CHAPTER - IV

GANDHI AND MASS MOVEMENT
(1937-1947)
CHAPTER-IV

GANDHI AND MASS MOVEMENT
(1937-1947)

THE FORMATION OF FIRST CONGRESS MINISTRY IN THE PROVINCE, INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA, QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT, THE CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMMES AND A BRIEF ACCOUNTS OF POLITICAL EVENTS.

The fourth phase of the Indian National Congress the last under the leadership and guidance of Gandhi lasted from 1937 to 1947. It witnessed the third and fourth mass movements launched by the Congress namely, Individual Satyagraha and Quit India Movement. During the period under the discussion Government of India Act 1935 was implemented. The implementation of the Government of India Act of 1935 also marked the opening of a new chapter in the Constitutional History of India. Under the Act of 1935, power was transferred to the popular control in the provinces, to be exercised through a Council of Ministers, responsible to the provincial legislatures. This was the scheme of the provincial autonomy introduced under the Act of 1935.

Notwithstanding its bitter criticism of the reformed constitution, Congress decided to participate in the election. Before this, Congress had been deeply divided in their attitude to the reformed constitution. One group of Congressmen led by Jawaharlal Nehru believed that the Congress should concern itself, not with the constitution but engage itself
in improving the condition of the masses of India and drawing them into the nationalist movement. But another group of Congressmen led by Sardar Patel and Rajendra Prasad, two prominent members of the Congress Working Committee were of the view that Congress should contest the elections and enter the new legislatures.

The resolution passed at the annual session of the Congress at Faizpur in 1936 resolved the conflict between the two groups. This resolution stressed the need for nationalists to associate the masses with the Congress and at the same time directed the Congressmen to contest the election to the new council in 1937.

In January 1936, the All India Congress Working committee reorganised the provincial committees. Accordingly, in Central Province and Berar the three Provincial Congress committees were reorganised and leaders emerged after the reorganisation were closely related to the masses and provided an opportunity to fulfil the aspirations of the people in provinces. M. V. Abhyankar, a veteran in Nagpur region died in 1935 and Dr. N. B. Khare succeeded him as leader of the Congress party in Nagpur region. The Congress Working Committee appointed Dr. Khare as President and E. S. Patwardhan as Secretary of Nagpur Provincial Committee.¹ M. S. Aney as President and Brijlal Biyani as Secretary of Berar provincial committee² and Ravishanker Shukla as President and Thakur Pyarelal Singh as Secretary of Mahakoshal provincial Congress committee.³
ELECTION UNDER THE NEW ACT

As the federal part of the Act could not be enforced because the Indian States did not agree to join the proposed federation, it was decided to enforce the provincial part alone. Accordingly, the elections to the Provincial Legislatures were held in February 1937.

The Congress published its election manifesto in 1936. The manifesto, on the basis of which the Congress decided to obtain the mandate of the people, emphasised on the following main points:

1. Repeal of all repressive laws.
2. Release of political prisoners.
3. Relief from the burden of debt and arrears of rent and revenue.
4. Poverty and unemployment relief.
5. Relief in the sphere of Industrial labour.
6. Prohibition of liquor and intoxicating drugs.
8. Reduction of high salaries, allowances and cost of administration of Government.

THE CONGRESS ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Due to the widening of the franchise, the Congress threw its heart and soul into the campaign of elections in 1936. Its important leader like Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others participated in it, although they did not contest the elections themselves.

In Hindi region (Mahakoshal) the President of the Provincial Congress Committee, Captain Lal Awadesh Pratap Singh was among the
first to launch election campaign. The most striking feature of the election campaign in 1937 was that the Congress did not put much emphasis on its election manifesto. Although the manifesto was issued, but the Congress sought vote not in the policies and programmes but in the name of Gandhiji. They also promised reduction in rent and remission of debts. They said that if the Congress came to power, no rents and debts would be asked to be paid.

Before tracing elections programmes in Madhya Pradesh, it is necessary to refer briefly to the administrative set-up in the province at that time. The composition of the legislative council was such that no stable ministry had been possible. The life of the council was extended from year to year after its normal term of three years was over. As a result, the members elected in November 1930 for fourth council continued to sit till 1936, twice the normal life of a council's life. There had been three ministries during this period, each supported precariously by a time-serving combination of groups. The last of these ministers, consisted of B. G. Khaparde and K.S. Naidu managed to remain in office for nearly 3 years and from March 1934 onwards. Dr. E. Raghavendra Rao continued as a member of the Executive Council ever since S. B. Tambe relinquished that office.

With the struggle for power in all the three provincial Congress committees at the provincial level resolved, the Congress campaign was started on 12th January 1937 by Stalwarts like Ravishankar Shukla, D. P. Mishra, Seth Govind Das and Captain Lal Awadhesh Pratap
Singh in Hindi region. Dr. N. B. Khare in Nagpur, Ms. Aney and Brijlal Biyani in Berar regions.\(^8\) Opening the Congress election campaign on 12\(^{th}\) January 1937 at Nagpur, Dr. N. B. Khare remarked, 'I appeal to you to vote for the Congress. The Congress did not beg your vote. It is its unique privilege to demand your votes as a matter of right.'\(^9\) Seth Govind Das and D. P. Mishra addressed several meetings in the Hindi region and appealed to the villagers to rally around the Congress banner and return the Congress candidates in an overwhelming majority in the Central Provinces Legislative Assembly.\(^10\)

In this election bureaucracy was also interested. They pinned their hopes on their Executive Councillor, Dr. E. Raghavendra Rao.\(^11\) In October 1936, the Governor, Sir Hyde Gowan wrote 'to all his commissioners to keep the posted every month with the developments, their divisions, especially the party leadings of the prospective candidates and how far they might be trusted to support Dr. Rao'.\(^12\)

The Congress leaders won a grand success at the elections to the Legislative Assembly held in February 1937. There were many factors responsible for this success. First, among the parties contesting the elections, only the Congress possessed a 'first class electoral machinery' and the services of a vast army of 'sincere voluntary workers'. Among the volunteers were village officials, the teachers of rural schools, students, and men and women volunteers, many of whom had participated in agitation against the government.\(^13\) Secondly, the Congress also scored success by fielding candidates who belonged to the
same community as the majority of voters in particular constituencies, and by convincing the people that 'if elected, it would introduce a new order of things'. This claim was instantly successful, as one observer said: 'we found everywhere a marked enthusiasm for the Congress. The electorate is of opinion that Congress will accept office .... Everywhere we find that the masses will vote for any party which promise them relief from poverty and misery. The Congress has been promising the masses on a large scale, a new order of things in its manifesto and naturally the scales have been weighted in its favour.\textsuperscript{14}

**IMPORTANCE OF CENTRAL PROVINCE RESULTS**

The elections to the Legislative Assembly in 1937 resulted in a clear win for the Congress party. Its candidates gained sixty one percent of the votes cast and seventy of the 112 seats in the Legislature.\textsuperscript{15} As for the opponents of the Congress the factions of the Muslim League won fourteen seats; the Tilakites and associated parties, four, the Independent Labour Party, four, the Non-Brahman Party, three; and others, including Rao and his associates, fourteen seats. The Congress victory signalled the defeat of E. Raghavendra Rao. After the outcome of the election results, Intelligence Officer, Nagpur reported, 'In this province the success of the Congress in assembly elections has upset all forecasts both official and non-official. Many of Congress candidates with no individual status defeated their strong opponents by thumping majorities.\textsuperscript{16}
The Congress victory placed responsibility on all Congressmen to fulfil the policies and programme given in the election manifesto. Thus the responsibility has been put on the shoulder of the Congressmen to fulfil the aspirations of the people of the provinces.

THE CONTROVERSY OVER OFFICE ACCEPTANCE

Soon after the declaration of election results, a constitutional crisis clouded the political horizon of India. Having won a thumping majority in six provinces, the Congress refused to accept office until the Governor gave an assurance that they would not use their special powers, vested in them by the new constitution. The question of office acceptance was a matter of controversy among the top leaders of the Congress even before the elections. But the Congress working committee had left it unresolved until the election results were declared. The impasse commenced with the resolution of the Congress Working Committee passed on March 17, 1937. The resolution declared, The All India Congress Working Committee authorises and permits the acceptance of office in provinces where the Congress commands a majority in the legislatures, provided the ministership shall not be accepted unless the leader of the Congress party in the legislature is satisfied and is able to state publicly that the Governor will not use its special powers of interference or set aside the advice of Ministers in regard to constitutional activities. 17
THE KHARE CRISIS, 1937-38

From the regional view point, the election results of 1937 would have required the election of a Hindi Congressman as premier of the Central Province and Berar because the Hindi region had a larger population and won more seats in the Legislature than the Marathi region, consisted of Nagpur and Berar divisions. The Hindi region had an even greater advantage in the allocation of Hindi or general seats. In the Hindi region, of 56 seats, 50 were Hindu and 6 Muslim. Whereas in the Marathi region of 52 seats 44 were Hindus and 8 Muslim. As for the regional membership of the legislature, Congressmen won 42 of the 56 Hindi seats, but only 27 of the 52 Marathi seats.\(^{18}\)

Despite the defeat of Rao’s candidates, on 1\(^{st}\) April 1937 Gowan appointed Rao as premier because the Congress declined to permit their party men in the various provinces to accept office.\(^{19}\) Consequently, Rao formed a united party consisting of twenty five Muslim, Harijans, non-Brahmans, Hindi and Tilakites member of the Assembly, and appointed B. G. Khapade and S.W.R. Rizvi as ministers from the party. This ministry held office on a caretaker basis until 14\(^{th}\) July 1937, by which time the Congress Working Committee permitted the Congress to form ministry in the provinces under normal circumstance. Ravishankar Shukla would have been the normal choice as the premier. But he shows little choice of his ambition to become premier. To him the unity of the party was supreme and he himself proposed the name of Dr. N. B. Khare for the office of premier.\(^{20}\)
After Khare's election as the premier, the Rao cabinet resigned on 14th July 1937 and Khare's ministry was installed on the same day. The ministry consisted of the following members:

1. Dr. N. B. Khare; Premier and held the Home Department.21
2. Ravishankar Shukla; Minister of Education.
3. D. P. Mishra; Minister of Local Self Government.
4. R. M. Deshmukh; Minister for Public Works.
5. M. Y. Shareef; Minister of Law.
7. P. B. Gole; Minister for Revenue.

But the Khare Ministry did not survive long. During 1937-38 struggle for power had developed between Khare and D. P. Mishra in the form of disagreement over the process of decision making. The conflict between Khare and Mishra called, 'The Khare crisis of 1937-38'. As a result Khare resigned from the party leadership and Ravishankar Shukla was elected as premier of the province and formed his ministry on 29th July, 1938.

The Shukla ministry had to face few controversial issues, prominent among which was to resolve communal tangle. The Muslim League issued a report on sufferings of Muslim under the Congress government. This report commonly known as the 'Pirpur Report', was issued during the tenure of Pandit Ravishankar Shukla. In clarifying the position the government issued a press note in which government denied Muslim sufferings as a reply to the Pirpur Report.22
Right from its formation. The congress ministry is implemented its policies and programmes in political, economic, and social fields also.

**POLITICAL PROGRAMME**

One of the first act of the ministry was the release of few remaining political prisoners. Their bonds were cancelled and securities already forfeited of the political prisoners were refunded. The press securities forfeited were also refunded.²³

**ECONOMIC PROGRAMMES**

(i) **Agriculture**

In the Central Province and Berar, the agriculturists formed the majority of the population. However, they had many problems to be solved. The congress election manifesto also had laid down agrarian reforms as one of its chief programmes. Hence the Congress Ministry took up in hand schemes that had been promised in the manifesto. The first step taken in this direction was the order of stay of all coercive processes employed in the collection of land revenue till December next. Telegrams were sent to the Deputy Commissioners conveying the order of the Government.²⁴ Though it was alleged that the revenue authorities openly flouted the orders of the Government and were busy in collecting and realising arrears of land revenue from the tenants and malgujars.²⁵ This problem of the peasantry received the earnest attention of the ministry. D. K. Mehta, Minister for Finance, presenting the budget in the
Assembly on 10th September 1937 assured the house of giving some immediate relief to the smaller peasantry throughout the province. The Government tried to mitigate the burden of the agricultural class in two ways, i.e. through administrative measures and secondly through legislative enactment.

(ii) Development of Cottage Industries and Khadi

The Congress programmes gave a very prominent place to the development of indigenous industries and Khadi throughout the country. When the Congress Ministries assumed office in different provinces, they found enough scope to implement their programmes into practice. Central province and Berar as one of the provinces in the country to have laid emphasis in this regard.

For developing cottage industries on scientific and systematic lines, industrial education was regarded very essential. Hence one new aided industrial school was opened at Deori in 1937-39 in the Bhandara district; and one school each was opened at Khandwa in the Nimar district and Darwh in the Yeotmal district during 1937-39. Besides these new schools there were already three Government Schools of handicrafts at Nagpur, Akola and Jabalpur and seven Government aided industrial schools at Amraoti, Khargaon, Buldhana, Dhamtari, Raipur, Sagar and Chandametta. These schools gave instructions in carpentry and smithy. In addition to these, two cottage industrial institution were opened at Jabalpur and Akola during 1938-39. They provided training in Cotton-weaving, Carpet, and Durrie-weaving, toy making, Cane and Basket
manufacturing. The average number of pupils admitted and passed were 246 and 166 in 1937-38 and 1938-39 respectively.

The Government also continued the system of granting scholarships to students for training in institution in and outside the province.

To provide training in the art of flaying, curing of raw hides, flesh manure manufactures, extraction of animal fat and bones-meal manufacturing, a Dead Cattle institute was started in the building of the Government Leather Training School, Nagpur.

A scheme for the training of village depressed communities in the use of offal and skin flaying was started in 1938. The scheme was divided into two parts, viz. disposal of dead carcasses in rural areas and bone-meal propaganda. Two centres were opened at Wardha and Yeotmal and propaganda work was carried on in the four districts of Mandla, Balaghat, Wardha and Yeotmal.\(^{30}\)

In order to encourage the people in cottage industries, classes were held at Betul, Patan, Chhindwara, Chanda, Nagpur, Durg, Raipur and Bhandara, where Rope-making, Carpet and Durrie weaving, dyeing and calico-printing, country wool refining and spinning, paper-making, fruit basketry, bamboo work were taught and demonstrated.\(^{31}\)

The scheme for the introduction of mulberry silk industry was financed partly by the Government of India, and partly by Provincial Government. The work of plantation of mulberry at the five seed distribution centres at Nagpur, Seoni, Betul, Sagar and Pendra Road was completed.\(^{32}\)
A scheme for the introduction of (Taser or Kosa) silk industry financed by the Government of India during 1938-39 was introduced in the province. The tasar or kosa industry work was concentrated in the Chand and Bhandara districts where the industry already existed.

As such it may be noted that all these steps of the Government were understood to establish small scale industries in the province on firm foundations. But besides encouraging, small-scale industries, the Government tried to find out ways and means to increase the financial sources, and to improve the economic condition of the people.

(iii) Welfare Measures of Industrial & Textile Labours

One of the most important achievements of the congress ministry was an appointment of the Central Province and Berar Textile Labour Enquiry Committee. The government accepted most of its recommendations, which helped the Labour to come out of financial hardship.

Since the very beginning there was a strong demand for raising the living standard of Labour and the restoration of wage cut of 1934. Several trade union leaders were also pressing the Government to solve their demands and had organised a few strikes. Therefore, following the steps of Bombay Government which appointed the Textile Labour Enquiry committee to gave new impetus to the labour demands, the congress ministry appointed the Enquiry Committee in 1938 and directed it to give its recommendation.353

After due deliberations the committee submitted its report in April 1938. The Central Province Government accepted its recommendation
with some modifications. As a result, cotton textiles workers gained about three lakh rupees annually.\textsuperscript{34} The textile workers insisted on the 75 percent restoration of wage-cut. Measures were also taken to raise the living standard of these labours.\textsuperscript{35}

**MEASURES FOR SOCIAL REFORM**

Gandhi was a great social reformer. Therefore, he was bent upon to eradicate the evils prevailing in the society. For this purpose, he strived for prohibition, Harijan welfare and emancipation of women.

**The Prohibition**

The prohibition was one of the most important programme, which under pressure from Gandhiji, the Congress Government had introduced in the provinces Gandhiji's views in regard to this issue are well known. According to Gandhi 'If I was appointed a dictator for one hour for India, the first thing I would do to be close without compensation all the liquor shops.\textsuperscript{36} The Congress included this measure in its programmes, eversince Gandhiji took over the leadership of Congress. Picketing of the liquor shops was a common scene during the days of the political movements launched by the congress under his leadership. So when the Congress came into power in the provinces the Government took various steps in this regard.

In August 1937, the congress ministry planned to bring total prohibition in the provinces in four or five years. For this purpose the Government passed a bill, which became law in 1938. Reporting on this, the Hitavada recorded: 'Central Province Ministry has decided to bring
about total prohibition at any cost, within the lifetime of the ministry not extending a period more than five years. But the implementation of prohibition commenced even before the Act came into force. The Government, under the existing Central Province and Berar Excise Act of 1915 decided to enforce it in the following areas from April 1938.

(a) The whole of the Sagar district,
(b) The Narsinghpur sub-division,
(c) The Akola taluka of Akola district and
(d) The industrial towns of Hinghanghat and Katni.

Thus an area of 9,333 square miles with a population of 14,00,000 was brought under prohibition. From January 1939, the prohibition was extended to Akola and Wardha districts. Even after the resignation of the ministry, the prohibition policy was continued and new areas were brought under it upto 1940.

After the introduction of the prohibition, the Central Province Government made sincere efforts to make it a success. These efforts can be divided in two parts. The first side included several schemes undertaken by the Government to include the addicts to abandon the drinking habit, and secondly, to take police action, against the offenders.

Prohibition was an humble attempt to reform the society. But the congress ministry failed to fulfil the expectations as desired. Despite all the efforts of the government it gained a little success. One fourth of the total area and population covered under the prohibition seems to be a success but to a lesser extent.
Welfare Measures for Harijans / Depressed Community and other Backward Classes

Despite all the pledges of the Congress about the welfare of Harijans the Congress Ministry could not bring any radical changes in the existing conditions of the depressed community. The inferior status of the community could not be abolished. However, the Congress Ministry tried to raise their social status by means of better facilities of education.

In 1938-39, Rs.5700/- each were sanctioned to the 19 districts committees appointed by the Harijan Sewak Sangh, for the education of Harijan students in the province. Similarly Rs.300/- to each of the 19 district committees were granted for the purchase of books and school material for Harijan students, studying in the recognised primary schools in the provinces. In 1938-39, five out of the twenty Harijan Hostels received special grants from the government. In 1939-40 these grants were extended to twelve hostels.

Similarly, the education for the aboriginal tribes, received very inadequate financial assistance from the government. For this purpose the Government appointed the Central Province and Berar aboriginal tribes officers to prepare a scheme to provide the better educational facilities to these tribes. But before the scheme could be prepared the Ministry resigned. Apart from this step the Ministry sanctioned a grant for the education of the aboriginal tribes during its tenure. In 1938-39 a grant of Rs.240/- per school, was sanctioned for opening of 50 new schools for the education of tribes in Mandla district. Rs.2500/- were sanctioned for the opening of the new schools in the
areas of Chande, Chhindwara, Bilaspur and Durg district. These grant were continued in 1939-40. Thus it is clear that the efforts of the Congress ministry in the field of Harijan and tribal welfare fell much short of expectation.

EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

Emancipation of women was another important social programme which the congress undertook under the influence of Gandhiji. Indian women lived under the grip of the centuries old orders and social customs. The customs made their lives like slaves. Many social evils such as dowry, child marriage, purdha system and inadequate facilities of education caught the attention of Gandhiji and he began his efforts to uproot these evils from the Indian society. Moreover, under his influence, women participated in the national movements, launched by him. For the welfare of Indian women he emphasized on the need to extend the facilities of female education. According to Gandhiji 'all social injustice heaped on women in India was due to their illiteracy'. Insisting on this he wrote in Harijan, all this means education will revolutionize the mentality of the youth of the nation. Thus the congress was committed to expand the facilities of education as well as to improve its quality.

Hence, when the Congress assumed power in July 1937 the Congress Ministry evinced keen interest towards the development of education, especially women education. Steps were taken to encourage enrolment of girls student in school and colleges. During 1937 to 1939 the number of girls in various educational institution increased considerably.
On 16th September, 1938 S. V. Gokhale, Minister for Education introduced the Central Provinces Primary Education (Amended) Bill, 1938 (53 of 1938).46 In view of the working of the Primary Education Act, it had been found that the local bodies, poor in their finance, were not in a position to give the free and compulsory education. Education of the people had become the primary need of the hour and one of the foremost duties of the Congress government was to provide education to the masses. That was why this Bill had been introduced in the house. Through this bill primary education was made compulsory.47 The next important matter which this Bill dealt with was in connection with the education of the girls. The Government wanted to lay down the girl’s education as well as that of boys on equal footing.48 The bill passed in to law on 2nd August 1939.49

During 1937 to 1939 the number of girls student in various educational institutions increased considerably. During 1937-38, there was an increase of 5,383 girls student. The number of girls under these institutions and in the middle schools raised from 68.1 percent to 73.3 percent. In 1938-39, the percentage of trained teachers in the middle schools went down from 52.8 percent to 40 percent.50 This fall was due to the fact that while the number of schools and the girls students was fast increasing, but owing to the limited accommodation available at the training college, Jabalpur the appointment of trained women teachers was not adequate. However, in 1939-40 the number of trained teachers in girls schools showed a slight increase and the situation began to improve.
EDUCATION

The contribution of Congress Ministry in Madhya Pradesh in the field of education was substantial. Ravi Shankar Shukla as minister for education introduced the Vidya Mandir Scheme of Education in 1937. This scheme was vigorously pursued inorder to meet the requirement of 24000 villages, which were without any educational facilities.51 A Vidya Mandir Training School was opened at Wardha on 17th April 1937 for training of teachers and inspectors of schools.52

After becoming Prime Minister, Shukla continued the expansion of this scheme. Trained teachers were posted at various schools under this scheme. Under this scheme facilities were also extended to the teachers of other schools.53

Thus, it is clear that in the vital deal of social reform the congress ministry in Central Provinces failed to live up to its expectation. It is true that its tenure in office was short, but the Government even failed to initiate any long-term measures. Its efforts in the field of total prohibition of liquor in the provinces were inadequate and its efforts for expansion of education specially primary education was not upto the mark. The Government also failed to take any significant steps to improve the lot of Harijans and tribals. But the measures adopted by the Government to uplift Harijans and tribals in the province were greater and effective than other provinces.
WAR ISSUE AND RESIGNATION OF THE MINISTRY

The seventh session of the Central Province and Berar Legislative Assembly began its session on 4th November to debate the resolution on the war moved by the Prime Minister, Ravishankar Shukla. It was an ominous beginning which ended with the resignation of the first Congress ministry on 10th November 1939.54

The Second World War had begun on 3rd September 1939 with the declaration of war against Hitler by Britain and France. As a part of the British Empire the Chamberlain Government began to deal with India in the typical imperialistic way. In August 1939 even without informing the representatives of the people in the Legislature, the Government had sent Indian armies to Egypt, and Singapore for the defence of the empire. The British Parliament enacted emergency legislation curtailing even the little freedom that the Indians possessed. The Viceroy was empowered to take action in the provincial sphere without consulting the provincial governments. Finally, without consulting the people of India, the Viceroy in Delhi declared India a belligerent country on the side of the Allies. But the involvement of India in the war was without any popular consent. The Congress, which had shouldered the responsibility in administering several provinces, was also not consulted. Naturally, the events soon took a serious turn and the Congress ultimately decided to quit office in the province. The working committee on 22nd and 23rd October at Wardha asked the Congress
ministries to resign as soon as possible. Thus, the resignation of congress ministries became inevitable.

In the Central Provinces and Berar Legislature, a heated debate on the war issue took place before the resignation of Ministry. On 4th November 1939, it met to debate the resolution on the war moved by the Pandit Ravishankar Shukla. Speaking 'on the resolution he referred to the way Indian had been dragged into the war without a single Indian having been consulted. 'Nothing in recent times, he said, 'had brought home the inferior status assigned to us in the British Commonwealth, as this act of the British Government. He referred to the familiar and empty words which had been repeated by British states men and added, 'now that we have proved ourselves equal to the task of Self-government, another bogey is being trotted out – the bogey of minorities'. With these words he recommended the resolution for acceptance of the members of the House.

The resolution which was brought before the house on 4th November 1939 and the anticipated resignation of the Ministry brought different reactions from the members of the House. The Congress members following the mandates of the party supported the resolution. The opposition members consisted of Muslim League, European and Scheduled caste took the opportunity to criticize the performance of the Ministry during the two and half years of its existence. They could not support the resolution. Thakur Chhedial moved an amendment expressing full confidence in the ministry while asking them to resign. The
debate which had lasted for four days and had been tensed on occasions was wound up by D. P. Mishra, who classified the position taken by the congress in relation to India's demand and the claim of minorities.  

Finally, the Congress resolution was accepted by the House. Soon after the adjournment of the Legislature, the Central Province Ministry sent its resignation to the Governor on 8th November, 1929, which was ultimately accepted on 10th November 1939. Thus, the tenure of the first Congress Ministry which had continued in office from 14th July 1937 came to an end on 10th November 1939. It closed the first phase of experiments in the Provincial Autonomy under the Act of 1935. Under Provincial autonomy the Indian Legislature got the experience to political education of the parliamentary democracy.

During its short tenure, the sessions of Legislature Assemblies were held seven times – two times in 1937, two times in 1938 and three times in 1939. The total duration of these sessions were 98 days.

WAR AND THE CONGRESS POLICY

With the outbreak of the second world war in September 1939, the Indian National Movement launched its final phase of struggle. On the war issue the congress party had decided to quit office in October 1939 as the British Government was not prepared to make any substantial change in its old imperialistic policy. Accordingly, all Congress Ministries in all the provinces had resigned by the middle of November 1939. However, the Congress did not immediately start any political campaign against the government after the resignation of Congress Ministries.
The war situation in Europe gradually deteriorated and by the middle of 1940 Hitler had over-run the whole of Western Europe. The Congress working committee at its meeting held in the first week of July 1940 renewed their unequivocal demand for an immediate full independence and proposed that 'a provisional National Government should be constituted at the centre which, though formed as a transitory measure, should be such as to command the confidence of all the elected elements in the center Legislature and secured the closest cooperation of the responsible Government in the provinces.' The resolution of the working committee were duly adopted by the All India Congress Committee in July 1940.

However, in order to achieve the cooperation of the Indian people in the war efforts the British Government came out with a proposal popularly known as the August offer on 8th August 1940. The offer promised the establishment of 'Dominion Status' and formulation of a new constitution after the end of war. During the pendency of war the offer promised the expansion of Governor General Council, the establishment of a Consultative Committee and the establishment of War Advisory Council consisting of Indians representatives. But the offer denied the immediate transfer of power to the Indians in the name of protection of the right of minorities. The Viceroy also supported the claim of Muslim League to some extent by declaring that the British Government would not accept any system of Government in India whose authority was directly denied by a large and powerful elements in Indian National life.
The August offer failed to satisfy neither the Congress nor the Muslim League. Hence, the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha on 21st August 1940, rejected the offer outrightly and asserted its demand for complete freedom from the orbit of the imperial power. The Congress Working Committee also advised the people to condemn the British attitude. Prof. Vishnu Bhagwan observes ‘The resolution passed by the Congress Committee at Wardha between 18th to 22nd August, 1940 was the embodiment of the impending storm in the political horizon of India’.62

The Muslim League also rejected the August offer, though on different grounds. One of the main grounds was that, ‘it asserted that the partition of India was the only solution acceptable to the League’.63 Gandhi was very sad to know about the denial of complete Independence to India as declared by the August offer.64 At the same time the British Government had embarked upon a policy of repression to crush the Congress by implementing draconian ordinances by suppressing the freedom of speech and the press.

The Government was getting ready to crush the Congress if the latter took any steps towards a mass struggle. Therefore, Gandhiji was deeply pained and started to think of launching some form of effective Satyagraha in order to preserve and maintaining the spirit of masses.

The Congress was also ready to show some signs of strength and bravery. Consequently, the All India Congress Committee met at Bombay and passed a resolution on 14th September 1940.
condemning the British policy of suppressing the Indian Public Opinion. The Committee decided to launch the Individual Satyagraha Campaign from October 1940. As Gandhiji was not in favour of embarrassing the British Government in its war against Fascism and Nazism, he wished to launch individual non-violent civil disobedience instead of mass non-violent civil disobedience. Maulana Azad wrote, 'he proposed that men and women should protest individually against dragging India into the war. They would dissociate themselves from the war effort publicly and court arrest'.

Consequently, Gandhiji announced the Individual Satyagraha, on 13th October 1940 and Vinoba Bhave was chosen by him as the first Individual Satyagrahi. On 17th October 1940 he addressed a meeting at Paunar near Wardha asking the people not to support the War efforts. Though Government refrained from arresting him on the spot, they prohibited the publication of all news relating to the Satyagraha, and later he was arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment. After Vinoba's arrest Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested on 31st October at Allahabad on his return from Wardha. This followed an almost never ending stream of Individual Satyagrahi all over the country.

**INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA IN CENTRAL PROVINCE AND BERAR**

Soon after the Ramgarh session of the Congress in 1940, preparations for a civil disobedience was started by the Congress in central provinces. The first phase of the Satyagraha began in October and November 1940. All the three provincial committees and District
Congress Committee were transformed into the war committees. War Councils were formed at Jabalpur, Raipur, Bilaspur, Durg, Narsinghpur, Nimar, Betul, Hoshangabad in Hindi region; Nagpur, Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara in Nagpur region and Amraoti, Akola, Buldhana and Yeotmal in Berar region. After the formation of War Councils various sub-committees were formed in the provinces. The sub-committees were given the task to carry on the anti-war propaganda, enrolment of active satyagrahis, collection of funds and opening of the training camps to train the Satyagrahis in the provinces.\textsuperscript{67}

Anti-war meetings were organized in various parts of the provinces. These meetings marked the beginning of a series of agitation during November and December 1940. In Umrare in Nagpur district a political conference was organized. The conference was addressed by Saooji, Mote, Dandakar and others asking people not to support the war efforts. District Congress leaders supplemented these activities by holding tehsil conferences by using the trained satyagrahis and the educational staff of District Councils to spread the message of Individual Satyagraha.\textsuperscript{68} Apart from these activities, enrolment of Satyagrahis lasted the second phase of Satyagraha in the provinces.

The third phase of Satyagraha opened in Central Province and Berar in November 1941, when the first Satyagrahi Seth Govind Das was arrested while organising a huge procession at Mangela village near Jabalpur. He was sentenced to one year imprisonment and was sent to Jabalpur Central Jail.\textsuperscript{69} Following the arrest of Seth Govind Das, other
prominent leaders, Ravishankar Shukla, D. P. Mishra, S. V. Gokhale, Brijlal Biyani and C. J. Bharucka had also been arrested and sent to jail.\textsuperscript{76}

Though the Satyagraha was observed on selective basis and Gandhiji himself checked and approved the list of Satyagrahis, but within six months after the campaign had been started, nearly twenty five to thirty thousand men and women were arrested and sent to jails all over the country.\textsuperscript{71}

The Satyagrahis arrested and sent to jails included all former prime ministers of the provinces, former ministers and other members of the legislature.\textsuperscript{72}

The Jails were over-crowded and the British Government resorted to imposing fines in lieu of imprisonment.\textsuperscript{73} The Individual Satyagraha continued for long and the congress leaders and Satyagrahis went to jail shouting anti-war slogans. The Government adopted a new tactics of not arresting unpopular Satyagrahis. But the Congress leaders directed that if a Satyagrahi was not unrested, he should persist his attempt till the Government would be found to arrest him. As these arrests coincided with the gradual fall and humiliation the Government thought it prudent and discreet to release all Satyagrahis.\textsuperscript{74}

Though the Congress Ministry had resigned and the Legislators were busy in Satyagraha, the Congress members of different local bodies still continued in office. In January 1941, a circular was issued to the members of the local bodies asking them to resign if resolution against the policy of the Congress were passed at their
meetings. It was also directed that all satyagrahis after their release from Jail should again offer Satyagraha. Those who could not offer Satyagraha were required to devote themselves in different constructive works in rural areas following the Golden Jubilee celebration of Individual Satyagraha on 17\textsuperscript{th} October, 1941 Gandhi suspended the Satyagraha on 30\textsuperscript{th} December 1941.\textsuperscript{75}

The achievements of Individual Satyagraha launched in Central Province during 1940-41 were many. Although the campaign was limited and restricted but the people of Central Province and Berar rendered greater support to make it successful. It also kept the national spirit of resistance high among the masses in the province.

CRIPPS MISSION

As the war situation in Europe, worsened in March 1942, the President F. D. Roosevelt of USA, President Chiang Kai-Shek of China and also the Labour Party leaders of Britain put pressure on Churchill to seek the active cooperation of Indians in the war efforts. To secure this cooperation the British Government sent to India in March 1942 a mission headed by a cabinet minister Stafford Cripps, a left-wing labourite, who had earlier actively supported the Indian National Movement.\textsuperscript{76} The visit of Sir Stafford Cripps aroused some enthusiasm in the Indian political circle. The congress began serious negotiations with him to break the political deadlock. But the provisions of the Cripps mission belied the hopes of the Indian National Congress as well as of Gandhi because they had not conceded the basic demand of complete independence.
Therefore, both the Congress and Gandhi rejected the Cripps Mission's proposals. The Muslim League also rejected the mission's proposals, as they had not conceded its demand for Pakistan in a clear-cut manner. At this point Gandhi described Cripp's offer as a 'post dated cheque on a failing bank'. By April 1942 the failure of Cripps Mission was beyond doubt and with this the chances of cooperation between the Congress and the British Government further receded.  

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT: AUGUST 1942 TO 1945

The Cripps Mission proved to be failure and Sir Stafford Cripps left India on 12th April 1942. The failure of mission strengthened the nationalist view that the British Government would not part with power easily and thus the last hope was lost. There was a belief in official circles that Jinnah had kept ready in his pocket two resolutions, one of acceptance and the other of rejection. As usual he waited for others to express their decision. When he learnt that Congress had rejected the offer, he tore up one of the resolution, and published the other rejecting the scheme because of its rigidity.  

Now both the Congress and Gandhi started to demand for complete independence in a more theoretic manner. Gandhi pointed out that the British presence in India was a source of inspiration for the Japanese invasion of India because the British belonged to the Allied power. Hence inorder to remove the incentive for the Japanese attack on India there has to be a orderly and timely British withdrawal from India. Gandhi also blamed the British presence in India for the disunity and
division among the Indian people because British were pursuing the policy of divide and rule since their arrival in India.  

Hence, Gandhi drafted resolution called the 'Quit India Movement' resolution. This was adopted, with some modification, by the Congress Working Committee on 14th July, 1942 at Wardha demanding an immediate end to the British rule in India. In the event of the rejection of this demand, the resolution pledged to a nonviolent mass movement under the leadership of Gandhi. Even then the British Government did not pay any heed to the demand of Congress and started preparations for suppressing any movement to be launched by the congress.  

Consequently, the All India Congress Working Committee in its historic session at Bombay approved and endorsed the 'Quit India' resolution on 8th August 1942.  

In fact, at this time, the Government was not ready at any cost, to allow the Quit India Movement to buildup its momentum and tempo. Hence, the Government swiftly moved its machinery for repression throughout the country against the Congress leaders and their organisation from the early morning of 9th August, 1942. The Congress Working Committee, the AICC and the Provincial Congress Committees were declared unlawful and their top leaders were arrested and taken to unknown destination.

Bipin Chandra disclosed 'The Government, however, was in no mood to either negotiate with the Congress or wait for the movement to be formerly launched.' The Congress leaders were no doubt
unprepared for such a sweeping action by the Government. It was expected that Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy would grant an interview to Gandhi and some efforts might still be made by the Government to arrive at a compromise with the Congress. But the Government was not prepared to make any such move and to take any risk in those critical days of the world war. So with righteous anger Government let loose its forces of repression.

On their part, the government at first arrested Gandhi on 9th August 1942. As a result, the people became furious and after clashes with authorities, they started to attack and destroy the symbols of the Government like law courts, railway stations, cut telephone line and attacked on bridges and police stations. In spite of Government firing at several places, the uprising continued to an extent that there were physical attacks on Europeans killing four R.A.F. Officers.  

The delegates from many parts of the Madhya Pradesh attended the historic session of AICC at Bombay. Ravishankar Shukla stayed in the ‘Sardar Griha’ along with D. P. Mishra. D. P. Mishra writes, ‘Shukla proposed that we should have a look at Bombay to find out how our people had reached to the sudden arrests of their leaders. A Bombay friend had placed his car at our disposal and we were out by 8.30 a.m. We saw the entire streets were crowded by excited people shouting the usual slogans. When Shukla proceeded to buy their railway tickets to Nagpur, D. P. Mishra suggested him to buy ticket up to Malkapur. Shukla
and Mishra were both arrested at Malkapur on 10th August, 1942. When the British Police Officer 'appeared to be pleased' Shukla handed over the tickets to him and said: 'Look at tickets and stop congratulating yourself'. To the discomfiture of English man Mishra said 'Rest of our journey at Government cost'.

In Madhya Pradesh, as other part of the country large number of people in all the three regions actively took part in the Quit India Movement. In doing so they severely challenged the government's ability to maintain Law and Order. Although the Quit India Movement had no definite programmes and activities but the campaign was almost similar in all the regions of the provinces.

In Hindi region the centre of movement was Jabalpur. Jabalpur was out of control with the news of arrest of Gandhi. At Jabalpur in the morning of 9th August, 1942 the prominent leaders like Bhawani Prasad Tiwari, Kunjilal Dube, Laxman Singh Chauhan, Narsinghdas Agrawal and Narmada Prasad Mishra were arrested and sent to Jail. Due to these arrests the people became furious and it was decided to hold public meeting and processions every day for one week. The agitation also took a violent town and people started to attack and destroy the government's building, railway station, police station, and telephone and telegraph wire and police station. The Government took all the repressive measures to control the situation. On 9th August 1942 against the repressive policy of the Government a meeting was organised at 'Tilak Bhumi' where Ayodhanand and Sivanand addressed the meeting and
asked the audience to spread the Gandhi’s message of ‘Do or Die’ even more widely throughout the region. 89

On the next day another meeting at the same place was dispersed by tear-gas bombs. A curfew was ordered, but that did not prevent defiant crowds cutting the telegraph and telephone wire and attacking a police chowki of langanj area. This brought the military on the scene, and they were posted at all strategic points and at Government buildings. Inspite of this two huge processions were organised on 14th August by the students and it marched through the streets. 90 The police opened fire and made a number of arrests on police firing one 16 year young boy Gulab Singh was killed. 91

In view of this conceived notion of potential danger to British interest the Government, Shukla along with Mishra sent to Vellore Jail. Other prominent detenus from Madhya Pradesh, who joined Shukla at Vellore, included Vinoba Bhave, Kaka Kalekar and Seth Govinddas. There were some reputed leaders form the southern India also. They included N. G. Ranga, Govindan Nair, B. Gopala Reddy, Sitaram Reddy and Bolliappa. 92

The situation out side the jail was worse and was worsening each day. After the arrest of all prominent Congress men, including all the members of the working committee, the people become leaderless and they began to challenge the Government in the manner they deemed proper. Within three weeks the situation became so grave that the Viceroy felt hopelessly nervous and on 31st August, 1942 he wrote to Winston
Churchill: 'I am engaged here in meeting by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security. The great edifice exhibited serious cracks and was on way to crumbling rapidly. It has terribly shaken their belief that 'any section of Indian people the Muslims, the depressed classes or the states people favoured continuance of their rule was a delusion.' King's biographer wheeler, commenting on the August happenings wrote: 'The events of 1942 had shown how easy it was for agitators to inflame the mob to make orderly government impossible over large part of the country.'

Even Churchill, who had repeatedly refused to preside over the liquidation on the British Empire, developed cold feet and one day "gloomingly" told the king ... the idea of the transfer of power in India had become an admitted inevitability in the minds of the British party leaders.

Under these circumstances to strengthen the movement Seth Mohanlal Hargovind Das, Dulichand Bhai and Ramchandra Shahia of Annapurna Committee gave financial help to the people at Jabalpur. In addition, Ishwar Singh Parihar, Bhagwati Prasad Vyas, Pramod Kumar Agnihotri and Rajaram Dube also gave financial help to the people. On this act, Ishwar Singh Parihar Vyas and Bhagwati Prasad were arrested and sent to Jail.

Inspite of ban on public meetings and proceessions, on 6th September a huge meeting was organised at Miloniganj resulting in lathi
charge and arresting of several people. The people defied all prohibitory orders and the movement continued.⁹⁶

Such arrests of the masses ultimately had their effect and the mass movement spread in surrounding areas of the Jabalpur district. At Kundam, Patan, Sihora and Kamore meetings and processions were organised and the police made a number of arrest.⁹⁹

The campaign of Quit India Movement sprang up almost simultaneously in every district of Hindi region and was concentrated mostly in towns and rural areas of the region. On 12th August the agitation took place in Nohia, a village of Betul district. The local authority was alarmed at this. A special armed force was sent from Nagpur which on reaching there, opened fire on the crowd, killing two persons.¹⁰⁰ The agitation spread to Patan, another neighbouring village and again firing was opened by the police killing one person.¹⁰¹

The situation became particularly serious at Ghodadongri, where the railway station and a large stack of timber were set on fire. The police broke up the crowd by opening fire, and arrested over a hundred persons including their leader, Vishnu Singh, who was trailed and sentenced to death. The sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment. When India got freedom in 1947 the government released him.¹⁰²

While these activities were going on in Betul district, the violence mass activities were repeated in Mandla. These activities marked the beginning of a series of agitations. On 15th August, a crowd of about fifteen hundred led by the Vice President of the District Congress
Committee proceeded to the Government Offices. They destroyed Government records, disrupted the railway and telegraph communications and advanced towards the town. The police opened fire on the crowd wounding a number of persons and killing a young Uday Singh Jain. In very rare cases the situation was prevented from developing into serious dimensions by the bold and tactful handling by Indian Police Officers. For instance in Sagar the tragedy of Betul and Mandla would have been repeated, if the police had been precipitately ordered to open fire, as indeed the European Police Superintendent desired. But the Deputy Commissioner, being an Indian approached the huge crowd which was intent on marching to the district offices, arrested all of them and confined them within a large compound and later let them out. That saved Sagar from a blood-bath but it apparently did not save the officer from British disfavour.

From 9th August onwards the agitation took place in Sagar district, where it coincided with the opening of the political activities. A large crowd assembled in the ground and marched towards the main street of the city.

The people not only disobeyed the laws of the Government, organised meetings and processions and also set on fire the dak-bungalows, post offices and police stations. They also cut telegraph lines. The agitators decided to hold meetings and processions every day. The students also actively took part in the movements. Women actively took part in these agitation Mrs. Yamuna Tai a leading nationalist of Sagar led
the agitation. She toured the district to whip up large scale opposition to the government.\textsuperscript{106} The other agitators who took part in the movement, counted arrest and sent to jail were Abdul Gani, Swami Krishnanand, Gaurishankar Pathak, Master Baldeo Prasad, Bala Prasad Mishra, Smt. Parvati Bai and Smt. Indira Bai.\textsuperscript{107}

In the district of Narsinghpur, agitation began from the town itself and spread around the surrounding areas of the town. In village Cheechli Mansaram lost his life while taking part in the August revolution.\textsuperscript{108} On 10\textsuperscript{th} August the District Congress Committee was declared illegal.\textsuperscript{109} The district authority also seized the document of the District Congress Committee. Among the Congressmen arrested were Thakur Raghunath Singh of Kareli, Narmada Prasad Verma and Babulal Verma of Gadarwara.\textsuperscript{110}

The August revolution took a violent turn in the district of Balaghat. On 20\textsuperscript{th} August, a huge procession took place in Waraseoni tehsil. Subsequently a small police party was attacked which led to police firing in which one Dasharam Phulmara was killed and Tulsiram Surar and Ramesh Chand Jain were injured.\textsuperscript{111} Other agitators were arrested and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. Among the other congressmen, Amirchand Jain, Ghanshyam Tamrakar, Dharamchand Solanki and Mangal Harwanshi who were leading the agitation were arrested and sentenced to two years imprisonment.\textsuperscript{112}

The contribution of Chhindwara district in the freedom struggle is no less important and the people of the area actively took part
in the August revolution of 1942. The agitators organised meetings and processions in urban and rural areas. The activities of the agitators were to obstruct the war efforts, starting dislocating communications and refusing to render help to the Government. Among the prominent leaders who took part in these activities were Annarao Khanna, Arjun Singh Sisodhiya, Abdul Mazid Khan, Gulab Chand Rathi, Nathuji Anne, Kali Prasad Tiwari and Jairam Sharma. They were arrested and sentenced to long term imprisonment.\textsuperscript{113}

In Hoshangabad district the movement began from tehsils and towns itself and the school students of Piparia, Panchmari, Harda, Babai launched a strike which was followed by the students of other educational institutions in the areas. The Editor of Karmavir Mahesh Dutta Mishra due to the ruthless policy of repression was to drive underground but ultimately arrested in September 1942. The students from Hoshangabad and Itarsi launched meetings and processions and hoisted the National flag, sang the National Song and listened to the message of independence.\textsuperscript{114} The Government took drastic steps against the teachers of the schools and they were imprisoned. On the next day the student set on fire the office of the Headmaster. Consequently, the Government imposed a heavy amount of collective fine of Rs.2000/- on the towns of Harda, Rs.50,000/- on Hoshangabad, Rs.200/- on Itarsi, Rs.1000/- on Babai and Rs.1000/- on Piparia and these were fully realised.\textsuperscript{115}

In the area of Chhatisgarh, the District Councils, local board of Bilaspur, Raipur and Durg were declared unlawful under Section 38 B
of Defence of India Rule for participating in August Revolution. The teachers of the Durg District Council were arrested while taking part in the activities of the Quit India Movement.\textsuperscript{116}

NAGPUR AREA

The campaign of Quit India Movement in the Nagpur region followed a similar course to the campaign of Hindi region alongwith the addition of remote areas during the latter part of 1942. During August and September, 1942 the leaders of the August Revolution in Nagpur area provided an effective challenge to the Government. In the preliminary phase in Nagpur, for a few days i.e. from 12\textsuperscript{th} August 1942 the campaign took a violent turn in the city of Nagpur, in which the indiscriminate firing was ordered to control the situation. Milkmen on their morning rounds, telegraph mechanics repairing the wires, women and children in the streets were shot down, and the officers assembled in the clubs in the evening to compare notes on each others "bag" for the day.\textsuperscript{117} The movement sprang up in Nagpur, Chanda, Wardha and Bhandara districts and their leaders used various means to arouse the enthusiasm of the people for the projected attack on the Government.\textsuperscript{118} Nagpur was in a state of uprising from 12\textsuperscript{th} to 20\textsuperscript{th} August, 1942 and the violent activities took place. The students and people destroyed government buildings, post offices and some of them burnt the government property. Telegraph and telephone wires were cut in several places to prevent telecommunications.\textsuperscript{119} After destroying most of the government property a huge procession marched towards the district court and hoisted the
national flag on the court building. For nearly 48 hours, it appeared as if the British rule did not exist in Nagpur. The government offices, schools and colleges were all closed. To control the situation, the military was brought in and posted all over the city. The law and order responsibility was handed over to the Commander and indiscriminate firing started in the city. Curfew was imposed and assembly of five persons and more banned. All these measures no doubt had the effect of bringing about an appearance of quiet although the life in the city had come to a stand still. For weeks together no students would go to college or schools until government were compelled to issue an order stating that if the students did not come back to the schools, their names would be struck off the rolls. But even this step did not have much effect and practically till the end of the academic year, all educational institutions were deserted.\textsuperscript{120}

In Nagpur, the underground activity was mainly directed by the 'Hindustan Red Army' led by Maganlal Bagdi which had played an important part in the Individual Satyagraha in 1941. But by 1942 it had become well organised and had about 1400 trained and disciplined volunteers.\textsuperscript{121} Their first target usually were the police stations from where they seized arms. The Red Army successfully attacked the Nawabpura police station where, one of their volunteer Shankar, a young man of twenty one was arrested and subsequently hanged.\textsuperscript{122} They later attacked the Mauda police station and the Craddock town post office. The government declared Red Army illegal and announced a reward for the arrest of Maganlal Bagdi and four of his colleagues. But though they were
on the outskirts of Nagpur, they could not be arrested till July 1943, when they were captured in Bombay and charged with waging war against the government and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Maganlal Bagdi was sentenced to transportation for life.\textsuperscript{123}

Near Nagpur at Ramtak agitators organised a huge procession. Police reached the spot and arrested about 100 agitators. Some agitators were beaten up and tortured by the police, in which one Shivlal Teji lost his life.\textsuperscript{124} Consequently, the people not only disobeyed the laws of the Government, organised 'Hartals' but also set on fire the government buildings, post office and cut telegraph lines. The small police party reached there was attacked by agitators, when police could not control the situation, fire was opened to disperse the people, which resulted in the death of 15 agitators and injury to 40 others on the spot.\textsuperscript{125}

Besides these other violent events continued in Nagpur in the first week of September.\textsuperscript{126} The students organised meetings and processions and abstained themselves from the studies. They also broke all discipline and roamed the streets insulting the police. When the government threatened the students, they returned to their schools and colleges at the end of the month.\textsuperscript{127}

At Wardha as other areas of the region the nationalists decided to disrupt the education system. The agitators started a policy of making appeals to the students. The students quickly became at discount and hartal followed hartal on any pretext. The students of Sakariya Commerce College of Wardha took part in the movement. They organised
meetings and demonstrations. The disturbances in the college compelled the Government to close the college for indefinite period.\textsuperscript{128}

The atrocities that took place at Chimur in Chanda district, and at Ashti in Wardha district, on Nagpanchmi day i.e. 16\textsuperscript{th} August 1942, have been made sufficiently familiar by the long drawn-out trials and the inhuman sentences passed on the arrested persons. At both the places the course of events was strikingly similar. A procession by the people was dispersed and put down with excessive violence. The indignant people in their fury set fire to the police station.\textsuperscript{129}

The military took charge and for a few days they perpetuated such bestial activities, as are disgraced to the human race. The government lost their head when the Chanda Bar Association protested against the Chimur atrocities and politely asked for a judicial inquiry. But the Government refused the Bar Association's request and threatened that if the Association continued to be recalcitrant, it would consider declaring it an unlawful association, and any one who continued to be a member would be prosecuted. Due to the government threat, all protest silenced.\textsuperscript{130}

BERAR

The campaign of Quit India Movement in Berar Region was carried on the lines of Hindi and Nagpur region.

The initial phase of the August revolution was seen with best effect in Amraoti district of the region. The movement developed considerable intensity in the village Yaoli, of Amraoti district. There the
dominant figure was Punjab Rao Yaolikar. On 15th August Satyagraha was organised in this village by Yaolikar. A large procession started and took the possession of the school, the post office and Patel’s record. The Telegraph posts were pulled down and the whole village was taken into possession by the agitators. When the news reached Amraoti a large police force arrived the next day and fired 59 rounds killing ten persons and wounding twenty two. Even the repressive policy did not suppress the spirit of the people, who on 16th August, hoisted the National Flag and held a meeting. This led to a conflict between the police and the people, in which five were killed and thirty injured. Similar atrocities by the police took place in Akola, Bhandara, Yeotmar and almost every important towns and villages of the region.

Among other organisation that took part in the August revolution was the Hanuman Vyayam Mandal of Amraoti. The training classes conducted by the Mandal were attended by young men from neighbouring provinces also. They were well trained in drill rifle practice and physical cultures. During the movement of 1942 several members of this organisation were arrested for sabotage in Bombay province. Thus under a variety of leadership, borne out of national wide discontent and spirit of revolt, the movement grew in wider dimensions. Strikes broke out in large industries including the Tata Iron and Steel Works and the Cotton Mills. The agitation took place almost in every large city.

By the end of December 1942, about 60,000 persons had been arrested, 940 killed and 1630 wounded in the country as a whole.
Police and Military had opened fired on 530 occasions and as many as 958 persons had been punished with whippings. For miles together there was nothing but desolation.\textsuperscript{133}

While the August Revolution was in full swing Gandhi while in imprisonment read in Newspapers about the upheaval in the country and the attitude of the Government. He wrote to the Viceroy on 23\textsuperscript{rd} September, 1943: 'The wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self control. I feel that the Government, not the Congress are responsible for the destruction that has taken place. The only right course for the government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of reconciliation.\textsuperscript{134}

But this earnest request of Gandhiji, produced no response from the Viceroy. Rajagopalachari, humanitarians the Liberals among others appealed to the government to end the deadlock, but the Viceroy remained adamant on his stand. As summed by a publicist; 'To keep Congress leaders locked up and allow no outsiders any access to them to repeat the slogan that unless all parties agree, the Government cannot do anything to do nothing themselves to promote this agreement or even popularize the administration and to go on indefinitely with the present administration, which vests all powers and authority in the Viceroy and the Governors -- that sums up the government policy.\textsuperscript{135} Thus, by the end of October 1942 Government succeeded in breaking the backbone of the Quit India Movement by strong repressive measures under the defence of India rule.
The beginning of 1943 saw no abating of the nation-wide unrest. Students, lawyers, school teachers, the people in the street, everyone was swept into the tremendous tide. In the meantime the nation heard for the first time on 10th February 1943, that, Gandhi had decided to undertake a fast for three weeks. Simultaneously Government also released the correspondence between the Gandhi and the Government leading to this decision.\textsuperscript{136} The fast produced a great effect on the country and the world as well. There was a long and heated debate in the Central Assembly. On the sixth day of the fast, three Indian members of the Viceroy’s Council - H. P. Mody, N. R. Sarkar and M. S. Aney resigned their membership as a protest against the Government attitude. At first Lord Linlithgow rejected all suggestions to release Gandhi. Crowds began to gather every day in solemn silence around Veravada Jail. On 2nd March 1943 Gandhi completed the three weeks fast and sipped slowly a glass of orange juice the Kasturba gave him.\textsuperscript{137}

But the Government showed neither any sign nor took any step for conciliation and it went on crushing the uprisings with heavy hands and brutal repression. Though the August Revolution of 1942 failed to remain to be non-violent and petered out within eight months, yet it aroused a very strong popular wave for complete independence from the British yoke. Bipin Chandra points out the similar opinion in these words. ‘The great significance of this historic movement was that it placed the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the national movement\textsuperscript{138} Meanwhile the tide of war had begun to turn. The Japanese
army had been stopped. In Indonesia they received a set-back. On the western front the Germany came up against the impregnable might against Russia and at Stalingard they met their waterloo.

A new event took place on 18th June 1943 by the appointment of Lord Wavell as Viceroy as a successor to Lord Linlithgow. The new Viceroy, Lord Wavell ordered the release of Gandhiji on 6th May 1944 owing to his illness. The Viceroy released Gandhiji not on the ground of mercy but on the ground of purely political expediency. However, soon after the release, Gandhi took initiative to break the political deadlock between the Government and the Congress. Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy, "I am prepared to advise the working committee to declare that in view of changed condition full cooperation in the war efforts should be given by the Congress, if a declaration of immediate Indian Independence is made and a National Government responsible to the central assembly be formed." But the Viceroy turned down the offer and advice of Gandhi. Instead, the Viceroy reiterated the minorities problem as the real obstacle in the path of any constitutional progress.

Hence, Gandhi restarted a fresh and determined efforts to solve the communal differences between the Muslims and Hindus through negotiations with M. A. Jinnah consequently, the Gandhi-Jinnah talks began on 9th September, 1944 and concluded on 27th September 1944. But the talks did not prove fruitful and ended in a fiasco. Jinnah was not ready to show any sign of compromise on the question of Pakistan on the basis of the 'two-nation' theory. Gandhi rejected altogether the two-nation
theory of Jinnah, but at the same time became ready to concede the
demand for Pakistan on the basis of Rajaji formula.\textsuperscript{142} But Jinnah refused
to comply with the Rajaji formula and remained adhered for Pakistan on
the basis of his two-nation theory.

WAVER PLAN

During the early month of 1945 Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, made some serious attempts to end the political deadlock in India. He proceeded to London in March 1945 to discuss with the British Cabinet about the general plan for the settlement of Indian affairs. A plan for the solution of India’s political deadlock was drawn up between Amery, Secretary of State for India and Wavell. Wavell returned to India in June 1945 and his plan was made public on 14\textsuperscript{th} June, which proposed a conference of the leaders of all political opinions in the country at Simla.\textsuperscript{143} It was an amplification of the short term proposals of the Cripps offer, with the material difference that the Indian members in the Viceroy’s council will represent the main parties. On the basis of this plan, discussion opened in Simla on 25\textsuperscript{th} June. The government had released the important leaders of the Congress Working Committee. The former premiers of the Congress majority provinces were also released to enable them to be present at Simla.\textsuperscript{144} Among them were R. S. Shukla, D. P. Mishra, N. B. Khare and others of Madhya Pradesh.

The Congress participated in the Simla conference. But the talks soon revealed the inflexible position taken by Jinnah on the issue of exclusive rights of the League to nominate the Muslim members. But it
failed to come to any solution of India's constitutional problem. On 14th July 1945, the conference met for the last time and the Viceroy announced that the conference had failed. It was the last effort of the British government to solve the Indian problem during the second World War. With commendable humility he said, 'I wish to make it clear that the responsibility for failure is mine'. The fact was that Jinnah would not agree to any plan which was likely to give the Congress a decisive voice in the Government.

The political situation in India began to turn after the General Elections in England in 1945, after a few weeks of the end of the second world war. Labour Party succeeded in defeating the conservatives and won a clear majority for forming the Government. In the Cabinet headed by Attlee, Lord Pathick Lawrence became the new secretary of state for India.

The Viceroy, Lord Wavell again acted expeditiously. After having consulting with the Home Government, he announced on 18th September the British Government intention to establish full self government in India in consultation with the leaders of the Indian opinion as early as possible. He further said, 'It is the intention of his Majesty's Government to convene as soon as possible, a constitution making body ... we must first hold election so that the will of the Indian people may be known. ... After the elections, I propose to hold discussions with the representatives of those elected and of the Indian states, to determine the form which the constitution making body should take, its powers and procedure.'
Accordingly on 28th September it was announced that the general election to the Central Legislative Assembly and the various Provincial Legislatures would be held in early 1946.\textsuperscript{149} In accordance with the new policy the general elections of Central Assembly were held in November, 1945. The Congress won all the general seats in the Central Assembly and even a few reserved seats. In provinces its success was even greater than in 1936. In eight provinces Congress had an absolute majority and Muslim League secured majority in two provinces i.e. North-West Frontier province and Assam.\textsuperscript{150}

In Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Congress won 94 out of 112 seats and a Cabinet with Ravishankar Shukla as Chief Minister was sworn on 27th April, 1946.\textsuperscript{151} One of the first step which the new government took in the province was to release all political prisoners, withdraw all warrants against absconder in political cases and remit the collective fines which had been levied by the previous regime.\textsuperscript{152}

According to the British promises made in the announcement of 19th February 1946 in the House of Lords the Home Government sent a mission known as the Cabinet Mission to India to discuss with the Indian leaders and the Viceroy, the constitutional ways and means for the transfer of power to the Indian hand in a peaceful way. The cabinet mission consisting of the high ranking British cabinet members Lord Páthick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander, reached Delhi via Karachi on 24th March 1946.\textsuperscript{171} After its arrival in India it started to gather views and opinions of the Indian political leaders mainly the Congress and Muslim League.
The Cabinet Mission Plan proposed to set up an Interim Government consisting of the Indian Political leaders belonging to the all major political parties for carrying on the administration of India during the period of making of the constitution.\textsuperscript{154} But, the cabinet mission plan proved to be abortive owing to the differences between the Muslim League and the Congress on the question of Muslim nominations to the Interim government formation of constituent assembly and the grouping of provinces.\textsuperscript{155} The Muslim League not only withdrew its acceptance of cabinet mission's statement of 16\textsuperscript{th} May, but also resolved to launch a 'Direct Action' movement to achieve Pakistan at any cost.\textsuperscript{156} On 16\textsuperscript{th} August 1946 the Muslim League celebrated a 'Direct Action Day' which resulted in communal riots in the country.

In these circumstances the British Government had become convinced that it would not be possible for her to rule India. Thus the British Government made an important and historical announcement in the British Parliament on 20\textsuperscript{th} February, 1947 regarding transfer of powers to Indians by June 1948.\textsuperscript{157} The government also appointed Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy in place of Lord Wavell to carry out the operation. In this way, the Britishers became ready to concede what Gandhi had demanded - 'Quit India'. But before quitting India they also decided to divide India.

After arriving in India on 22\textsuperscript{nd} March 1947, Lord Mountbatten started to discuss with the Indian political leaders the question of the transfer of power and resolution of the communal differences between the Congress and the League. After having a series of discussions with the
top most leaders, Lord Mountbatten was convinced that the partition of India is inevitable. As a consequence, Lord Mountbatten emerged on 3rd June, 1947 with a plan, popularly known as the 'Mountbatten Plan', seeking, to effect an early transfer of power on the basis of Dominion status to two successor states, India and Pakistan. Ultimately the Indian Independence Act 1947 was passed by the British Parliament which provided for the end of the British rule in India on 15th August, 1947, and the establishment of the Dominions of India and Pakistan which were allowed to secede from the British Commonwealth.

Thus, in this way, the British rule in India came to an end and India achieved her independence, but at the cost of partition which was a blow to the dreams of Gandhi of a united India and a permanent Hindu-Muslim unity, which was his foremost constructive programme.
REFERENCES

1. Hitavada, 17th January 1936, p. 3.

2. Ibid.


4. NAI, Home Political Fill No. 4/9/1937, pp. 1, 2.

5. Ibid.


7. Ibid.


14. Hitavada, 10th February 1937, pp. 6, 7; NAI, Moonje, B. S. Diary. 12th February 1937. In Nagpur rural area where the majority of voters were kunbis, the Congress sponsored a kunbi candidate, Bajrang Thekedar.


18. Return showing theResults of Elections, in India Provincial Legislatures, 1937, Central Province and Berar; analysis of Election Results in Central Province and Berar; Indian Annual Register, volume 1, 1937, p.168.


25. The Nav Rajasthan, Akola, 2nd October 1937.


32. Ibid.

33. The Times of India, Bombay, 1938, p.2; Indian Year Book, 1938-39, Bombay. (The Times of India Office).
34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.


39. Ibid.

40. Report on the State and Progress of Education in Central Province and Berar for the year 1939-40, Nagpur, 1940.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.


46. CPLA, Vol. IV, 1933, p.61.

47. Ibid, p. 62.

48. Ibid.


53. Ibid.


55. Ibid, p. 443.


57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.


63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.


67. NAI, Home Poll., 1940, CPB, FR 2/April,1940, pp.1-2.

68. Ibid.

69. Mishra, D. P., op. cit, p. 452.

70. Swaraj, Nagpur, 13th October, 1941.
73. Ibid.
81. Gopalswamy, K., Gandhi and Bombay, Bombay, 1969, pp. 360-64.
82. Bipin Chandra and others, op. cit., p.460.
83. Ibid, pp.461-462.
85. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.


94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.


100. Mishra, D.P., op. cit, p. 471.

101. Ibid.


103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.


106. Ibid.

107. Ibid.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.


112. Ibid.


122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid.


132. Ibid.


139. CWMG, Vol. 77, p. 262.

140. Ibid

141. Murti, V.V. Raman (edited), Gandhi Essential Writings, New Delhi, 1970, p.231.

142. CWMG, Vol. 78, p.104.


146. Indian Annual Register, Part II, 1945, op. cit. pp.148-149.
147. Ibid, p. 149.
148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
156. The CWMG, Vol.85, 1982, p.V.
157. Ibid., Vol.87, 1983, p. V.