest to secure office under the Reform Act and to make that Act succeed according to the Liberal viewpoint.

From the beginning of 1920 onwards the Central provinces and Sare Liberals had proceeded in various ways

31. Ibid., p. 693.
32. Ibid., p. 693.
33. Ibid., p. 694.
to organise themselves for the forthcoming elections under the new Act. They issued an appeal and pleaded with the electorate to elect only those persons who had faith in the reform scheme and who were willing to work for its success. Further, they also issued an election manifesto in which they made the position of the Liberals clear in politics. They asserted that there were only two parties in the country - one which wanted to work the reforms and the other which wanted to wreck it. They contended that the Liberals stood for working the reform scheme from the very beginning. They complained that the organised campaign of vilification against the Liberals was started to discredit them before the country. They also noted that some of the nationalists proposed to keep Liberals from being elected to the new councils and they urged the Liberals not to be frightened by this but to do their best, despite their weakness in numbers, to make the Reforms a success. They appealed that only the best man, irrespective of party affiliations, should be sent to the council. They assured the electorate that they would work constructively in all the fields including education, medical relief, sanitation, village Panchayats, uplift of the depressed classes and encouragement to industries. But in spite of their appeal and manifesto,

their active campaigning was so slow in developing that the provincial government became alarmed that they would be swamped by nationalist propaganda.\textsuperscript{37} It was at this point on 20 April 1920 that B.G.Tilak\textsuperscript{38} formed the new 'Congress Democratic Party' and published its manifesto.\textsuperscript{39} The manifesto proclaimed 'unswerving loyalty' to the Congress, called for Dominion Status for India on the basis of the principle of self-determination, rejected the reforms as 'inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing'. They proposed in the meantime 'to work the reforms for all it was worth' and for accelerating the grant of full responsible government. It offered the policy of responsive co-operation or constitutional opposition, whichever may be expedient and best calculated to give effect to the popular will.\textsuperscript{40} In this way, in the provincial politics, on the one hand, the new Congress Democratic Party threw an electoral challenge to the Liberals, on the other, it girded itself for a battle with the Congress to forestall its adoption of a programme of boycott of the proposed council.

The significance of the emergence of the new party and its programme for the Liberals and the Congress in the provincial politics was twofold. Its belief was that the new councils should be worked for whatever they were worth.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Home Pol., No.89 Deposit, July 1920, FR, Second Half of February, 1920, p.21, NAI.
  \item \textsuperscript{38} See Biographical Accounts, Appendix-A.
  \item \textsuperscript{39} The Leader, 24 April 1920, p.10.
\end{itemize}
In respect of the view that a rejection and boycott of reforms served no purpose and that some good could be had from reforms, it stood with the Liberals. It was also clear, as far as its co-operation with the government was concerned, that the new party would work with the British only where it was clearly to its advantage and would otherwise oppose them. The Liberals would cooperate instinctively while the Congress Democratic Party tactically. Thus, the programme of the new party brought little consolation to the Liberals. For the Congress, it gave rise to tensions in the provincial politics between the nationalists of the various linguistic and regional groups. It resulted in discord between the nationalists of the Mahakoshal and the Vidarbha regions on the issue of entry into the new Council.

In response to the call given by the Congress, the Mahakoshal nationalists led by Ravi Shankar Shukla accepted Gandhi as the leader of the Indian National Congress and gave their full support to his programme. They did so for a number of reasons. The nationalist movement in the Mahakoshal region was in its infancy though it had been taking roots in the Vidarbha region for some time past. The nationalists in the Mahakoshal region were, therefore, prepared to support any leader who could lead them in attacking the British rule.  

41. See Biographical Account, Appendix- A.  
42. The Hitavada, 10 April 1920, p.7
In addition, they believed that the Non-Cooperation movement would create political consciousness among the Hindi-speaking people on a large scale. But the Vidarbha leaders, led by B.S. Moonje from Nagpur and G.S. Khatade from Berar, however, did not pledge their support to Sandhi as the Mahakoshal leaders had done. They supported Tilak's view and opposed Gandhi in two ways. First, by proposing to contest the elections to enter the reformed legislature and, secondly, when their attempts proved futile, they tried to defeat Gandhi at the Congress session at Nagpur.

In planning to enter the reformed Council, they followed the lead given by Tilak. Following Tilak's policy of 'responsive cooperation', the aims of the Marathi speaking nationalists were to contest the elections and to enter the legislature to advance the cause of self-government for India and to work the reforms for the benefit of the people. These aims were particularly important to the Vidarbha nationalists who represented urban groups and were in government service and the professions; they possessed extensive interests in land and banking also. Under this policy they could advance

43. The Bombay Chronicle, 17 May 1920, p. 7; The Hitavada, 14 August 1920, p. 5.
44. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
45. Ibid.
46. The Leader, 10 April 1920, p. 10.
the cause of self-government and to protect the interests of these groups at the same time. From the very beginning the Vidarbha nationalists could not keep their regional interest completely subservient to the wider issues facing the country at the time. Their desire to do so had the full encouragement of Tilak. In February, 1920 Tilak sent Kelkar to the Vidarbha region to address public meetings on the reforms.47

The election activities of the Vidarbha nationalists were especially keen in the Wardha district. In May 1920, Swarajya tours were arranged by the District Congress Committee to explain the benefits of the reforms to the villagers in the interior of the district. The leaders from all parts of the province were invited to join the tours.48 These efforts were successful both in the towns and villages as is evident from a description of an electoral meeting in the town of Wardha on 27 June 1920, as recorded by C.S. Khaparde: "We got down at Wardha on the platform where Balwantrao Deshmukh of Chanda, Atre, Trimback Rao Deshpande, Arjunlal Sethi, the brothers of Abhyankar, Joshi, Kedar pleader and many others with volunteers... The meeting was held in the theatre... and I presided. More than a thousand people were present. The Wardha Congress Committee visited 27 villages and did very good propaganda... and election work... The meeting was successful."49

48. Home Pol., July 1920, No.94 Deposit, PR, First Half of May 1920, p.19, NAI.
49. Khaparde Papers, Diary, 27 June 1920, NAI.
In July, 1920 the Congress Democratic Party proceeded to select candidates for the elections.\textsuperscript{50} But two events occurred in August and September which changed the situation in favour of the Gandhians. The first was the death of Tilak on 1 August 1920 that left the Vidarbha nationalists without a leader. The second event was the overwhelming vote in favour of Non-cooperation at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta in September, 1920.\textsuperscript{51}

The Special Session of the Congress was held at Calcutta on 4 September 1920 under the Presidentship of Lajpat Rai.\textsuperscript{52} It was called to consider the issues of Non-Cooperation and Boycott. The boycott of the Council elections, law courts and educational institutions came to be called the 'triple boycott'.\textsuperscript{53} Here Gandhiji placed his scheme of withdrawing all support to the government until the wrong done to Panjab was redressed and the question of the Khilafat was solved to the satisfaction of the Muslims. He suggested that 'there was no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of Non-violent, Non-Cooperation movement until the said wrongs were righted and Swaraj was established'.\textsuperscript{54} The resolution also desired the withdrawal

\textsuperscript{50} The Hitavada, 17 July 1920, p.5
\textsuperscript{51} The Pioneer, 11 Sept. 1920, p.5
\textsuperscript{52} See Biographical Account- Appendix-A
by candidates of their candidature for the selection to
the reformed councils, and refusal on the part of the
voters to vote for any candidate who might offer himself
for elections against the Congress advice.\textsuperscript{55} To Gandhi,
Councils were a 'deathtrap'.\textsuperscript{56} They would not only be
incapable of leading the country towards the Swaraj but
would tighten the 'British hold on India'.\textsuperscript{57}

The resolution was opposed by Bipin Chandra Pal,
Madan Mohan Malaviya\textsuperscript{58}, Annie Beasant, Vijaya Raghava-
Chariar\textsuperscript{59} and M.A. Jinnah. C.R. Das\textsuperscript{60} from Bengal and
G.S. Khaparde from Berar put up a stiff resistance to
Gandhi's scheme of boycott of the elections. C.R. Das's
attitude to the Montague-Chelmsford reforms was, however,
not rigid. He was prepared to offer cooperation to them
and was of the opinion that India should work the reforms
as far as it might be possible for the early establishment
of full responsible government. 'We are', he said, 'not
opposed to cooperation, if co-operation helps us to attain
that. We are not opposed to obstruction, when that helps
in our political goal'.\textsuperscript{61} G.S. Khaparde, a close associate

\textsuperscript{56} Gandhi's Speech at Subjects Committee, Calcutta,
\textsuperscript{57} Gandhi's speech on the Non-Cooperation resolution of
8 September, 1920 at Calcutta. \textit{Young India},
15 September, 1920.
\textsuperscript{58} See Biographical Account, Appendix-A
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Report of the 34th Session of the Indian National
Congress held at Amritsar on the 27th to 31st
of Tilak, opposed Gandhi's scheme because he believed in Tilak's policy of responsive cooperation with the new reforms. Tilak's followers believed that responsive co-operation was more practical than boycotting the Councils. These elite groups also opposed Non-Co-operation and advocated entry in the Councils because, they felt, the talk of the boycott had dangerously roused the political ambitions of the Muslim community in India. Lajpat Rai, who presided over the session, also had no sympathy with Gandhi's programme. The real battle was fought in the Subjects Committee where Gandhi won only by a majority of seven votes. Ultimately, in the open session, the resolution, which Gandhi himself moved, was carried by 1886 votes against 884, a huge


64. Gandhiji was not at all confident about its being adopted by the Congress because of the opposition by some leading figures like Annie Besant, Madan Mohan Malviya, Vijaya Raghavachariar, C.R. Das and Lajpat Rai. M.K.Gandhi, Autobiography, p.610.
majority indeed. The break-up of the votes is shown in table 2.1. 65

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>For Resolution</th>
<th>For Amendment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>395</td>
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<td>United Province</td>
<td>259</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panjab</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>92</td>
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<td>Andhra</td>
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<td>Sindh</td>
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<td>Delhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berar</td>
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The adoption of the Non-Cooperation resolution by the Calcutta Congress gave a great fillip and new direction to the national movement. The seed was thus sown in Calcutta of a new, dynamic, and hitherto untried method of political agitation, which was to exercise a profound influence on the course of events in India for the next twenty-seven years. The author of this dynamic programme was Gandhi who since then dominated the Indian political scene for nearly three decades.

According to the provisions of the Act, the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council was to consist of 53 elected members, 2 ex-officio members (members of the Executive Council) and 16 official and non-official nominated members. The elected members were again divided into three broad categories. They were elected either from general constituencies, rural and urban, or from communal constituencies or from special constituencies. In the Central Provinces and Berar, forty members were to be elected from general constituencies of which thirty were to be rural and ten were to be urban. There were seven communal and six special constituencies. The total electorate in the province was 1,49,737.

The qualifications for voters varied from province to province. Generally speaking, a male British subject of 21 years of age and of sufficient means to pay a certain minimum contribution to the public revenue could be a voter. In urban constituencies those paying income-tax on an income of not less than Rs.2000/- a year or owning or occupying a house of the annual rental value of Rs.36/- or paying municipal rates amounting to not less than Rs.3/- per annum could be registered as voters. In rural constituencies, payment of land revenue amounting to not less than Rs.10/- to Rs.50/- per year entitled a person to vote.

For Landholders' constituencies the qualification prescribed was the payment of annual land revenue of Rs.3000/- in University constituencies, registered graduates of 7 years' standing and fellows of Universities were entitled to vote. In the Central Provinces and Berar, lumbardars and village headmen could also become voters.

The elections to the Legislative Council under the Reforms of 1919 were held in November and December, 1920. The boycott of elections as already agreed upon at the special session of the Congress at Calcutta, formed an essential feature of the Non-Cooperation programme.

In response to the call of the Congress, an important meeting was organised at Narsinghpur in 1920 to decide upon the future course of action. The meeting was attended by Ravishanker Shukla, E. Raghavendra Rao, B.S. Moonje, Daulat Singh, Makhan Lal Chaturvedi, Vishnudutta Shukla and few other leaders of the province. These leaders decided to boycott the elections of the reformed Council.

68. *Indian Annual Register*, 1920, p.240
70. Ibid, p.240.
71. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
Following the meeting in the Central Provinces and Berar, many prominent leaders either did not stand for elections or withdrew their candidature. On 20 September 1920, in the Mahakoshal region, Ravishanker Shukla withdrew his nomination from the elections to the provincial legislature. In the Vidarbha region, Moonje withdrew his candidature from the coming elections for the new legislature. Following Moonje, a majority of the Vidarbha nationalist leaders also withdrew themselves from the elections. This is clearly seen in the following description of events given by Ahaparde in Amraoti on 20 and 29 October 1920: 'Local leaders do not care for non-cooperation, but think that since Congress has passed a resolution, it should be carried out. . . . Everyone recognises that non-cooperation . . . is foolish and suicidal, and yet they do not like to dissent publicly from Gandhi’s view and programme because Congress, they say, has adopted it.' A few sitting members of the


76. Khaparde Papers, Diary, 28 and 29 September 1920, NAI
councils resigned their seats. Vishnudutt Shukla of Sihora resigned from the membership of the Imperial Legislative Council. The move was well supported by the people of the province by who openly ask their candidates to withdraw their names. 77 With the influence of Ali brothers, Muslim leaders also boycotted the elections. 78 Likewise, many Tilakites also withdraw from the contest during the elections to the reformed legislatures. 79 But G.S. Khaparde and his associates disapproved of the scheme of Gandhi and decided to contest the elections. 80

However, the opposition of a few Tilakites could not prevent the success of this move in the Vidarbha region. The overwhelming majority of voters in the region abstained from the polls, and in a large number of constituencies only one candidate, generally a loyalist, stood for elections. 81 The Amrit Bazar Patrika gave the following description of the elections: 'Very few, we believe, expected that the elections would be such a fiasco in most places as they have been. In some places, there have been no candidates at all. In the Central Provinces ... there were no candidates from

77. 'Statement of Voters', Appendix-B.
80. The Tilakites who stood for elections were G.S. Khaparde for the Council of State; and R.M. Deshmukh, D.K. Kane, and J.B. Sane for the Provincial Legislature. All represented electorates in Berar.
seven non-Muslim rural constituencies till the date fixed for the election and the Chief Commissioner has been compelled to call for fresh nominations. 82

At many places, fresh nominations were called to fill in the vacant seats. Fresh nomination were also called for several non-Muslim seats as there were no candidates for them in the first instance. 83 Even the Central Provinces Government had to concede that 'no candidate was nominated for election in seven constituencies and out of 52 constituencies, 33 were uncontested. Out of 51,457 voters in contested constituencies, 11,566 voters or 22 percent attended the polls, the poor percentage being due . . . . to the non-cooperation campaign . . . . ' 84 It was reported that one of the polling officers became so exasperated when not a single vote was cast during the day that he made the local Patel perform sit-up holding his ears with the tips of his fingers in order to humiliate him. 85

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83. Home Pol., No. 33 Deposit, January 1921. Telegram from The Viceroy to the Secretary of States of India, dated 5 Dec. 1920, NAI.


85. *Indian Papers, CPR, The Bombay Chronicle*, 4 December 1921. *The Kesari*, 30 November 1920, NAI.
Some of the candidates who got elected, in spite of public opposition, faced utter humiliation at the hands of the people. With the result, a few elected members resigned from the membership of the Legislative Council. Bajirao Kirdutt, who was elected from Raipur District south constituency, resigned from the membership of the Legislative Council. V.J. Patel, General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, while delivering a fiery speech at Nagpur on 26 November 1920 emphasised the fact that 'the newly elected members of the provincial council were not the people's representatives, he suggested that the electors in each constituency should hold meetings calling upon the members to resign'. Even then many who entered the councils invited the ridicule of the people and became intensely unpopular. While commenting on their pitiable condition, The Gujrati of Bombay wrote: 'Mr. (G.S.) Khaparde, who disapproved of the Non-Co-operation resolution and resolved to stand for election, has now became one of the most unpopular of men in his province where he used to receive enthusiastic oviations as the "uncrowned king" of the Berars'.

86. There were 33 unopposed members, The Return Showing of Elections, the Results in India, 1920, p.23-24.
88. Home Fol., February 1921, No.35 deposit, FR, First Half of December 1920, p.22, NAI.
The elections were almost a walk-over for the Liberals, the Loyalists and the Independent candidates. The members elected to the councils were without political influence. More influential leaders abstained from seeking elections. The quality of these members was summed up by the Nation of London in the following words: 'There may be highly respectable persons among them, wealthy men, men enjoying decoration but on the whole they were elderly (sic) and timid men who have little driving power, little initiative and no great popular following'.

The Legislative Council of Central Provinces and Berar, as it emerged after the elections and nominations, consisted of 71 members—53 elected, two ex-officio members (two members of Executive Council, one Indian and one European) and 15 nominated officials and non-officials (five European and seven Indians.)

The test by which representative character of a legislature can be judged is whether it represents a cross section of the opinion of the people. As we have seen, during the elections in the province, the boycott of Councils, preached, enforced and to a large extent acted upon, by the Non-Co-operators led to a serious

91. See Appendix-C.
position in the Council. Consequently, in 33 out of 53 constituencies, there was no contest, while in the 23 constituencies, in which contest took place, only 22 percent of the voters actually recorded their votes. With the result, the Council elected on a drastically constricted franchise, actually represented only a very small proportion of the electorate. Thus it can safely be concluded that the first reformed Council of the Central Provinces and Berar could in no sense claim to be truly representative.

The Indian elected and nominated members, classed on an occupational basis comprised 32 practicing lawyers and landholders, five big zamindar, five landholders, three merchants, two bankers, one journalist, one teacher, one industrialist and nine members belonging to miscellaneous occupations. It is noteworthy that nearly all the lawyers were landholders also.

The elected members fell into three categories, those who represented a popular electorate, e.g. members representing the Mohammedans and the non-Mohammedans; those who represented special interests, e.g. the Central Provinces and Berar Mining Association, Central Provinces and Berar Commerce and Industry Association, Berar Commerce and

92. The Return Showing the Results in India, 1920, pp. 23-24.
93. See Appendix-C.
Industry and those who represented Central Provinces and Berar Landholders. The nominated members fell into four divisions: those who were nominated from among the owners of Zamindari and Jagirdari estates declared to be backward, those who were nominated to represent depressed classes, those who represented the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians, and Government officials who ensured merely the minimum voting strength for the government.

Of the eight nominated non-official members one was nominated from among Zamindari and Jagirdari estates declared to be backward, two were nominated from among depressed classes and one was nominated from among the European and Anglo-Indian Community. Although nominated non-officials were not government servants and were free to vote as they pleased, they were conscious that they owed their seats to the government patronage and therefore, voted according to the government's wishes.

Of the 53 elected members the Central Provinces and Berar Mining Association elected one member, Central Provinces and Berar Commerce and Industry Association elected one member and Berar Commerce and Industry elected one member. These three gave the government
three more votes because one of them was its own official\textsuperscript{94} and the remaining two depended on government for licences and other facilities. Besides this, the landholders who were classed into special constituencies elected another block of three members. They, in time of need, owing to their vested interest in the status quo, could be depended upon to vote in favour of the government. In addition, seven Mohammedan members, elected to represent their community were also government supporters. It appears from the proceedings of the Legislative Council that they, except in exceptional matters related to their own community interests, always gave their support to the government. Consequently, the representatives of the general electorate, consisting of only Hindus, numbered only forty, while the government had, for all occasions a hard core of a block of 28 votes in the Council.

Thus, it may be said that the composition of the Council on the basis of two contradictory systems, popular representation as well as nomination of dependable non-officials as well as of permanent officials often junior officials who had no voice in the shaping of policy, militated against the responsible character of the legislature.

\textsuperscript{94} Mr. H. D. Coggon was elected to represents Central Provinces and Berar Mining Association. 
\textit{Source: Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1920, p. 24.}
The exact dates of birth of most of these members are not traceable, but in some cases an approximate date of birth is available in their biographies, and in some cases their dates of birth have been obtained from the interviews with their sons, grandsons, relatives, friends, and Congress leaders. The following table shows the age composition after the elections and nominations:

Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elections</th>
<th>Under 30</th>
<th>30-49</th>
<th>50-69</th>
<th>70-89</th>
<th>Known</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is clear that the majority of Indian members both elected and nominated, were between the ages of 50 and 69. Thus, the legislature which emerged after the elections and the nominations in 1921, was somewhat older than the second, third and fourth legislatures. The fact that 35 out of the sixty members, or 50 per cent, were above the age of fifty shows that the elections did not bring young people, imbued with the ideals of nationalism or reform in the council. Their age in itself would incline them generally to take a safe stand on various issues that might embarrass the government.

95. See Appendix C
The first reformed Council consisted of eight Indian members\(^{96}\) (elected and nominated) who had been the members of the earlier Council and had some experience of public affairs. Some others, mostly from the urban constituencies, had earlier taken part in local affairs. But a considerable proportion of the rural members were making their first entry into public life. Thus, the proportion of the inexperienced members was very high in the first council. Naturally their contribution to the deliberations in the Council would not be very significant.

Education

The education system up to 1920 was not very accessible and popular. Only the sons of notable Malguzars, Bankers, Merchants, Lawyers, and those from the middle classes were able to acquire higher education. Only in exceptional cases could the sons of the people of lower classes receive higher education. The following table\(^{97}\) shows the standard of education of the members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Matric</th>
<th>Under Matric known</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council 1921-23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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96. They were Gangadhar Madho Chitnavis, President of the Council, Kizuddin Khan, Zamindar of Khuji, Bipin Krishna Bose, M.G. Deshpande, M.R. Dixit, M.V. Joshi, N.R. Kelkar and S.V. Mahajani.

97. See Appendix-C.
From the above table it is clear that the majority of the Indian members were graduates and law graduates. This showed that the council was composed of the people mostly of middle class background. Naturally their approach to the problems would have a middle class orientation.

By 1920 the society in Central Provinces and Berar was arranged mainly into three social and economic groups: Upper class (Urban and Rural), Middle classes (Urban and Rural) and Lower Class (Urban and Rural). The upper class comprised members from the prominent families including sons of Brahmin and Non-Brahmin Malguzars, Marwari Bankers, Merchants, Industrialists and Lawyers. The middle classes included Lawyers from Brahmin and Non-Brahmin families, with or without landed connection, and government servants in the Mahakoshal region and Brahmin, petty traders, small land-holders and government servants with or without landed connection in the Vidarbha region. The lower class consisted of, among others, landless rural Sarzis, Telis, Kumhars, Dhobis, Chimars, Rai, Chaders, Chamaras, Basorees and Mehtars in the Mahakoshal region, and low-caste Mahar labourers and Harijan industrial workers in the Vidarbha region. Out of the 60 elected and nominated members, 20 were from the upper class, 31 were from the middle class and 9 were from the lower class. 98 Thus the

98. See Appendix-C.
legislature was apparently a middle class dominated body. It at the same time consisted of a good number of members of low social status, such as a Tailor, Vegetable sellers and petty shop-keepers some of whom were unfit by training or education to exercise the responsibility of their position. 99 This proportion of middle classes and lower class in the council was due to the boycott of the councils, enforced by the Non-Co-operators to a large extent. This was also responsible for the abstention of many gentlemen whose abilities and knowledge of public affairs would have marked them out as worthy of a place in the legislature. 100

Of the 60 nominated and elected Indian members of the new Legislative Council of 1921, twelve were liberals, 101 four were Tilakites 102 and forty-four were loyalists and Independents, though some of the latter held moderate views. 103 These included G.M. Chitnavis who was nominated President of the legislature by the Governor for three years. But there was no form of party organisation in

100. Ibid., p. 309.
101. They were Sir G.M. Chitnavis, President of the Council, Moropant Vishwanath Joshi, Home Member, Bipin Krishna Bose, Rai Bahadur Keshav Warnam Brahama, M.R. Dixit, G.P. Jaiswal, Rai Bahadur M.G. Deshpande, Syed Yasin, Sir S.M. Chitnavis, Rai Bahadur N.K. Kelkar, R.V. Mahajani and N.A. Dravid. The figures are based on a comparison of National Liberal Federation membership list and the membership of the legislature.
102. Return showing the Results of Election in India, 1920, pp. 23-24.
the legislature. Members were divided into three groups, viz. Brahman, Mohammedan and depressed classes. In addition to these groups, there were also territorial and linguistic groups. There were Berar representatives, who held that Berar was exploited by the Central Provinces and did not get a fair share commensurate with its revenue; the Central Provinces representatives, claimed that Berar should be treated as a part of the province and not as a separate political entity; the representatives of the Hindi-speaking districts of the north maintained that the interests of the Mahakoshal were sacrificed to benefit Vidarbha. The representatives of Vidarbha were mainly Marathi-speaking. These groups in the legislature were not formed in accordance with the character of their political leanings or convictions, but rather on territorial, class or communal considerations.

Although the proportion of the Liberals in the total number was not great, as a group, they were influential. The number of their leaders, who were subsequently appointed as ministers, made their position even more decisive. S.M. Chitnavis and N.K. Kelkar

105. See Biographical account, Appendix-A
106. Ibid.
were appointed Ministers. Executive Councilorship also came to the Liberals, and N. V. Joshi was appointed an Executive Councillor. Thus the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council for the first three years of the reforms, could be described as a liberal and the loyalist legislature, not much influenced by the mainstream of the political opinion that was sweeping the country during its tenure.