CHAPTER III

HIS ROLE IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Before coming to the study of Kripalani's role in the freedom struggle, it is necessary here to know something about the circumstances of the British rule in India, the concept of nationalism in general, the emergence of Indian nationalism in particular and the impact of English education in India and on the freedom struggle, etc.

The Indian history goes back several centuries before the start of the Christian era. It will not be an exaggeration if we say that India was not even a country, one country, for a long time of her history. India was made up of many kingdoms. The rulers of the kingdoms were fighting with one another. Taking advantage of such internal fighting the foreigners started invading the kingdoms. They invaded many times. Some of the foreigners settled down in the country and became kings and emperors. Some of them went back with the wealth which they were able to gather. Among the foreigners who stayed on in India were the Mohammedans, the Portuguese and the British.
When the British entered the Indian scene, the Moghuls were ruling the country. The British established the East India Company for purposes of trade. At the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the Moghul power in India came under the threat of the Rajputs and Sikhs and the Marathas became more powerful. The East India Company took advantage of the prevailing situation: in the battle of Plassey in 1757, the Company forces defeated Siraj-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Bengal. The victory at the battle of Plassey firmly laid the foundations of the British power in India. The rest of the country fell under the British influence stage by stage. The British ruled the country for about two centuries.

Nationalism

Professor Hans Kohn defines nationalism as "a state of mind, permeating the large majority of a people and claiming to permeate all its members; it recognises the nation-state as the ideal form of political organisation and the nationality as the source of all creative cultural life and economic well-being. The supreme loyalty of man therefore is due to his nationality, as his own life is supposed to be possible by its welfare."1

According to Smith, nationalism is "an ideological movement, for the attainment and maintenance of self-government and independence on behalf of a group, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential 'nation' like all others." 2

Smith goes on to say that "nationalism basically fuses three ideals: collective self-determination of the people, the expression of national character and individuality, and finally the vertical division of the world into unique nations." 3

Nationalism is a complex phenomenon and defies a clear analysis as to its origin, development and effects. Hayes, while tracing the origin of the term nationalism, gives his opinion that "nationalism is the product of the social instinct of man. From the very beginning to the sixteenth century nations continued to exist but they seemed to be progressively less compelling than international religions and international empires." 4 In the seventeenth century, nationalism and internationalism developed with the thought of Hugo Grotius. But

3. Ibid., p.171.
nationalism, the paramount devotion of human beings to fairly large nationalities and the conscious founding of a political nation on linguistic and cultural nationality, was not widely preached or seriously acted upon until the eighteenth century.\(^5\) Humanitarianism was the distinguishing feature of this nationalism, for most eighteenth century critics were humanitarians as well as nationalists. At the close of the eighteenth century, nationalism threw off the cloak of humanitarianism and stood nakedly exposed as aristocratic or democratic or neither; democratic nationalism became Jacobin, aristocratic nationalism became traditional; and nationalism which was neither democratic nor aristocratic became liberal.\(^6\)

**Indian Nationalism**

At the beginning of the nineteenth century India came into contact with many European countries which were experiencing varied forms of nationalism. It is generally assumed that nationalism in India is a product of the English education and the impact of the West. However an Indian scholar contradicts

\(^5\) Ibid., pp.5-6.

\(^6\) Ibid., pp.41-42.
this assumption and asserts that nationalism in India arose out of the conflict between the British and the Indian interests in the economic and other spheres.\(^7\)

Though there were several other factors which spurred the Indian national movement, English education and the impact of the West were the foremost factors which awakened the Indians to fight for their rights.

**English Education in India**

Credit goes to Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay for introducing English education in India. The aim of Macaulay was to create a class of people who would be "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, words and intellect."\(^8\) Indian leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy welcomed the introduction of English education in India, though not for the reasons advanced by Macaulay.

In the beginning a small Western-educated class formed the elite. Various administrative posts were held by the members

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of this class. Initially they thought themselves as leaders and considered that "they had been chosen to speak for all their country-men." In course of time English education spread to every corner of the country. Consequent upon this a middle-class intelligentsia developed and this played a tremendous role in the Indian national movement.

Frank Horace writes, "This class, initially visualised by Bentinck and Macaulay as the mainstay of British rule in India, was ultimately to prove its undoing." Notwithstanding the termination of British rule in India the Western influence continues till today. Nationalists and patriots of India drew heavily on the Western philosophy and writings of the liberal authors of Europe and "as in the morning of the world light began to proceed from the West to the East."11

The writings of Rousseau, Mazzini, etc. inspired the Indian nationalists to cherish the ideal of political liberty. The Congress, in its early days, was much influenced by the

European liberal writers like Milton, Burke, Mill, Macaulay and Spencer. The English-educated community started demanding more and more rights and privileges and causing difficulties for the British administration.

Stanley E. Skinner, the Honorary Magistrate of Hissar, while reporting on the political agitation in India stated, "It is these newly created educated communities alone that are responsible today for all the present political agitation and unrest throughout the whole of India." 12

The renaissance and reformation of the nineteenth century India were mainly due to English education. It was this education which inspired the leaders for the task of the purification of the society and the Hindu religion by the removal of the socio-religious prejudices, superstitions and caste barriers. There were two groups which wanted to emancipate India from the dark period of her history. The first group was cosmopolitan and eclectic in nature which tried to assimilate the good aspects of other religions and cultures. The second group was essentially nationalistic and conservative in its approach and it aimed at the revival of the Indian culture and the reform of India's

religion. The movements led by these groups came to be known as the Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj respectively.

The influence of the Western thought on Hinduism generated "two main currents of thought which were afterwards to be united in the stream of Indian nationalism. The Brahma Samaj attuned the minds of many Indian leaders to the new ideas of democracy and freedom while the Arya Samaj and the revival among orthodox Hindus led to militant Hinduism, which for the first time gave real unity to Hindu India and built up a combative nationalism."13

The impact of the Western thought led the educated Indians not only to think of the Western political institutions but also to rediscover their own culture and civilization.14 Desai demarcates three stages of Indian nationalism: (1) From Ram Mohan Roy down to 1885; (2) From 1885 to 1905; and (3) From 1905 to 1918.15

The national movement in India was part of the national renaissance started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other reformers.16

The Arya Samaj provided a spiritual base to the politics of the country and asked for maximum sacrifice and dedicated work from the people in the service of the motherland. A sense of pride was infused by the Samaj in the minds of Indians regarding their glorious heritage; this led to extreme self-confidence which resulted in political extremism.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose, through Bhuwani Mandir, evoked a powerful spiritual response in Bengal. Bal Gangadhar Tilak brought about a spiritual revolution and cultural regeneration in Maharashtra through Ganesh festival and Shivaji festival respectively. Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal were also not behind. They drew heavily on the philosophy of Arya Samaj.

According to Dodwell, "None of these spiritual movements had any direct political aims, but they brought together men who were seeking fresh interpretation of old faiths, and who naturally passed thence into affairs of state." 17

Sitaramayya observes, "... all these movements were really so many threads in the strand of Indian nationalism and the

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nation's duty was to evolve a synthesis so as to be able to dispel prejudice and superstition, to renovate and purify the old faith and Vedantic idealism, and to reconcile it with the nationalism of the new age. The Indian National Congress was destined to fulfil this great mission.  

The nationalist politics in India which was a past-time for the educated Indians became a gigantic revolution when it enlisted mass support in its favour. The role of Swami Vivekananda in this respect was truly remarkable. His message destroyed the barriers which isolated the common mass from the educated few. His heart-catching message created consciousness among the masses and they were made to feel that they are all sons of a common mother. He promoted a sense of unity for the common cause. Swami Vivekananda's message had far-reaching results and political repercussions.

Reincourt has rightly analysed the contribution of the Indian leaders in the following words, "The greatest leaders of the early twentieth century, whatever their walk of life—Rabindranath Tagore, the prince of poets; Aurobindo Ghose, the
greatest mystic philosopher, Mahatma Gandhi, who eventually shook the Anglo-Indian Empire to destruction — all acknowledged their over-riding debt to both the Swan and the Eagle; to Ramakrishna who stirred the heart of India; and to Vivekananda who awakened its soul. 19

There are three phases of Indian nationalism, according to N.C. Chaudhuri; they are: (i) Liberal, (ii) Neo-Hindu, and (iii) Gandhian. The first two stood near each other and taken together formed one thesis facing the Gandhian antithesis, though the Gandhian thesis quite logically followed the other two. The first and second were not antithetical, but they might be compared to Liberalism and Conservatism in England or the liberal nationalism in France and Italy and the conservative nationalism of Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century. The first looked more to the west, and less to India's past; while the second looked more to India's past and less to the West. 20

In the competition among the three forms of modern Indian nationalism, victory went in the first round to neo-

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Hinduism, and in the second to Gandhism; but what triumphed in the end was that older thing, the activist nationalism of the Hindus. 21

The reaction against Western domination was necessary to create self-consciousness and a sense of dignity among the Indians; it helped materially the cause of national integration. 22 The new patriotism, which supplanted the old one which was rootless and unreal, was intensely real and implied a burning love for the motherland. 23

Freedom Struggle

When we speak of the freedom struggle in India, we refer to the recent period of the Indian history, i.e., from the start of the British rule in India. A number of rebellions, uprisings and movements had taken place before 1857 in which year the major revolt known as "Sepoy Mutiny" which was nothing short of a large-scale fight for independence broke out.

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21. Ibid., p.441.


23. Ibid., p.30.
Of the pre-1857 events, the following may be mentioned:
The Sanyasi rebellion in Bengal lasted from 1763 to 1800. The Chaur uprising in Bihar lasted from 1766 to 1772. The Crissa Zamindars' rebellion lasted from 1604 to 1817. The King of Vijayanagaram revolted in 1794. The Malabar and Pindigal revolt took place in 1801. The Mysore rebellions occurred in 1800 and again in 1831. The Kittur uprising lasted from 1824 to 1829. The Kolhapur uprising took place in 1824 and the Satara uprising in 1841. In the North, the Jats of Western U.P. and Haryana created disturbances in 1824. The Aligarh Taluqdars revolted during 1814-17 and the Bundelas of Jatalpur in 1842.

Without going into further details, it may be stated here that these struggles, together with the large-scale fight in 1857, shook the foundations of the British rule in India.

Indians needed a powerful organisation to fight for their freedom. Mr. A.O. Hume fulfilled this need by establishing the Indian National Congress in 1885.

The Congress played an important role in spreading the nationalist consciousness among Indians during 1885-1905. It is this consciousness which emboldened the Indians to oppose the partition of Bengal in 1905.

**Kripalani's Role in the Freedom Struggle**

As pointed out earlier, there were two groups in the Indian National Congress viz., the moderates and the extremists. The extremist group was headed by Lal, Dal, Pal. Kripalani sided with the extremist group. Tilak's views and activities had a great influence on the young Kripalani. Tilak's slogan "Swaraj is my birth right and I will have it" came as a moral boost to Kripalani. Kripalani followed in the footsteps of Tilak. He considered Tilak his political Guru.

We have already seen in an earlier chapter Kripalani's feelings and activities during the partition of Bengal.

The situation prevailing then compelled Kripalani to come into contact with Gandhiji. His contact with Gandhiji changed him into a non-violent person. But the conversion was not sudden. He accepted the Gandhian means of truth and non-violence and the Gandhian technique of Satyagraha only after he had known Gandhiji very closely. In his first meeting with Gandhiji at Santiniketan,
Kripalani found that Gandhiji was earnest and had a remarkable organizing ability.

Gandhiji's Young India of 16 January 1926 contained this reference to Kripalani, "Originally a teacher and a professor, Kripalani threw himself into the fray, as soon as an opportunity offered itself in Bihar, in 1917. The seal with which he took the lead in giving Gandhiji the first welcome in Champaran cost him his comfortable job in the Government College at Muzaffarpur and ever since he has been in one or the other national movement."

Kripalani's termination from the college was a welcome deliverance, for it gave him a chance to participate actively in the battle of freedom. He had the distinction of being the first Satyagrahi to be arrested in Champaran. The year 1917 brought a change in Kripalani's life.

In 1918, Kripalani joined Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, founder of Banaras Hindu University, as his private secretary. Later on he was appointed as a Professor of Political Science in the same university. He worked in that capacity till Gandhiji launched his non-cooperation movement in 1920.
At this time, the Government of India had passed the 1919 Act, derisively known as Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act. The Act was passed in spite of repeated protests by the Indian leaders. The Act posed a serious challenge to nationalist India. A nationwide strike was observed on 6 April 1919 at the call of Gandhi to protest against the Act. On the 15th of April Gandhi was arrested along with other leaders.

This was accompanied by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre which was unparalleled in the history of the country. When the whole nation was in a state of shock, the Khilafat question aggravated the situation. The Indian Muslims, on the assurance that nothing would be done to dismember Turkey, had supported the British against the Sultan of Turkey. But when the war (the First World War) terminated, resulting in the defeat of Turkey, the Indian Muslims developed misgivings.

Gandhi wasted no time in realizing the need of the hour. Soon after, while supporting the Khilafat movement, Gandhi appealed to the people to form a common front of the Hindus and the Muslims for the cause of the nation. Accordingly both Hindus and Muslims, the Congress and the Muslim League, working in the spirit of the Lucknow pact of 1916, joined together and formed a front to secure the redressal of the wrongs committed by the Government.
In November 1919, Gandhiji presided over the All-India Khilafat Conference in which he urged the Hindus to cooperate with the Muslims on the Khilafat movement issue. Once a cooperator, Gandhiji lost faith in the British government after going through the Hunter Committee Report which was submitted in March 1920. The Khilafat Committee, under the leadership of Gandhiji, adopted a programme of non-cooperation which was launched on 1 August 1920. The Muslim League was persuaded to agree to Gandhiji's leadership.\footnote{Jawaharlal Nehru, \textit{Autobiography} (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1962), pp.46-47.}

The Indian National Congress, in its special session held at Calcutta in September 1920, decided to start a non-cooperation movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It was for the first time that Gandhiji had become the leader of those who wanted the Congress to launch a policy of direct action to achieve independence.\footnote{J.B.Kripalani, \textit{Gandhi: His Life and Thought} (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1970), p.89.}

Before this time, Gandhiji had reposed trust in the British government. That is why he had given his full cooperation to the British government during World War-I, in spite of strong
opposition from Tilak. However the Rowlatt Bill, the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the Martial Law in the Punjab and the Hunter Committee findings drove Gandhiji to believe that the British government no longer deserved the trust.

The special session of the Congress at Calcutta also called upon Indians to surrender their titles given by the British government and resign the nominated posts in the local bodies. The government and aided educational institutions were to be boycotted by students. The lawyers were asked to boycott courts of law.

In response to this resolution, Kripalani resigned his post of professorship which he held at the Varanasi Hindu University. He also appealed to the students to leave the university. Accordingly many students left the university and came out in support of the non-cooperation movement. Lal Bahadur Shastri (the late Prime Minister of India) and T.N. Singh (Ex-Governor of Bengal) were among those who left the Harischandra school where they were studying and joined the movement at Kripalani’s instance.

Kripalani, along with some students, started the Gandhi Ashram at the Nepali Kothi in Varanasi. In this Ashram Kripalani
used to give lectures for the benefit of those who had left schools and colleges in support of the movement. Kripalani was beginning to emerge as a founder of the national education system. Gandhiji felt that it was necessary to open a national university especially for those who had come out in support of his movement. As a result, the Kashi Vidyapith came into existence in 1921. Shiv Prasad Gupta, a landlord of Varanasi, generously donated funds for the establishment of the Kashi Vidyapith. Under the direction of Mahatma Gandhi, Kripalani took charge as the Vice-Principal of the Vidyapith.

The ultimate aim of the non-cooperation movement was the attainment of Swaraj. To Gandhiji Swaraj was not merely political independence. Swaraj would be meaningless without economic and social justice. Kripalani stood for the economic independence of the country along with the other aims. He said, "The programme of non-cooperation must be backed up by constructive activity which, among other things, meant work for communal unity, removal of untouchability, Khadi, Swadeshi, village industries, rural development, national education, prohibition and organisation of village panchayats." 26

Kripalani had actively engaged in the constructive programme on the Gandhian lines, along with his teaching work in the Kashi Vidyalashram. The main aim of the Gandhi Ashram, started by him, was to produce Khadi and work in the villages to improve the living conditions of people. Hundreds of such Ashrams were opened in Delhi, U.P. and M.P. These Ashrams have started producing and selling hand-spun and hand-woven Khadi, encouraging village industries, organising basic education centres and doing general Sarvodaya work. Now we can see the Gandhi Ashrams in the towns and cities of several states. This has been a great achievement. The headquarters of the Gandhi Ashram has shifted from Varanasi to Meerut.

The Gandhi Ashram is a premier organisation for popularising Khadi. It is estimated that the Ashram institutions provide full-time employment to more than 5,000 workers and part-time employment to 3,00,000 spinners, weavers and artisans connected with the industry. The Ashram runs about 400 shops and emporia and has 700 and odd production centres spread over 20,000 villages in the three states mentioned above. The cost of the production is about 60 million rupees a year. (The source for these figures is "JE. Kripalani," an unpublished paper of Mr. N. Krishnaswamy, Kripalani's secretary).

To many, the non-cooperation movement was a utopia. Speaking on the non-cooperation programme at a meeting in Meerut.
convened to protest against a resolution of the Meerut College Board, regarding the participation of the students and professors of the college in political meetings. Kripalani explained his ideas in some detail:

"It has become the fashion in our days to consider the non-cooperation programme to be utopian, but I ask you what can be more utopian than to suppose that this country can content itself with political liberty without asserting its economic independence. What can be more utopian than to think that we can be free without even the limited Swadeshism implied in the boycott of foreign cloth and the manufacture of our own? What can be more utopian than to expect real national workers out of those who live and move and have their being in government schools and colleges which are in every way soulless foreign institutions? If national life means anything there must surely be a scheme of national education wholly under national guidance and control, in tune with the past, responsive to the present and fully conscious of the country's destiny in the future. I ask again what can be more utopian than to expect Swaraj from the activities of the imitation parliaments at Delhi and Simla and their
provincial offshoots. Were they designed for enabling India to realise her full height?" 27

Decides attending to the rural development work, Kripalani continued to be an active political worker. As a staunch follower of Gandhiji, Kripalani went to jail on several occasions. The non-cooperation movement continued with full vigour throughout 1920 and 1921. By this time, Kripalani was wedded to the Gandhian ideology of Swadeshi and non-violence. Kripalani had undertaken many trips to spread the non-cooperation movement in U.P. and Bihar.

On 19 August 1921, Kripalani went to Dighwara (a place in Sadar Sub-Division of Chapra, in Bihar) to meet the villagers, the weavers, who put many questions to him about Swaraj, Swadeshi and non-violence. He was happy to listen to them and affectionately explained the meaning and importance of the national movement. This visit was part of his non-cooperation programme.

Later, in 1923, Gandhiji founded the Gujarat Vidya-pith, on the lines of Kashi Vidya-pith, to impart national education.

27. Young India, Vol.11, 1929, p.309.
especially to those who had boycotted government colleges
during the non-cooperation movement in Gujarat. Again, at the
instance of Mahatma Gandhi, Kripalani had to take charge as the
Principal of the Vidyapith. It is since this time that he has
come to be known as Acharya Kripalani. He worked in Ahmedabad
from 1923 to 1927.

When he left the Gujarat Vidyapith in 1927, he undertook
the Khadi work again. To him, Khadi work was in no way less
important than other work. Kripalani was an ardent Gandhian
who believed in Gandhi's theory of constructive work.
Kripalani, like others, boycotted the foreign goods. He was a
believer in the Swadeshi movement as it was part of the freedom
movement.

Jawaharlal Nehru, in his letter addressed to Mahatma Gandhi
on 11 January 1928, charged that "... our Khadi work is almost
wholly divorced from politics and our Khadi workers are developing
a mentality which does not concern itself with anything outside
their limited sphere of work. This may be good for the work
they do, but little can be expected of them in the political
field."28

Acharya Kripalani denied the charge as baseless and clarified the position as follows:

"It was not quite correct of Jawaharlal to say that Khadi workers and workers in the constructive field confined themselves to their particular work and were not interested in the fight for freedom. Whenever there was a call they were the first to court imprisonment ... As soon as a call for Satyagraha was given, we marched off to jail, not caring for what happened to our Khadi and other work. All our production and sale centres were confiscated, along with the goods and funds. Before the commencement of the Salt Satyagraha, even though I knew what we had to do, I approached Gandhiji to seek his advice ...

It is sad to think that while some of our leaders could not understand the significance of the constructive programme of Gandhiji in terms of the country's freedom, this was clearly understood by the British bureaucrats. They looked with suspicion upon every reform activity of Gandhiji including such humanitarian work as that of the uplift of the untouchables and prohibition. Constructive work organisations and workers were kept under strict
surveillance. As soon as Satyagraha commenced, the workers were arrested, the organisations closed down and the properties confiscated ... They realised that constructive work was no less dangerous to their power than Satyagraha.29

Thus the Swadeshi movement was not merely economic and occupational character. It was also educational and political in character. Jawaharlal Nehru thought incorrectly that the Swadeshi movement workers were less relevant or less interested in the political aspects. But this was not so. Their work and contribution were not only relevant but also vital and crucial as the attitude of the concerned administrators showed.

The Swarajist, Chitta Ranjan Dac, knew the value of constructive work. In a statement he said, "We are of the opinion that the council work (function as a political party) must necessarily lose much of its strength without the backing of the constructive work outside (function as a nationalist movement), for it is not inside but outside legislatures that we must look for that sanction without which the effective

carrying out of that policy (wrecking the legislature) is impossible.” 30

The year 1929 may be said to mark a new phase in the history of the Indian freedom struggle. The Indian National Congress in its Lahore session declared that 26 January 1930 be observed as Independence Day. This was part of the programme of Purna Swaraj or complete independence. The declaration to be read on 26 January 1930 was as follows:

,"We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe,

Therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence."31

When India was hopeful and was ready to sacrifice everything for the attainment of Purna Swaraj, the statement of Lord Irwin, issued on 25 January 1930, shattered the hope of the Indian people. The statement of Irwin was as follows:

"Although it is true that, in her external relations with the other parts of the Empire, India exhibits already several of the attributes of a Self-Governing Dominion, it is also true that Indian political opinion is not at present disposed to attach full value to these attributes of status, for the reason that their practical exercise is for the most part, subject to the control or concurrence of His Majesty's Government."32

This statement of Lord Irwin not only shocked the Indian people but also convinced them that self-determination now was

32. Ibid., p.365.
out of the question. Gandhi presented the following eleven demands to the Viceroy:

1. Total prohibition.
2. Reduction of ratio to 1s. 4d.
3. Reduction of Land Revenue at least by 50 per cent and making it subject to legislative control.
4. Abolition of the salt tax.
5. Reduction of military expenditure at least by 50 per cent to begin with.
6. Reduction of salaries of the highest grade services by half or less, so as to suit the reduced revenue.
7. Protective tariff on foreign cloth.
8. Passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill.
9. Discharge of all political prisoners, save those condemned for murder or attempt to murder, or trial by ordinary judicial tribunals, withdrawal of all political prosecutions, abrogation of Section 124-A Regulation III of 1818, and giving permission to all Indian exiles to return.
10. Abolition of the C.I.P., or its popular control.
11. Issue of licences to use fire-arms for self-defence, subject to popular control.  

Lord Irwin refused to concede these demands. Ultimately the Congress authorised Gandhiji to launch civil disobedience movement. Accordingly, Gandhiji launched the civil disobedience movement on 11 March 1930. As part of this movement, Gandhiji undertook a march to Dandi and broke the Salt Law by making salt from the sea water on 6 April 1930. The civil disobedience movement spread throughout the nation. Government ordered the arrest of all law breakers.  

During this movement Acharya Kripalani took a leading part in educating the people about their rights. He toured many parts of Bihar again. He addressed a meeting on 16 April 1930 in the town hall at Chapra and said that no law of government should be obeyed. The arrest of Gandhiji on 4 May 1930.

33. Ibid., p.366.
further intensified the movement which resulted in nearly 90,000 arrests throughout the country by January 1931. 36

On 6 June 1930, Acharya Kripalani was sentenced for a period of one year. The Acharya was arrested again in Benaras on 7 July 1932, and was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment, under Section 17(A) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, on 16 July 1932.

Kripalani was arrested once again on 4 January 1933 and was sentenced on 13 January 1933, to five months' rigorous imprisonment at Patna, under Section 17(1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, for his activities to remove the British from this land.

During 1927-33, Acharya Kripalani went to jail frequently. The Acharya's leadership in organising social service remained strong as ever. He was one of the first to go to Bihar, in 1934, to organise the relief work, when a big earthquake struck the unfortunate area.

In 1934 too Acharya Kripalani was appointed as General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. He held that post

for nearly 12 years. During this period he set up the following departments to work systematically: Agrarian Reforms, Labour, Peasants, Information and Publicity, Women's Work, Foreign Relations, Economic Affairs, Constructive Work, Planning, Election Campaigns, Parliamentary Affairs and Seva Dal. Acharya Kripalani recruited talented and capable persons to head each of the departments. In spite of the harassment from the British Government he organised the work so thoroughly and systematically that the whole office functioned vigorously. This came as a big blow to the government. Some of the personnel were arrested. The Congress office was raided, several documents, records and publications were seized.

Acharya Kripalani had a chance to work as General Secretary under the presidentship of Babu Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and Maulana Azad. None of these presidents dared to replace the Acharya, though some of them could not always see eye to eye with him.

There were differences of opinion among Congress leaders regarding economic policies. In the early twenties Nehru was a complete Gandhian. However in 1926-27 he visited Europe where he came in contact with orthodox communists and left-wing socialists. Since then he started preaching socialism. The other
members of the Congress Working Committee like Acharya Kripalani, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, C. Rajagopalachari, Jamsalal Bajaj, Jairamdas Paulatram and Shankar Rao Deo took a strong note of Nehru's socialism and sent in the resignations, of their places on the Working Committee. In a letter addressed to Jawaharlal Nehru on 29 June 1936, they said:

"We feel that the preaching and emphasising of socialism particularly at this stage by the President and other socialist members of the Working Committee, while the Congress has not adopted it, is prejudicial to the best interest of the country and to the success of the national struggle for freedom which we all hold to be the first and paramount concern of the country."37

Kripalani stayed with Gandhiji at Sevagram during the individual Satyagraha of 1940, scrutinising the lists recommended by the PACs, weeding out the weak and selecting the right Satyagrahis for Gandhiji's final approval and directing the campaign all over the country.

The year 1942 is another landmark in the history of India's freedom struggle, as the famous "Quit India" resolution was

passed in the midnight of 8 August 1942 by the All-India Congress Committee in its historic meeting held in Bombay. The Congress leaders took the pledge "Do or Die." The Quit India movement was the final struggle for India's freedom. In the early hours of 9 August 1942 Kripalani was arrested and kept in the Ahmednagar fort; later he was shifted to the Karachi jail. He was in jail for three years and was released on the eve of the Simla Conference.

After the adoption of the Quit India resolution, there was a demand for a programme of preparation for the struggle. Gandhiji said that the only programme he could suggest was the intensification of the Charkha and Khadi movement and the overall conduct of the constructive programme. According to Gandhiji, the working of the constructive programme, especially the economic part of it, was a pre-requisite for any successful struggle against the foreign domination. 38

Though the Acharya participated in the Simla conference, he was extremely unhappy with the turn of events. He sensed the growing isolation of Gandhiji from the top Congress leaders especially Patel, Nehru and Azad. He believed that these leaders

were not showing firmness while dealing with the Viceroy. Kripalani was afraid that these leaders, in their anxiety to arrive at a negotiated settlement, might betray Gandhiji and the nation. At the Simla conference the Acharya felt that the partition of the country was coming.

As per the negotiated settlement arrived at the Simla conference, Jawaharlal Nehru became the head of the Interim Government. Therefore he resigned the Congress presidency in 1946. In the same year Acharya Kripalani ceased to be the General Secretary of the Congress. It seemed that his political career suddenly came to an end. But fortune was awaiting him. Gandhiji decided to entrust Acharya Kripalani with the position of Congress President. Accordingly Acharya Kripalani was elected, unopposed, Congress President in October 1946.

It was customary for the president to assume office at the annual session which, that year, was scheduled to be held at Meerut. However the President-elect Acharya Kripalani had to rush to Raxaul in East Bengal where communal riots had broken out on a large scale. Kripalani immediately undertook relief and rehabilitation work. Soon the communal riots spread to

Bihar. Kripalani had to rush there too carrying the message of peace and communal harmony.

Kripalani, while addressing as the President of the 54th session of the Indian National Congress held at Meerut on 23 November 1946, surveyed the political situations prevailing then and commented on the Simla conference and after, constructive revolution, democracy and non-violence, decentralisation of industry, agriculture and food problem, national unity, India states, the canker of untouchability, power politics, constituent assembly, India and the World, South Africa, Ceylon and Burma and "our organisation."40 While concluding his presidential address Kripalani observed:

"Slavery works neither for goodness nor for greatness. But the darkness of centuries can be removed the moment light is brought. In India the light has been lit. Let us keep it steadily burning and let us follow its lead, and all shall yet be well with us."41

41. Ibid., p.66.
As the President of the Congress party, Kripalani had a clash with the members of the Interim Government. The members of the Interim Government had agreed to a proposal of the British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, to send a delegation to London to break the deadlock between the Congress and the Muslim League positions on the Cabinet Mission proposals. Kripalani represented the Government's failure to consult him or the Working Committee. He was right in his stand. The Interim Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru should have consulted Kripalani, the party president, before agreeing to a proposal of Attlee.

1946 and 1947 were the crucial years of the final stages of negotiations leading to the partition and the transfer of power to the Indian and Pakistani hands. At heart Kripalani was as opposed to partition as ever. Partition, to him, besides being a national calamity, was a personal tragedy since some of his Muslim relatives were still in Sind. Long before the partition took place, he had smelt the possibility of it, on the basis of the Simla conference and Jinnah's attitude regarding partition. Once, when Acharya Kripalani was released from the Karachi jail, his Muslim niece had come to see him. As he embraced her, he laughed and said, "Here we are, two nations in one family."42

Mohammed Ali Jinnah was adamant. He demanded a separate nation for Muslims. On 27 March 1947, he declared, "I am fighting for Pakistan, which means I am fighting for the freedom of India. I am fighting for Pakistan because it is the only practical solution for solving the problem and the other ideal of a United India and a rule based on parliamentary system of government is a vain dream and an impossibility. India is neither a country nor a nation, but is a score of nations."43

Kripalani, as the President of the Congress, agreed to the partition of the country. The Congress had accepted the division of the country on two considerations. In the first place, it was clear from the unyielding attitude of the Muslim League that a united India would either be delayed or could be won only at the cost of a civil war. Secondly, it was hoped that the establishment of a separate Muslim state would finally settle the communal problem which had for so long bedevilled Indian politics and thwarted all progressive aspirations.44

The decision of the Congress was against the wishes of Gandhiji. It was a decision which Kripalani himself deeply regretted in the later years.

Finally, the partition took place and consequent upon this India and Pakistan became two independent nations. Even after the Congress accepted the Mountbatten Plan, Acharya Kripalani expressed the hope of reuniting India. Calling on the party to make India a strong, happy, democratic and socialist state, he declared, "Such an India can win back the seceding children to its lap ... for the freedom we have achieved cannot be complete without the unity of India."45

Earlier, Kripalani had observed:

"The Mountbatten Plan offered us freedom from British rule at the price of the division of India. We agreed to pay the price because freedom was the prime necessity of our national existence and the British were bent upon exacting the price to secure for the Muslim League its pound of flesh. Secondly, the plan seemed to open a way out of this tangle, chaos and frustration resulting from the deteriorating communal situation in the Punjab, Bengal, Bihar and the Frontier Province. The Provincial Governments were unable to cope with the riots. We agreed to accept the plan in the hope that the Muslim League,

45. Congress Bulletin, No.4, 10 July 1947, p.11.
having got what it wanted, will cease its bym on communal hate and cooperate in the reconstruction of social and economic structure of the two states."46

Kripalani had not given up the hope of reuniting India. To him, partition was a kind of temporary phase and the unity of India was bound to assert itself in course of time. He said,

"Though we have accepted partition under certain circumstances, we have in no way given up our faith in the unity of India which the Congress has cherished and worked for ever since its inception ... though we may have to part company now. Sooner or later, the basic unity will assert itself and those who are anxious to break away now, will be equally anxious to return to the common lap."47

However the situation created by the partition has not changed even after 40 years. The hope of reunification still remains a hope.

This presidency of the party which was entrusted to Kripalani by Gandhi had to be given up soon. His confrontations

with Nehru became more frequent. He found it difficult to persuade the leaders in the government to implement the Gandhian policies to which they were publicly committed as members of the Congress. His difficulties increased and he resigned his presidency by the end of 1947.

Kripalani again contested for the post of president, in early 1950, against Fursaudam Das Tandon. Kripalani's candidature was supported by Jawaharlal Nehru himself. Nehru supported Kripalani because Tandon was backed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Nehru had strained relations with Patel. However Kripalani lost to Tandon by a thin margin of 254 votes. 48

Soon afterwards Acharya Kripalani formed a Democratic Front within the Congress to resist communalist pressures on the national organisation. After seven months it was dissolved at the instance of Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru wanted to get representation for Kripalani and his followers on the Central Election Committee. But Tandon did not let that happen.

Therefore Acharya Kripalani left the Congress with his followers in late 1950 and formed the KMPJP (Kisan Mazdoor Agra

Party) in 1951. Kripalani contested, unsuccessfully, the first general election in 1952 as a KMPP candidate from the Fyzabad constituency in Uttar Pradesh. It was a debacle not only for the KMPP but also to the Socialist Party of Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia. By then the Socialist Party had come to have greater faith in Gandhiji's political, social and economic ideas and policies which, according to it, were being neglected by the Congress government. There was a demand for the merger of the KMPP and the Socialist Party. Acharya Kripalani agreed to it. The new party came to be known as PSP (Praja Socialist Party). Acharya Kripalani was the Chairman of the PSP till the mid-fifties.

In the meantime Acharya Kripalani had entered the parliament by winning a by-election from the Sitamarhi constituency held in 1953. He retained the seat in the parliament following the 1957 general elections. He lost to V.K. Krishna Menon in the 1962 general elections from North Bombay. He entered the parliament by winning a by-election from the Amroha (U.F.) constituency in 1963. He contested the 1967 general elections as an independent but was defeated. In the same year however he won a by-election to the parliament from the Guna constituency (M.P.).

Acharya Kripalani remained a member of the parliament till 1970, when he decided to give up parliamentary life.
he did not keep quiet. He toured the length and breadth of
the country warning the countrymen against the danger of a
dictatorial rule by Mrs. Indira Gandhi. In fact this was the
main theme of his innumerable articles and speeches during the
next few years. His timely warning was not taken seriously by
the opposition leaders till 1974, when they woke up. In October
1974 the major opposition parties came together and set up a
"Lok Sangharsh Samiti" (People's Struggle Committee) under
Acharya Kripalani's chairmanship.

Acharya Kripalani's second freedom struggle starts in
1975 when Mrs. Indira Gandhi declared internal emergency on 25
June, consequent upon the Allahabad High Court judgement
unseating her from the parliament. Kripalani had sensed such
a danger. He immediately issued a public warning about the
troubles ahead.

In a letter to Mr. N.A. Palkhiwala, a noted advocate, on
19 June 1975, Kripalani stated:

"The way she (Mrs. Gandhi) has been allowing
propaganda to be freely carried on in her favour
shows that she does not care about what happens to
the country. This propaganda might lead to counter-
demonstrations imperilling the peace of the country."
This may lead to rioting, bloodshed and shooting by police ... This is what happened in the past."49

Mrs. Indira Gandhi took the desperate step of imposing an internal emergency and ordering the arrest not only of the opposition party leaders but also of several thousand political workers and even Sarvodaya leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan. Pre-censorship of all news prevented the public from knowing what was happening in the country.

In the morning of 26 June when the news about the midnight arrests leaked out, Acharya Kripalani was the first person who protested against Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorship and led a big procession in Bombay. During the dark period of 18 months, when the rigorous and cruel enforcement of the emergency deprived the people of their hard-won freedom and democracy, the Acharya consistently raised his voice against the dictatorship.

Acharya Kripalani used every opportunity provided on any public platform to strengthen the morale of the people and keep alive the flame of liberty. Somehow or the other the Acharya managed to circumvent the censors and got a number of articles and letters published in different newspapers and journals.

His writings were full of biting wit, humour and sarcasm which came as a breath of fresh air in the stifling atmosphere that prevailed then in the country.

Acharya Kripalani's letters found their way even into the jails and came as a boost to the detainees. He met the imprisoned leaders when they were released on bail or medical grounds. He often visited the law courts whenever political workers were brought there for trials. His very presence electrified the atmosphere and served to strengthen the spirit of resistance of the Satyagrahis. He never allowed depression to overwhelm.

On the other side, as a true Gandhian, Acharya Kripalani carried on correspondence with Mrs. Gandhi, pleading for the release of the aged and ailing leaders.

In January 1977, when Mrs. Gandhi decided to order fresh elections to the parliament, Acharya Kripalani launched the election campaign on behalf of the democratic opposition parties which had by then agreed to fight the elections under the Janata Party banner and symbol. Acharya Kripalani toured the length and breadth of the country for nearly six weeks, appealing to the country-men to throw out the corrupt and
dictatorial regime of Mrs. Gandhi. He addressed scores of public meetings and press conferences. As a result, Mrs. Gandhi and her party were thrown out.

Acharya Kripalani was the main architect in installing the Janata Party government at the centre in March 1977. Again in the middle of 1977, when elections to nine state assemblies were announced, Kripalani toured extensively braving the heat and dust of the summer and mobilised support for the Janata Party.

Kripalani started warning the Janata leaders against the various pitfalls and persuaded them to implement the policies and programmes outlined in their election manifesto which had accepted the broad framework of the Gandhian approach.

One fine day in 1978 Acharya Kripalani announced his retirement from active public life and resigned from the several organisations. However he had not taken complete Sanyas. He had not laid down his powerful pen. He continued to issue press statements and write articles to educate both the masters and the servants in democratic India.

It can be said here that Acharya Kripalani had successfully fought two freedom struggles, the first one against the British regime and the second one against the Indira Gandhi regime. In both the struggles he played a crucial role.

Acharya Kripalani served the country for more than 70 years. He breathed his last in Ahmedabad on 19 March 1982, at the age of 94.