CHAPTER IV

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE DRINK EVIL
AND OTHER PROGRAMMES
A very major item of the Non-Co-operation programme was, prohibition. Gandhiji was opposed to drinking because he considered it the worst evil. He wrote: "I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. It is often the parent of both."1 According to Gandhiji liquor spoils the human character and soul. He expressed the same thing in his speech at Seoni that, "it is much better to consume sewage water than to drink liquor sewage water is merely dirty and causes bodily illness, but liquor defiles the soul."2

As per the non-co-operation programme prohibition had only two aspects; the moral and the political. It's moral aspect emphasised that it was wrong to drink. The political aspect aimed at depriving the Government of the revenue it received from the sale of liquor.3

The first stage began well before the Nagpur session of the Congress.4 People accepted and adopted the method of picketing the wine shops in C.P.5 Gandhiji appreciated the early response given by the people of C.P.6

1. M.K. Gandhi, Young India, 8 June 1921.
2. CWAG, xix, p. 462; Madhya Pradesh Aur Gandhi, p. 17.
4. NAI, LFCPR, No. 19, 1921, p. 196; Maharashtra (Nagpur) 4 May 1921.
This programme appealed to the masses, the majority of whom were teetotallers. In certain parts of the province public opinion became so bitter against the drink habit that even the contractors of liquor shops did not bid for further contract. Under such circumstances the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur had to give up the auction of licences. The same thing was happened in Chhindwara, Balaghat, Nimar and some other districts of C.P. In some places the liquor contractors surrendered their existing contracts and closed down their shops. Seeing the strong public opposition, some wine shops were even removed from the villages and the government too curtailed the number of liquor-shops in the province. The local newspapers also forced the provincial government to restrict the opening of liquor shops in certain areas of city. Wherever the Government succeeded in auctioning liquor shops, the money received was much less than before. At Dhamtari the licence was sold to a notorious bad character, for Rs. 1,600/- only, though it used to fetch Rs. 16,000/- previously.

7. NAI, IRCPB. 1921, p. 70. Maharashtra (Nagpur) 9 Feb. 1921.
8. Ibid., C.P. Weekly News (Chhindwara) 12 Feb. 1921.
10. Ibid., pp. 41, 342, 279.
11. The Maharashtra (Nagpur) 12 Oct. 1921. Articles were 'शाहीन भार भारत' and 'कर नाकारते किस जिंदा'.
12. The Young Patriot (Nagpur), 12 Sept. 1921.
Municipal Committees also supported the anti-drink campaign being launched in the province. The Municipal Committees of Akola, Amraoti, Nagpur, Raipur, Wardha, Yeotmal and several local bodies passed resolutions against having any liquor shop within their jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{13} Gandhiji highly appreciated the decision of Municipal Committees and asked other Municipalities to follow the same.\textsuperscript{14}

The campaign against the drink evil was such a success that people not only abstained from liquor, but also from other intoxicants like bhang, ganja, etc.\textsuperscript{15} The working classes like gold-smiths, barbers and cobblers too resolved to abstain from drinking.\textsuperscript{16}

Picketing:

Apart from the resolutions passed by the various municipalities, and strong public opposition, some wine shop owners did not close down their shops. The Congress volunteers then started an intensive campaign of picketing.


\textsuperscript{14} M.K. Gandhi, \textit{Young India} 1919-1922, 29 Sept. 1921, pp. 772-773.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Karamvir} (Jabalpur), 2 April 1921.

\textsuperscript{16} NAI, IPCPB 1921, p. 70, \textit{Rajasthan-Kesari} (Wardha), 29 May 1921.
these wine shops. The picketing of wine shops was successfully launched at Yeotmal, Akola, Daryapur, Raipur, Narsimhapur, Wardha, Jabalpur, Damoh, Nagpur, Seoni, Saugar, Bilaspur, Amraoti, Nimar, Hoshangabad, and in few other places of the province.\textsuperscript{17} With the result of these picketings the police department found it difficult to maintain the law and order in the province.\textsuperscript{18} Government adopted repressive measures and arrested hundreds of people in connection with the picketing of liquor shops.\textsuperscript{19} But the prosecuted volunteers did not request for mercy and cheerfully accepted the imprisonment.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{Raipur Incident:}

On the call of P.C.C., Sunderlal Sharma of Rajim\textsuperscript{21} and Qutubuddin of Raipur organised a public meeting on 7 February, 1921 at Gandhi Chowk, in Raipur City. In the course of the meeting the leaders argued the people to continue the picketing of wine shops. In the mean time Qutubuddin was arrested by the Police. This was strongly


\textsuperscript{19} Appendix - G.

\textsuperscript{20} NAI, Home Pol. F-170/1921, Extracts from Indian News Agency, Telegram No. 20(5) Simla, 8 June 1921.
resented by the people and the furiated mob started stoning on the officials. The local authorities took it as a challenge and dealt with the situation seriously. The news of the Raipur incident excited the people in other parts of the province. Therefore the Government abandoned the liquor auctions in six districts and partially suspended them in four and "took prompt action to suppress any further tendency towards intimidation... through prosecution." 23

**Violent Incidents at Nagpur:**

Dr. Paranjpe, a prominent lieutenant of Dr. Moonja 24 successfully organised the picketing of foreign liquor shops in Nagpur. He was also successful in persuading some of the liquor contractors to boycott the liquor auctions due to be held in the last week of February 1921. 25

21. Sunderalal Sharma: Leading social worker and freedom fighter of Chhattisgarh, actively participated in N.C.O. M., associated with several social organisations.

22. NAI, Home Pol. (d) F-179, 1929, p. 27 'Note on Boycott Movement'; MSN, Police Deptt., F-11 No. 642, 1922. "Increase in the special armed forces in the C.P."; Proceeding of the conference of commissioners held at Pachmari on 27 June 1921, p. 8.

23. NAI, Home Pol., F-179, 1929, p. 27, 'General Political situation in India, Notes on Boycott Movement'; The Govt. abandoned the sales in Raipur, Dury, Nimar, Hoshangabad, Seoni, & Damoh, and partially suspended them in Balaghat, Chhindwara, Jabalpur & Betul districts.

24. Dr. Balkrishna Shivarao Moonja (1872-1948): A staunch follower of Tilak, opposed the programme of non-co-operation; founded 'Rashtriya Mandal', and published the nationalist newspapers 'Maharashtra' and 'Hindi-Kesari'.

On 22 February 1922 the Government ordered Dr. Paranjape to stop the picketing of liquor-shops and arrested Dr. M.R. Chelkar, the vice-president of Nagpur Municipality, on a charge of sedition. The government also arrested two Muslim volunteers for allegedly causing violence at liquor shops and went ahead with its plan to hold the liquor auction.26 The people of Nagpur got furiated with the arrests of their popular leaders. A large crowd attended the court next day where the leaders were to be tried and auction of liquor-shops to be held. The angry crowd laid violent hands upon some contractors who had bid at the auction. During the disturbance, policemen were assaulted and some Europeans were also attacked. Some liquor shops were looted and some liquor houses were demolished in the city.27 To prevent any further outbreak the government called out the soldiery and prohibited all meetings for one month. On the expiry of prohibitory orders, a public meeting was organised at Nagpur on 24 March, 1921. The speakers while criticizing the repressive policy of the government exhorted the audience to carry on the programme of non-co-operation and temperance movements vigorously, not caring for arrests and imprisonment.28 As a result, tension again


27. Hitavada (Nagpur), 26 Feb. 1921, p. 4; Young Patriot (Nagpur), 28 Feb. 1921; In the disturbances, two European officers and seven policemen were injured.

rose in Nagpur city. Three days later a mob of 400 Koshtie and others bearing stones and lathis looted liquor-shops in the city. Police immediately arrested 30 suspected Koshti agitators. The Koshties retaliated and in reply, the Police opened fire on the mob. Nine people were killed and twenty seriously wounded in the firing. This caused a great excitement in Nagpur city, and fearing further retaliation the Police vacated control posts in the inner parts of the city. With the removal of the police, the mob went berserk, and burnt four police sub-stations, and assaulted some policemen in different parts of the city. Finally the Army was called to establish the normal condition. By 30 March the condition was brought under control. On the very next day, the government prohibited all public meetings in Nagpur for two months; and with that order, the agitation ceased. 29

The Nagpur incident sent a wave of horror and anger throughout the Province, and helped to make the people more determined.

The campaign against the drink evil got a wide support from all sections of the people. The picketing movement became so popular that Dr. Dharmadhikari even asked Amraoti District Board, to sanction rupees 3,000 for picketing the

liquor shops. The Central Provinces Legislative Council also supported the movement and passed two resolutions in the legislative council to stop the further sale of country-liquor throughout the whole province.

With the result of this anti-drink movement, the liquor shops in C.P. and Berar were reduced from 3454 shops to 2628 shops; during 1920–22. A fall of 44% was recorded in the consumption of country liquor, consequently the revenue from liquor also fell from rupees 1,07,82,459 to rupees 71,21,996 during the said period.

In this way, the campaign of anti-drink movement remained successful throughout the province. The movement was successful in raising the moral tone of the people amongst whom the drink habit played such a havoc. The non-co-operator had to suffer heavily, but he bore the cross cheerfully.

30. NAI, IFC-PB-1921, p. 422, The Bharat (Amravati), 15 Sept. 1921. The Nagpur District Council sanctioned Rs. 2,000 for picketing the liquor shops; MFP, p. 308.


32. Appendix - H; at one time nearly 2000 liquor-shops were closed in the province, CPIC, Vol. II, 1921, p. 801.

33. Appendix - I; As per another account a fall of 76% was seen in the consumption of country liquor, 'statement given by C.U. Wills in C.P. Legislative Council' on 5 August 1921, CPIC Vol. II, 1921, p. 411.

Boycott of Duke of Connaught's Visit:

The non-co-operation programme also included the boycott of the Duke of Connaught's visit to India. The reasons for the boycott of his visit were not personal but public. Gandhiji made it quite clear that nobody had anything against the Duke as an Englishman. But his visit was boycotted because he came as a representative of British Empire "which has trampled under foot the feelings of Indian".

The local newspapers strongly opposed the visit of Duke and refused to accord him a welcome. Karamavir described the Indian feelings as follows: "... India is deeply groaning under miseries so much so that she is not in a position to participate even in his reception.

The Provincial Government made all the preparations to make the visit a success, but Duke's visit was totally boycotted, in Madhya Pradesh. Wherever he went he was greeted with a Hartal by the people.

36. NAI, IP CPB, 1921, p. 23. The Iai (Jabalpur).

The members of the Central Provinces Legislative Council even asked about the money spent on the eve of Duke's visit to C.P. and Berar, refer CPLIC 1921, Vol. II, p. 8.
Surrender of Honours and Titles:

Surrender of honours, titles and boycott of Government services was one of the main items of the non-co-operation programme. The British Government, in order to obtain powerful support, conferred titles and honours on leading public men. The recipients of honours from the Government were mainly big Zamindars, Jagirdars and wealthy people. In return for the honours conferred on them, they were expected to give their fullest support to the British Raj. 40 The non-co-operators aimed to cut the source of this support to the Government. In their opinion if a large number of such staunch supporters of the government could be persuaded to give up their titles and honours, the prestige of the Government would be undermined. The surrender of titles and honours was first a moral protest and, secondly by depriving the government of its strong support, it aimed at paralysing it. Showing the moral aspect of this item, the non-co-operator clearly said that it would be a sin to receive honours and titles from an unjust government. On the same grounds the internationally reputed poet, Rabindranath Tagore, renounced his Knighthood, and wrote to the Government: "The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context by humiliation, and I for my part, wish to stand shorn of all special distinction by the side of those of my countrymen, who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to

40. NNL, Frank Sly, Governor of C.P. & Berar to Khazuddin Khan, 30 Dec. 1920. S.No. 4416 (Gandhi Papers).
suffer a degradation not fit for human beings."41 This was a sort of inspiration to the title holders of Central Provinces and Berar and as a result some of the well known figures of C.P. and Berar surrendered their titles and honours, the prominent among them include: Jamnalal Bajaj, Pt. Vishnu Dutt Shukul, Waman Rao Lakhe, Seth Govind Das and Dr. E. Raghavendra Rao.42 As per the reports available nine persons renounced their titles and eighteen honorary magistrates surrendered their positions in C.P. during the non-co-operation movement.43

Results:

In spite of the efforts of non co-operators, very few title holders surrendered their titles and honours in C.P. and Berar. But the prestige of the title holders was lowered down in the society. The title holders became objects of ridicule and contempt. As a result some of the newspapers stopped publishing the list of New Years honours.44 The titles which were symbols of respectability now became the insignia of insult, ridicule and shame. Title-holders were "reduced to the position of untouchables in society."45 At many places they were refused even a decent burial in the Community burial grounds.46 The repugnance against the

42. NML, A.I.C.C. Papers, file No. 6/1922, pp. 199-200.
43. Appendix - J.
44. Praiapaksha (Akola), 9 Jan. 1921.
45. Ibid.
46. Iai (Jabalpur), 26 Jan. 1921.
titles and medals had become so wide-spread that even school boys refused to accept medals and in some cases students boycotted prize-giving and other ceremonies.47

In this way the non-co-operation movement completely changed the position of title holders. There was a time when people were prepared to spend large sums of money to acquire Government titles but after the commencement of Non-Co-operation Movement it was difficult to find self-respecting men who would care to make special effort to get a title.

Boycott of Government Services:

This was one of the subsidiary items of non-co-operation movement. According to the non-co-operator when there was such a difference of opinion between the people and the Government and such vital points as the honour of the country and its economic interests; no self respecting and patriotic Indian should care to serve under the present administration. Therefore under the programme of non-co-operation the government employees were asked to leave their services.

Madhya Pradesh also responded to this item of non-co-operation programme. In the first phase about 30 teachers belonging to Government or Government aided schools resigned

47. Maharashtra, 16 Feb. 1921; 17 Feb. 1921.
from their services. In the same way one Naib Tahsildar, one Head Constable, two Clerks working in Government office, one Draftsman of P.W.D., one Sub Inspector of Police, and one Additional Income Tax Inspector also resigned from their services in C.P. Gandhiji also persuaded some of the Government employees to resign from their services.

As a result of this movement the government servants lost their respect and influence before the people. Even those who could not resign from government services for personal reasons, now started helping the national movement by other means.

**Campaign Against Untouchability:**

The removal of untouchability formed another important aspect of the Non-Co-operation Movement. To Gandhi, its removal appeared an essential prerequisite for the attainment of Swaraj. Untouchability and Imperialism were like twin brothers. Essentially they were similar concepts. Their basis was the suppression of one people by another. According to Gandhiji the subjection of India to British rule and untouchability were inter-related. Therefore he

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50. Madhya Pradesh Auro Gandhi, p. 16.
urged the people that "we must treat them (harijans) as our blood brothers as they are in fact. We return to them the inheritance of which we have robbed them ... Untouchability is not a sanction of religion, it is a device of a Satan." He further said "we are guilty of having suppressed our brethren; we make them crawl on their bellies; we have made them rub their noses on the ground; with eyes red, with rage, we push them out of railway compartments - what more than this has British rule done? It is idle to talk of Swaraj so long as we do not protect the weak and the helpless, or so long as it is possible for a single Swarajist to injure the feelings of any individual." By attempting to remove untouchability, Gandhiji was not only rectifying previous wrong done to the untouchables, but was making them conscious of their own status as human beings and, thus making them active participants in the freedom struggle. He felt that untouchability and Swaraj would go ill together. And if India wanted Swaraj it must remove untouchability. He believed that removal of untouchability would mean the end of British rule. And the end of British rule could lead to Swaraj. Likewise Sardul Singh Caveesher also expressed "The Indian agitation against the English for


52. Ibid., p. 474, 27 April 1921; Gandhiji’s presidential address in 'Suppressed classes conference,' held at Ahmedabad, 13 and 14 April, 1921.
securing equality of treatment could have no great force, so long as Indians had their own helots and down-trodden. If one blamed British for not treating Indians as their equals, how could one excuse Indian tyranny against the untouchables 53

Of course the Provincial Congress Committee of C.P. launched a vigorous campaign against the untouchability but, "with a few exceptions no practical work was one." 54

53. Sardul Singh Caweshr, India's Fight for Freedom, p. 76.