CHAPTER VI
RETURN TO AGITATION
SIGNALLING QUIT INDIA, 1940-41

This chapter which serves broadly as a backgrounder to the Quit India Movement attempts to examine the nature of peasants, and tribals, workers mobilisation and the attendant popular perception in 1940-41. Besides, it maps the Individual Satyagraha in a separate section. These developments are also read along with peculiar developments in Orissa in the shape of factions within the PCC, leading to the installation of a ‘coalition ministry’ and the rejection of assent to the Madras Land Estates Bill by the Viceroy. The overall scenario of war serves as a continuing theme of all the subsections contained in the chapter. While dealing with the Individual Satyagraha, attempt has been made to locate the forms and extent of popular mobilisation under its strategy, thus assessing its strength and viability as a method of struggle. We have also tried to suggest that this Satyagraha should be seen as a strategy linked to the broad mass movement which emerged in 1942, in so far as it mobilised people and kept them ready for the subsequent onslaught on imperialism. In other words, the strategy of the Individual Satyagraha went into the making of the forceful anti-imperialist and anti-feudal sweep characterising the 1942 struggle.

PATTERN OF PEASANTS/WORKERS MOBILISATION: 1940

The resignation of the Congress Ministry in November 1939 was accompanied by the simultaneous process of elevating the peasant movement to a new height and placing peasant consciousness on the path of progressive transformation. Thus, despite the outbreak of World War II (September 1939) and the consequent imperialist repression against anti-war stance of the leadership, the peasant movement continued to maintain a fair degree of momentum. Let us analyse this
trend briefly to locate the immediate context of the Quit India Movement.

One of the dominant issues around which peasant mobilisation occurred during this period was Madras Estates Land (Orissa Amendment) Bill, which was finally refused consent by the Viceroy in February 1941. We have observed earlier how massive peasant mobilisation in Ganjam got organised around this Bill till the end of 1939. Coinciding with the resignation of Congress Ministry several meetings as well as Kisan Rally Week were organised in places like Aska, Kudala, Patrapur, Kalyanpur, Samantyapalli and Gurandi, demanding early consent to the bill by the Viceroy. Biswanath Das, who addressed these meetings, indicated the lines of Satyagraha to be organized after the approval and support of AICC and PCC, in case consent to the bill was withheld. The people of Phasi village (Atagada estate) moved in a demonstration to the district magistrate and submitted unsigned resolution to him (addressed to the Viceroy) saying that the same had been passed by all the ryots in the village. The resolution demanding immediate consent to the bill rejected any plea for compromise over the bill. It characterised the bill as not very satisfactory so far as the protection of the interests of the Zamindary tenants were concerned, yet a measure intended to save the ryots from the "present misery and exploitation" of the tenants. In March, a delegation comprising Dibakar Patnaik (MLA, Ganjam), Shyam Sundar Misra, and Laxmi Narayan Sahu (Servants of India Society), Sachi Routrai (left wing student activist, and a peasant leader by this time) attended the 5th session of the All India Kisan Conference. So also, a delegation of 20 peasants from Parlakhemundi attended the said Conference. The

1. HPD, FNR Ganjam, 30.1.40 (ACC-1308).
2. HPD, I.G. Report, 5.4.40 (ACC-1371).
meeting with Swami Sahajananda and other peasant leaders in the Conference gave these delegates the idea of launching a no-rent campaign back in Orissa and particularly in Ganjam District and Khurda. Around March, Dibakar Patnaik, Balram Panda and Ramaballava Panda in a meeting at Luhagudi (Ganjam) advised the tenants not to offer bethi (forced labour) to the Government and to demand full payment for such work and moreover, to "resist by force" any attempt by Government to realise bethi through force. The villagers were also told not to give their dues to the patros. So also, Banamali Maharana, kept on releasing leaflets and making speeches in the usual militant tone, focusing on the grievances of the peasants. In Balliguda Agency, the tribals, under the advice of dismissed Samastnam Paik Hanu Majhi, refused to work on Government roads and buildings and also refused payments to the patros.  

The possibility of a no-rent campaign gathered strength around April in Ganjam after the Palasa peasant conference in the specific context of long-pending Madras Land Bill and an overall "hesitation in paying-up rents" in the Zamindari areas came to be experienced. This process was further helped by the weak control of PCC over Congress activists of Ganjam and the involvement of communists in championing the cause. We come across evidence of tenants assaulting the police force by September in Kakharajolo village (Hinjli, Ganjam). The police had gone there to


4. HPD, Kisan Sabha and Agrarian Situation, 22.3.40 (ACC-1371).

5. Board of Revenue Records, Chief Secy to D.M., 15.4.40 (Sl.No.422).

6. HPD, FNR Ganjam, 27.4.40 (ACC-1308).

7. HPD, No rent campaign in Ganjam, 19.5.40 (ACC-1441).
arrest a 'suspected person'. The concerned Sub-Inspector who led the force (10 in number) to the village was aware of the tension prevailing in the village earlier. Still, he went ahead with a small force and without any fire arms. This resulted in a serious assault on the police by the people and a constable was murdered.8

Congress organisation in Ganjam reflected the sharp division in the PCC in terms of two factions under the leadership of Dibakar Patnaik and Biswanath Das. The former advocated a more militant line in terms of a no-rent campaign whereas Biswanath Das as usual pressed for the organisation of a Satyagraha in case of refusal of assent to the Madras Bill. Dibakar Patnaik represented the Nilakantha Das (Forward Bloc adherants) group in PCC whereas Biswanath Das and Mahatab constituted the dominant leadership of PCC. It would not be out of place to suggest here that the advocacy of more a militant line of peasant mobilisation by the faction of Nilakantha and Dibakar was more to oppose the ex-ministry faction than to genuinely take up peasants cause. Besides, certain peasant associations of rich peasants of Khallikote and Atagada estates (like one at Kudala Taluk) preferred and pressed for a compromise between the Raja and the tenants over the Madras Bill and sought immediate reduction of rents. That apart, the large scale arrest of Kisan activists and leaders in Ganjam (Banamali Maharana convicted in September 1940) definitely dampened the militancy of Ganjam peasant movement. Along with these trends, the campaign against contributions to war-funds also existed in the district. The initiative for this drive came from Banamali


Unfortunately, we do not get enough details of the incident. The peasants involved in the incident were Ghana Sahu, Sudarshan Sahu, Dilli Sahu, Dina Sahu, Madhab Patra, Agadhu Sahu, Ganga Badita and others. The official enquiry held to probe the incident viewed the S.I.'s conduct as 'irresponsible' and 'irresolute'.

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Maharana.\(^9\)

The 'All-India Kisan Day' was observed on 1 September in Puri district particularly in Begunia and Astarang areas. The imperialist war policies were discussed and stress laid on the need to devise means to prevent the British from "taking away men and money by force for the war". Peasants were advised to initiate a 'whisper campaign' in the villages against the war efforts and fund collection drive.\(^{10}\) The Communist leader like Fakir Chandra Mohanty (Bolgarh), who was active in peasant mobilisation in Puri, advocated resistance to the drive for war-fund collection along with breaking of forest laws and withholding of rent payment.\(^{11}\)

Around September, the Congress resolutions passed in Poona were printed in Oriya booklets, detailing AICC directive on refusal of payment of compulsory war subscriptions. They were distributed and meetings were organised to explain to the people in this regard.\(^{12}\) The Socialists like Khetrabasi Mahanty and Lakhmidhar Mahapatra brought out anti-war posters under the titles of Sahajyabad Dhawansa Heu (Down with the doctrine of help and co-operation) and Bhaira Buku Re Chhura Dei Judha Chanda Deuchha Ki? (Are you contributing towards the war, stabbing the chests of your brothers).\(^{13}\)

However, as elsewhere, large scale arrests of the leftwing leaders (who were most active in the peasant mobilisation of the district) such as Gokul Mohan Rai Churamani, Sadhu Charan Mahanty, Prananath Patnaik and Purna Chandra Mahanty

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9. HPD, FNR, Ganjam, 13.7.40 (ACC-1308).
12. HPD, FNR, Puri, 30.9.40 (ACC-1285).
13. HPD, FNR, Puri, 29.11.40 (ACC-1285).
under D.I.R.,\textsuperscript{14} dealt a major blow to peasant movement of this district. We also come across a pamphlet entitled 'Ranabheri' (War Trumpet) circulated in Jalleswar hat in Balasore district. The pamphlet discussed the overall scenario of war and asked the Kisans to refuse "war tax to hypocrite Britishers". While advising peasants to form "young volunteer peace corps" (Yuvak Shanti Sena Dal) it asked them to devise means to drive away the Britishers and not at all to be "afraid of red pugrees" (meaning police). Natu Satpathy, who pasted the pamphlet on a tree in the hat, when arrested by the police, refused to divulge his address saying that his residence was in India.\textsuperscript{15}

So also, Banamali Das (of Nilagiri Prajamandal fame) stepped up Communist propaganda by circulating the Communist leaflet Age Chala (Forward March) in the villages.\textsuperscript{16} We also come across a book the titled Chasabhai Gita\textsuperscript{17} (songs of the peasants), which was considered for proscription in the year 1940. The booklet was written around July 1939, by a student of Agarpara High School (Bhadrak) Jatindra Mohan Mohapatra and published by the Students Federation of Agarpada. This long poem brings out the youth's as well as the intelligentsia's concern for the peasantry. The poem basically a text with intense nationalist content appealed to the peasants to be fearless and join the non-violent struggle of the country; it stressed all the Gandhian principles in terms of Swadeshi, boycott, and the Gandhian constructive activities like Harijan uplift, anti-untouchability, antidowry, literacy, and anti-liquor. Besides, it advised the

\textsuperscript{14} HPD, FNR, Puri, 14.3.40 (ACC-1285).
\textsuperscript{15} HPD, S.P. Report on Oriya Pamphlet Ranabheri, 4.6.1940 (ACC-1495).
\textsuperscript{16} HPD, FNR, Balasore, May 1940 (ACC-1307)
\textsuperscript{17} HPD, S.P. Report on the book the Chasabhai Gita, 12.4.40 (ACC-1450).
peasants to represent to the Congress all their grievances without leaving the organisation "even if it is converted into 100 factions!" (This was somewhat a reflection on the state of PCC!). The poem also pointed to the stranglehold of imperialism when it warned the peasants that "just because the Ministers of the province are Congressmen, don't think you are saved; over them there are Governors, Viceroys...."

The poem exhorted the zamindars and the vested interests to realise the fact that by oppressing the tenants they were only serving the colonial interests.

Back in Koraput, one again finds the peasant meetings used by the leadership to campaign against "forced" contributions to the war fund. Cyclostyled notices against forced contributions to the war funds were issued in Nawarangpur under the initiative of Radha Mohan Sahu (MLA). In meeting, addressed by Prof. Ranga in Gunupur, peasants were promised a peasants Government entirely manned by peasants on Russian ideals. Ranga attacked both imperialism and the internal exploiters like Zamindars for their extravagant living and the oppression of the peasantry. However, the anti-feudal edge of the peasant movement in this district (as picturised in 1937-39 phase earlier) was blunter and the focus of attack shifted to imperialism through campaign against war-measures - a feature increasingly visible right since May, 1940, when the number of Congress meetings opposing war measures was stepped up.

At this stage, we must turn our attention to Laxman Naik, a 'graduate' and a trainee of Nuaput Camp in Koraput to examine his style of leadership as well as his mobilisa-

18. HPD, FNR, Koraput, 27.9.40 (ACC-1306).
19. HPD, FNR, Koraput, 13.2.40 (ACC-1306).
20. HPD, FNR, Koraput, 12.5.40 (1306).
tion of peasantry in the pre-Individual Satyagraha phase. This is to be examined as a crucial aspect along with the overall peasant mobilisation obtaining in Koraput in 1937-39 phase which we have analysed earlier. Understanding Laxman Naik in this phase assumes importance precisely because he became a substantial force in the Quit India Movement in Koraput. Back to his village at Tentuligumma from Nuaput Camp around March 1938, Laxman was a transformed political personality. The ideological weight of the Nuaput camp had generated in him a much stronger commitment towards Gandhian ideals. Being a tribal he gave up hunting and non-vegetarian diet. He also tried to equally dissuade his fellow villagers from sacrificing animals before goddesses. That apart, he preached to the people the Gandhian Constructive programmes such as Khadar, spinning, cotton cultivation, non-violence, and character-building for moral and economic regeneration of the rural life. Laxman's father was a mustajar (village headman) of Tentuligumma, Bejuniguda, Anlaguda and Lekiguda under Jeypore Zamindari. Laxman succeeded his father to this position in 1930. He also owned nearly 80 acres of land. He utilised his position as a Mustajar to further the campaign of Gandhian programmes in the villages by undertaking village reconstruction in terms of road-building, making provisions for irrigation facilities, introducing new techniques for cultivation, etc. He moved from village to village covering 30/40 miles a day preaching the Congress and Gandhian policies and ideology and collecting subscription for the Congress

21. This reflection on Laxman Naik is mostly constructed on the basis of the views presented in Dasarathi Nanda's book, Sahid Laxman Naik, pp. 30-90 (Berhampur, 1977). It is also interesting to note that Laxman, the youth had come under the impact of Rampa rebellion led by Alluri Sitaram Raju (1922-24). Raju, it is reported, had been to Malkangiri, in the process of his wandering. Besides, Laxman had befriended one Chandra Kutia, (a Koya youth who had joined the Rampa fituri) and learnt from him about the Rampa rebellion and the nature of rebel warfare. Under Chandra's guidance, Laxman interestingly mastered the use of gun. These, must have shaped the youthful exuberance of Laxman and afterwards helped in the tribal organisation in his own areas.
fund. As a Mustajar, he listened to the complaints of people regarding the oppression by the Zamindars, did the state and forest officials. Besides he gave discourses on religion, Gandhi, Khadar and national movement etc. to the people. He often advised the people:

"Don't fear, tell loudly whatever you have in your mind, otherwise you and your future generations would suffer.... We must think a way out.... Don't fear the revenue inspector nor the Raja... the Raja is placed under British Government... they have arms and ammunitions.... If we reject both the Raja and the British Government no body can terrorise us.... This is what Gandhi a great man of this country says.... Gandhi has said that people should disobey the Government; not to perform bethi and gudem. If a single man does it, police will beat him, but if everybody does it, the Sahibs (Britishers) will quit this country."

In the process, Laxman (himself being a Mustajar) came to inaugurate a virtual no-rent campaign by advising fellow tribals to hold back the payment of cesses to the Ruler. Laxman's activities resulted in losing his official position a Mustajar and he was declared a rebel. The entire process of mobilisation undertaken by Laxman led to the people treating him as the Gandhi of the tribals of that tract.

The Kisan Sabha activities in Khariar (Sambalpur) were geared towards refusal of Charî and Ranawa to the Zamindars of Khariar which continued along with attempts at negotiations with the Zamindars.22

So also, the peasant movement in Kanika, Aul, Dampara estates of Cuttack district as well as the conflicts between petty landlords (like Samadhi math, Sankarananda math, Mahiparaksh math and Neuldas math) and their respective peasants in Puri district continued, though in a muted form; with the landlords as elsewhere, trying to reassert their position which had been undermined in the 1936-39 phase.23 The floods in Cuttack and Balasore during July-August, 1940, and the arrest of left wing leaders (as seen in the context of Puri district) also considerably affected the pace of peasant

22. HPD, FNR, SBP, 27.6.40 (ACC-1305).

movement in these districts. Another form of activity of this period was the kisan school which was opened at Jankia (Khurda), under the guidance of socialist leaders, to educate peasants on the war situation and other war-time developments. Mention may also be made of Gramya Mangal Samiti, (which basically functioned for rural uplift) at Lachinda village (Bargarh Sub-division Sambalpur), which had been started during the period of the Congress Ministry to protect tenants' interest against the oppressions of Gountias. It was revamped in 1940. A Congress volunteer training camp, including a plan for a lady volunteers' section, was opened in Tunglibandhbi (Sohela, Sambalpur) to impart necessary training to village level volunteers.

The overall pace of peasant movement during the year 1940 was one of low-key in the face of massive repression launched by imperialism. This helped the autocracies represented by the Zamindars and the Rajas to re-assert their position, which had been damaged during the period of the Congress Ministry.

At this point, we may also trace certain developments regarding workers mobilisation, a feature-emerging very late in Orissa and possibly due to the impact of massive mobilisation of peasants during 1936-39.

As early as January 1940, one notices, the labourers at the goods-shed demanded a hike in wages due to rise in prices of foodstuffs and proposed to go on a strike from 15 January of the year. In May 250 workers of Himgir-Rampur colliery

24. HPD, FNR, Cuttack, Balasore, July, August.
25. HPD, FNR, Puri, 14.5.40 and 14.6.40 (ACC-1285).
26. HPD, FNR, SBP, 12.4.40 (ACC-1305).
27. HPD, FNR, SBP, 12.2.40/12.4.40 (ACC-1305).
28. The efforts at mobilising the workers in the phase of 1936-39 was really mild and meagre.
(Sambalpur) struck work demanding increase in wages from -/2/6/- to -/3/- per day due to war-time inflation. The strike continued till the 1st week of June. But nothing materialised as regards their salary increase and the workers resumed their duties.³⁰ So also, in August, around 300 labourers of Orient Paper Mill at Ib (Sambalpur) held a meeting at Telenpali under the leadership of Durga Prasad Guru, the President of the Labour union, and demanded a hike in wages. They resorted to a full fledged strike on 13 August. They took out processions with red flags and distributed leaflets. This ultimately forced the mill-owners to concede a wage hike. This, in fact, made Guru a hero of the labourers.³¹ This success of the labourers at Orient Paper Mill spurred the labourers of Himgir-Rampur Colliery once again, as the labourers for the factory were drawn from the same villages. They again struck work only to be persuaded back to work through a promise of negotiation regarding pay increment by the authorities. Here, Guru and Piary Shankar Ray took up the initiatives to mobilise the workers.³²

Guru often mobilised the workers and kept up the strikers' morale by composing many poems.³³ The poems were written essentially to enthuse the labourers to get into a struggle against the capitalist system by highlighting their grievances. These poems were sung by the workers during processions. For instance, one of the poems read:

"Blow the conch of strike and mobilise the workers in the paper mill; Rend the heart of the proud (owners) by hoisting up bloody flag.... Destroy the acute pride of capitalists through strike.... Respond to the exploitation of the capitalists through this strike.... The sky

³⁰. *HPD, S.P. Report, 10.6.40 (ACC-1490).*
³¹. *Board of Revenue Records, Deputy Commissioner's Report, (Sambalpur), 17.8.40, Sl.No.401.*
³². *Board of Revenue Records, Deputy Commissioner's (Sambalpur) Report, 21.8.40 (Sl.No.413).*
³³. *HPD, Report by Deputy Commissioner on a booklet Biplab Jhankar (Oriya), 16.2.42.*
will rend with cheers of the Labour Union...." (Poem-1, Dat.13.8.40). Referring to the failure of the authorities to initiate negotiations with the labourers, another poem read: "The name of Birla who is known in the country as charitable, and respectable, has become so for our misfortune.... It is useless to wait any longer.... Display, the proletariat! being united, the destruction of the haughty and the proud!" It further went on to chart the method of struggle for the workers: "You have made your righteous war by holding up the banner of truth and chanting the slogans of peace; proceed on your work fearlessly and with an undeluded mind.... Apply your mind to righteous warfare by taking up the arms of action". (Poem-2, 23.10.40).

Another poem reminded the labourers that they were the miserable victims of the capitalist system. For instance: "The earth could no longer bear the pains, the seat of the Almighty shook. The reliever of the distressed played revolution in the process of relieving them.... The whole world is shaken in the sounds of catch! strike a blow! The war goddess Durga is bathed in blood and dancing merrily.... The oppressive kings and haughty capitalists will also perish.... We, the cultivators and labourers who are losing all, will surely attain victory. The destroyer of pride and the killer of demon has become merciful to us. We are masters of this country. We have no fear for anyone...." (Poem 3, 10.9.41). The text of the poems clearly revealed a distinct inspiration of communist perspective of struggle against capitalism.

We also come across evidence of sweepers strike in Puri.34 For instance, Narasingha Tripathy (Chairman, Puri District Youths Conference) along with other communist leaders like Gokul Mohan Ray Churamani and Guru Charan Patnaik organised the sweepers of Puri Municipality over the issues of pay hike and basic facilities to sweepers regarding drinking water, street lights, provident fund, provision for holidays, and leave and maternity leave for women sweepers. The sweepers also demanded recognition of the Harijan Labour Union. They called for a general strike during the car festival in July. Behind such mobilisation, prominent communists such as Sarat Patnaik, Ananta Patnaik, Bhagabati Panigrahi were also active. These leaders launched an association called Harijan

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Sramika Sangha and under this banner carried on a literacy campaign among the Harijans along with the attempt at organising them. This development had its effect in Parlakhemundi (Ganjam) where sweepers threatened the municipality with a strike in August.\(^{35}\) It may be noted that the organisation of Harijan workers and the assertion of their rights were primarily due to the Harijan welfare campaign taken up by the Congress leadership - mostly the committed Gandhians - over a long period and markedly since the 1930s.

**PRINCELY STATES:**

What was the pattern that obtained in the princely states during this period? Let's briefly look at it. The Talcher Prajamandal intensified its campaign against the Ruler for the violation of the declaration made by the durbar and the Zulum of the forest department. It condemned the Ruler for not implementing the concessions, already announced by the administration such as stopping of realisation of professional taxes from artisans and the return of Khasdakhal and Sarbara-kari Bhogra lands. However, the Prajamandal shifted its focus to imperialism locating in it the major cause for the exploitation of the state subjects. For example, in a meeting at Kosala refugee camp (11 March, 1940), Pabitra Pradhan, declared the British Government to be "thieves, liars and cheats" in as much as no action was taken by the political department to remedy the real difficulties of the people. He advised the peasants to join the coming CDM vigorously.\(^{36}\) The Talcher Prajamandal leadership also stepped up the campaign against war-loan collection as well as kept asking the people to withdraw their savings from post offices.\(^{37}\) Yet in another meeting at Paniola (24 June), Pradhan spoke of conducting the

\(^{35}\) *HPD, FNR, Ganjam, 13.8.40 (ACC-1308).*

\(^{36}\) *HPD, D.M.'s Report, Cuttack, 31.3.40.*

\(^{37}\) *HPD, 10.7.40 (ACC-1353).*
Pramandal campaign both violently and non-violently due to the changing political context and the war.\textsuperscript{38}

The anti-imperialist focus of the leadership was exceptionally sharp. For instance, Madanmohan Pradhan explained to the people of Paniola that, British empire would certainly crumble in the war and therefore the people in the states should organise and launch a Satyagraha movement.\textsuperscript{39} In this context, we may look into the detailed instructions of Pabitra Mohan Pradhan to the subjects of Talcher with reference to War and the future course of action. They were as follows:\textsuperscript{40}

(a) *To establish youth leagues in villages to recruit one person from each family to the league.*

(b) To arm every family with lathi of 3 cubits and rope of 10 cubits in length.

(c) To keep a detachable ladder secretly in the bedding which can be taken everywhere for disconnecting the telegraphic lines so as to disrupt the state administration's move to bring in armed forces to the state by wiring message in the context of war.

(d) People in the villages to appear in batches of 500 to counter the contingent of 100 armed police. People should collect together when a call or signal of the Congress is given in the village.

(e) People should defend themselves by the use of lathis and armaments (sickle, axe) and resist the collection of war loans as well as recruitment of men to the war. They should also go to the rescue of villagers where such attempts are undertaken.

(f) Through youth leagues, sufficient number of volunteers should remain ready in every village.

(g) In view of the war, the rich in the villages should distribute their properties mainly paddy stocks among the fellow villagers by way of loans, to be realised back in future.

(h) Volunteers to launch Satyagraha against the Darbar, taking advantage of the war conditions, to get back the Sarbarakari land.

(i) To strengthen Pramandal, subscriptions should be collected from people.

(j) Not to fear 'red turbans', forest officials and other officials of state administration.

(k) Maintenance of peoples' unity in the context of the war.

(l) Constructive programmes like cultivation of cotton, sugarcane and groundnut and soap-manufacturing to be undertaken by the people for their economic upliftment.

(m) A bell to be kept in a village and when it rings, people should assemble for secret meetings preferably in the night.*

\textsuperscript{38} HPD, DM's Report on Paniola Meeting, 24.6.40 (ACC-1351).

\textsuperscript{39} HPD, Speech of Madan Mohan Pradhan, 26.6.40 (ACC-1351).

\textsuperscript{40} HPD, Different Report of DM, Cuttack, on Talcher State, 28.6.40, 7.7.40, 2.7.40, 3.7.40, 21.9.40 (ACC-1351).
Resolutions were passed in the meetings condemning forcible war-fund collections by the state Dewan or Police and asking people to 'launch Satyagraha' and "snatch away power from the Ruler". As late as 30 October, the Talcher Prajamandal passed a resolution, under the leadership of Pradhan seeking the intervention of political department to withdraw the executive and judicial powers exercised by the Ruler and transfer them either to the Ministers elected by the people or to a Dewan appointed by the political department. It also appealed to the political department to grant remission of rent and provide relief work in areas where crops had failed. It also sharply criticised the misrule of the state by noting that "the subjects cannot live safely and peacefully under the Ruler's regime." 41

Back in Nilgiri, the communist leadership represented by Banamali Das stepped up its activities, providing a new direction to the overall Prajamandal movement. He advised the state subjects and dominantly the tribals in Nilgiri to raid police stations, to refuse to pay arrears of rent payable to the state and instead to pay them to a Congress office, and loot the granaries of the rich as per their necessity under instructions by the leadership. 42 A suggestion to take possession of the jail was also made by him. 43 Besides, in the context of war, the leadership coined and aired the slogans like Na ek bhai, Na ek Pai, Samrajyabād ladhai (No brother, no paise to the imperialist war) and Lalajee ka badla lena (Take revenge of the murder of Lajpat Rai). Das was also in regular touch with the communist leadership outside the state. For ensuring massive propaganda, he had kept a good amount of left literature procured from Moscow, Great Britain and also the

42. AISPC Papers, F.No.124, 15.6.40.
43. Ibid.
Orissa communist pamphlets like Age Chal (March Forward) etc.\textsuperscript{44} However, this led to his arrest and subsequent expulsion from the Prajamandal. The President of Prajamandal, took this decision as he was afraid that such activities would offer a chance to the Ruler to derecognise and ban the Prajamandal.\textsuperscript{45} We must note here that Prajamandal's struggle against the state had been a long drawn one, mediated by the twin processes of struggle and negotiations in the 1937-39 phase. Thus, any attempt to pitch the struggle to such a militant and even violent height in the war-context on the line of communist policy was sure to invite the imperialist as well as Ruler's suppression and thereby cause serious damage to the peoples movement. The Nilagiri Prajamandal, however, carried on its activities by forming defence committee to render financial help to the victims of the state administration and denounced the oppression and victimisation of Lakhrajdars by the Ruler.\textsuperscript{46}

In contrast to Talcher and Nilagiri, Dhenkanal presented a rather mild version of popular protest. This was due to the high pitch of terror resorted to by the Ruler in terms of the arrest of Prajamandal leaders and the disruption of the Prajamandal and Congress activities in the state. Besides, the refugees had gone back to the state by early 1940. We also come across evidence of bulletins released by Prajamandal in other states. One such bulletin was \textit{Judha Nian}\textsuperscript{47} (War Fire), issued by Khandapara Prajamandal which denounced both the state Rulers and imperialism as sources of sustenance of repression of the subjects.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} HPD, 18.3.40 and HPD, OPAI, Vol.V, 8.1.40 (WWCC-30).

\textsuperscript{47} HPD, OPAI, Vol.V, 20.3.40 (WWCC-30).
POLITICS OF THE YOUTH:

We can take a pause here to look into the nature of youth and students' politics of the pre-Quit India phase, very briefly. As early as 1938, the students of Cuttack Medical School sought permission of the Superintendent for hoisting the National flag on 26 January. But the British Superintendent refused permission to do so on a "Government building". Disregarding the directive, the students hoisted the flag on that day. By the time the authorities intervened to remove the flag, it was evening and the students had removed it. On 15 August of the same year, the students of this school again submitted a charter of their grievances to the authorities and went on a strike from 16 August. However, the strike was called off on 20 August on the assurance by the authorities that a committee would be formed to examine their grievances.

By September 1938, the law students of Ravenshaw College resorted to a strike protesting over an issue which involved the resignation of a faculty member (Professor Banarjee) on grounds of opposition to service conditions. A number of law students were struck off the rolls and upon offering apology to the principal they were readmitted.

Again, in March, 1939, the medical students of Cuttack went on a strike. They resented the reported remark by the Government on the lack of discipline of the students in connection with the previous year's medical school strike. They formed a council of action and resolved to go on a strike if Government did not withdraw its remarks within a week. In response, the authorities rusticated four student leaders. This only brought in intense mobilisation of the students in protest against the decision of the authorities. They held

49. HPD, FNR, Cuttack, 31.8.38 (ACC-1059).
50. HPD, FNR, Cuttack, 17.9.38 (ACC-1059).
demonstration in the Cuttack town shouting anti-authorities' slogans. The students organised public meetings over the issue and condemned the Congress ministry for such moves against the students. They boycotted the Board Examination and refused to vacate hostels. And, finally, to intensify the movement, they picketed and offered Satyagraha at the Secretariat building for nearly a week from 20 April. However, on 27 April they called off the Satyagraha, when the Congress Government agreed to reinstate the rusticated students, not to victimise any students and to release the Satyagrahis. 51 The students strike evoked widespread sympathy in the province. 52 Students of other schools like Ravenshaw Girls School, Collegiate, Mission, Victoria and Academy also joined in the Satyagraha and picketed before their schools. Arrest of each batch of Satyagrahi brought in fresh batches of Satyagrahis who joined instantly. Students in large numbers offered themselves to be recruited as volunteers. The student Satyagrahis organised huge demonstrations and raised slogans against imperialism, injustice and in favour of students' unity. Citizens meetings were organised in Cuttack Town Hall to discuss the issue. The town also witnessed a successful bandh as a mark of support to the striking students on 21 April. The students led a huge demonstration to the secretariat building and offered Satyagraha there and made speeches against the Ministry.

Financial contribution and sympathy from other parts of the province also flowed in, demonstrating high fraternity for the movement. The students braved the victimisation,

51. HPD, FNR, Cuttack, 3.4.39, 17.4.39, 3.5.39 (ACC-1088).
52. The Chhatra, Oriya Pamphlets, D1.15, 21, 22, 24, 25 (April 1939) on Medical School strike (ACC-1229); The Observer, 15.4.39, on Orissa Medical School Strike and its ideal and Etiology (ACC-1229); HPD, S.P. Report, 21.4.39 (ACC-1124).
and harassment of the authorities; indifference of and objection from the guardians and relatives and joined the Satyagraha. The anti-Congress Ministry faction extended support to the movement to put the Ministry in an embarrassing position. However, the students organisation tried to project a neutral image. Thus, anybody wishing to be recruited as a volunteer for Satyagraha signed a form that he would follow strictly the policy of truth and non-violence, that the struggle was not intended against the Congress but against imperialism and its reactionary allies, and that the fight would enhance the image and prestige of the Congress. The youth who participated and provided the radical thrust to this movement were Sachi Routrai, Biswanath Pasait, Baidyanath Rath, Bibhudendu Mishra, Ashok Das, Bijoy Chandra Das, Man Mohan Mishra, Nilamani Routrai and Gangadhar Mohapatra among others.

Sachi Routrai in fact brought out a daily bulletin called Chhatra (Students) in the context of students Satyagraha detailing the developments and projecting a students' perspective of the movement vis-a-vis imperialism and Congress movement and Ministry. The Chhatra repeatedly clarified the objective of the movement as not opposed to Congress. However, the anti-Ministry position as well as its communistic predilection were best evident from its editorial of 21 April, 1939:

"Those who attempt to fly the flag of freedom, they in fact, get imprisoned first.... Likewise, the November revolution was born, but it demolished the nexus of imperialism and capitalism in Russia and made way for the establishment of classless society of Proletariat.... (Today)... the student society is distressed over the doings of some of the opportunist Congress leadership, who are the agents of imperialism. They have, in fact, started fostering an attitude of compromise with imperialism instead of unleashing a mass movement without any compromise with imperialism. This Congress Ministry has become an indispensable constituent of imperialistic bureaucracy. They are acting against the interests of the peasant and state peoples movement.... (Thus)... the students being united, demand a clarification from these careerist elements...."

In its editorial of 22 April, it commented:

53. Ibid. and Bijay Chandra Das and Sadananda Mohanty, Chhatra Andolanara Itihasa (Oriya), Cuttack, 1986, pp.22-30.
Today the youth sings the rhymes of Diwali by braving and ignoring the lathis of police, the rule of the guardians, the inhuman policies of the Congress Ministry - committed to political prostitution and the agents and the servants of imperialism.

A column in the said bulletin titled, Satakatha (True News) issued during the struggle, was sharply critical of the contemporary Congress 'rightist' leadership. It went on to characterise Mahatab as the "approved compromising leader" of the Government who had volunteered compromise in all the political battles including state peoples struggle but without any success. It also criticised the socialist leadership represented by Nabakrushna Choudhury and Surendra Dwivedi as no better than the Congress leadership who always insisted on "compromise" in "any political battle".

The success of the strike emboldened the students considerably. Thus, again in 1940, a massive student strike rocked Ravenshaw College, when the students insisted on hoisting the national flag on 26 January (to observe Independence Day) in the Tennis field of the college compound, disregarding an order by the authorities to the contrary. The defiant action by the students provoked the authorities. The University syndicate inflicted fines on two of the organisers of the meeting namely Nilamani Routrai and Bibhudendu Mishra. The students, in their turn, decided to protest by going on a strike in February and planned to boycott the University examination. In retaliation, the authorities closed down the college and ordered the non-examinees to vacate the hostels and made heavy police bando-bast for the conduct of the examination. On 26 February (on the day of the examination), the students picketed and obstructed the conduct of examination in the face of a severe lathi charge. The issue of Ravenshaw strike was

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54. HPD, S.P. Report, Dt.18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 (February 1940) and Dt.8, 14, 29 (March 1940). Also Report of the Enquiry Committee, headed by Laxmi Narayan Sahu, 1940 (ACC-1395).
discussed in Ramgarh session in March 1940 in the AISF's executive meeting which was attended by young communists such as Baidyanath Rath, Biren Mitra, Durga Charan Mohanty, and Nrusingha Ch. Tripathy. On the basis of a decision in the meeting, the ex-Secretary of AISF, Mr. Mohan Mangalam was deputed to meet the Vice-Chancellor to persuade him to revise his orders and readmit the students whose names were struck off the rolls during the strike. Mangalam effected a compromise between the authorities and the students by which the boys were asked to tender apology to the Principal and secure readmission. Mangalam also condemned the action of the boys in resorting to a strike without enlisting the support of the public or the entire student community. The leadership of this strike was again mostly dominated by the Communists like Sachi Routrai, Ashok Das, Baidyanath Rath, Rabi Ghosh, Durga Mohanty, Manmohan Mishra, Jai Krishna Mohapatra (Secretary, Utkal Students Federation), Ram Krishna Pati, and Gangadhar Mohapatra. The basic feature of this strike was characterised by a strong thrust of anti-imperialism. Sachi Routrai also developed the idea of a 'Summer School of Politics' and opened such a school at Cuttack during May 1940 on the lines of Communist ideology. However, the large scale arrests of communist leaders along with proscription of communist literature by July 1940 in Cuttack/Puri district restrained the pace of youth politics in this period.

THE FUNCTIONING OF PCC:

What is the state of PCC in 1940? The feature which characterised it right since the installation of Congress Ministry in the shape of a factional divide between Nilakantha-Godavarisha at one hand and Mahatab/Biswanath on the

other, further deepened. This ultimately resulted in the formation of a coalition Ministry in November 1941 by the former along with the support of the Raja of Parlakhemundi indicating a veiled victory for the rightist-opportunist elements in the PCC. Curiously enough, in its bid to gain political mileage and a popular image, this leadership had been associated with the Forward Bloc Movement and often maintained a position sharply critical of Gandhi and the policy of non-violence. However, their shifting political stance was more reflective of an anti-PCC attitude than an anti-Gandhian policy.

In contemporary politics, this divide in PCC was also seen in terms of a caste clash, i.e., "Brahmin vs. Karan/Khandayat (writer/warrior)", with Nilakantha representing the former and Mahatab the latter. The bitterness in the two camps was such that a periodical Dagara observed: "We only wish that people of Orissa having been saved from the clutches of a tiger (referring to Nilakantha's Presidentship of PCC in 1939) might not fall into the clutches of the snake". However, this divide ultimately resulted in the formation of the Orissa Congress Swarajist Party by October 1940 by the Nilakantha faction.

56. WWCC, (ACC-30), 14.8.41.
HPD, FNR, Puri, 15.4.40 (ACC-1285).
While around April, Dibakar Patnaik, a member of Nilakantha group criticised Gandhi along with the war-aims of imperialism and talked of Satyagraha, rejecting the waiting policy of Congress; by August (1941) he would advise people in Koraput to desist from Satyagraha and to help war-efforts. These shifts reflected more their anti-PCC stand than an anti-Gandhi position.

57. The Dagara, 1.1.40: commented, referring to an Oriya proverb:
"Brahmins do not know how to sit and Karans do not know how to eat... (and goes on to add) the community led by Kshatriya Mahatab alleges that Brahmin Nilakantha has misappropriated the money of the Congress Committee. The community of Brahmins alleges that Kshatriya Mahatab has wrongly usurped the throne in the Congress Committee."

58. The Dagara, 1.1.40.
The revamping of PCC had in fact started right since February with Nabakrushna Choudhury and Radhakrishna Biswas Roy being appointed as President and Secretary respectively. By April, PCC took up the initiative for the preparation of Satyagraha by taking a census of active and passive volunteers. The DCCs were instructed to send volunteers to undergo an orientation and refresher course at Bari Gandhian camp in Cuttack. This was a prominent Gandhi Ashram managed by Gopabandhu Choudhury. Besides, Satyagraha committees were formed in each district and all the DCCs and Primary Congress Committees were transformed into Satyagraha committees, with the standing instruction that those who did not meet the requirements of an active Satyagrahi should resign to create space for others. The Gandhian orientation of the PCC's exercise was sought to be demonstrated by arranging a march of Congress activists under the leadership of the noted Gandhite, Gopabandhu Choudhury, in April. He walked from Bari to Ganeswarpur, organising meetings en route, and explaining Gandhian principles as well as the war-situation. This march was organised on the occasion of the annual session of Gandhi Seva Sangha. The other aspect of the PCCs reorganisation exercise was to float four departments to monitor activities on Harijan uplift, minority issue, Khadar and Spinning and overall Congress propaganda efforts. Mahatab headed propaganda affairs, Biswas Ray handled Harijan uplift, and Muhammad Athar was kept in charge of minority issue. Khadi and Spinning was placed

under the supervision of a sub-committee. Mahatab (around May) back from AICC Session was emphatic about stepping up the constructive programme of Congress to enhance Congress influence.65

Besides, we come across evidence of a march to popularise Khadi and instill Gandhian values, conducted from Soro (Balasore) to Jajpur (Cuttack). The march led by Nilambar Das and 5 other marchers, en route demonstrated Khadi Spinning to the villagers.66 The march was conducted by 6 Congress activists, spanned over a period of 20 days. Also, we see efforts made by leaders like Laxmi Narayan Sahu to convert a liquor shops into a Sanskrit tol in Balasore.67

Mahatab undertook regular tours of Balasore district with an eye to strengthen the constructive programme of the DCC (he, being the President of DCC) right since May 1940.68 These tours were also undertaken to gauge the popular pulse for the coming Satyagraha.69 The DCC also promoted the campaign around constructive programme by distributing AICC and PCC circulars as well as articles written by Mahatab, and explaining the Satyagraha programme in mass meetings.70

By June, nearly 5 short-term Satyagrahi training centres had come up in the province.71 The Cuttack district

66. WWCC (ACC-60), 28 November 1940.
67. WWCC (ACC-60), 13.10.40.
68. WWCC (ACC-60), 28.5.40/13.8.40.
69. WWCC (ACC-60), 29.9.40.
70. Ibid.

A volunteer training camp was formed in Butosorosingi in Ganjam district. We don't have much details about it. (HPD, FNR, Ganjam, 13.7.40) (ACC-1308). The training camp at Tunglibandhi (Sohella, Sambalpur) was opened in February and trained 17 Congress volunteers. A plan was afoot here to organise a lady volunteers training camp. (HPD, FNR, SRP, 12.4.40.) (ACC-1305). The other volunteer training camp in Sambalpur was at Kuchipali,
Satyagrahi training centre was organised for a fortnight from 9 May. In this centre, Nabakrushna Choudhury was assigned the task of taking political classes for the trainees; Pranakrushna Padhihary (CSP) instructed on Khadar and Spinning, and Rajkrishna Bose acted as the Camp Manager. As a conspicuous contrast, no physical training such as lathi exercises was imparted to the trainees in the overall exercise to instill Gandhian values. Physical training, we have seen earlier, constituted a vital component of Congress-sponsored training camps in the 1937-39 phase. We have also referred to earlier, how a Kisan camp sprung up at Jankia (Puri) and another under Sachi Routrai's initiative on behalf of the All Utkal Students Federation at Cuttack (in May-June). According to PCC's estimates, by the end of May, it had trained 416 active Satyagrahis and 121 passive Satyagrahis.

UPCC and DCCs circulated various leaflets to popularise their viewpoints. For example, around September, UPCC released 3 leaflets namely Congress Nirdesha (Instructions), Congress Karyakari Samiti Prastab (working committee resolutions) and Congress Committee Istahar (communique). These leaflets essentially focused on non-co-operation with war efforts. The communique released by Mahatab on behalf of the Balasore DCC advised people not to tolerate any compulsion regarding war-fund collection and to immediately inform the Congress office of such efforts. As early as January 1940 we also come across a pamphlet issued by Balasore DCC called "The Oriya Way" to serve as a guide to the

...Continued...

Congress activists engaged in popularising the message of the Congress and Gandhi.\textsuperscript{75} Mahatab was appointed as the "General Dictator" for Orissa to monitor PCC's preparation for the Satyagraha.\textsuperscript{76} So also "Dictators" were appointed for other districts. These developments suggest that, despite a disturbing divide in the PCC, right since the beginning of 1940 a consistent effort was on to put the PCC in all readiness for the coming Satyagraha. The process naturally hastened in April with the re-organisation of the PCC and the institution of Satyagraha cells as well as Satyagraha training camps both at village and district levels. It was in this context that UPCC sent circulars to the DCCs regarding the new type of Gandhian Satyagraha (Individual Satyagraha) by October. The circulars, while highlighting constructive work to be taken up by Congress activists, asked only the 'selected' to offer Satyagraha; and instructed the DCCs to nominate 'dictators' in advance to conduct Satyagraha in view of the arrest of the leaders or the banning of the Congress.\textsuperscript{77} In this connection, we come across some evidence that Mahatab instructed the DCCs that in case the Congress was banned, the Congress activist would be released from the pledges of non-violence (which they had given) and were at liberty to decide their individual and collective policy.\textsuperscript{78}

Before looking into the nature and pattern of Individual Satyagraha in Orissa, we must note here that Congress leadership undertook a consistent campaign against war-measures and war-fund collection. Thus, already a strong anti-imperialist current had been formed in the province.

\textsuperscript{75} WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.V, 8.1.40, No.2.
\textsuperscript{76} WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.V, 3.10.40, No.37.
\textsuperscript{78} WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.V, 17.11.40, No.43.
As early as November 1939, Birakishore Das, the nationalist poet, penned a beautiful piece in Kurshak criticising the imperialist war. The poem titled: Dhapadhapi Aau Chaliba Nahin (Deception will no longer pay) read: 79

*We speak frankly it will no longer do to deceive us,  
We have remained vigilant and watching all your moves (chorus).  
Things could be managed so long by suppression.  
They can no longer be managed even for an hour.  
Have you got the power to check the current  
that is flowing throughout India?  
Our eyes have been opened through the mercy of the Congress: there is nothing more to know.  
You are responsible for all the unrest and war in the world.  
You have a widespread Empire throughout the world, it is why you are seeking help.  
Unless you give up your attachment to imperialism, You would not be given any corner in human society.  
You are shedding tears for the protection of democracy, but you have kept us like flock of sheep. Your words and deeds are incompatible.  
It is why people are jeering at you.  
...You carried away maunds and maunde of gold and gave us nickel and paper instead.  
If you hope to be honoured in the world, give up craftiness and arrogance.  
Remove the machinery of exploitation from this land,  
Be simple and keep good relationship.*

Yet in another piece, depicting the context and objective of Ministry's resignation he wrote in the poem Yudha Kahali: Uthila Baji80 (the bugle of war is being blown):

*...the whole country is obeying the order of the Congress, the fort of Council is dismantled, the minister friends threw off their resignations and removed the obstacles on the way to freedom.  
Not even a single Deshi (indigenous man) agreed to work up the machine under the mantra of the foreigner!  
The Britishers who took pride in offering constitutional reforms;  
Got the rebuff when ministers resigned by giving up office.  
...the Britishers have really behaved the Nazis!  
Swaraj is our birth right; we want the key of India.... We don't have aeroplanes nor submarines, the beggar of the street is our - General - let the world see our war strategy, we have sacrificed everything for the world....*

So also, Laxmi Narayan Mishra, in Jharsuguda, on the occasion of "Martyrs' Day" (1 March) described imperialist Government as a "Jallhad Sarkar" (Murderous Government). 81  
Yet in another public meeting at Lachide (Bargarh) he asked the peasants to "pray for the annihilation of British Government". Dubbing British Government as devil of devils, he wished for the establishment of Bolshevism. He went on to

79. The Krushak, 18.11.39.  
80. Ibid.  
explain the villagers that: "If at all the Britishers want to live in India, then we will keep Lord Willingdon and Lord Linlithgow as our sweepers in the same way as they have kept us as their servants and in bondage of slavery for so long". 82

Nabakrushna Choudhury held the "Capitalists" and "Imperialists" as responsible for the war in a meeting at Tukuda 83 (Balasore) on 3 July. He was equally critical of the Gandhian policy of non-violence, and observed that it would be wrong to say that Indians could not overpower their enemy, if they resorted to violence as the Government's armed forces were insignificant compared to the overwhelming population. He exhorted the people to join the Congress and carry out its programme and not to help war efforts. 84

In a public meeting at Sambalpur town (October 13) Nabakrushna, referring to the war, observed: "This war is against the doctrines of Kshatriyas." 85

The Press also organised a vigorous campaign against war-measures and the war fund. 86 For instance, a weekly newspaper Pallibasi, published from Belguntha (in Ganjam) printed news concerning the defeat of British army. This led the Chief Secretary to remark that "Congress leaders and newspapers have frequently asserted that compulsion is being used by officials" to secure help for war funds. This paper was widely circulated in the Khond tribal agency tract of G. Udayagiri. Quite naturally, such "rumours" spread fast.

83. HPD, Spl. Branch Report, 2.2.40 (ACC-1404).
84. Board of Revenue Records, Report of Rev. Commissioner to Chief Secy, 18.7.40 (Sl.No.403).
85. HPD, FNR, SBP, 28.10.40 (ACC-1305).
among the tribals in the agency and copies were secretly distributed in the markets. This rumour was equally strong in the Kodala Taluk, and even in the whole of Ganjam district.87

The Dagara was an ace critic of the police, who arrested the Satyagrahis and took them to the court and inflicted violence on others. A sarcastical poem titled Police Premo (love with police), compared the police as "a class, compromising persons of ill repute", who could create thunder without rain. The sarcasm is visibly sharp when it read: "Oh! police! you are so audacious that you made me give up fear of jail". In a figurative tone, the poem suggested that "if I be given the authority to lord over you (the police), I would smash you then and there".88 It should be noted here that Dagar, edited by Nityananda was an ardent supporter of Gandhian leadership in the context of his writings way back in 1936-37. His poem titled Gandhi Budha (the oldman, Gandhi) was basically illustrative of this orientation. But by 1941 he was veering towards a position which synthesised both Gandhian and non-Gandhian forms. Thus, one finds him around October 1941, making a speech during 'Gandhi Jayanti' celebration, advocating both force and non-violence to drive away the British from India.89

Nityananda's overall position in terms of his writings and speeches, thus illustrates a typical case where, one without offering the prescribed pattern of 'Satyagraha' almost dared the authorities to arrest him. And, probably this was his modified version of 'Individual Satyagraha' - more or less an innovation.


88. The Dagara, 1.9.41.

89. HPD, S.P. Report, 4.10.41 (ACC-2033).
Our evidence also suggests that Communist literature and pamphlets were smuggled into Cuttack from Calcutta for circulation among students. One such pamphlet was "our duty on the Independence Day" around February.90 The Congress Socialists also resolved to take up leaflet campaign on war and national struggle among the masses, and organisation of strikes and marches to the district or sub-divisions by the peasants, workers and students.91

On an overall assessment, it seems that except Ganjam (where PCC's dominant leadership lacked relative control over DCC as the issue of Madras Land Estate Bill remained unresolved and to certain extent the latter remained inextricably entangled with the former) Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Koraput, Sambalpur as well as the princely states were characterised by an intense sweep of anti-imperialism as also by a dominant strain of Gandhian constructive activities. With this backdrop, we need to examine both the phases of Individual Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement.

THE PATTERN OF INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA (1941)

Here, we will examine the nature, extent and pattern of the individual civil disobedience which was organised right since 1 December 1940. Earlier, in the pre-December 1940 phase, we have seen how politicisation occurred in the whole of Orissa province around anti-war issues. The dominant leadership of PCC including Mahatab, Biswas Ray, Biswanath Das, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Kanungo undertook the offering of Satyagraha on individual basis and courted arrest. The DCCs, in fact, were marked by hectic activities through the conduct of individual Satyagraha.

The Individual Satyagraha was sought to be imparted a mass anti-war orientation by the selected Satyagrahis. The

90. Board of Revenue Records, 18.2.40 (Sl.No.388).
91. HPD, S.P. Report, 12.1.40 (ACC-1292).
Satyagrahis would read out from the prepared text which highlighted non-violent resistance to imperialist war efforts by withholding support in terms of men and money. But this was usually preceded and followed by detailed speeches by the Satyagrahis. It was impressed upon the audience that any help to war-efforts was a "sin"; and that it was the "order" of Gandhi not to help war-efforts. In some cases, references to Gandhi in terms of asking people to "have a Gandhi in every house" or "if the Government throws bomb, Gandhi will upset the Government" were also made. People were asked to be fearless. For instance Biswas Ray told the audience; "we were goats previously, but now we are men and why should anybody take us to the war forcibly." The texture of the speeches by the dominant leadership points to a serious exercise on its part to keep the Satyagraha strictly within the dictated course.

To show the texture of Congress propaganda at the popular plane, we may point to a leaflet circulated asking

92. Anti-war speeches by the Satyagrahis were mostly made in selected places to attract large crowds. For instance, in Balasore district we see anti-war speeches mostly delivered in hats like Ambodia hat, Deula hat; in Bhadrak at Budhabar and Wednesday hat; in Puri at lions gate near Jagannath temple; in Cuttack at Secretariat building to attract large crowds.


Besides, we have references to the incident in Puri of one activist Sadhu Charan Das shouting slogans against imperialism and war fund in the court room of SDM on 20 Dec.

*HPD, FNR, Puri, Dec. 1940 (ACC-1285).*


Speeches of Laxmi Rai (Berhampur), Jagannath Das (Bhadrak), Mohan Das (Nimapara), on 4.12.40 and Bodharm Dube (Sambalpur) on 2.12.40 are contained.

94. *HPD, S.I. Report on Biswas Ray's Speech, at Berhampur (1.12.40), Koraput (ACC-1543).*


the people to desist from any effort at helping the war. This pamphlet was released and distributed under the signature of a local level Congress activist of Sambalpur, Mangalu Pradhan. The pamphlet read as follows:

"Beware, my brothers and sisters. Beware of being cheated. Many innocent persons are being killed in the aggressive (hinsamaya) war that is now going on between England and Germany. They cannot eat a morsel of food or wear a piece of cloth. Knowing this misery, we can give no help to the Government unless it is to our own benefit. We should not also do harm to the Government. We must free ourselves from the supremacy of the English.... In 1914, in the German War, we helped the British Government against our conscience in a violent way and saved their Kingdom. We shall not give any such help, because India does not get any benefit. Be it known that, Congress is declaring that we should not render any help to any Government for any war in Europe. We shall spin (Khaddar) and remain prepared in a non-violent way. Brothers, beware! According to the present condition of the country, one who is not able to defend himself how can he defend others?" Manglu distributed the leaflet and pasted its copies on the walls of houses in Bheren village and made arrangements for its circulation in the other villages of the district through secret messengers. Interestingly, he would paste the pamphlets just below the posters and advertisements calling upon people to purchase Defence Bonds of the Government. Sometimes on that spot he would make a speech to the gathering. This had exerted great impact in the villages under Bheran thana. In fact, people refused to make "any contribution" when the village Moharir visited the

village to collect donations to the war fund. We also have reference to "National Flag" hoisted on a Khadi store as a "symbol of Satyagraha" in Jeypore (Koraput). When the police intervened and asked the shopkeeper to remove the flag, the shop-keeper refused. He told the police that the flag had been planted to advertise his intention to offer Satyagraha. By refusing to obey the police, he had really offered Satyagraha!

Sarangadhar Das (the Secretary Orissa Prajamandal Association), who was not selected as a 'Satyagrahi' to conduct Individual Satyagraha and instead was assigned the job of popularising the constructive programme of Congress, addressed several public meeting in Sambalpur district during January 1941. In these meetings he advise people not to contribute to war funds and ask people to be prepared for 'mass Satyagraha' within a year or so. The impact of his activities and anti-war sentiments on villagers was considerable. This also shows that the constructive activities were also utilised to further anti-war sentiments.

On January 26 (1941) Independence Day celebration, meetings were organised in different places and Satyagraha pledge read out to the audience, followed by spinning competition. By February, PCC appointed dictators for different districts to monitor Satyagraha and also suspended DCCs

98. Ibid.
100. HPD, Report of D.M. (SBP), January 1941 (ACC-1874).
Here, mention may be made of Nityananda Mohapatra's (editor, Dagara) speech.
102. WWCC, S.P. Report, 2.2.41 (ACC-60).
and all primary level Congress cells.\textsuperscript{103} Efforts were undertaken to compile a list for subsequent batches of Satyagrahis.\textsuperscript{104} In fact, Sachi Routrai, a student activist of Kisan Sabha, and also a full-fledged communist, was involved in the preparation of such a census.

The response of the colonial authorities, however, was to arrest prominent leaders who offered Individual Satyagraha and to ignore less prominent Congress activists by not arresting them (or, even if they were arrested, to give them milder punishment).\textsuperscript{105} I may also describe an interesting incident in G. Udayagiri in Ganjam Agency dominated by Khond tribals. Here, the colonial authorities had started recruiting tribals for the 40th Labour Company. In this context, two of the local Congress activists announced in February that they would be conducting Satyagraha in local markets and bazars. When they offered Satyagraha (on 21 February 1941) by making anti-war speeches, the District Magistrate ordered the S.I. and A.S.I. to arrest the Satyagrahis on the ground that activities of Satyagrahis would "excite the hillmen". The concerned S.I./A.S.I. refused to carry out the order saying that the instruction of the S.P. were to the contrary. Whatever the explanation may be, it also points to the moral support of the police to the Satya-

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{WWCC} (ACC-60), 19.2.41. 
Thus, Gouranga Charan Das, Nilambar Das, Satyabadi Nanda, Damodar Samantrai, Ram Murthy and Dayananda Satpathy kept in charge of Cuttack, Balsore, Puri, Koraput, Ganjam and Sambalpur respectively.

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{WWCC} (ACC-60), 8.1.41. 
Sachi Routrai (Communist) and Rabinda Mohan Das toured Balsore district to compile a list of Satyagrahis for the 3rd batch of Satyagrahis.

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{WWCC} (ACC-30), 15.3.40 and \textit{HPD}, FNR, Puri, Dec. 1940 (1285). 
For example, one Sadhu Charan Das who stormed the court of A.D.M., Puri, and shouted anti-war slogans was imposed only a fine of Rs.50/- or in default 1 months simple imprisonment. This was done not to give him "cheap publicity".
The entire region of Bhumsur-Udayagiri region dominated by the tribals came to be affected by the anti-war propaganda and so also resistance to war recruitment of tribals continued delaying the process of completion of the labour company. Also, the colonial authorities were concerned about a possible rise in jail population of Savara tribals in the Parlakhemundi Agency of Ganjam; and consequently they made preparation for the arrested by arranging extra tents in Berhampur and Koraput jails. This strongly points to the mobilisation of tribals in the Khond belt of Ganjam.

In general, there was a great deal of resentment against the official war-fund drive. Despite war-time press control, the Samaja condemned the attempt by the authorities to collect war-subscription along with Chaukidari tax. We equally come across a reference around June 1941 of a demand for the refund of war-subscription. A person named Ramchandra Dora of Chhatrapur (Ganjam) resented the large sum of Rs.400/-, demanded from him as war-subscription. He wrote to the authorities to give back the already deposited amount of Rs.200/- instead of agreeing to pay another Rs.200/-. So also, popular resentment existed against the collection of rent along with war-subscription in Jeypore Zamindari.

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This incident at least highlights two points. One, Organisation of Individual Satyagraha in the pockets of tribal areas around February, 1941, where war-recruitment continued. Besides erosion of loyalty on the part of police to imperialist bureaucracy and support to National Movement. The names of THB two Congress activists were Narayana Patro and Madhava Routho. The police also arrested a tribal along with these two Satyagrahis, which points to the participation of the tribals in the Satyagraha activities.


Such incidents were given wide publicity by the leadership through the press, alleging use of compulsion in the collection of war subscriptions. The weight of the campaign was such that Chief Secretary warned all the district authorities to ensure that only voluntary contributions for war were made.\(^{110}\)

The Individual Civil-Disobedience, however, seemed to stagnate due to the Government policy of ignoring local level activists (who offered Satyagraha) by not arresting them but arresting only prominent leaders (even if they did not themselves offer Satyagraha, for example, Sarangadhar Das). This created a good deal of frustration among the unarrested Satyagrahis as well as apprehensions among the arrested leaders. This trend was evident by March 1941.\(^{111}\)

But, PCC came up with a surprising degree of innovation as per the directive of AICC and Gandhi's scheme of "Delhi March".\(^{112}\) PCC, in fact, drafted an innovative scheme which asked the `unarrested' Satyagrahis to serve fresh notices on the authorities about his plan to undertake a tour, from his village culminating in the capital of the province, i.e., Cuttack, in between touching existing police stations and the sub-divisions. The Satyagrahi were thus expected to cover many villages, en route, where he could popularise anti-war slogans and convince people that Government had

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111. *HPD*, OPAI, 15.3.40 (WWCC-30).

112. 'Delhi March' meant that disappointed Satyagrahis should converge on India's capital. But before marching on to Delhi, the Satyagrahi would serve notice on the District Magistrate revealing his intention to offer Satyagraha and shout anti-war slogans. He would repeat the same method if he was not arrested. But on the second notice, he would add that he had not been arrested on the previous occasion as Government had realised its folly and it no more considered anti-war slogans as an offence. The logic was to dare the authorities to affect arrest. In this second attempt, (if unarrested) the satyagrahi should be prepared to march to Delhi by going round places and shouting anti-war slogans. And, his Delhi march was not to be intimated to the District Magistrate.

Refer: *WWCC* (ACC-30), 8.3.41 and 19.3.41.
realised its mistaken policy of treating anti-war slogan as an offence thereby resorted to the policy of no more arresting the concerned Satyagrahis. Besides, the Satyagrahis were instructed to make the most of their long tour from their villages to provincial capital by making anti-war speeches at selected sites like hats, railway stations, court compounds, townships, and temple compounds to attract large crowds. The arrest of Satyagrahis at such sites was meant again to accord him extra public image and popularity. Further, the Satyagrahis were asked to make a door-to-door campaign explaining anti-war slogans and anti-war fund views.\textsuperscript{113} The PCC further clarified that 2 or 3 Satyagrahis having influence on people should move together and finally reach Cuttack - from where they could get certificates for their march to Delhi.\textsuperscript{114} In fact, this was a clarification sought by Balasore DCC - which indicates the expectation existing at mass levels to carry forward the struggle based on Individual Satyagraha. As an alternative, the PCC (in May) further instructed the Congress rural activists to concentrate on constructive work besides taking up mass contact programme as well as Hindu-Muslim unity activities. The members of local bodies were directed to monitor such activities in their respective constituencies. However, this emphasis on constructive programme was to be carried on along with stress on building popular opinion against war and other political developments.\textsuperscript{115}

By August, Balasore DCC decided to divide the district into several units, each under the charge of a Satyagrahi, to supervise activities of constructive work, enrolment of Congress members, Hindu-Muslim Unity, and providing broad

\textsuperscript{113} WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, 15.3.41, Vol.VI.
\textsuperscript{114} WWCC (ACC-30), 22.5.41.
\textsuperscript{115} WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, 13.5.41, Vol.VI.
political orientation to public opinion in villages on issues like contemporary political developments, and war question through door to door campaigning.\footnote{116} Besides, a weekly titled `Satyagrahi' edited by Gopabandhu Choudhury mostly on the lines of the `Harijan' was published which sought to popularise the philosophy of Khaddar, non-violence and Gandhi.\footnote{117} In May the Chairman, Balasore District local board, ordered the S.I. of Schools to the effect that they should ask the teachers to fly the national flag in the schools ask students to sing Bande Mataram and to teach them Hindi.\footnote{118} Also, by April, Satyagraha consultation camps had sprung up around April to offer new directions to the movement which had started showing signs of petering out.\footnote{119}

Around May, the PCC launched a scheme for the recruitment of santisena (Peace Army) to enroll volunteers as well as to train the intending Satyagrahis. The Sena would primarily supervise the maintenance of peace along with allied Congress activities.\footnote{120} Thus, we come across establishment of Congress volunteer training camps at Gadadharpur (Bhadrak), and Aska (Ganjam), by June. The pattern of instruction in these centres focussed on spinning, khaddar, meaning of Satyagraha pledge, and aims and duties revolving around Individual Satyagraha.\footnote{121} All these innovations by PCC can be seen as a systematic exercise to re-energise the waning

\footnote{116. WWCC, ACC No.30, 8.8.41.}

\footnote{117. The Satyagrahi, 23.4.40, No.14 (ACC-1429). This weekly was launched right since January 1940.}

\footnote{118. HPD, FNR, BLS, 13.5.41 (ACC-1986).}

\footnote{119. WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, 6.5.41, Vol.VI.}

\footnote{120. WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.VI, 4.6.41. The qualification enjoined to be eligible for being recruited as Santi-Sena were that, a person should be above 18 years of age having faith on Hindu-Muslim unity.}

\footnote{121. WWCC, ACC No.30, 22.6.41.}
spirit of the unarrested and disappointed Satyagrahis as well as to push the struggle forward in a new direction. The very strategy to reinspire the Satyagraha spirit by undertaking constructive programmes and anti-imperialist political training at rural levels through the organisation of training camps as well as building up a vast contingent of 'Santi-Sena' demonstrated its potential viability afterwards. This can be perceived when the entire rural set-up in Orissa was swept by a vigorous anti-imperialist and anti-feudal current. However, there is no doubt that the pace of Individual Satyagraha slowed down by April before it was formally suspended in December 1941. This slowing down was probably compensated by shifting the focus of the Satyagraha in the direction of villages giving it a broad Gandhian constructive orientation.

Despite the slow down Individual Satyagraha continued to be organised in almost all the districts, with some released satyagrahis repeating the performance. Our evidence points to a perceptible enthusiasm for the performance of individual satyagraha again around September with more arrests being effected at sub-divisional levels like Angul, Jajpur, Kendrapara (Cuttack), Bargarh (Sambalpur) and Chatrapur (Ganjam).122 Probably, this can be traced to the inspiration gathered for the Satyagraha through rural camps and training centres. The other noticeable feature in the conduct of 'Satyagraha' in this phase was that the Satyagrahis while making speeches often went beyond the usual forms of speeches as spelt out in the satyagraha pledge.123 Also the meetings organised to welcome back and garland the


123. WWCC, ACC No.57, dt.10.1.42. Pranakrushna Padhiary in a meeting of labourers in Cuttack (on 7 Dec. 1941) talked of British rule as 100 times more condemnable than German rule.
released satyagrahis were largely attended. The released satyagrahis often expressed their desire to repeat their performance after a few days' break. We have also indicated in the case of Nityananda Mohapatra (editor, Dagar), how he kept writing inflammatory articles and made speeches criticising imperialism, and thereby risking arrest by the authorities without offering satyagraha in the prescribed manner. That was probably his individual way of organising satyagraha!

Here, we should also take into account the fact that PCC's efforts at conducting individual satyagraha was marked by a parallel exercise in terms of formation of a coalition ministry represented by the faction of Nilakantha Das and Godavarisha Mishra along with the landlord elements in Orissa. As noted earlier, they floated a party called Orissa Congress Swarajya Party, which stood opposed to the PCC and installed a coalition ministry in November 1941. This factor also partly explains the slowing down of the Individual Satyagraha. For explains, the Puri DCC could not take any disciplinary action against two Congress MLAs who were not willing to join Satyagraha lest they should go over to the faction of Das and Misra.  

124 The DCCs in other parts were also ridden with this infighting between these two factions. This was aptly summed up by the District Magistrate of Balasore as early as January 1940, who wrote to the Chief Secretary characterising it as "unseemingly squabbles for power among the different Congress groups". Further, he observed that "Congress Ministers are now making extensive tours, telling people what to do since the leaders do not themselves know what to do and partly with the object of gaining support for their group against Nilakantha Das. In this district the Congress opponents of the Ministry though

Few are not down hearted." Besides, there was a relative fall in the figure of Congress membership by 1940 compared to 1937-39 phase, partly due to the stringent qualifications enjoined for enrolment as a Congress satyagrahi. Membership stood at only 46,000, a figure which was less than half of 1939 and one-third of that for 1938. The number of Satyagrahis in the year 1941, (on the basis of an official report), who offered Satyagraha and got arrested, was 377 with 68 repeating the "offence".126

At this stage, we need to locate the pattern emerging in the tribal belt of Koraput district. We have noted earlier how Laxman Naik mobilised the tribals against the illegalities of Jeypore Zamindari, in Mathili area. In fact, a virtual no-rent campaign by Laxman had led to his arrest in 1939. His activities were stepped up in the context of Individual Satyagraha. He offered Satyagraha twice, once in Ramgiri bordering Jeypore sub-division and the other time in Mathili. As a result he was arrested twice and sentenced to imprisonment for 9 months and paid a fine of Rs.300/- .127 In fact, we have noted earlier how in Jeypore Zamindari, the rent collection included in it the item of war-subscription; thus creating a basis for strong popular resentment. By February 1941, twenty two people (both tribals/non-tribals) were arrested128 in connection with slogans against war-collections. It was natural that

125. WWCC (ACC-56), FNR, BLS, 12.1.40.

126. WWCC, ACC No.30, Summary of Political Activities during the year 1940, and 1941, dt.12.1.42.


128. HPD, FNR, Koraput, 18.2.41.
the Individual Satyagraha further hastened the campaign against *bethi, goti, gudem, panu* (taxes) *shandy* excise dues, plough tax, and *hat* tax. These issues were taken up by Laxman right since 1939. We have also references to the killing of an *amin* in Kasipur as well as another in Nandapur by the people during this period. In contrast, interestingly, Mathili was marked by the absence of any violence perpetrated against estate officials.\(^{129}\)

Besides, Laxman's initiatives in organising tribal villages through constructive activities as well as political education (a trend, as noted earlier, evident right since 1939) had made the tribals confident and assertive. To quote Dasarathi Nanda with his beautiful representation of this transformation in popular consciousness: a tribal who used to say to the revenue inspector, police and forest guard - "Oh! you my Lord, what ever you wish, I will carry out" started speaking "I say no to you, I am not willing, we will not give, and we will not do.... (what you demand or say)."\(^{130}\) One must note here that Laxman's faith in non-violence and Gandhi was total and he mobilised the tribals strictly within these creeds, which at least explains why we don't come across any violent activities in this period in the Mathili zone. Again, the considerable number of satyagrahis arrested in Koraput district also points to the degree and pace of tribal mobilisation, obtaining in the context of Individual Satyagraha.\(^{131}\) Laxman was heading the Congress primary committee at Mathili in this period and during 1941-42, Congress membership in Laxman's village at Tentuligumma stood at 200. The very popularisation of


131. Gopinath Mohanty, *Dhuli Mati Ra Santha* (Oriya). He views that the number of arrested satyagrahis in Koraput was the highest. He puts the figure at 500 (p.243).
Gandhian constructive activities, like spinning, khaddar along with the establishment of Ashram schools in areas like Udayagiri, Pandraguda, Tentuligumma in Malkangiri¹³² (where Laxman operated) equally suggests the success of the movement in certain tribal areas.

PRINCELY STATES:

Here, we must take a look at the developments in princely states. The Prajamandal leaders of Nilagiri and Talcher offered individual satyagraha. Kailash Chandra Mohanty (President, Prajamandal of Nilagiri) was arrested in Ambodia Hat in December 1940.¹³³ When he was released around August, a reception for him was organised. On that occasion, the Nilagiri Prajamandal issued a booklet detailing the state of affairs in Nilagiri.¹³⁴ So also, Pabitra Pradhan of Talcher got arrested in December 1940 and Kalandi Charan Pradhan became the President of Talcher Prajamandal. What is noticeable is that most of the Prajamandal leaders continued to emphasise constructive activities - a trend clearly emerging in 1940, but, protest against misrule of the states by organising meetings or by releasing cyclostyled leaflets also existed.¹³⁵

PEASANT MOBILISATION (1941):

As far as the peasant mobilisation is concerned, we see in the beginning of the year (1941) massive protest against

¹³². S. Sangama, op. cit., p.249. Mahatab, op. cit., pp.91-92, and Interview with Malati Choudhry (Angul, 14.5.90) and Manmohan Choudhry (Cuttack, 13.7.89).

¹³³. WWCC, ACC No.60, 16.12.40.

¹³⁴. HPD, Prosecution of proprietor of Gopinath Press, Dt.4.8.41. The book was published in Gopinath Press of Bhadrak, where the Dagara of Nityananda Mohapatra used to be published.

¹³⁵. AISPC Papers, F.No.164, Sudhakar Rath's letter to AISPC, Dt.5.3.41. WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.VI, 21 Jan. 1941; and OPAI, Vol.VI, 4 June, 1941.
the rejection of Madras Estates Land Bill by the Viceroy. The Ganjam DCC, while resenting the decision, appealed to the Government to appoint an official enquiry committee to examine the suggestions made in this connection by the Viceroy. 136 The peasant agitation over the rejection of Madras Bill picked up from February 1941. They resented the decision as arbitrary decision, having been taken without the consent of peasant association. They held out a warning that the Government would face a terrible situation in case their grievances were not redressed. 137

A peasant conference at Lingapur (Parlakhemundi, Ganjam) in June, under the Presidency of Malati Choudhury, resolved to fight imperialism, fascism and nazism and to establish a socialist state. Among other usual anti-Zamindar resolutions, a resolution demanded establishment of village panchayats for settlement of rural disputes. The conference also defended the civil liberty of the people; condemned the rejection of Madras Bill and asked people to continue agitation against a rent hike. 138 The peasant conference held at Polosara (Ganjam) on 7 June elected a delegation to meet the Governor in connection with the harassments of the peasants by local landlords after the rejection of the Madras Bill. The conference represented that the rejection of the bill had placed the ryots at the mercy of Zamindars who would hardly offer any voluntary reduction of rent. 139

At the same time, we find efforts on the part of local

137. WWCC (ACC-30), Ganjam S.P. Report, 1.3.41.
139. WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, 11.6.41.
leaders to enter into a compromise with the Zamindars. Dibakar Patnaik (President of the District Board) favoured such a compromise. As against this, Bipra Charan Das (brother of Biswanath) and Narayan Panda opposed any idea of compromise over the bill. The latter advised peasants to refuse payment of rent and to oppose the distrains, if at all made. Their position over non-compromise encouraged the peasants so much that Raja of Khallikote had to abandon the idea of carrying out distrains under police protection, sensing the popular mood. Letters in large numbers by peasants containing written resolutions of protest against the decision over the bill were sent to the viceroy. The All Orissa Kisan Conference held at Khurda (8 June), attacked imperialism and capitalism as sources of exploitation of peasants and responsible for dragging them into the war. It also sought to defend the peasants' fundamental rights and civil liberties. It asked the peasants to join the anti-imperialist forces in securing freedom and resolved to initiate an Orissa-wide agitation over the Viceroy's rejection of Madras Bill. Dominated by communist leadership, the Conference made no secret of the fact that it wanted to use Kisan Sabha to further its pro-communist campaign.

The chasm between Kisan Sabha activists of communist persuasion and the other Congress sections widened during the year. Nabakrushna Choudhury, in a meeting at Puri in September, sought to reconcile the differing perception of the two sections. It was decided that all ideological shades in the Congress would back the Satyagraha effort. Besides no disciplinary action would be initiated against any Kisan Sabhaite provided he acted as per the general

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140. WWCC, ACC-30, 22.2.41.
141. Board of Revenue Records, D.M. to Revenue Commissioner, 26/31.4.41, Sl.No.268.
142. WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.VI, 11.6.41.
cred of Congress. The Kisan Sabha's open professing of Russian ideals had become near-total by November 1941. The Kisan Sabha was mostly active in Puri; its efforts at expansion in other districts was not very successful. Also, the Communist attempt to launch a parallel Kisan Sabha through the help of Congress left-wingers was not successful. The conflict between the two forces was evident when Balasore DCC, in a meeting, resolved not to dilute the anti-imperialist thrust of the movement by joining the Kisan Sabha.

**Politics of the Youth (1941):**

A fillip to the organisation of the youth and the peasantry was given within the course of 'Individual Satyagraha' when most of the unarrested and intending 'Satyagrahis' were directed to concentrate on village welfare job apart from offering individual satyagraha. This probably explains why we come across several examples of various forms of popular mobilisations and peasant resistance in many parts in 1941, which marked clear-cut departure from the usual and prescribed conduct of Individual Satyagraha. In this context, we may also mention cases of salt law violations. There was a perceptible increase in such cases by the end of 1940. Puri registered 1654 such cases with 114 in Balasore. The reasons for these may probably be sought in the influence of communists in Puri Kisan Sabha and the talk of Satyagraha which was round the corner. The

143. WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.VI, 19.6.41.
144. HPD, OPAI, Vol.VI, 20.11.41.
145. WWCC (ACC-30), Review of the year 1941.
146. WWCC (ACC-59), 15.8.41.
preparation for Satyagraha around December 1940 and the popular memory of salt satyagraha probably spurred such violations. We come across a report around March 1941 by the colonial authorities undertaking full-fledged effort to prepare a scheme for protecting salt factories of Ganjam district. The scheme insisted on the extra recruitment of at least 18 havildars and 84 constables for Humma and Suman-di salt factories as it anticipated "raids" on the factories in view of the Satyagraha.148

One more aspect, which merits attention is the open participation of states' subjects in Kisan Sabha activities. For instance, the Kisan day celebration at Remuna was marked by the participation of Nilagiri Peasants.149

As noted earlier, Sachi Routrai along with Rabindar Mohan Das (another leftwinger) toured Balasore district extensively in the beginning of 1941 to compile a list of Satyagrahis for the third batch.150 In fact, Rabindra Das was selected to impart training to Satyagrahis at Soro centre in April.151 Probably, the involvement of this type of youth with their communist outlook in the overall conduct of Satyagraha must have imparted a different impulse, as far as training of youth or organisation of peasantry were concerned. For example, Sachi while addressing the Andrei Youth league session in Balasore also urged the ordinance to fight capitalism.152 We also come across an evidence regarding formation of Kisan Sabha in Dhamnagar. Here, people

148. HPD, I.G. Police report on protection of salt factories, 8.3.41 (ACC-1835).

149. WWCC, ACC No.59, 15.9.41.

150. WWCC, ACC-60, SP Report, 8.1.41.

151. WWCC (ACC-30), 27.4.41.

152. WWCC (ACC-60), SP Report, 8.1.41.
resented the Government's policy of levying water tax, and thus was born in Dhamnagar a water tax association. This association, gradually, transformed itself into a Kisan Sabha around July. \textsuperscript{153} In Eram, Basudevpur and Bhadrak Individual Satyagraha in a Congress dictated form came to be opposed. \textsuperscript{154} Around October, one finds Satyagraha conducted before the houses of paddy hoarders, in the overall atmosphere of food scarcity in Balsore. \textsuperscript{155} How to explain these trends within the broad pattern of Individual Satyagraha? As we have said earlier, it was the organisation of rural areas through constructive activities, and Satyagrahi training centres or the building of Shantisena and the PCC's consistent call for "march to villages" with the objective of re-inspiring the large number of unarrested and intending Satyagrahis at mass levels, which probably created space for different forms within the broad structure of Satyagraha.

**Mobilization of the Youth**

We may also note that many of the youths, basically socialists and communists, also committed themselves to such activities at village levels. The reasons for peasant mobilisation picking up in many of the estates like Madhupur may be explained by this. We come across several instances of the organisation and activities of youth league in the year 1940-41. The emergence of this trend, in fact, picked up within the course of the Individual Satyagraha, and in the context of consistent efforts by PCC to emphasise constructive activities at the rural levels. This trend was evident right since January 1941, when many youth leagues sprung up at village levels doing village welfare jobs like settling petty disputes. Mostly initiated by local level

\textsuperscript{153} WWCC (ACC-59), 10.3.41 and 31.7.41.

\textsuperscript{154} WWCC (ACC-59), 15.7.41.

\textsuperscript{155} "All India Kisan Supplement", Oct. 18/19 1941, Indulal Yajnik Private Papers (NMML), Subject File No.20.
Congress activists, such leagues were often used as platforms to cover up socialist and communist ideological campaigns. We have seen earlier, how, as early as September 1940, the youth league at Jeypore estate (Koraput) resisted violently the efforts at war-fund collection by the authorities leading to the arrest of its president Lambodar Singh Lal. On 16 June Lalmohan Satpathy (Balasore) distributed leaflets in Jallesore Hat and encouraged the audience in the Hat to form an organisation of youth which would drive away the British Government. His speech was characteristic of the departure from the "symbolic Satyagraha." In September, Puri District Youth Conference was organised under the presidency of Nabakrushna Choudhury, who emphasised the need to strengthen the anti-imperialist struggle.

We have also pointed out earlier the activities of Sachi Routrai and Rabindar Nath Das in Balasore. They were involved in working up Kisan Sabha organisation through the overt activities around Satyagraha and organisation of youth league. Along with this, most of the rural pockets of Balasore, particularly, Bhadrak, Basudevpur, Chandbali and Andrei, were conspicuous by the presence of several youth leagues. These leagues formed under the initiatives of local Congress leadership attracted many student activists. Most of them adopted basically anti-capitalist and anti-feudal positions to effect welfare of the peasantry.

As for the students politics in the year, both National Front and Forward Bloc kept functioning within the Orissa

156. WWCC (ACC-30), ACC-60, SP Report, 8.1.41; and HPD, OPAI, 27.1.41, No.5.


158. WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.VI, 6.10.41, No.37.

159. WWCC (ACC-30), S.P. Report, Balasore, 1.1.41/7.1.41.
Students Federation. M.N. Roy's visit to Orissa in January had a mixed response. The 'National Frontiers' condemned him as an "agent of imperialism" and a "traitor". Nilakantha Das group opposed to the ex-Ministry party, were supporters of both Forward Bloc and M.N. Roy. The 17th session of the All Orissa Students Federation organised by the National Front wingers resolved to unite and fight any sorts of discrimination, and to take their due share in national struggle without being an appendage to any political party in the context of the war and to bring about social change. Besides, it reiterated its anti-imperialist stance very clearly and condemned the Congress for its "shameful efforts for a compromise" with imperialism. The Balasore students conference was organised in April 1941. It was presided over by Harihar Mohapatra who advised the students to concentrate on socio-cultural as well as constructive activities. The conference was conspicuous by the presence of communists like Sachi Routray, Ram Chandra Mishra. The editor of Dagara, Nityananda Mohapatra also attended the conference. The conference condemned the oppressions on students in the Medical Schools so on.162

The National Front wing dominated by the budding communists now stepped up their activities. Bibhudendu Mishra, a prominent student communist, released a pamphlet for distribution among Ravenshaw College Students in January. The pamphlet reminding the students of the preceding years strike during the celebration of Independence Day, exhorted the student comrades to assert their rights as students and

160. WWCC (ACC-30), OPAI, Vol.VI, No.3, Dt.13.4.41.
162. The Chhatra, 1.4.41.
Another youthful communist Ramkrishna Pati translated the book *Whither Congress* into Oriya under the title *Congress Ra Gati Keun Ade* around February. While explaining the need for such a translation, he observed in its prefatory remarks that:

"After coming into contact with various youth leagues (implying communist association with youth leagues in Orissa) I have been convinced of the fact that most of Congress and kisan activists have no idea about things except what they come to see in newspapers.... These workers have heard of only spinning and weaving. They have also heard that in the present situation of the country we shall have to be organised and to engage ourselves in constructive work (Spinning, Harijan uplift etc.) as per the dictate of Gandhi. This is the political education of the workers and this is the method to bring about political awakening among the people."

Dubbing the policy enunciated by Congress leadership as wrong, and basically capitalist in character, the book defined socialist principles. While the book was critical of the "philosophy of Swaraj based on Khaddar and Spinning" it blamed the Congress leadership for not politically educating the masses properly for fear of the destruction of capitalist system, which such education might generate.

This, in fact, typically reflects the growing disillusionment of the communist with the dominant Congress leadership and to their negative attitude towards Gandhi. In March, Durga Charan Mohanty, a student communist, addressing the youth gathering at Cuttack on the occasion of "Sahid Day" described the imperialist rule as an organised hooliganism, causing mass deaths through firing and bombs and starvation, and exhorted the audience to fight for independence of the country and to fight the obstacles on the way to independence. He equally warned that "while doing it, if anybody rises a step higher, then we shall have to follow him". This points to the open advocacy by the Communists of alternative

164. Ram Krushna Pati, *Congress Ra Gati Keun Ade* (Oriya), Cuttack, 1941.
methods of struggle to the basic Gandhian forms. Yet in another meeting, on 9 March, he attacked the method of Individual Satyagraha as organised by Gandhi, describing it as a "stupid" method, but he concluded by observing: "it is necessary for the youth and old men, women to take part in the agitation (Individual Satyagraha) to break the backbone of British Government, who are now embarrassed due to this war and whose backbone is about to break". He also projected the communist thinking of the necessity to organise a mass movement immediately to fight British imperialism. Mohanty also used to circulate many communist leaflets. The communist bulletin Chhatra (mouthpiece of Orissa Students Federation 1940) continued its publication in 1941 under an editorial board comprising prominent left winger activists such as Banamali Patnaik, Durga Charan Mohanty, Biren Mitra, Ram Chandra Ram etc. It continued to reflect communist ideas in its writings.

166. Ibid.
167. See, for example, Chhatra, 1.4.41.