CHAPTER - III

THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT
(1930-1934)
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THE PROGRESS OF THE ASSOCIATED CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMMES
AND A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF POLITICAL EVENTS UPTO 1937

After the calling off of the Non-cooperation Movement, for a few
years i.e. during 1923 to 1927 there were no nation-wide political campaigns
or agitations. The congressmen mainly concentrated themselves in
popularising and implementing the Constructive Programmes of Gandhiji in
the province. But soon this lull was over. When the British Government
declined to accept the congress demand for dominion status for India, the
congress declared its aim of ‘Complete Independence and to achieve it
launched a campaign of Civil Disobedience’ against the Government of
India. An attempt has been made in this chapter to analyse the Civil
Disobedience Movement and its achievements in Madhya Pradesh. The
effort has also been made to discuss in brief an account of political events
between 1934-1937. The attempt has also been made to study the formation
and working of the first Congress Ministry in Madhya Pradesh.

THE SIMON COMMISSION

On 8th November, 1927 the British Government appointed
the statutory commission known as Simon Commission to enquire into the
working of system of the Government of India Act of 1919 and to suggest
necessary changes. It consisted of seven members of the British
Parliament led by Lord Simon\textsuperscript{1} without a single Indian representative. Its terms, also, did not hold out hopes of any thing remote like Swaraj. Bipin Chandra observes 'it was, however, from the later part of 1927 that the curve of mass anti-imperialist upsurge began to take a marked – upward turn. As with the Rowlatt Bills in 1919, it was the British Government that provided a catalyst and a rallying ground by an announcement of 8\textsuperscript{th} November, 1927 of an all white commission to recommend whether India was ready for further constitutional progress and on what lines.'\textsuperscript{2}

The congress defined its attitude in Madras session held in December 1927. The congress declared that the commission had been appointed in utter disregard of India's right of Self-determination. It resolved that only self-respecting for India was to boycott the commission at every stage and in every form.\textsuperscript{3}

The Muslim opinion with regard to the commission was divided. The reactionary wing of the Muslim League led by Sir Mohammad Shafi decided to welcome the commission while his followers linked with the congress.\textsuperscript{4} Thus the commission was treated by nearly all section of Indian opinion, as an insult to the Indian people and a humiliation, and almost all the prominent leaders of India were in favour of boycotting the commission.\textsuperscript{5}

As a result, a wave of protest swept throughout India. The commission arrived in India on 3\textsuperscript{rd} February, 1928 and was met with a country wide hartal. Even the majority of the members of the Central Legislative Assembly boycotted the commission. Anti-Simon Committees were formed all over the country to organise demonstrations and hartals.
wherever the commission went. Peaceful demonstrators were beaten up by the police at many places. Bipin Chandra reveals, 'In Lucknow, Jawaharlal and Govind Ballabh Pant were beaten up by the police. But the worst incident occurred at Lahore, where Lala Lajpat Rai was assaulted and soon after died in November 1928."

In Madhya Pradesh there was complete polarisation on the question of boycotting the commission. Meetings were organised all over the provinces. M.S. Aney, a member of the Legislative Assembly, addressing a meeting at Yeotmal on 15th December, 1927 on the subject of the statutory commission, suggested a rival commission. Munje, President of Nagpur Congress Committee, asked all political parties and committees to sink their differences and to cooperate with each other in holding mass meetings to support, the hartal, on 3rd February, 1928, on commission's arrival in India. Similar views were expressed at the central provinces Marathi provincial political conference held on 9th March, 1928 at Nagpur. K. F. Nariman presided over the conference. N. B. Khare, as chairman of the reception committee, expressed satisfaction on the success of demonstrations organised on the boycott issue and asked the audience to make it as complete success on the commission's arrival at Nagpur on 14th March, 1929. The conference also adopted unanimously Abhayankar's resolution appealing for boycott of the commission. In March, both participated in the agitation which coincided with the visit of the Indian Statutory commission to Nagpur. Similar appeals were also made by the leaders of the Hindi region.
The Central Provinces and Berar All Parties Conference met on 9th December, 1928 at Nagpur. It was presided over by M. S. Aney. S. M. Chitnavis represented the liberals, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Seth Govindas represented the Swarajists, B. G. Khaparde and G. R. Pradhan represented the Responsivists, Kali charan Nandagaoli and F. W. Fulay were the representatives of the depressed classes and labour respectively. The conference passed the resolution boycotting Simon commission and condemned police assaults on Lala Lajpat Rai. A boycott committee was also appointed at the All Parties Conference.

While the boycott movement was in full swing in the province, central provinces and Berar Legislative Council brought an indictment against the government in appointing the statutory commission. Like the Legislatures of all the provinces in the country the Central Province and Berar Legislative Council recorded its decision to have nothing to do with the Simon Commission. On 20th January, 1928, Brijlal Biyani, one of the leaders of the Swaraj Party, moved a resolution in the Council recommending the Government to inform the Viceroy and the British Government that the scheme of the statutory commission was wholly unacceptable to the council, and that the council would therefore have nothing to do with the commission at any stage or in the way. Elaborating his views, the mover said that he had no faith in the commission and proposed to boycott, since it was an insult to the self-respect of the Indian people. He made a fervent appeal to all section of the council to support the motion.
Among those who supported Biyani’s motion were D.Y. Rajukar, U.D. Pathak, T.J. Kedar and B.G. Khaparde son of G.S. Khaparde, N.B. Khare, G.S. Gupta, Mahant Laxminarayan Das and N.S. Patil. The Government members did not ask for division of votes and the resolution was carried by a majority of votes.

Only G.A. Gavai, nominated member representing the depressed classes opposed the motion. He welcomed the commission not because it was going to give any political rights to India but because he thought it would listen to the grievances of depressed community, both political and social.

Thus despite the boycott of Simon Commission, during 1927 to 1930 the leaders of the Indian National Congress re-established their leadership over the nationalist movement in the provinces. They did so through constructive programme and a movement to remove the stigma of untouchability from the Depressed Community.

While the boycott of Simon commission was going on, the secretary of state, Lord Birkenhead, in order to justify the exclusion of Indians from the commission, challenged the Indian Nationalists that they could not produce an agreed constitution by themselves. Hence the Indian nationalists accepting this challenge appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru to draft a constitution for India. The report of the Nehru Committee came to be known as the 'Nehru Report' was published in August, 1928.
In 1930 the Indian National Congress launched a campaign of civil disobedience against the Government of India. It did so because the British government refused to accept the constitution known as ‘Nehru Report’ for India drawn up by the congress and other Indian Political parties in 1928. The ‘Nehru Report’ recommended Dominion status as the form of Government for future India. The demand of ‘Dominion Status’ was supported by Gandhiji but it was opposed by the young nationalist leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose, who were in favour of ‘Complete Independence’.

In December 1928, the congressmen at the annual session of their organisation held at Calcutta warned the Government that they would launch a campaign of non-violent non-cooperation against it if the British Government refused to accept the constitution.\textsuperscript{19} In fact, by hammering out a compromise formula Gandhiji seemed to give a chance to the British to do justice without any painful struggle between them. In spite of Gandhiji’s efforts Lord Irwin, the then, Viceroy of India, under the pressure of the Home Government refused to accept the demand of the ‘Dominion Status’, as envisaged in Nehru Constitution. Gandhi met Lord Irwin and requested him to convene a Round Table Conference for drafting a constitution granting full and immediate ‘Dominion Status’ to India in order to avoid confrontation. But Lord Irwin declined even to give any assurance. Bipin Chandra writes, ‘On 23\textsuperscript{d} December Irwin himself told Gandhi and the others that he was in no position to give the assurance they demanded. The stage of negotiations was over and the
stage of confrontation was about to begin. As a consequence the Indian National Congress held its annual session in December, 1929 at Lahore. This session was presided by Jawaharlal Nehru. At this session, he sounded the note of war against the government. In his presidential speech, he declared that 'I feel that the step the Congress took, some years ago to permit congressmen to enter the councils was an inevitable step, and I am not prepared to say that some good has not resulted from it. But we have exhausted that good, and there is no middle course left today between boycott and full cooperation... . Our workers are limited in numbers and we can have no mass movement unless they concentrate on it and turn their backs to the palatial council chambers of our legislatures... . The boycott ... will release energy and divert attention to the real struggle which must take the shape of non-payment of taxes'.

The Nehru's speech was a fitting prelude to the main resolution of the session, which was moved by Gandhi. The resolution stated that because the British Government had refused to grant self-government and Dominion status to India, congressmen would therefore give their exclusive attention to the attainment of complete independence for India. To achieve this goal the resolution requested Congressmen to leave the councils, and with other members of the organisation, to implement the constructive programme. The resolution also authorised the All India Congress Committee 'whenever it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of Civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes'.


At the beginning of 1929 the Congress organisation in various parts of the Central Provinces and Berar was ill prepared to launch Civil disobedience against the government. The activities of the small group of Congressmen in the legislature formed the major exception to this.

In 1930, after a year of intensive preparation, the Indian National Congress launched a campaign of Civil Disobedience against the Government of India, on the direction of congress working committee met on 2\textsuperscript{nd} January, 1930. The congress working committee appointed Gandhi as the leader of the organisation and authorised him and others holding non-violence as an article of faith to start civil disobedience as and when they decide.\textsuperscript{24}

Gandhi decided to begin the campaign by breaking the Salt Law, and on 12\textsuperscript{th} March, 1930 he commenced his historic Dandi March from Sabarmati, in Gujarat to the Seacoast at Dandi for breaking the salt law. He reached the seacoast on 6\textsuperscript{th} April, 1930. On the same day Gandhi broke the Salt Law and issued a message to the nation for Salt Satyagraha. His message electrified the entire nation and surcharged the wave of anti-salt satyagraha. Within a few days he had committed other activities of civil disobedience, and as a result Government of India ordered his arrest and imprisoned him at Yeravada Jail, near Poona.\textsuperscript{25}

In Madhya Pradesh, as in other parts of the country, Civil Disobedience Movement launched in the division of Nagpur, Berar and in the Hindi region. In each area alike an agricultural and trade depression assisted in preparing a suitable ground for agitation against the
government. In the Marathi region, low prices and a reduced demand for cotton adversely affected agriculture and urban or rural workers, who depended for their livelihood on the cotton industry. In the Hindi region, poor harvests created famine conditions in the countryside, while a sharp decline in agricultural prices affected the purchasing power of tenants and malguzars alike.26

In the provinces the campaign consisted of Salt Satyagraha, boycott of foreign goods, boycott of educational institutions, emancipation of women and other subsidiary items. In Madhya Pradesh, Forest Satyagraha marked an important phase of Civil Disobedience Movement. Forest Satyagraha was launched all over the province and this attracted the people of aboriginal tribes of remote areas. The Forest Satyagraha put up a stiff resistance to the governments ability of maintaining law and order in the effected areas. The campaign of Civil Disobedience rested for support on a wide range of social groups in towns and involving far greater number of people than the movement of non-cooperation in 1921. Three War Councils were formed in the province. One was in the Hindi region and one each for Nagpur and Berar region.

NAGPUR REGION

In 1930, the leaders of Civil disobedience in Nagpur region provided an effective challenge to government and at the same time re-established the congress as the leading political party in the area. There were five phase of agitation.
The first was a preliminary phase, between January and March 1930, when the agitators contacted different groups of people with a view to drawing them into the agitation. The leaders used various means to arouse the enthusiasm of the people. Among these were the withdrawal of congressmen from the legislature in Nagpur; the celebration of Independence Day on 26th January 1930; and the organisation of processions, meetings and conferences. These activities aroused the interest of different cross-section of the population and paved the way for the launching of the campaign. 9th March, 1930, the provincial congress committee appointed a committee to find out places where civil disobedience was possible in the province and to make all necessary arrangements to carry it on, in consultation with the All-India Congress Working Committee.

By 16th March the necessary arrangements were complete. In Nagpur the provincial congress committee had given way to a war council, and that body despatched Ranka and the Populists to the countryside to enrol volunteers and preach the message of non-violent resistance against the government.

The second phase of civil disobedience began in early April, when the war council called for people to prepare salt in defiance of the salt law. There was an immediate response to the call. On 9th April, 1930, the Satyagrahis, drawn from all walks of life, left ‘Nagpur for Dahihanda in the district of Akola where they were to prepare salt.’ Four days later, on 14th April, 1930 Abhayankar himself inaugurated the Salt Agitation in
Nagpur by auctioning; 'One tola of Salt form Akola in Berar... for Rs.225.... In obedience to the mandate of the congress committee, some merchants closed their business and participated in the demonstration .... (There was) a mammoth gathering in the town hall grounds ... (and) a procession of congress volunteers went around the Principal Streets of Nagpur with National Flags in the evening.... Then Abhyankar did the salt auction, (but) ... before doing so, he made a passionate appeal to all to follow the banner of Mahatma Gandhi'.

A week later, Abhayankar, Ranka and the other Nationalists set off to launch the campaign of civil disobedience in the rural areas. There Abhyankar shed his role of 'landlord for that of professional breaker of laws', and, with all his ability to command and instant response, sparked off a round of rural agitation similarly to that taken place in Nagpur. The 'mass awakening in the province', however did not unduly disturb the government.

It resolved to maintain control with the minimum interference, and met the new situation giving additional powers to the public and by promulgating, though not implementing, a press ordinance.

To draw the government more fully into the fray, Congressmen in the region of Nagpur launched a further round of agitation in urban and rural areas. This constituted the third phase of the campaign of civil disobedience. During this phase the nationalists hurled every available weapon to the attack, disrupting the rule of the law and making heavy inroads into the provincial revenues. The major reason
behind the nationalists ‘Success was their ability to inflame many people from different social and economic groups against the government. This phase of civil disobedience, which lasted for four months, began on 9th May, 1930. On that day Abhyankar again led the attack on the government by reading passages from a prescribed book ‘Bharat Mein Angrezi Raj’ to a huge gathering in Nagpur. As the Hitavada reported: ‘Before the meeting, a procession of volunteers with many others in attendance passed through the town hall grounds where it formed itself into a huge mass meeting ...(there were) shouts of Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai and national Slogans .... The meeting commenced with prayers at 8.30 .... Abhyankar (was) given a great ovation ... (he) read from ‘Bharat Mein Angrezi Raj’ .... These passages were later repeated amidst great excitement by the whole audience .... Abhyankar challenged the government to arrest him (and) ... appealed to the audience to join the fight with respect of creed, cast or colour. Following this demonstration, congressmen took the agitation out into the countryside.}

As the government still refrained from joining the combat the congress leaders intensified their campaign against it. During May they launched a bitter attacks on the government at meetings throughout the region. This verbal onslaught appears to have achieved its objective, for on 15th May 1930 the government reported that ‘the tone of speeches in the Nagpur district has changed for the worse. There has been increasing vehemence in the abuse of government servants, especially the police and an appeal to government servants to be disloyal to their duty is now a
marked feature of these harangues. This tendency is causing some anxiety to the government.36

As a result, 'the government decided to seize the leaders of the agitation, hoping that, deprived of their inspiration, it would wither and die'. Accordingly, on 29th May 1930 the police arrested Abhyankar at Amraoti.39 But before the arrest took place, the war council issued a call to the people to boycott British clothes and other goods.40 This call met with a ready and widespread response. Merchants in Nagpur agreed not to indent these commodities; lawyers in Wardha 'changed their head, gear (and were) found spinning in the bar; students and others picketed the shops of merchants who refused to observe the boycott; educated women marched through Nagpur; wearing white Khadi (and) ... singing national song; and small boys of the city collected and burnt foreign caps'.41

On 29th June, 1930 the war council unleashed a further attack on the government by urging people to boycott liquor. In response to this call, volunteers picketed liquor ware houses and shops in the division, and in Nagpur held meetings 'at the premises of different liquor shops in arousing the conscience of people against the evils of drink'.42 Then just as the students were returning to their schools and colleges at the end of the summer vacation, the nationalists decided to disrupt the educational system. In early July the government reported that 'the Government colleges had reopened... after the vacation, and congress at once started a policy of making appeals to the students. Discipline quickly
became at a discount, and hartal followed hartal on any pretext, and students absented themselves from the studies as well school boys also broke all discipline and roamed the streets insulting the police. One party entered Hislop College ... and after breaking a number of windows, hoisted the congress flag'.

The Government took repressive measures and compelled the authority to maintain discipline in colleges and schools. As a result the war Council decided to begin intensive agitation in the rural areas of the region.

The main programme of this phase of agitation consisted of Forest Satyagraha. This campaign was launched in Arvi tahsil of Wardha district, on 1st August, 1930. Before that date, however, nationalists had seriously weakened the government's position in Arvi. The District Superintendent of Wardha reported on 20th July, 1930, 'the idea ... (was) fairly generally accepted in the Arvi Tahsil that government ... (had) really ceased to exist .... The Circle Inspector of Arvi found that persons collecting money for the congress purposes had now merely enter a village and demanded a subscription in order to have their demands met immediately .... About 12000 palm trees have been cut so far in the district and the present position is that the volunteers merely go and direct villagers to cut the trees and their orders are complied'.

Meanwhile, the Responsivists had already begun their Forest Satyagraha at Pusad. To prevent the situation from getting out of control, the government took repressive measures. Early in July, 1930 the
government extended the prevention of Intimidation ordinance to Nagpur and enforced it vigorously to combat the hold which the congress had obtained against the liquor trade. Further to remove those leaders leading these activities, the government proceeded to 'round up ... congress leaders in the south of the province'. Among the congressmen arrested were Dr. N. B. Khare, who had replaced Abhyankar as president of the 'War Council, and Ranka, who was also a member of the council'. In addition, on 4th August, 1930 the government closed the Government Engineering and Medical Colleges in Nagpur. Then 'as it was no longer possible for government to retain in its own hands the direction of all prosecution, ... (it delegated) responsibility for dealing with the movement in their division ... to all commissioners, who from this time forwarded to direct the conduct of operation'.

So far from controlling the situation, however, these measures formed a prelude for a further round of agitation in urban and rural areas by Violence. This round of agitation which occurred between August and September 1930, constituted the fourth phase of campaign of civil disobedience in the region. The agitation were the Forest Satyagraha launched in the districts of Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara. Thousands of people participated in these Satyagrahas, and caused violence in many places. A typical incident occurred in Chanda on 24th August, 1930, 'when 25 youth, who had cut and stolen trees from government forests in obedience to the order of congress, were arrested in Chanda. The small police party carrying out the arrest was almost overwhelmed by
the mob Stones were thrown and many officers, including the circle inspector were hit.\textsuperscript{51}

A proximity of violence was also evident in the anti-liquor campaign which spread throughout the towns of the division of Nagpur. This violence was due to the picketers who were not trained in the spirit of non-violence, as were many of those who had long since been arrested and imprisoned.\textsuperscript{52} Violence also occurred when the war council organised a demonstration in Nagpur on 8\textsuperscript{th} August in defiance of an order by District Magistrate.\textsuperscript{53} In addition during August many students in the division of Nagpur exhibited a 'total lack of discipline', and the government was compelled to close eight high schools.\textsuperscript{54}

But despite these measures, by the end of August 1930, the main campaign of civil disobedience in the region was over. The leading congressmen were in jail; the anti-liquor campaign continued on a very small scale and the Forest Satyagraha were well under control. On 28\textsuperscript{th} August, 1930 the war council of Nagpur was declared an unlawful association.\textsuperscript{55}

The method used by the government to control civil disobedience in the region proved effective. From September 1930 onwards, the agitation gradually subsided until a truce was declared between the government of India and the congress.

This period of declining agitation constituted the fifth phase of the movement. During this phase, nationalists mostly continued forms of agitation used in the earlier phase of civil disobedience. There was one
major exception to this namely, the boycott of elections to the provincial legislature on 10th November 1930. This boycott was astonishingly successful in urban and rural electorates alike.\textsuperscript{56}

Following the boycott of the elections, Congressmen organised a number of small demonstration in Nagpur, but these petered out in the face of speculation, which soon gave way to a certainty, that the Government of India and the Indian National Congress, had agreed end the campaign.

BERAR REGION

The campaign of civil disobedience in Berar region was similar to the campaign in the Nagpur region. The campaign threatened the government's ability to maintain the law and order. The movement in Berar region restored the Congress to a dominant position in the political life of the region. The campaign was followed by a Salt Satyagraha in the urban and rural areas. In January 1930, P. B. Gole and Brijlal Biyani, the two leaders resigned from the provincial legislature and through public meeting and the celebration of Independence Day prepared the people of the district for the coming fight.\textsuperscript{57}

The preparatory phase also witnessed a change in the composition of some congress committee in Berar. The responsirists, who were strongly entrenched in the provincial and some district congress committees, declined to support the proposed campaign of civil disobedience.\textsuperscript{56} Accordingly, as the moves to launch the campaign gathered momentum, they resigned their seats on these committees and
leaving congressmen in 'possession of the field'. The way was thus open for the launching of civil disobedience in Berar region.

Consequently, on 16th March 1930 the provincial congress committee formed itself into a war council and resolved to organise Satyagraha. The campaign started with the Salt Satyagraha which began on 12th April 1930. The agitation was concentrated mostly in the towns and rural areas of Amraoti and Akola. Volunteers prepared the salt from a saline well at Dahihanda, a village in Akola, and then distributed it for sale towns throughout the region. During April, nationalist leaders also moved about persuading people in the towns and villages to support the agitation, and urging that by 'disobeying the salt law, they would be nearer to independence'. Crowds of people from (the) ... villages and towns heard the message, and many of these volunteered to assist in the agitation. In the towns, too, ladies prepared salt in public, merchants organised hartals to coincide with the agitation, and 'an appreciable number of people ... signed the Satyagraha pledge'.

To avert the loss of their own political leaderships the Responsivists also participated in the Salt Satyagraha. In April 1930, Aney joined the war council and 'offered himself for Satyagraha at the earliest opportunity'. In doing so, however Aney explained that this 'did not mean any exchange of opinion on my part on the fundamental points which unfortunately compelled us to sever our connections with the old Swaraj party and form ourselves into a new growing styled as the Responsive co-operation party.'
Following the move of Aney, the other prominent responsivists followed Aney's lead and on 19th April 1930 at a meeting in Amraoti declared that 'the Civil Disobedience campaign started by Mahatma Gandhi is quite legitimate and has (our) ... full support'. Accordingly, responsivists joined congressmen in breaking the salt law in the district of Amraoti, and were amongst the bands of congress volunteers that left Amraoti to go to Dahihand to prepare salt.

As the government was unwilling to suppress the salt satyagraha, congressmen in Berar region launched more intensive round of agitation. This agitation launched during May to September 1930 constituted the third phase of civil disobedience in the region. This agitation thus formed may be described as the first true mass agitation ever launched in the area. This agitation was concentrated in two areas. One consisted of the districts of Akola and Buldhana where congressmen predominated. The other area consisted of the District of Amraoti and Yeotmal where Responsivists predominated. Congressmen opened the campaign in Akola on 10th May 1930 by reading prescribed literature. During the ensuing week Biyani, accompanied by Smt. Durgabai Joshi, a leading nationalist from Akola, toured the district to whip up large scale opposition to the government. The tour was completely successful. According to one observer 'the large assemblage of over ten thousand that gathered at these meetings, over which the workers like Brijlal Biyani and Smt. Joshi speak is really a sight to see as to how this movement is now permeating the masses .... The organisers know that unless there is
a mass agitation and mass awakening government would not yield to even reasonable demand of the educated few.\textsuperscript{70}

During May 1930, Akola was also the scene of an intensive campaign against the liquor trade. Prominent among those who picketed liquor shops in Akola were the ladies of the town, assisted by pleaders, merchants and volunteers. The ladies also 'delivered lectures and sang songs on the evils of drink at the ale – houses'.\textsuperscript{71}

At the same time agitation began to intensify in Amraoti and Yeotmal. In Amraoti town Wamanrao Joshi and Abhyankar both delivered 'bad speeches which made no pretence to conceal their appeal to violence'.\textsuperscript{72} The government immediately swooped on the two leaders and put them in jail. Despite their arrests however, the situation in Amraoti worsened. During June the merchants of the town organised a boycott of foreign cloth, and congressmen held a number of demonstration.\textsuperscript{73} The government immediately arrested the leaders responsible for these demonstration, and the centre of agitation swang away from Amraoti to Yeotmal. At Yeotmal, Aney and his followers inaugurated the Forest Satyagraha in July. The government believed that 'he was more dangerous than Biyani because he was preaching in the rural areas chiefly on the subject of the breach of forest laws. In view of Aney's well known influence, this was bound to have a bad effect. It was the general opinion, however, that there was no alternative but to proceed against him.\textsuperscript{74}

Accordingly, on 13 July 1930, the police arrested Aney, and the other leaders who replaced him. As a result, the agitation again
shifted to Amraoti and West Berar region. During July and August 1930 Congressmen also launched Forest Satyagraha and urban agitation in the districts of Akola and Buldhana. The Satyagraha, in particular, provided an effective challenge to the government. During August observer reported that 'people of all castes and creeds and status (were) ... vieing with one another to break the 'forest laws', and that thousands ... (were) ready to go to jail.75 The urban agitations were also effective, as the following description of the scene in one of the principal towns of Burdhana during July demonstrates:

In Khamgaon, the incident of the national flag in the government high school worked coup ... public enthusiasm ... In close succession came the civil disobedience of forest laws, and public meetings in Khamgaon attracted thousands ... . Hartals were often spontaneously observed by Hindus and Muslims. Khadi came to adorn the most Fashionable ... against this background. Dr. Parasnis decided to break the forest laws.76

The government took effective measures to suppress these activities and by October the agitation in Amraoti, Akola and Bulahana had contracted to the urban areas, and had declined considerably in intensity.77

The shift of agitation to the towns marked the beginning of the fourth phase of agitation of Civil Disobedience in Berar area. This campaign was launched during October 1930 to February 1931. During this period the campaign consisted of vigorous agitation in Akola and Amraoti.
The first of these was a campaign of abuse against Tambe, who agreed to represent the provincial government at the First Round Table Conference to be convened in London on November, 1930.\textsuperscript{75}

The second agitation consisted of boycott of election to the provincial legislature to be held during November 1930 while the agitation against Tambe did not prevent him from leaving Berar on 2\textsuperscript{nd} October, 1930 to England but the boycott of elections was most successful.\textsuperscript{79}

Following the boycott of elections, congressmen organised a boycott of the excise auctions, which, like the elections, also took place in November 1930. In Amraoti ladies threw themselves into the boycott campaign. As the government reported in Amraoti: 'The congress arranged to picket the auctions on the first day ... by women and it was found necessary to arrest ... Mrs. Joshi ... and a number of other women picketers who flung themselves prostrate in front of major vehicles conveying bidders to the auctions.'\textsuperscript{80} Such arrest ultimately had their effect, however, and the anti liquor agitation subsided. Congressmen advocated a boycott of British goods and the non payment of taxes.\textsuperscript{81}

As the result of the Gandhi Irwin Pact on 17\textsuperscript{th} February, 1931 the campaign of civil disobedience was suspended for the time being.

HINDI REGION

The campaign of Civil Disobedience in the Hindi region was similar to the campaign in the Nagpur and Berar regions. In addition, during the later part of 1930 it extended in the rural areas of the region.
The first phase opened on 17th January 1930 when the Hindi Congressmen abstained from the council elections, which were held during November and December 1930. Nine days later, on 26th January 1930 i.e. Independence Day, those who had vacated their seats in the council and others, who took the message of agitation among the people all over the Hindi region 'in far away villages and hilly areas in the forest region of Bilaspur and Mandla, ... not to speak of the more accessible parts of the ... (region), groups of men, women and children gathered in an open place in the early hours of the morning, hoisted the tricolour flag, sung the national song and listened to the message of Independence.'

In February 1930, to spread that message more widely in the region, Govind Das and D. P. Mishra founded a Hindi daily, the Lokmat, at Jabalpur. District congress leaders supplemented these activities by holding tehsil conferences, or by using the educational staff of the District Councils to spread the message of civil disobedience.

The activities of the Hindi region reached to a climax on 30th March, 1930, when the Provincial Congress Committee met in Jabalpur and constituted the Hindi War Council. The committee authorises it to 'Formulate a scheme of civil disobedience and organise an effective campaign in the region.'

The war council splashed the message of civil disobedience in the Hindi districts by organising a Salt Satyagraha in the towns and villages of the region. The salt Satyagraha formed the second phase of
The movement, and during its course attracted the attention of 'thousands of eager spectators'.

The centre of the Satyagraha was Jabalpur and there on 16th April 1930 a huge procession ... organised ... (and) led by Seth Govind Das and D. P. Mishra ... wended its way to the historic Samadhi of the Warrior on Queen Rani Durgawati, about thirteen miles from the city. There the assembled multitude took a solemn vow to carry the struggle for independence to a successful conclusion. Batches of volunteers went forth and thus symbolically broke the salt law ... Sihora, Katni, Mandla and Damoh witnessed the same spectacle. In hundreds of villages the ritual was performed with solemnity. On 15th April 1930 the agitation took place in Raipur where it coincided with the opening of the political conference of the region.

This conference marked the beginning of the third phase of agitation in the area. There were other reasons that are why the nationalists prepared themselves for civil-disobedience. On 14th April 1930 the Government arrested Jawaharlal Nehru at Allahabad as he desired to visit Raipur to attend the conference. R. S. Shukla, who was president of the conference 'declared that the arrest of ... Nehru had suddenly transformed the political conference in to a war conference.'

At this conference, too, Hindi leaders revived the ancient name of Hindi region - Mahakoshal. In doing so the leaders who heard the name a 'host of sacred memories, legends and stories, spurred them to restore the region to freedom and glory. As a result, the leaders of the
conference decided to supplement the Salt Satyagraha with the reading of prescribed literature. In consequence of this decision, the agitation shifted back to Jabalpur. On 20th April 1930, all the prominent leaders gathered to launch the intensive phase of civil disobedience: ‘from Raipur came R. S. Shukla, from Durg came G. S. Gupta, from Khandwa came Makhanlal Chaturvedi, from Seoni came D. K. Mehta, Khandekar came from Sagar and Agnihotri from Mandla to tell that the whole region was behind the people of Jabalpur in their resolve to fight the battle of freedom to the finish ... with Govind Das (and) D. P. Mishra, V. Bhargava pleader, P. Jain a merchant, L. Kalve a cultivator (who all) ... read messages from a prescribed book.’

This meeting marked the beginning of a series of agitation in the northern Hindi district during April and May 1930. The Government arrested Govind Das, D.P. Mishra, R.S. Shukla, M.L. Chaturvedi and V. Bhargava on 29th April 1930; and all except Bhargava were awarded sentences of two years rigorous imprisonment. Bhargava received a sentence of one year.

The swing of nationalist agitation to Chhattisgarh marked the beginning of the fourth phase of civil disobedience in Hindi region. This phase of campaign which took place during May and June 1930, began in the town. During its course it also penetrated deep into the countryside and was often accompanied by violence. Again, this round of agitation drew for support on distinct social and economic groups in contrast to the general support of the population.
Of all the agitation launched in Chhattisgarh during May and June 1930, perhaps the most successful was the boycott of foreign clothes. The Raipur was the main centre of nationalist activities in the region. There the merchants refused to sell foreign cloth, the ladies announced their readiness to spin, and almost all the labouring classes and artisans ... decided to boycott foreign cloth. In addition, volunteers picketed the shops of those merchants who refused to support the boycott. Volunteers also boycotted liquor shops in Raipur and other towns in Chhattisgarh. On 9th June 1930, the government reported that 'Government Servants are openly attacked and the policemen are especially abused and threatened. Speaking at Raipur on 29th May Purushottam Das urged his audience to buy arms and ammunition, and on 2nd June said it would be easy to kill handful of British in the country .... There have been instances in Raipur city itself of deliberate hampering investigations. In Raipur, the crowd which move in the streets day and night ... becoming troublesome, police are insulted on every possible occasion, and European passers by are feared and shouted at.' There are frequent demonstrations in the vicinity of the police lines. According to the government the activities of the District Council considerably aggravated the situation in Raipur. This estimation was correct. The council played a vital part in the campaign of civil disobedience, urging people in urban areas to participate in agitation. Through its teachers the council spread the message of civil disobedience to the rural areas. By June 1930 the government considered the council
too great a danger to law and order in Raipur and it decided to take immediate action. Accordingly, on 12th June the government dissolved the district council of Raipur, and 10 days later arrested four of Shukla lieutenants in Raipur. Those arrested included W. R. Lakhee, Seth Shivadas Daga, Abdul Rauf and Thakur Pyarelal Singh. These measures achieved the desired effect, and by July a ‘definite lull’ engulfed on Raipur and the division of Chhattisgarh'.

During this lull, agitation similar to that of Chhattisgarh, flared up in the northern districts of Mahakoshal region. In the towns the agitation was sharp but brief. The police pounced on suspected leaders and by early August the situation in Jabalpur, the centre of movement was ‘much quieter than it (had) ... been for some months’. As the situation in Jabalpur and other northern towns, quietened however, disturbances broke out in rural areas, adjacent to the towns. During June and July 1930 villagers and aboriginals tribes in several district raided government forests. They included forest auction and interfered in irrigation facility. But once again the government successfully suppressed the agitation and as such this phase of agitation in Mohakoshal region reached to a close.

The Forest Satyagraha of July to November 1930 formed the fifth phase of civil disobedience in the region. The activities of Forest Satyagraha were so extensive in nature that it involved huge number of aboriginal tribes of Gonds and Korkus. These activities of Forest Satyagraha were severe challenge of the entire campaign of Civil
Disobedience in the province during 1930. In assessing the causes of the Satyagraha, the government had to say, 'The appeal of Forest Satyagraha ... was irresistible. These ... people have always looked upon the restrictions imposed by forest conservation as an unjustifiable encroachment on their natural rights, and have an easy prey to propaganda which told them that forests laws were unjust and made only to be broken. Further, in its search for recruits, the congress had recourse to the lowest classes of the population, ex-convicts, riff ruff of the bazaars in the town and the like ... (The) danger of the situation were obvious'.

Apprehending the dangers of the situation, however, the Government tried to halt the campaign in its early stages. The government arrested its leaders - D. K. Mehta, G. S. Gupta and Seth Dipchand Gothi, a leading nationalist from Betul. But the Satyagrahas proliferated on a large scale rapidly in Betul, Durg, Seoni, Chhindwara, Mandla, Raipur and Nimar.

In many districts, too, the agitation was accompanied by serious violence, as in Betul on 19th September 1930. The police had arrested some Forest Satyagrahis in the district and were bringing them to Bordehi. As they halted in village Kundana, 'about 400 persons came armed with lathis and ... seized the enquiry papers, which they tore up on the spot. The District Superintendent of Police and the Divisional Forest Officer immediately proceeded to the spot with a party and made eleven arrests. Returning to Jambura Railway Station they were overtaken by a party of about 400 villagers who intended to rescue the arrested men.
They however, dispersed as soon as the police made it to charge. An hour later, about 700 villagers all armed with lathis came to the station with the same object and hurled stones at the police party.¹⁰⁶

The government responded to the agitation with full force, and by 30th September 1930 the situation had been in control. Considerably, during October, the incident of agitation decreased and by November had ceased altogether.¹⁰⁷

Following the Forest Satyagraha, agitation again broke out in the urban areas, but had been controlled. This period of urban agitation from October 1930 to February 1931 constituted the final phase of Civil Disobedience Movement in Hindi region. In the towns merchants observed boycott of foreign clothes, a 'batch of young workers, conducted an anti-liquor campaign and a host of volunteers organised a successful boycott of elections to the legislature during November'.¹⁰⁸

The district council of Raipur and Betul also contributed a lot to the agitation. During the last of phase of Civil Disobedience Movement in October 1930 the government dissolved both councils fermenting civil disobedience and ordered them to elect fresh office-bearers. The councils obeyed this order but showed the opposition to the government by electing men who were still serving sentence in jail for offences committed during civil disobedience. As a result, in November 1930 the government pronounced the councils incompetent and suspended them to prevent them causing any further trouble.¹⁰⁹ The councils suspended were Betul and Raipur. Following these suspension the campaign of civil
disobedience in Hindi region came to a halt, and with the signing of the truce between Gandhi and Viceroy, ceased altogether.\(^{110}\)

On 5\(^{th}\) March 1931 the Gandhi – Irwin pact was signed. As a result, congress suspended its civil disobedience movement and the Viceroy agreed to release all the Satyagrahis.

The achievement of civil disobedience in Madhya Pradesh in 1930 were manifold. First, although the campaigns occurred in three separate areas namely the region of Nagpur, Berar and Hindi, they were more alike than the movement of non-cooperation in these areas during 1920-22. This similarity gave the campaign of 1930 greater cohesion and hence posed more effective challenge to the government. These campaigns also changed the government's ability to maintain law and order. Secondly, the congress drew into it a large number of people from all sections of society - rural and urban. Among these were members of the urban middle classes, the merchant community, the educated ladies of the town, students, the urban lower classes villagers and members of aboriginal tribes. The campaigns of civil disobedience were also more effective than those of non-cooperation because it aroused far greater degree of opposition to the government in rural areas. This was partly because the campaigns of 1930 was built on the foundations already laid in 1920 and partly also because the congress was far better organised for rural agitation in 1930 then in 1920.

Scarcely, a year after Gandhi and the Viceroy Lord Irwin had agreed on a truce, the Indian National Congress was once more at war
with the Government of India. At first the congress and the Government made strenuous efforts to observe the terms of the Gandhi – Irwin pact. According to the terms of the pact and on the advice of Lord Irwin, Gandhiji with Madan Mohan Malviya and others participated in the second Round Table Conference in London. The conference held from 7th September to 31st December, 1931. But the general election results in London changed the entire course of events and the right wing of the government made up its mind to break up the conference and to fight the congress.111

True to Gandhi’s expectation, the Second Round Table Conference proved to be a complete failure. The delegates did not reach any agreement on the thorny question of communal representation and Gandhi returned empty handed. As a result, relation between the congress and the government worsened and at the close of 1931 each side accused the other of breaking terms of the pact, which had culminated on 5th March, 1931 and notified by the Karachi session of the congress held in March 1931.

In the Central Provinces and Berar, the period of the truce was at first more smooth in Marathi region than in Hindi region. But by the end of 1931 congressmen in Nagpur and Berar regions were equally prepared for a second phase of the campaign of civil disobedience. Speaking in the council on 6th March 1931, the Finance Member, Sir Arthen Nelson, declared that ‘I really hardly say, sir, both for myself and my colleagues, and I am authorised to add on behalf of His Excellency
the Governor, and I feel sure, I may add also on behalf of all the officials of the Government have greatly pleased we are at the prospect now held out of a return to normal conditions.\textsuperscript{112} To assist this return, on the same day the government ordered the release of most of the those political prisoners imprisoned for civil disobedience during 1930.\textsuperscript{113} During the truce the Hindi nationalists adopted a more militant attitude to the government than their counterpart in Marathi region.

SECOND PHASE : 1932–1934

However, though Gandhi returned from Round Table Conference empty handed, yet he was not filled with any disappointment when an exchange of telegrams between Gandhi and the Private Secretary, of Viceroy Lord Willingdon were going on. The private secretary turned down the request of Gandhi to meet the Viceroy and threatened to take severe action against the leaders and the follower of the civil disobedience movement.\textsuperscript{114} Gandhi wrote back to the government about his intention and firm determination to resume the civil disobedience movement accepting full responsibility for the consequences.\textsuperscript{115} Thus, the battle lines were redrawn and the Gandhi Irwin pact ended in failure.

The government on its part started the course of brutal repression by arresting national leaders. Swaraj Bhawan and Anand Bhawan were searched. Purushattam Das Tondon was arrested on 20\textsuperscript{th} December and Jawaharlal Nehru was taken into custody on 26\textsuperscript{th} December on his way to Bombay. The Congress Working Committee,
which met on 1st January, 1932 at Bombay, adopted a resolution to resume civil disobedience.\(^{116}\) Gandhi was arrested on 4th January, 1932. Among other arrested leaders were Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Sarojini Naidu and M. A. Ansari. From these measures it appeared that the government made up its mind to crush the campaign.

Following the arrest of Gandhi and other leaders, the second phase of campaign of civil disobedience began in the provinces. But the campaign gave little challenge to the government compared to the agitation in 1930-32. This was largely due to the prompt and effective action taken by the government. However, as in 1930, the congress led the agitation, and thus once again claimed to espouse the cause of the people. All the provinces in District Congress Committees were dissolved and in their place War Councils were formed with President and Secretary for each of the region. Seth Govind Das and D. P. Mishra occupied these positions in the Hindi region. M. V. Abhyankar and Punam Chand Ranka in Nagpur and Wamanrao Joshi and Brijlal Biyani in Berar region.\(^ {117}\)

**NAGPUR REGION**

The Provincial Government dealt severely inorder to bring – the movement under control. As for the Nagpur region, early in January 1932 the government outlawed the War Council. Further it arrested Abhyankar and Ranka and applied an ordinance to prevent boycott movement in the region.\(^ {118}\) In addition, to deter other leaders from stirring up the people, the courts imposed severe sentences and fines on
Abhyankar and Ranka. Both men were sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment. The government also fined Abhyankar Rs.10,000/- and auctioned his cars.\textsuperscript{119} Next, on 13\textsuperscript{th} January 1932, Governor Butler issued a public statement on the government policy towards the new campaign of civil disobedience, stating 'during the last Civil Disobedience Movement, government took a lenient view of the picketing ... and interfered only when it became forcible ... the public cried out for intervention ... . That policy failed and this time we have decided to take all measures necessary to secure the rights of all members of the public to pursue their lawful avocations without interference to their liberty .... We have the will and power to protect you.'\textsuperscript{120} Within a month the government had applied the ordinance against picketing to the Districts of Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara and under this ordinance arrested large number of volunteers.\textsuperscript{121}

As for other measures to check nationalists activities, during January 1932 the government seized the property and funds of institutions in Nagpur region which helped or trained agitators.\textsuperscript{122} At Wardha and Hinganghat, the police attacked groups of demonstrators. On 16\textsuperscript{th} January 1932, there was again a serious lathi charge at Wardha.\textsuperscript{123} The government also prevented assembly and prohibited Newspapers from publishing any matter relating to the campaign of civil disobedience.\textsuperscript{124} These measures were effective, and the only agitation launched were the boycotts organised by the merchants community. Despite these, the merchants of Nagpur region swung behind the
congress to boycott movement. They supported boycott of foreign clothes, foreign sugar and household articles in common use. However, the measures adopted by the government were so heavy, repressive against the nationalists, that by August 1932 these agitations, too, almost came to an end.

**BERAR REGION**

The campaign of Civil Disobedience in Berar region, during 1932 was more aggressive than the campaign in Nagpur region. During January the government arrested prominent leaders and promulgated ordinances to suppress the agitation as it had done in Nagpur region. Despite these measures, however, the campaign persisted longer in Berar. This was due to two factors. Firstly, Wamananrao Joshi avoided arrest by making studiously moderate speeches. Secondly, the nationalists leaders in Berar seem to have had the use of a more instant supply of volunteers. This was particularly the case of Akola, where, with the assistance of merchants and volunteers, a succession of boycotts occurred until June 1932. Similar agitations, on a smaller scale took place in Buldhana and Amrawati. By July, however, as a result of firm action by the government, the movement everywhere had collapsed.

In spite of the repressive measures by the government, however, the Satyagraha went on and did not completely stop until it was called off by the congress in April-May 1934.
HINDI REGION

Civil Disobedience in Hindi region, like that of in Nagpur region, also occurred on a very limited scale. The main centres of the agitation were the towns of Jabalpur, Khanda and Sagar in the north, and Raipur and Durg in the east. In the later stages of the campaign Betul also became an important centre where Forest Satyagraha was launched on a wide scale.

In dealing with these agitations, the government adopted a policy similar to those employed in Marathi regions.

At first, the government arrested important leaders like Govind Das, D. P. Mishra and R. S. Shukla, and then promulgated ordinances to enable it to arrest volunteers on a large scale. The government also suppressed by ordinances the printing of hostile news items and prohibited meetings and conferences scheduled to be held in Jabalpur and Sagar. As a result, the agitation quickly subsided. The government withdrew ordinances and allowed the conferences to be held, where it was confident that these would not disturb the law and order.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMMES IN THE PROVINCES

During 1932 to 1933 agitation against the government diminished slowly, and congressmen turned their attention towards upliftment of the depressed community. In doing so, the congressmen strengthened their claim to espouse the interest of the common people. This movement had the additional advantage of swinging political interest
apart from civil disobedience towards constructive work, as it proved later in the Central Legislative Assembly election. The protagonist of the campaign to uplift the Depressed community was Gandhi who began the campaign in 1932, following the publication of the Communal Award, on 17th August, 1932.

The Communal Award prescribed separate electorates for Hindus, Muslims and Sikh and the depressed community under the proposed constitution for India. Gandhi considered that the award of separate electorates to the depressed community as immoral. For the cause of Harijans, on 20th September, 1932 he began a fast to compel the British Government to abandon the scheme. Gandhi achieved his immediate objective in Poona pact, with this he set himself for a nation wide tour that weakened the bastion of untouchability. This movement confirmed the claim of congress that it espoused the causes of depressed community along with other under privileged people of India.

In 1932, congressmen in the provinces concentrated themselves for upliftment of depressed community. They did so in the wake of Gandhi's symbolic fast which triggered off a movement to remove the stigma of untouchability from the depressed community of the province. The congressmen and other leader opened wells and temples to the suppressed community or Harijans as Gandhi used to call them. According to observers 'great cordiality and co-operation (was) visible throughout. This 'cordiality and cooperation between congressmen and Harijans was more evident in Nagpur'. The Hitavada described the scene
in the city on 20th September 1932, the day on which Gandhi began his fast. "The 20th September was observed as a Gandhi's day .... (There was) unprecedented support from the Nagpur public.... Colleges and schools were for the most part deserted and municipal offices closed.... Hindu shops observed hartal, and many Hindu fasted.... Dr. Khare declared temples open for the depressed castes .... (There was) a procession with a portrait of Gandhi in the evening with both touchables and untouchables ... ending in a mammoth meeting with Dr. Khare in the chair".135

After releasing from jail in June 1933, Gandhi skilfully blended his political activities with his constructive works for the sake of the Harijan community. In this way he inspired further efforts to remove untouchability, which lessened the possibility of congress to resume its campaign of civil disobedience against the government. On three occasion during 1933 Gandhi drew the attention of the Indian public for the Harijan community. In May and August he undertook further symbolic fasts for upliftment of Harijans. In September he announced that he would begin a nation wide tour to collect funds for the upliftment of the community.

Gandhi's activities in 1933 benefitted the Harijans and increased the popularity of the congress in the central provinces and Berar. His two fasts and the Harijan tour coincided with a marked decline in the level of agitation, which in some parts of the province had lingered on upto 1933.
The event which aroused the greatest interest among the people in the Central Provinces and Berar, was Gandhi's Harijan tour of the provinces in November 1933. In November 1933 Gandhi arrived in Nagpur, on his first stage of 10 months long Harijan tour. As the Hitavada observed, it was a day on warm and enthusiastic welcomes, a day of gifts, official meetings, and car processions ... with surging crowd in the Halidayomood' ... . At the centre of it, was diminutive Mahatma wreathed in flowers, and by his side his host Dr. Khare. Following his tour of Berar, Gandhi left for Mohakoshal where further honours awaited him and his associates. Gandhi's visit to Raipur, where he stayed with Ravi Shankar Shukla, was one of the high points of the tour in the Chhattisgarh region. Gandhi also visited the northern districts of Hindi region, where, according to one observer his presence created a wonderful atmosphere, enabling us to breathe full and free air, and feel that we belong to the same motherland. During his tour of Madhya Pradesh he covered over 2500 miles and collected Rs.51,000/- for the Harijan fund. Although the Gandhi's tour raised the prestige of the congress in the provinces, it was not without its critics. Some observers pointed out that 'the tour had not removed the traditions and conservatism'. But these criticism could not detract from the excitement of the Gandhi's tour. Nor could they undermine the prestige of the congress as the sponsor of that tour.

The congress leaders in the Central Provinces Berar turned themselves from the Harijan campaign in 1934 to contest the election of the Central Legislature Assembly. Between 1933-34, nationalists throughout
India urged the congress to permit its members to retouch to the legislature. As a result, in April 1934 Gandhi suspended Civil Disobedience and during May submitted a resolution to the All India Congress Committee seeking approval for congressmen to enter the Legislature. The committee accepted the resolution. Soon afterwards, Gandhi resigned from the congress to improve the lot of India's all section of population i.e. in favour of Harijan works and other items of constructive programme. Gandhi declared very boldly; 'I would therefore, gladly retire from the congress and devote myself to Harijan community'.

The congressmen prepared themselves to contest the election for the Central Legislative Assembly to be held in November 1934.

Thus, between 1934 and 1937 the campaign of Civil Disobedience and the Harijan movement placed the congress in a strong position to win the election for the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934, the Council of States in 1936 and in 1937 for the Legislative Assembly of the Central Province and Berar formed under the Government of India Act., 1935.

ROLE OF LEGISLATURE

The period under review is significant in the history of Central Provinces and Berar legislative council unlike the preview years. It began to respond to popular demands. It is indeed remarkable that the fact of their not being representative of the peoples will did not prevent most of the members from functioning, as if they were truly representative.
When the Civil Disobedience Movement was at its peak the first session of the fourth council started on 9th December 1930.\textsuperscript{141} The legislature either under the pressure of public opinion under the congress aspiration,\textsuperscript{142} denounced the repressive policy of the government and demanded the release and improvement of living condition of the political prisoners in jails. They raised the issue by way of resolutions, adjournment motions, cut motions and interpellations.

The immediate issue that agitated the responsive cooperative members during the first session of the fourth council was the question of the release of political prisoners who had not been convicted of offences involving violence to person or property or incitement to such violence and were still in jails. On behalf of the government, home member declared that government was prepared to release all political prisoners who were not convicted of violence on the condition that they give an undertaking that they would not participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement in future.\textsuperscript{143} The responsive co-operators and loyalist members, however, declined to support such a step which tantamounted to an apology from the prisoners for their participation in the heroic struggle. They strongly disapproved of the government's policy towards the prisoners, and in a resolution moved by T.J. Kedar on 17th January 1931, made an attempt for getting their release. The resolution read: This council recommends to the Government the release of all political prisoners who have been sent to jail for practising Civil Disobedience not involving acts of violence\textsuperscript{144} while moving his motion,
Kedar referred to the address that was delivered by the Governor at the beginning of the session. The governor had said that he would be happy to release the political prisoners the very next day, provided they make it clear that they would take no further part in the movement. Kedar thanked the government for its frankness but regretfully observed that the assurance was not generous enough to satisfy even those loyalists who were against the Civil Disobedience Movement. He pointed out that the release of N.B. Khare had not been followed by any untoward consequences. Khare had not gone back to the movement and there was no fear that other persons would rejoin the movement after their release. He said that no good would be served by detaining political prisoners in jail till expiry of their term. He further observed that it would be unwise on the part of the government to extract from the prisoners a humiliating undertaking that they would not participate in the movement in future. He appealed to the government to grant a general amnesty to all the prisoners. At the end of his speech he sought cooperation from all the members for carrying the motion.\textsuperscript{145}

R.A. Kanitkar moved an amendment to Kedar’s motion. The amendment read: This council recommends to the government the release and remission of fines that may be still unrecovered from the political prisoners who were sent to jail for participating in civil disobedience, not involving acts of violence.\textsuperscript{146} In support of his amendment Kanitkar said ‘If the political prisoners are to be released on account of the grant of amnesty to them ... and if they are ask to pay fines
and still they are not able to pay, they are to be asked to go back to jails and serve sentences. What is the use of this grant of amnesty? Seth Sheolal, S.M. Rahman, R.S. Dubey, K.M. Dharmadhikari, G.R. Joshi and B.G. Khaparde strongly supported the amendment moved by Kanitkar.

On behalf of the government, of the Home member, Dr. E. Raghavendra Rao, while defending the government’s stand, declared that it would be difficult for it to release political prisoners unless it was clear that they would take no further part in the movement. He requested the mover not to press for his motion. The resolution as amended by R.A. Kanitkar was unanimously accepted by the council.

However, several questions were asked during 1931 - 1932 relating to the same matter. These constituted another instrument for expressing popular discontent and disapproval of the government’s acts. For instance, questions were put enquiring about the persons including some members of the provincial legislature, who had participated in the movement and were arrested and convicted. A series of questions were also put in protest against promulgation of ordinances, the arrest of volunteers in large number, the passing of sentences and imposing heavy fines against the satyagrahis who had participated in the movement.

JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORT

Inspite of the resumption of the civil disobedience by the Congress and its non-participation in the third and last session of the
Round Table Conference, held in November 1932 the British Government, had proceeded on its business of framing a new constitution for India.

The decision taken by the Government in the light of conference contained the proposals for constitution reforms published in the White Paper in March 1933. The Calcutta Congress expressed its emphatic condemnation of the proposals. The proposals contained all the obnoxious features which had been repeatedly criticized at the conference viz. safeguards, reservations and the privileges accorded to the Princes.

The British Government appointed a Joint Parliamentary Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Linlithgow to discuss the proposals of the conference and directed it to submit its report shortly. After a long discussion the committee submitted its report in November 1934. It accepted the White Paper proposals in general but in some details it was even considered to be a more retrograde measures. Therefore, it was condemned by almost all sections of public opinion in India. The Congress asked the people to reject it outright. The Muslim League and the National Liberal Federation also could not accept its proposals.

However, the government brought the matter to the provincial legislatures of the country for discussion, in order to ascertain their views. In the legislative council of central provinces and Berar, the home member, Rao, moved the resolution on 2nd February 1935 for bringing into consideration the report of the joint select committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms.¹⁵¹
Immediately after the motion was adopted for discussion, nationalist members while condemning the retrograde recommendations of the report, characterized it as highly unsatisfactory and falling short of the Indians demand.\textsuperscript{152}

Representing the Muslims view, S.M. Rahman declared, 'there was no sense' in the talk of rejection of the constitution.\textsuperscript{153} G.A. Gavai, representing depressed community expressed gratitude to the British Government for conceding adequate representation to his community in the legislature.\textsuperscript{154} G.C. Rogers representing Anglo-Indian Community, paid tribute to the joint select committee for its labour and appealed to all, to work the new constitution in a spirit of goodwill and sincerity in the interest of social justice.\textsuperscript{155} In the end the discussion on Joint Select Committee report petered out.

In the meantime, the British Government, however, did not wait for the views of the legislatures in India. In fact it paid scant attention to them. The Government of India Bill, based on the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee was introduced in the Parliament on 1\textsuperscript{st} Feb. 1935 and received the Royal assent on 4\textsuperscript{th} Aug. 1935. Under this act the provinces would have the representatives of the people as ministers holding all the portfolios and being responsible to the legislature, though subject to overriding power of the Governor. The congress at its Lucknow session in April 1936, passed a comprehensive resolution rejecting the new constitution entirely. Of course, it later on participated in the elections for the provincial legislatures.
The elections to the new legislative assembly of the Central Provinces and Berar, took place in February 1937. The Congress woman overwhelming majority. Its candidates gained sixty one percent of the votes castes and seventy of the 112 seats in the legislature.\textsuperscript{156} As the congress at first refused to allow its members to take office under the new constitution. On 28\textsuperscript{th} March 1937, Sir Hyde Gowan invited Dr. E. Raghavendra Rao to form a caretaker ministry.\textsuperscript{157} Consequently, Rao formed a ministry, although they had the support of a small minority in the Assembly. Within, a few days he assumed office as Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{158} The ministry held office on a caretaker basis until 14 July 1937. On that day a ministry formed by Congress took office. With this the freedom struggle in the Central Provinces and Berar and the provincial politics entered into a new phase.
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5. Prasad, Rajendra, India Divided, Bombay 1947, p.129.


10. Hitavada, 14th March, 1929, p. 3.


20. Bipin Chandra and others, op. cit, p. 266.


22. Ibid.


28. Those participated in the activities of the Congress were the councillors, Students, Railway Workers and the less responsible elements of the population.
29. Indian Annual Register, Vol. 1, 1930, p.27.


31. **Hitavada**, 10th April 1930, p. 9. The Satyagrahis were U.G. Sahastrabudhey, a member of the Nagpur Municipal Committee, Ranade, a first year student; Bagre, a municipal employee and Dokh and Waghmale of the Tilak Vidyalaya.


35. MPS, P&M, 302/CDM, 1930, p. 17; **Hitavada**, 24th April 1930, p. 2. Mass agitation refers to agitation drawing in large number of people from different, strata of society, and occurring on a sufficiently widespread scale to constitute a serious threat to law and order.


37. Ibid, 18th May 1930, p. 9.


40. **Hitavada**, 18th May 1930, p. 9; 18th May 1930, p. 10.

42. Ibid., 3rd July 1930, p. 8; 10th July 1920, p. 7.

43. MPS, P&M, 302/CDM, 1930, pp. 7-8; Hitavada, 17th July 1930, p. 9; 24th July 1930, p. 9.

44. Hitavada, 20th July 1930, p. 2.

45. MPS, P&M, 272/CDM, 1930. Proceeding of a meeting held at Nagpur at the Honourable Home Minister's Bungalow on 20th July 1930.

46. MPS, P&M, 302/CDM, 1930, pp. 6-8.

47. Ibid, p. 8.


54. Ibid, p. 25.


56. MPS, P&M, 302/CDM, 1930, pp. 11-12. In one rural and one urban electorate in the district of Nagpur less than 3 percent and 7 percent of voters exercised the franchise respectively.

58. NML, AIICC, G-136 (12W-1). 1930, T. S. Bapat, Secretary District Congress Committee Yeotmal to Secretary Working Committee, 29th January 1930.


63. Ibid, 17th April 1930, pp. 6, 10; 20th April 1930, p. 9, 24th April 1930, p. 7.

64. Hitavada, 17th April 1930, p. 6, 10; 24th April 1930, p. 7.


68. Ibid, 20th April 1930, p. 10; 24th April 1930; 1st May; p. 7.


70. Ibid.


73. MPS, P&M, 302/CDM, 1930, p. 8; Hitavada, 12th June 1930, p. 11; 22nd June 1930, p. 7; 22nd June 1930, p. 9.

74. MPS, P&M, 272/CDM, 1930, Proceedings of a Meeting held at the Honourable Home Member's Bungalow on 30th May, pp. 14-15.


76. Hitavada, 3rd August, 1930, p.5.


78. NAI, Khaparde, MS, Diary, 2nd October 1930; 4th October 1930.


81. Ibid.

82. NML, AICC, G-125 (ii) 1930, D. P. Mishra to President, Indian National Congress, 1st March 1930.


84. Hitavada, 10th January 1930, p. 3; 26th January 1930, p. 3; 26th January 1930, pp. 9, 11; 2nd February 1930, pp. 7; 6th February 1930, p. 11; 13th February 1930, p. 11.


89. Hitavada, 20th April 1930, p.2; 24th April 1930, p. 5.


92. Ibid, 27th April 1930, p. 5.


95. Ibid, 1st June 1930, p. 9.
96. NAI, Home Poll. 253/30, 1930, The Civil Disobedience Movement in the Central Provinces, Extract from the Central Provinces, Summary for the week ending 9th June 1930, Raipur District, p. 4.


98. Hitavada, 26th June 1930, p. 15.


100. Hitavada, 5th June 1930, p. 5; 12th June 1930, p. 6-12, 19th June 1930, p. 7; 29th June 1930, p. 3; 3rd July 1930, p. 7; 20th July 1930, p. 7; 24th July 1930, p. 2-7; MPS, P&M 302/CDM, 1930, pp. 5-7; MPS, LSG, 18-6, 1932, Report on the working of Municipal Committee in Jabalpur, pp. 63-64.


102. Hitavada, 5th June 1930, p. 5; 6th July, 1930, p. 3; NAI, Home Poll., 253/30, 1930. The Civil Disobedience Movement in the Central


104. Hitavada, 21st August 1930, p. 3; A compilation of important political trials in the Central Provinces and Berar, op. cit., p.7.


113. MPS, P & M. Confidential, 48/CDM, 1931; H.C. Gowan Chief Secretary to all District Commissioner, Central Provinces and Berar, No. 154-1, March, 1931.


115. Gopalaswami, K., Gandhi and Bombay, pp. 276-277.


120. Ibid.


125. Hitavada, 10th Jan. 1932, p.7; 24th Jan. 1932, p.9; 31st March 1932, p.5; 14th April 1932, pp.5, 8.


131. A compilation of important political trials in the Central Provinces and Berar, p.11; Hitavada, 10 Jan. 1932, p. 1; 14th January 1932, p.1; 28th Jan.1932, p.5; 25th February 1932, p.8; 15th May 1932, p.4; 25th May 1932, p.5.


134. Hitavada, 18th Sept., 1932, p. 7; 22nd September 1932, p. 5; 25th September 1932, p.7; 2nd October 1932, p.5.

135. Hitavada, 22nd September 1932, p.5.

136. Hitavada, 9th November, p.5.

137. Hitavada, 10th December 1933, p.4; 17th December 1933, p.9.


139. Hitavada, 10th December 1933, p.4.


144. Ibid, 17 January 1931, p.223.

147. Ibid.
149. Ibid, pp. 245.
152. Ibid, pp. 244-45.
153. Ibid, p. 245.
154. Ibid, p. 245.
155. Ibid, p. 245.
158. Ibid, No. 1, 1937, pp. 240-241. Rao's supporters numbered 25, this ministers were B.G. Khaparde and S.W.A. Rizvi. His ministers were B.G. Khaparde and S.W.A. Rizvi.