CONCLUSION

In this work an attempt has been made to analyze and assess the mega saga of the Indian National Movement in the erstwhile Indian province of Central Provinces and Berar, within a limited time frame from 1936-42. During this period, as at the national level, in this micro region too, Congress and other political parties went through a whole array of myriad experiences, ranging from party reorganization to ministry formation, and through a sustained movement, with all finally conflating into an epic mass struggle.

In this study, the Indian National Congress dominated the provincial scene as a massive organization with an overwhelming and impact over the masses. Available contemporary sources related to this period clearly reveal Congress’ tremendous success at mass mobilization in CPB. The Congress was the only party that had a structured, multilayered organization and a well-defined strategy. The historical sources of the other parties are not only very limited, but at times, even not available.

By 1937, the Indian National Congress had emerged as a single powerful movement with its rightful claim to represent entire the Indian nation in the struggle against British imperialism. Prior to the Act of 1935, other entities like the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha were only potential contenders on the Indian national horizon. However, the elections of 1937 brought these organizations to the forefront as separate political forces, in direct confrontation with Congress along with the British.

During the period of the election campaign, the first problem faced by the Congress was selection of candidates. There was an inevitable period of conflict within the organization as different groups tried to secure tickets for their candidates. In spite of considerable dissensions and conflicts, the basic strength of the organization was reflected in the fact that once the wrangling was over and tickets were distributed, the organization closed its ranks and unitedly worked to secure a victory for the party.
During the campaign, the main plank of the Congress programme was freedom from British rule and measures for ameliorating the conditions of the masses, especially peasants and workers. The methods adopted for propaganda were newspapers, pamphlets, and tours by leaders, both local and national. As elsewhere in the country, Gandhi's name wielded tremendous power and impact on the masses. Jawaharlal Nehru was a very popular leader and his meetings attracted large crowds. The massive impact of the election campaign in extending mass consciousness and arousing hopes for change reverberated when many peasants stopped paying revenue and rent, and on the day of elections, shook their fists in the face of officials who operated the polling booths as if to tell them that their days were over.

The preceding study has shown that CPB was initially a province with a divided leadership. While Gandhi's influence was discern with in Mahakoshal, Nagpur and Berar were under Tilak's influence. Elections proved to be a turning point so far as the issue of leadership was concerned. After the elections, Gandhi emerged as the sole and only Congress leader with a mass following. In CPB, Gandhi was the supreme leader at the apex of a grid of provincial, district, taluqa, tehsil and gram network of teeming followers engaged in coordination and mobilization at lowest rung.

The biggest contribution of the 1937 election in CPB was the reorganization of the Congress party at gram, village, tehsil, taluqa, district and provincial levels. A constant interaction with people at all these levels, generated euphoria in the public mind. People were ready for a ministry of their own, they knew that something new was coming up and they understood that their destiny was going to change under Mahatma's leadership. Gandhi was deemed a Messiah with the power to change the destiny of people. During the 1937 elections, Gandhi's army was at the recruitment stage where each soldier had faith in his leadership and was convinced of fighting a war for a just and truthful cause. This army of Gandhi constituted 'men of no status'; ordinary common people leading a miserable existence, yet had a strong conviction to challenge the mighty, imperialist world power. Gandhiji infused the spirit of self-empowerment in the souls of the masses.
and motivated them to face a massive and highly powerful coercive force. The army of Gandhi at this juncture was getting ready for the ensuing confrontations.

At the time of office acceptance, Congress had declared its objective of utilizing the ministries to develop mass struggle, combat constitution, oppose the Act of 1935 and lead people towards winning complete independence from the British Raj. It also aimed at a welfare government, which would try to abolish the oppressive laws passed by the British and pass legislations for the benefit of the masses, workers and kisans. CPB ministry tried to adhere to this goal and vigorously directed its energy towards this purpose. This was reflected in its parliamentary and extra parliamentary activities.

CPB Congress ministry activities included introduction of various reforms for the expansion of civil liberties which gave a considerable fillip to popular mass mobilization. The release of political prisoners was another important and popular aspect. This introduction of Vidya Mandir Scheme gave an impetus to primary education; civil disabilities on Harijans were removed and the number of scholarships and freeships for Harijan students was increased, Special attention was given to recruitment of Harijans in government services; Congress volunteers and workers conducted a prohibition campaign and the ministry declared certain areas as dry on an experimental basis with the intention of extending prohibition further. MPCC also formed a volunteer corps for Congress rural propaganda.

Another important feature of this period was mass mobilization and mass activity among peasants. Beginning with the election campaign and during the ministry period mass mobilization of the peasantry took place under the aegis of the Congress and Kisan Sabha. Both the Congress and the Kisan Sabha were active in mobilization, organization, and leading a struggle against specific zamindars. The Congress election campaign contributed tremendously to the growth of peasant consciousness. The election manifesto proved a potent catalyst to awaken the peasant masses. Peasants saw Congress assumption of office as their own victory. For them Congress rule implied their own rule and that meant no revenue and no rent. Quite naturally such high expectations could not be fulfilled. Within
Conclusion

one year of the Congress ministry rule, its policies and their implementation disillusioned peasants. During the ministry period signs of discontentment among Congressmen and Kisan Sabha workers regarding Congress policies were quite visible. Differences between fantasy and reality, high sounding election pledges and their impracticability, use of coercive methods and Congress disapproval of Kisan marches were the causes which contributed to the disappointment of the many Congress and Kisan Sabha workers. Congress activity among Kisans, however, tended to decline over the period whereas Kisan Sabha activity showed a marked increase. Kisan Sabha movement gathered momentum during the ministry period in CPB especially in Nagpur and Berar regions whereas Congress' attention shifted to Mahakoshal.

CPB zamindari areas witnessed peasant awakening during ministry the period. At the grass root level, Congress and Kisan Sabha worked together among the peasantry in zamindari regions of Chhuikhadan, Umrer, Dondi-Lohara, Khujji, Uprora and Chichgaon. In these regions Congress also as the government, tried to suppress the peasant agitation. It is perhaps easier to embark a non-violent movement than to suppress on a non-violent movement with non-violent coercive methods. However, as seen in chapter 4 and 5, promises were broken and expectations dashed, down yet during the ministry tenure a vast multitude of peasantry was brought in to the mainstream of the Indian National Movement at the ground level. Congress and Kisan Sabha workers built a strong and firm foundation in the rural areas; strong enough to shoulder the ensuing mass upsurge.

The Congress ministry provided relief to peasants by passing the CPB Tenancy Act. This Act gave a right to rent to the absolute occupancy tenants to acquire ‘Malik-Makbuza’ title i.e. full proprietary right, on payment of ‘Nazarana’ to the landlord equal to ten times of the annual. This was an advance over the U. P. Tenancy Act passed by the U.P. Congress Ministry, as the U. P. Tenancy Act did not have any provision for purchase of full proprietary rights by tenants. On the other hand, CPB Tenancy legislation had no provision for reduction of rent and recovery of lands lost through alienation unlike those provided in tenancy legislations passed by the U. P. and Bihar Congress Ministries.
Conclusion

Among labour, there was a considerable mass upsurge, as a result of the expansion in civil liberties and the resultant hopes and aspirations of workers. The number of strikes that took place in almost all kinds of industries is significant. Congressmen backed many of these struggles both inside and outside the province. The mobilization of labour was effectively organized and workers, women and children participated in large numbers. In case of labour disputes and a deadlock, Congress ministers and other leaders played a role in bringing about a settlement. The active organizations among labour were the Congress and the Trade Union Congress.

 Strikes at Rajnandgaon, Nagpur, Hinganghat, Burhanpur, Jabalpur and Katni revealed mobilization of labour and the participation of Backward and Depressed Classes. The sweepers', mochis' and bidi workers' strikes are good examples of the permeation of nationalist sentiments at the ground level.

During the ministry period, many weaknesses also emerged in the CPB Congress organization. Evidence of bogus membership was found in Berar PCC. Some Congress members avoided work in rural and interior areas and several instances of indiscipline were reported. Regional rivalries between the three PCCCs, accentuated by petty squabbles and factionalism, resulted in the "Khare crisis" which was an open defiance of the Congress high command by a premier. Provincial leadership went into further oblivion due to the 'Khare Crisis'.

Ministry formation was a challenge of momentous significance for the Indian National Congress. It provided an opportunity to counter the colonial notions of Indian incapacity to rule. The Congress always claimed that it was a solid united monolith representing the entire Indian nation. The exposure of a fissure in its own cadre and scandalous public denouncement of the high command and CWC were extremely humiliating and a catastrophe for the Congress.

In CPB, Congress party was divided into three provincial Congress committees with distinctive regional linguistic and cultural patterns. Their agricultural and developmental requirements as well as economic resources were different. Each area had exclusive but genuine problems and needed different solutions. Existence
of three PCCs divided the top leadership thus confrontations and clashes of personality were inevitable.

CPB Congress had won elections largely because of the charisma of Gandhi and the ideological appeal of the Gandhian programme. Gandhi’s dominating presence and influence and the over-centralization of Congress organization even raised debates in the press. The press raised huge uproar over Khare’s dismissal and the subsequent ministry formation by R. S. Shukla. Inherent factional and regional disputes of CPB Congress weakened the Congress and caused incalculable damage to the Provincial Congress organization.

Amidst these pressures, the Congress decision to expel CPB premier was a logical and rational assertion of its authority. The Congress was carrying out a massive struggle against a mighty imperialistic power. It was mendatory for Congress to control, guide and discipline each Congress institution or individual member. Dr. Khare as a party member was responsible to the Congress Party and not to Governor. Therefore, the authority of the Party was unquestionable.

The Congress had faced some problems on the Kisan and Labour front as well. High expectations aroused by the formation of the first popular ministry could naturally not be fulfilled in their totality. Some disillusionment and criticism was inevitable. At times, Kisan Sabha opposition manifested in demonstrations, led to friction with Congress. As in the case of the Muslim League, these organizations had no constraints of running a government and could afford the freedom of levelling criticism, a luxury Congress could not afford.

Another major problem faced by the Congress was on the communal front. The Muslim League was determined to exploit every opportunity, real or imagined, to advance its position and the Congress was always on the defensive. Even benign measures like Vidya Mandir Scheme were misrepresented and Congress attempts at Muslim mass contact were treated as a hostile act. Congress could not provide a powerful alternative strategy to counter communalism. The pro-Hindu bias of some individual Congressmen provided grist to Muslim communal propaganda against Congress. Local Congress leaders condemned the Muslim League for its
communal propaganda but avoided criticizing the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS for the same. Enhanced Hindu communal activities of certain groups like Hindu Mahasabha and RSS further accentuated the communal problem. During the period of this study, the process of Muslim estrangement and alienation from Congress and inclination towards Muslim League unfortunately gained momentum. The Congress campaign against communalism proved weak and ineffective. In fact, The Congress did not launch a massive campaign to counter the menace of Hindu and Muslim communalism in the Muslim minority province.

The relationship of the Congress with the bureaucracy was also bedeviled with problems. The bureaucracy was naturally averse to sharing power with the Congress, the organization that it had continuously treated as an enemy. British authorities tried, therefore, to strengthen the hands of those groups and individuals on whose loyalty they could rely. This was necessary for their mutual existence, a marriage of convenience. During the election campaign, British authorities helped Rao and other independents. Later, they found a new ally in the Muslim League, to counter-balance and restrain the Congress. Although in private they recognized that Congress overall had kept a non-communal stance, they took a different position in publicly. Similarly, at a personal level, the governor Francis Wylie acknowledged the beneficial aspects of the Tenancy legislation passed by the Congress. Yet this did not form a part of his public stand on the Congress Ministry. However, despite all these constraints, within a short span of twenty-eight months, the Congress ministry succeeded in achieving considerable success in furthering its goal.

Left activities were also building up at this time. Kisan Sabha, Forward Bloc, Hindustan Red Army, Student Federation and Communist Party were engaged in the mobilization of students, peasants and labour.

In conclusion, it is possible to assert that despite many problems and weaknesses that surfaced in this period, the Congress was able to advance the nationalist cause by forming a ministry in the CPB. It kept itself reasonably free from the pitfalls and lures of office, remained fair on the communal front, brought significant
legislatures and welfare measures and advanced the process of mass mobilization. The people benefited from the extension of civil liberties and breathed in a free atmosphere. Their fear of government officials got reduced. They were empowered with a new confidence gained from the experience of their own government in power, particularly because the British proclaimed that Indians were incapable of governing themselves. Congress ministry imparted the hope of a new age and a vision of independent India. A dream of free India was taking shape and this infused a fresh spirit in the activities of all political parties.

With the resignation of Congress ministry, Gandhiji prepared the nation for a future mass struggle. The Congress organization was reorganized and people were mobilized and educated. Individual Satyagraha was truly a movement of ‘men of no status’ under Gandhian leadership. It empowered the satyagrahi with self-respect and gave him an identity of a soldier with a just and a nationalist cause to live for. These satyagrahis were non-violent soldiers of Gandhi, held no office, no powerful position and enjoyed neither privilege in the social hierarchy nor patronage in caste structure. On the political level, the movement prepared a solid ground for the Quit India movement of 1942. It was the first leaderless movement and proved the dress rehearsal for the Quit India Movement.

Thousands of Satyagrahis had been convicted for offering Satyagraha. Yamuna Thakur became a symbol of participation of women. She walked 10 miles a day, took promises from Harijans in the Saugor villages for sending their daughters to school and talked about Vanar Sena, Jhanda vandan, Swadeshi, cleanliness and takali. Individual Satyagraha provided a mission and an opportunity to each Satyagrahi to work for the nation. Gandhi became a symbol of country and nation, a symbol of their fight against the injustice of the British rule and perhaps even the injustice of centuries. It was the first biggest purely non-violent and truly Gandhian movement.

Individual Satyagraha was a part of the Gandhian strategy designed to impart training to the Satyagrahi in self-discipline and self-empowerment. Gandhi was creating and training an army for embarking on a bigger war. Individual
Satyagraha was a battle for winning a war in 1942. Individual Satyagraha developed its own structural spontaneity and turned into a movement of unfathomable depth under Gandhian influence. The masses often defined the form and shape of the apex-icon in their own idiom within the contours of larger framework in mass upsurges. Through the ‘Icon’ of Gandhi the economic, political and social programme of Congress percolated to the farthest corners of the province. In Central Provinces and Berar, Gandhiji became a national thaumaturgical power, a panacea for all ills.

The Quit India Movement in Central Provinces and Berar was an extensive, widespread, planned, synchronized and resonant movement. It would be an incorrect assumption to assign spontaneity to this movement in its early stages. A massive preparation for a final insurgency was building up since the withdrawal of the Congress ministry. Individual Satyagraha proved a precursor of the Quit India movement that was launched after a gap of only sixteen months. It presented an illusion of spontaneity, though in reality, uniformity in the course and pattern of the movement indicates a synchronized orchestrated insurgency in the entire province. Massive participation by Congress volunteers, government servants, District council teachers, municipal employees, students, women, Hindustan Red Army, peasants, mill hands and common people made this movement a huge success. It was a torrential stream joined by every possible rivulet in its pathway, adding to its intensity, enormity, expanse and gravity.

As already shown in chapter four, an in-depth study of Political and Military department files and General Administration Department files clearly reveal that 1942 proved to be a crucial juncture of consolidation of Hindu and Muslim communalism. Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh were similar in their approach and hence equally responsible for the flaring of communal frenzy. Hindu-Muslim identity, majority-minority tangles and separate nationhood claims were the core issues of these communal parties, but these did not impress the common people at the grass root level. At that level, all identities merged into one identity that of the nation- witnessed in the massive participation of all and sundry and non-occurrence of any communal clashes.
during the course of QIM. Quit India Movement brought together all Indians irrespective of community, caste, creed and ideology.

After CDM, the charged masses needed an agenda and a programme of action. At that moment, it was provided by the communal organizations. As argued in Chapter Six, several incident clearly reveal and that at the ground level, a thin line existed between the nation and the community, and at times it got smudged. Given that different levels of consciousness co-existed (what James Scott calls 'the multiple reality of mass identities') it is difficult to explain popular mobilization in terms of clear-cut and homogeneous causes. National identities became stronger during movements initiated by the Indian National Congress. After the movement died down, the communal consciousness took over for some time because of the absence of any greater agenda and objective. The association of Congressmen with Hindu communal forces was individual aberrations not sanctioned by the party. This is best illustrated by Nehru’s statement in a letter to Brijlal Biyani, President, Berar PCC, on the forthcoming Berar Hindu Mahasabha conference. According to Nehru, "It seems to me undesirable for prominent Congressmen to associate themselves with the provincial Hindu Mahasabha even as members of the reception committee. I suggest therefore that congress should keep away from it though of course they should not interfere with it in any way." Congress tackled the communal issue in a complacent manner, perhaps because it never believed in the possibility of the realization of Pakistan.

The years from 1936 to 1942 witnessed the consolidation and widening of nationalism in CPB. A parallel wave of communalism is also seen to be emerging very strongly in the study area. Indian National Congress was big stage, a wide platform, where diverse elements met and dispersed at random points without remaining uninfluenced by it. Congress influenced many local initiatives and built

1 Jawaharlal Nehru to Brijlal Biyani, President, Berar Provincial Congress Committee, September, 1937., dated June 30,1937; Jawaharlal Nehru to Dr. J.G. Bande, Secretary, Nagar Congress Committee, Yeotmal (Berar), dated June 30,1937; Jawaharlal Nehru to M.S. Aney, MLA, Yeotmal (Berar), dated 30 June 1937, AIICC Papers, File no. P22/ 1937; Times of India, September 10, 1937, Page no.5.

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up the national movement in this area. However, Congress could not provide an effective counter to the appeal of the Hindu and Muslim communal propaganda and its appeal after the tapering down of the 1942 movement. In the context of the time frame of this study, Indian National Congress with its secular credentials emerged in the mass perception as a parallel government as there was a steady erosion of colonial hegemony and was recognized as a legitimate alternative to British rule and perhaps this was the biggest achievement of the Indian National Movement.