CHAPTER III

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT IN ORISSA

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CHAPTER-III
QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT IN ORISSA

Though Gandhiji had been speaking of the coming struggle for quite some time, it was at the working committee at Wardha on 14th July 1942 that the Congress first accepted the idea of a struggle and the All India Congress Committee at its Bombay session on 8th August 1942 later ratified the Quit India resolution.

In his speech to the AICC after the adoption of the 'Quit India' resolution on 8th August, 1942, Gandhi said, "The actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two to three weeks." He went on in the same speech to advise different sections of the society (Government servants, Students and others) as to what they should do in the waiting period "till the time that I frame a programme for the struggle."¹

The Government, however, was in no mood to either negotiate with the Congress or wait for the movement to be formally launched. In the wee hours of 9th August 1942, in a single sweep all the top leaders the Congress were arrested and taken to unknown destinations.

The top leaders had the apprehension of a possible government crack down in mind and hence the Resolution had clearly stated "A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people when no Congress committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions. Every Indian who

desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide". Anticipating arrest, Gandhiji had given his famous speech ‘Do or Die...’. “Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achievement of freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal."²

In order to justify large scale arrests, Amery, the Secretary of State, charged the Congress of conspiracy with the intention of disrupting communications, destruction of public property, uprooting of railway lines etc. The Government had prepared a list of 36 items which intended to create serious trouble for the Government. The list comprised of "formation of wherever possible of a parallel government........general social boycott, particularly of individual Britishers who were to be harmed in every possible way ....the withdrawal of money from banks,Gandhi to declare himself a rebel, to disclaim British nationality and to fast on to death......demolition of bridges.....incitement to government servants to resign, stopping of trains or railways......interference with telegraph and telephone and communication including cutting of telegraph wires ...mass ticketless travel on railways."³

But the fact is that there was nothing new in the items and almost all of these techniques had been applied in the past. The difference might have been in the degree but Amery's publicity of these charges made the people believe that the Congress really had such items in its agenda. They now started indulging in such activities. Amery's intention was obviously to discredit and denigrate the Congress before the public opinion. But to his great disappointment, the Congrees received enormous response of the people. Various underground organisations and groups exploited this situation of confusion by issuing pamphlets and bulletins calling for mass sabotage in the name of Gandhi and the Congress.

The movement can be broadly divided into three phrases, overlapping each other. Beginning of the second phase did not imply the cessation


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of the first but only indicated that from then onwards that was the predominant trend within a wider spectrum. In the first phase, trouble erupted in the urban centers immediately after the arrest of the senior Congress leaders. The tempo and strategy differed from region to region and the response was also varied.

In Orissa, the movement initially erupted in Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Koraput and Sambalpur districts. It was urban-based and hartals, strikes, burnings and protest marches comprised the main form of activities. There were a few acts of violence as the clashes of the people with the police were few.

In Orissa, as in other parts of the country, early in the morning of 9th August 1942 all important Congress leaders were taken into custody. Twenty-four Congress leaders namely, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Nabakrushana Choudhury, Rama Devi, Bhagirathi Mohapatra, Biswanath Das, Nityananda Kanungo, Rajakrusna Bose, Surendranath Pattanayak, Pranakrushna Padhihari, Madan Mohan Pattanayak, Sadasiva Tripathy, Radhakrusna Biswasroy, Manmohan Choudhury, Radhanath Rath, Acharya Harihar Das, Lokanath Mishra, Sudhir Chandra Ghosh, Nilambar Das and Mohammad Atahar were arrested on 9th August 1942. By the Gazette notification on that day, the Government of Orissa declared all Congress bodies, their offices and other allied organizations (thirty-eight in all) as unlawful ones and the police took possession of those notified places as quickly as possible.

The arrest of the important leaders of Orissa and the declaration of the Congress as illegal caused a strong resentment among the people. In Cuttack, the movement began with the launching of a strike by the students of the Ravenshaw College. The students of Ravenshaw College led by Bhagirathi Mishra, Upendra Mohanty, Narasingha Tripathy, Biren Mitra, Durga Charan Mohanty and Manmohan Mishra organized public meetings to condemn the arrest of the Congress leaders by the Government and exhorted the students to lend

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whole-hearted support to the Congress movement. The general strike of the students in Ravenshaw College was followed by strikes in other educational institutions in Cuttack. The students of Ravenshaw collegiate school, Pyari Mohan Academy, Town Victoria school etc. boycotted their classes on 13th August 1942.6

The Students’ Federation in Orissa (Chhatrasangha) decided to organize demonstrations and meeting everyday in front of the college demanding the release of the arrested leaders and the formation of a National Government.7 Accordingly, public meetings were held in the college premises defying the prohibitory orders on 10th, 11th and 13th August 1942. Prominent leaders were arrested by the British officials for making patriotic speeches.8

The students of the Ravenshaw college had coined a term S.N.S. (Secret News Service) and notices and bulletins were circulated under this banner. Agitated by the arrest of their leaders, on 15th of August, around 200 students of the college forcibly entered the College offices and the laboratories and burnt the records and the furniture.9 Principal student leaders involved in this incident were Banamali Patnaik, Biren Mitra, Surajmal Shah, Bibhudhendra Mishra, Mayadhar Mohanty and Bijayketan Mangaraj. After police enquiry Surajmal Shah and Bibhudhendra Mishra were arrested under the Defence of India Rules and sent to the Berhampur Central jail.10

The strike in the Ravenshaw College continued for some time and the involvement of the students of this college in the movement at various stages and at various places had its impact on the morale of the students. The principal expelled some students from the college and the boarders of the hostel protested against this action by mass-fasting. When the college reopened on 20th November 1942, the authorities collected Rs. 10/- (Rupees Ten only) from each boarder as security for good conduct. 11

In Koraput, the movement was initiated by two boys of Jaipur carrying the Congress flags who on 13th August read out a message from Gandhiji contained in a cyclostyled leaflet believed to have been posted from Bombay. 12 The Congress workers arranged hartals, and started no-rent campaigns preaching among the people that the country was no longer ruled by the British. People also took vow not to rest till the release of Mahatma Gandhi from the jail. 13 Hartals, protest meetings and picketing before excise shops were also marked in Balasore and Sambalpur districts. 14

This phase continued for over a week. The demonstrations were undertaken on a small scale at first as the political parties in the province were taken aback by the sudden and unexpected arrest of the senior leaders and required time to formulate a concerted programme to be put into action.

12. The leaflets titled "Gandhiji's last Message" were sent to all the District Congress Committees by S.N.Dwibedi from Bombay on 9th August 1942. It seems only Koraput DCC received it. S.N.Dwibedi, Mo Jibanara eka Adhyaya:August Biplab, Grantha Mandir, Cuttack, 1989,p.99.Another secret document containing a programme of action had reached the ashram at Bari. But nothing much is known about the sender or the actions prescribed in it. S.C.Maharana (ed.), Mukti Sangramare Bari Anchala, Gramasebaka Samabaya Prakashan, Koraput,1990,p.30.
14. HFMU Papers, File No.46/3, pp.21,33.
Giving his review of the political situation in Orissa for the week ending 15th August 1942, Superintendent of Police (S.P) Special Branch, Orissa, Wrote, "The Government measures against the Congress have so far had no serious repercussions in this province. With their leaders arrested unexpectedly, local Congress Workers are uncertain about the policy to adopt and some time will be spent on deliberation before any concerted programme is developed and put into action. There have naturally been demonstrations such as partial strikes in schools, hastily arranged protest meetings at which some objectionable speeches have been made, temporary and partial hartals at one or two places and threatening posters pasted on the walls surreptitiously, but all have been on a small scale and confined to the larger towns. The people in the interior districts have not grasped what is going on." 15

But roughly from August 15th onwards, the focus of political activities started shifting towards the countryside and smaller towns. In order to evade arrest the students escaped to the countryside. Moreover, the Government itself had shutdown all schools and colleges as a part of precautionary step because it was expecting further spread of the movement with the schools and colleges as hostile centers.

The Quit India movement in Orissa developed in vehemence towards the later part of August 1942. In Koraput district, the movement was violent, though it lasted for a short period.

Koraput was a partially excluded area and it was not normally administered by the laws and regulations of the province. Till 1936, it had been a part of the Jeypore estate which had been under the jurisdiction of Madras. It was chiefly noted for its tribal population who lived in the forest and hilly areas of the district and its literacy rate was the lowest in the province. However, the people were not unaware of Gandhiji's message. In the second week of August, when cyclostyled leaflets of Gandhi's message were circulated, the news spread that

Gandhiji had given a call for open rebellion and the people started no-rent campaigns with the belief that the British rule had come to an end. Gradually acts of violence, rioting and sabotage on a large scale spread over in the district.

Shandies (village hats) in Kundili, Nandipur, Pukuli, Sembliguda, Padwa and Papdahandi became centers of hectic activities as those were the points where the people were exposed to a variety of external influences ranging from market forces to rumours. They served as important centers of discussion and were used to decide future course of action and to mobilise support.

Opium and liquor shops were the common targets of the mobs. Around two hundred people led by Laxman Naik raided opium and liquor shops in Badhigar on 16th August, Kongrabeda and Kuntipalli on 17th August, Sindhabeda on 18th and Pushapalli on 19th August. The crowds composed of tribals and non-tribals like Gandas. They reached the places shouting slogans, brandishing lathis and Congress flags. In most cases the pots containing the fermented mohuwa and the distillation apparatuses were destroyed and account books and signboards tampered with.

The purpose of these demonstrations was to prevent the Government from obtaining revenue from this popular means of relaxation. Some owners out of panic surrendered to the mob and some who hesitated faced the wrath of the crowd. Several shops at Pukuli shandy in Pottangi taluk were burnt.

17. HFMU Papers, R-1, File No.46/3, pp.4-5.
On 16th August two persons were arrested near the Koraput shandy for making patriotic speeches. Their arrest infuriated a mob of a thousand people who threatened to use force to release the arrested persons. The police resorted to lathi charge and the mob was dispersed. But the same evening around three thousand men threatened to bring down the Jeypore police station to get their leaders released. They were, however, driven away at gun point, with some receiving injuries. The people retreated but on the way blocked the entrance to Jeypore police station by cutting and felling trees on the roads. 20

On 17th August, a large crowd led by some Congress volunteers gathered near the Sembliguda rest shed of Jeypore and demanded the surrender of Dasmanthpur police station on the claims that the British rule had ended and that the Indians had attained swaraj.21 The Congress volunteers were dispersed by the police and the leaders were arrested. The same day, at Laxmipur police station, the assembled crowd burnt the records and demolished a portion of the reserve forest and bridges lying on the Ampani ghat near the Koraput - Kalahandi border. 22

Mathili was the epicenter of a very wide-spread campaign which had stirred up Malkanagiri and the western portion of the neighbouring Jeypore taluk (especially Ambaguda and Udaygiri). On 21 August the opium shop at the Revenue Inspector's office was raided. 23 Following this a crowd of about a thousand people reached the Mathili police station around 9.30 A.M. singing the Ramdhun and carrying Congress flags. They raised slogans like: We are warriors. The British Government has gone. Mahatma Gandhi is our king. Maharaja of Jeypore is dead. The British king is dead. The country is ours. We have got independence. Rise brethren, all of you take part in this war. Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai.24

20. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
The people were stopped by the police about two hundred yards east of the police station. After an argument with the policemen, the crowd withdrew to the nearby hat in procession. There, Laxman Naik, the leader, made a speech informing that the British Government was gone. "Gandhi Raj had replaced the British Raj and the shandy dues and the forest dues no longer had to be paid". 25

Laxman Naik's entry into the Gandhi-led Congress politics had been quite late. He had joined the Congress as an ordinary four-anna member in 1936. 26 But thereafter, his popularity as a leader had been steadily on the rise because of his local struggles. In 1939, he was arrested for the first time for launching a no-tax campaign in Mathili. 27 In 1940-41, along with seven local villagers he had undertaken Individual Satyagraha twice and courted arrest once at Ramgiri and once in Mathili police station jurisdiction. Laxman used to move extensively in this "forest country" covering around 30 to 40 miles a day. To the people he was the Gandhi of Malkanagiri. 28

Prior to the events of 21st August 1942 at the Mathili police station, Laxman had been in the forefront of the Congress activities in the district. He had led the people in the anti-liquor and anti-opium demonstrations. He had also incited people against 'bethi', 'goti' and 'gudem' through his slogans.

On 21st August, when the crowd marched towards the police station, their sole objective was probably to defy the Government orders, have a meeting, hoist the Congress flag as a mark of defiance and then court arrest. 29 Contemporary reports also confirm that the crowd was peaceful.

In the tussle that followed when the crowd marched to the police station to hoist the Congress flag around 2 PM, the police found pretext for lathi charge and subsequent firing. Laxman was hit by a police bayonet on his face and lay unconscious in a small drain, in front of the police station. It was in the police firing that a forest guard Rammaya was killed along with some nine to eleven other demonstrators.

In the trail that followed the crowd was described as a 'violent mob' which wanted to bring down the police station, kill the officers and loot the Malkanagiri treasury. Since Laxman was viewed as a potential threat by the estate as well as the colonial administration, he was singled out and charged with the murder of Rammaya. The authorities unleashed a virtual reign of terror to smoother the storm and to secure witnesses. Of the fifty three charge sheeted, four were acquitted, eighteen convicted to lesser terms, thirty sentenced to life imprisonment and Laxman given a death sentence. He was finally hanged on 29th March 1943 in the Berhampur central jail premises.

The situation in Papadahandi area of Nawarangapur taluk was worsening due to the news of police firing and other repressive measures in other places of the province. On 24th August, an armed mob of about four to five thousand led by Jaganatha Tripathy, Simachal Behera, S.P. Sharaff and Laxman Chandra Das approached Papadahandi with the intention of demolishing bridges and the police station in Nawrangpur circle. A party of the armed police obstructed the procession at the bridge on the Papadahandi river which was then in high flood. Although the reports about the incident are confusing, as per the Government version (official) the police warned the mob to disperse. The mob paid no heed to

30. Ibid.
34. Ibid, p.90.
their warning and started attacking the police party. The Subedar received a lathi blow and a constable was hit with an axe below his ear. As the small police force was in fear of being overwhelmed, it resorted to firing. A large number of people jumped in to the overflowing river to swim across for safety. Thirty-two rounds were fired as a result of which twelve died on the spot, fourteen were injured and three more died in the hospital.  

The police party was reinforced by the addition of twenty armed constables deputed by the neighbouring raja of Bastar State. Large number of suspected participants were arrested and the Government ordered the seizure of the country-made muzzle-loading guns, bags of gun-powder, caps and sword-sticks.

The final statistics for the Quit India disturbances in Koraput district read:

Total arrested-1970, jailed-570, death in jails -50, lathicharge-24 occasions, total rounds fired by the police-451, total killed in police firing-25, total injured-2147 and total fine imposed-Rs.11,200.00.

The repressive measures by the Government quelled the movement to a great extent and in September and October, apart from a few minor clashes with the police, there was not much of action in way of violent activities in the Koraput district.

The Quit India movement was most widespread in the Cuttack district. The masses were so stirred that in Jajpur sub-division alone there were 71 revolutionary cases in one week during the month of August 1942 and these included 26 cases of burning of police uniforms, 6 cases of arson in canal revenue

35. H.K. Mahatab (ed.), HFMO, Vol.V(supplement), p.88. The figures quoted in the Orissa District Gazetters, Koraput(p.76) is different. It puts the figure at 19 dead, 100 injured and 140 put under arrest.

36. HFMU Papers, R-1, File No.31/3, p.81.

offices, 4 in post offices, 5 of excise shops, 6 in zamindar kutcherys and 4 PWD bungalows.\textsuperscript{38} The Congress ashram at Bari, which had been the center of intense activity in preceding years was declared illegal. And immediately after the passing of the Quit India Resolution, properties of the ashram were attached. The ashram had been set up way back in 1934 by Gopabanbdhu Choudhury and many villages in the locality had been inspired to carryout similar programmes of constructive activities. Kaipada, Anikana, Sanyasipur and Ramachandrapur, all had branches of the Bari ashram.\textsuperscript{39} A banara sena (monkey brigade) had been formed for mobilizing the masses and to paralyse the Government by destroying Government offices, post offices, police stations etc. The police intelligence even had collected the figures of the village-wise membership of this brigade.

On 16th August 1942 some Congress volunteers attacked and reoccupied the ashram. They also set fire to the properties of the ashrams which had been attached and stored in a nearby PWD building by the police after seizure.\textsuperscript{40} Dussasan Jena, Prahalad Jena and some other workers were arrested in connection with this incident.

Defence organisations were started by the people at different places in the district with the objective of self protection against police atrocities. A batch of young men of the village Bagalpur in Gobindpur police station led by Gouranga charan Das trained themselves in lathi in order to fight the police in the event of the arrest of the Congressmen.\textsuperscript{41} Other associates in the group were Chittaranjan Das, Jagannath Daś, Gobinda Chandra Mahanty, Kamala Charana Das, Kalpataru Das and Indramani Das. They had established links with the underground machinery at Cuttack and regularly issued cyclostyled bulletins in the locality.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{HFMU Papers}, R-1, File No. 31/3, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{39} B.C. Rath, \textit{op. cit.}, (2)p. 38.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{HFMU Papers}, R-1, File No. 31/3, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibid.}
Organisations like *Rakta Bahini* (Blood Sacrificers) and *Marana Bahini* (Death squads) were formed by the young men of Batimura village in Gobindpur police station with the aim of combating the police and organizing cutting of telegraph and telephone wires. Demolition of bridges and destruction communication lines.\(^{43}\) It was the *Rakta Bahini* which had reoccupied the Bari ashram before it was destroyed by the police.\(^{44}\)

On 17th August 1942, some Congress workers of Bari locality led by Bira kishor Ray, Haladhar Das, Jaymani samal and Bichitranaanda Sukla planned an attack on the Kaipada post office. The post office was attacked and burnt by the people on 17th August.\(^{45}\) On 26th August a police party came with a DSP and a magistrate and arrested fifteen persons prominent among whom were Indramani Tripathy, Bidyadhar Ray, Benudhar Samal, Anand Chandra Das, Dambarudhar Ray, Anam Das, Rasanand Shukla, and Hrushikesha Ray.\(^{46}\) While they proceeded towards Binjharpur thousands of people followed them. It is around this time that Annapurna Maharana (Chuni) joined them at Kalamatia Chhak while on her way back from a public meeting at Sanyasipur. People were becoming restless and she appealed to them to remain peaceful.\(^{47}\)

\(^{43}\) *HFMU Papers*, R-1, File No.31/3, p.84.
\(^{44}\) S.N.Dwibedi, *op.cit.*, p.83.
\(^{45}\) S.C.De. *Story of the Freedom Struggle in Orissa*, Regional Committee for Compilation of the Freedom Struggle, Bhubaneswar, 1990, p.95. However another version has it that some of the Congress workers went to the post office that day and asked the postal officials present to hand over all papers (documents) in the office. The postal officials cooperated and after disposing off the money orders, the Congress workers destroyed the documents. A police party headed by a second officer from Jajpur came on 25\(^{th}\) August to enquire about the role of the post master and possibly to punish him. Balaram Mohanty, *op.cit.*, p.104.
\(^{46}\) S.C.Maharana(ed.), *op.cit.*, p.33.
\(^{47}\) *Ibid.*
Although the sequence of events vary in the different accounts, it remains a fact that the people were becoming increasingly aggressive and because of provocation through physical assault to the policemen, some people lost their lives as a result of brutal piercing of bayonets through them.\(^{48}\)

The police resorted to firing in which four people died on the spot and nineteen were injured.\(^{49}\) The people who lost their lives were Saunti Mallick of Srirampur, Mayadhar Bhuyan of Hatashahi, Hadibandhu Panda of Krishna Nagar and Sananda Swain of Krishna Nagar.\(^{50}\) Nidhi Samal, Ramakrusna Jena, Suprabhat Dey and seventeen others were injured. A collective fine of Rupees five thousand was realized from the nearby villages.\(^{51}\) Seventeen out of a total of twenty-seven teachers at the Basic school at Bari were arrested and around eighty-four people were arrested from this area.\(^{52}\)

The situation in Jajpur was equally explosive and tense. Padmanava Ray of Chhatrapada and Baidyanath Das of Chikina along with their associates Gopinath Sahu, Duryodhan Mohanty and Santanu kumar Das mobilized the masses in this locality. On 12th August some of the students like Purna Chandra Padhi, Parsurama Das and Santanu Kumar Das had been arrested while picketing before the Jajpur highschool. On 18th August some students along with two Congress workers entered the hall of the Jajpur High school and smashed the glass panels of

\(^{48}\) Ibid., pp.33-34. Hadibandhu Panda and Mayadhar Bhuyan died because of bayonet wounds.

\(^{49}\) S.N.Pattanaik, op.cit, p.176. Annapurna Maharana was present at the site and it seems she even advised the people to fall flat on the ground to escape bullet injuries. S.C.Maharana(ed.), op.cit.,p.34.


\(^{52}\) Balaram Mohanty,op.cit,pp.105-106.
the almirahs and other furniture. \textsuperscript{53} The next day, some student leaders went in a procession to the SDO and presented a memorandum to him. \textsuperscript{54}

Post offices, Canal revenue offices, Dak bungalows and other government offices were destroyed or set fire to at various places in Jajpur. Workers like Jaganath Das, Dwarikanath Das, Gadadhari Dutta, Bipin Bihari Mohanty, Shashi Bhusan Das Ekadashi Bindhani, Bhagaban Sahoo, Madan Mohan Patnaik, Annapurna Maharana, Manmohan Choudhury etc. were arrested for their participation in the movement. \textsuperscript{55}

In the early hours (3AM) of 25th August around three hundred people led by Padmnava Ray, Bhagaban Sahu and Udekar Mohapatra set fire to the inspection bunglow at Ahias. \textsuperscript{56} The thatched roof and the furniture of the bunglow were all burnt.

The police beat house at Jaintra and the Government Training school and the canal Revenue office at Dasrathpur were set on fire on 25th August 1942. \textsuperscript{57}

On 27th August, in defiance of the Government's prohibitory orders against processions and assemblies, Congressmen led by Padmanava Ray proceeded from Jajpur town towards the police station to capture the S.D.O's office. The police party was taken aback at the sight of thirty thousand strong crowd\textsuperscript{58}. The Congress leaders urged the officials at the S.D.O office to resign from their jobs. The police

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} H.K.Mahatab(ed.), \textit{HFMO}, Vol.V, p.64.
\item \textsuperscript{54} B.C.Rath, \textit{op.cit.}\textsuperscript{(2)},p.41.
\item \textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{56} \textit{Home Deptt.}\textsuperscript{.} (\textit{Pol.}), Confidential, File No.657/1942, Orissa State Archives (Hereafter OSA), Bhubaneswar.
\item \textsuperscript{57} B.C.Rath, \textit{op.cit(2)},p.42.
\item \textsuperscript{58} S.N.Dwibedi, \textit{op.cit.},p.82. J.N.Pattanaik quoting HFMO, Vol.IV(pp.93-94) puts the figure at fifteen thousand while B.C.Rath quoting the same source puts the figure at ten thousand. J.N.Pattanaik, \textit{op.cit.},p.175. B.C.Rath, \textit{op.cit(2)},p.42.
\end{itemize}
men were placed on full alert. The agitated mob at the same time was shouting slogans. Suddenly an aeroplane hovered around the mob at a very low height and dropped tear gas shells to disperse the crowd. The crowd was scared and dispersed. But nearly half of them reassembled again and on their way back burnt a number of government offices and buildings. Rambag post office was burnt by these people. A punitive tax of Rupees six thousand was imposed on the neighbouring villages.

In the Cuttack district, Barchana, Binjharpur, Tirtol, Ersama and Mahanga witnessed large scale popular participation in the Quit India disturbances. In the Jagatsinghpur and Balikuda area post offices and police barracks were burnt. The prominent workers in this locality (Jagatsingpur) were Nrusinga Charan Mohanty, Biswambhar Parida, Jayram Parida, Lokanath Ray, Nilamani Pradhan, Nityananda Jena, Kalandi Charan Mallick and many others. It was for conspiracy against the government and the attack on Nalibar military camp on 26th August that Biwambhar Parida, Jayram Parida and Somanth Nayak were arrested. Six other school students along with some Congress workers were arrested the same day.

On 22nd August the records and furniture of the Kuanpal post office in the Mahanga police station were burnt. Records of the Tehsil office at Balichandarpur were destroyed the same day. On 27th August, some people stripped a constable and two chowkidars of their uniform and burnt them. Two prominent workers of the area Sachidananda Jena (called as Mahanga Gandhi) and Biraja Prasad Ray were arrested.

59. S.C. Maharana (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.34. This version has it that the SDO, Ratnakar Sarangi was garlanded, presented with a khadi dhoti and scarf by the leaders and then requested to resign from his job.
60. S.N. Dwibedi, *op. cit.*, p.82.
64. Ibid, p.68.
In Barachana Police station, the Gopalpur inspection bungalow was attacked and destroyed on 21st August. The crowd did not spare the chowkidars who were stripped off their uniforms. Again on 26th August, a crowd under the leadership of Krusna chandra Rout assembled at Dhanmandal to raid Darpani estate office and the police station at Barchana. They burnt the uniforms of two chowkidars there. Five of the leaders were later arrested by the S.P. of Cuttack and the District Magistrate.

Krusna Chandra Rout, who escaped arrest at Barachana also played a prominent role in organizing the movement in Dharmasala area. On 20th August the canal revenue office at Dharmasala was burnt. Again on 22nd August the records at the revenue collector’s office at Neulpur in the Dharmasala police station were burnt down.

Ersama and Tirtol also witnessed violent activities during this period. In Ersama, Congress leaders like Gourishyam Nayak of Hazipur, Dasa Malik of Narasihnghpur, Mana samal of Gambharikana, Bulai sahoo of Goda, Bhim chandra Das of Pandua and Dhaneswar Senapati of Banka-sahada led Seven hundred villagers and attacked the Ersama police station on 6th September 1942. The small police party present was overpowered by the mob and the records and furniture were burnt down. A police barrack situated nearby was set on fire. The irate mob then destroyed the records at the local post office and looted the excise shops.

In Tirtol, a police party escorting a Congressman was attacked on 31st August. Around five hundred villagers overpowered the police at the embankment near the Balipatna gada and rescued Duryodhan Nayak, who was being taken to be produced in the court at Cuttack.

65. Ibid.
66. B.C.Rath, op.cit.(2), p.44.
67. Home Political (confidential), File No.662/1942, OSA.
Again on 3rd September the canal revenue office at Nuapada was burnt. The PWD rest sheds at Jaganathapur and the rest shed, canal revenue Tehshil office and the staff quarters were burnt at Sanara around this time (7th September 1942).  

In Anugul, two sub inspectors, one inspector of police and deputy collector were assaulted by a mob on 27th August. Again on 7th September a group of people attacked a police party, rescued the arrested Congress leaders and injured the magistrate and some policemen.

Elsewhere in the Cuttack district, places like Krusnanagar, Salepur, Kendrapara, Patamundei, Kanika, Aul and Cuttack Sadar witnessed public meeting and protest demonstrations but violent activities were rare. In Kendrapara sub-division, post offices, canal revenue offices and PWD Bunglows were burnt. In the coastal areas, it seems some of the Congress workers moved around telling people that the Japanese would attack India from that side (eastern coast) and they would like men who kill officials and burn Government properties.

The movement in the Balasore district was equally widespread. On 17th August, a large number of people attacked the police station at Bhandari Pokhari (a place fifteen kms. South of Bhadrak town) and set fire to it. They also burnt the post office in the locality and demolished a road bridge to prevent the possibility of the police force reaching the place. By the time the D.M. reached the place with a large police force, the people had already dispersed.

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69. Ibid, p.46.
A virtual reign of terror was unleashed in the area and the leading agitators like Jaganath Das, Baisnab Charan Nayak, Mahanta Durga Charan Bharati, Dwarikanatha Das and others were taken into custody. A punitive tax of six thousand rupees was imposed. The villages were Bhandari Pokhari, Uttarabada, Dakshinabada, Chandrabhanupur, Koharapokhari, Rajendrapur, Naguan, Patauli, Palat and Torat.

Dhamnagar police station in Balasore also witnessed mass protest, and violent activities in the Quit India movement. On 5th September 1942, people burnt the uniforms of chowkidars and dafadars at Dhusuri. Flag march of the armed police was led by the S.P Balasore in the disturbed area. On the way the police force was threatened by a crowd led by Muralidhar Panda.

Muralidhar Panda had been involved in the extortion of paddy from the local mahajans and he was wanted by the police for inciting the people against the government. The police party in pursuit of Muralidhar Panda and the rioters met a mob at Lunia-Katasahi on 22nd September 1942. The police force was surrounded by the people and the people snatched away the rifles from them. In the ensuing melee, the police fired thirty-five rounds. Nine people were killed, many more were wounded and around forty were arrested. Muralidhar panda was arrested from Bhadrak and other prominent leaders who were arrested were Nabakrusna Nayak, Gananath Padhi, Kamadev Nayak and Dharanidhar Jena. A collective fine of rupees two thousand two hundred and twenty-five was imposed on the nearby villages.

75. Ibid.
76. Samaj, 28/8/1942.
77. Collector of Balasore to the Chief Secretary, Government of Orissa, D.O. No. 1260-c, dtd. 23/9/1942, WWCC, No-62, OSA.
78. Balaram Mohanty, op.cit, p.109. Also, HFMU Papers, R-1, File No.31/3, p.23.
79. B.C. Rath, op.cit, p.75.
Krusna Chanda Jena, Chintamani Panda, Purusottam Padhi spearheaded the Quit India movement in Tudigadia locality of Khaira police station. In a significant development, the Congress leaders had declared the Tudigadia area "free and Independent." A parallel Panchayat administration had been set up with its headquarters in village Chhatra. The police obviously took a serious note of the development in Tudigadia and on 22nd September one of the leaders Baidyanath Rout was arrested from the Tudigadia. Thousands of people soon assembled and rescued their arrested leader. The police including the S.I were assaulted and they fled away.

So on 27th September 1942, an Inspector of police with armed force was sent to arrest the people who had attacked the S.I and the police party. At Khairadihi the police party faced a mob of around four hundred men. The police fired but there were no casualties. The very next day, on 28th September 1942, the police entered the Khairadihi village to arrest the ring leaders. While conducting a search of the houses, looking for Baidyanath Rout, the police entered a house. Immediately the people set fire to the house to trap the policemen inside. The angry crowd had surrounded the house from all sides, armed with lathis, Katuris, bows and arrows. The police party managed to escape and in the subsequent firing two were killed and three were seriously injured.

On the same day, (28th September 1942) the most tragic event of the August Revolution in Orissa took place at Eram in Basudevpur Police Station of Balasore district. In a single instance of police firing twenty nine people were killed and more than a hundred were injured.

80. Ibid.
81. Both the Inspector and the Sergent Major agreed that the constables (probably) deliberately did not take proper aim. Collector, Balasore to Chief Secretary, Government of Orissa, Cuttack, D.O. No.1266-c, dtd.28/9/1942, WWCC, OSA.
82. HFMU Papers, R-1, File No.31/3, p.24. Also, B.C.Rath, op.cit,p.77.
An area of about forty square miles and surrounded by two rivers and the sea, Basudevpur was almost inaccessible during the rainy season. And that is why the Congress men had complete control over this island of twenty six villages. The local people led by Gouranga Mohanty, Kamala Kanta Kar, Anirudha Mohanty, Prabhakar Tripathy and Shyam Sundar Paniagrahi had built up a parallel administration in this inaccessible area in complete safety. The "Swadhina Banchhanidhi Chakla" which was set up on 17th September 1942 had six Panchayats and twenty six villages under its jurisdiction. They had established a system of communication by means of conches and it was reported that there was a jail and a set of different officers to run the administration. The Chowkidars of the area had sided with the people and so the Government was in the dark about the happenings in these areas.

In the previous weeks looting of the paddy of the rich landlords of the area and an assault on the staff of the coastal watching station at Kulikuti had been reported to the police. On 19th September three Congress leaders had escaped after being arrested. So the DSP was ordered to arrest these leaders and bring the situation under control.

On 28 September, the DSP left for Eram with a police party of eighteen constables, a sub Inspector and a havildar. As they crossed the river Gomei, the people were alerted about the arrival of the police by the blowing of conches. Nearly four thousand men with lathis gathered in no time. The Chowkidars were following the police party with the kit. As the police party had advanced a little

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83. The Chakla had departments like army, intelligence, food etc. There was a court to decide cases and Bhagi Singh and Ram Singh of Eram village were detained in the jail for two days for defying the Congress. J.N.Pattanaik, op.cit.p.179. Also, B.C.Rath, op.cit, p.79.

84. Collector, Balasore to Chief Secretary, Government of Orissa, 3/10/1942, HFMU Papers, R-1, File No.31/3, pp.1-4.
ahead, the *chowkidars* were surrounded by the mob and their kit snatched. One *chowkidar* managed to escape and informed the DSP about the occurrences. The zamindar is said to have pleaded with the DSP to keep calm and not to be violent. The DSP, however, did not pay any heed to his requests and after reaching Melanpada ordered the policemen to fire. In all 129 rounds and fourteen revolver shots were fired killing twenty nine people and injuring more than hundred. The mob dispersed in panic and the police party stayed in the house of the local zamindar.

The Government was severely criticized for the police firing and was ultimately forced to institute an official enquiry into the matter. This incident was followed by a terrible policy of repression. All the prominent leaders were rounded up and a punitive tax of Rupees four thousand and seven hundred was imposed.

Ganjam, Sambalpur and Puri districts were relatively quiet during the Quit India movement. Apart from the only instance of police firing at Nimapada in the Puri district, the agitation took the usual form of student strikes, protest demonstrations, felling of trees, disruption of communications and burning of a few Government buildings/thatched (sheds) in these three districts. Most of the prominent leaders in these districts were rounded up by the police.

At the Barabati field in Nimapada, a Public meeting was held on 16th September 1942. In the meeting the villagers decided not to pay to the...
Government and the zamindar in way of rent. They proceeded to the police station after the meeting and appealed to the Government servants including the policemen of Indian origin to resign from their jobs. In the meantime, some people had set fire to the inspection bunglow and cut the telephone wires to disrupt the communication. At the police station the people wanted to hoist the Congress flag and the police prevented them from doing so. The agitated people threw stones at the police and in retaliation the police fired to disperse the mob. In the firing Uchhab Mallick of Dihabari was shot dead and sixteen others were injured. 90
Forty four Congressmen were arrested and a collective fine of rupees one thousand five hundred was imposed on the villagers of Manijang, Chanarapada and Hanspada for their participation at Nimapada. 91

II

Quit India in the princely states

The Quit India movement was not only confined to British India alone. It made deep inroads into the princely states and inspired the people there to make their contribution to the cause of India's independence.

Initially, there were demonstrations against the arrest of the Congress members in Nilgiri, Dhenkanal and Talcher states. But the movement really caught up with the escape of Pabitra Mohan Pradhan from Talcher jail on 31st August 1942.

The movement was most widespread in Dhenkal and Talcher states as the repression was most brutal there. Regarding the Dhenkanal affairs, the Political Agent wrote on 23rd September 1942:

"The Raj family has, I more than suspect, been guilty of minor oppression in very recent years. The Raja himself must be the most unpopular man in the agency. With his malicious, tortuous mind he delights in carping at his employees without ever setting them a good or a bad example. As I have said elsewhere about Niligiri, if I lived in Dhenkanal, I should probably be one of the worst agitators myself."

The situation in Talcher was no better. In the same telegram the Political Agent wrote:

"Talcher on the other hand is well administered. But I think that the very factor which makes for the strength of the administration is also liable to lead to the production of an opposition party. I mean the fact that the administration is very much a family business. Apart from the Raja, the yubraj is the state judge. The second son is the chief executive officer. A cousin is the Superintendent of

Police and other relations occupy such posts as S.D.O...... for the most parts the states already impose taxation without representation. This need not itself be a bad thing but it becomes bad if it develops into taxation without compensation." 95

In Dhenkanal, people devoid of any civil rights were reeling under an oppressive state machinery. The news of the events in British Orissa inspired the people in the gadjats to defy Government orders and to indulge in acts of lawlessness.

Apprehending trouble, the Dhenkanal state authorities had passed orders on the 17th August 1942 for detaining Kishori sahu, Bhagirathi Sahu, Dibakor Biswal, Baisnab Patnaik, Maheswar Subahusingh, Purna Mohapatra, and for restricting the movement of Musa Mallick and Debraj Patra. 96 All these leaders were absconding and only Purna Mohapatra and Maheswar Subahusingh were detained on 19th August 1942. 97

After his release on 28/4/1942, Baisnab had left for Cuttack and there was no news of him in Dhenkanal till 26th August 1942, when he led a gang of nineteen people to Murhi (Kamakshya Nagar now) and caused havoc there. The group was armed with deadly weapons such as muzzle-loading guns, bows, arrows, spears and lathis. They raided the police station at Murhi at 4 A.M. in the morning. 98 A boy of 12 years, Baidhar Swain remained in charge of their surplus weapons and baggage in the Jungle. They overpowered the guard and attempted to break the iron safe containing the treasury money, but failed. They burnt the thana records, took away four state guns, sixty rounds of ammunitions and a cash of rupees 19,146.00 from the thana building and ran amok, threatening the local

95.Ibid.
97.Ibid.
98.B.C.Rath, op.cit,pp.96-91.
SDO, police and the public. They broke open the court, the office rooms, burnt the court records, Tehsildar's quarters, SDO's quarters, and the quarters of the second officer, Sirastadar, range office other state quarters and sheds. They then left for Malpura, a village about six miles from Murhi and with the aid of the villagers looted a state granary. The miscreants robbed one hundred and fifty rupees from the care-taker of the debottar granary and distributed the paddy among the villagers.  

Baisnab Patanaik and his group marched from village to with the Congress flags and drums. At Palasuni biso arround five hundred villagers raided the Chandpur police station on 2nd September 1942. Baisnab and his men then burnt down the thana house and the local school.  

After Chandpur, Baisnab along with his associates Musa Mallick, Dibakara Biswal, Kisori Sahu and others proceeded towards Parjanga. The police had got the information and on 4th September 1942, encountered the mob at Janhapara. In this clash with the police, Bira Sahu of Toradanali and Benu Sahu of Kusumunda were shot dead and Baisnab sustained serious bullet injury.  

After being critically wounded, Baisnab managed to sneak into Cuttack with with a fellow-fighter Nabaghaha Behera and with the assistance of Surendranath Dwibedi left for Calcutta for treatment in the guise of a marwari. After Baisnab's daisappearance, another party led by Debraj Patra set fire to the police out post and the beat house of the forest department at Gengutia on 5th september 1942.  

100. Ibid.  
However, after baisnab left the state with a gun-shot wound, the movement lost its momentum. In order to instil fear in the minds of the people, state administration came down heavily on the rebels and the villagers who supported them. Forces were stationed at different places of the state and Bhuban. Night patrols were arranged and raids were conducted in suspected villages for arresting the leaders.\textsuperscript{104} Cash awards were announced for the capture of absconders and the state even rewarded the villagers of Kusia with rupees three hundred for assisting in the arrest of four associates of Baisnab- Musa Mallick, Ananda Swain, Anukula Sahu and Baidhar Swain.\textsuperscript{105} Houses of the prominent prajamandal leaders were pulled down by elephants, properties confiscated and men, women and children indiscriminately assaulted.\textsuperscript{106}

The movement in Talcher was led by Pabitra Mohan Pradhan who escaped from the state jail on 31st August 1942 and inspired the setting up of a separate "parallel government" (or national government) in the area.\textsuperscript{107}

\textit{Prajamandal} committees had been formed at the village, block, and the sub-division level and no vestige of the state power was allowed to exist. The village headmen, Chowkidars, School teachers, block officers, police officials and excise and revenue department officials stationed at different places voluntarily surrendered to the local prajamandal authority and there were also instances of violence against those who did not.\textsuperscript{108} The government offices and residential quarters of the employees situated in different parts of the state were attacked and set ablaze.

To prevent any external interference the communication links were disrupted. The Cuttack-Talcher railway tracks were destroyed and telegraphic link

\textsuperscript{104}B.C.Rath, \textit{op.cit}, p.102.
\textsuperscript{105}\textit{Amrit Bazar Patrika}, 11/10/1942.
\textsuperscript{108}\textit{Ibid}, p.135.
was cut off. Three rural police stations and the sub-divisional head quarters at Kaniha were captured and by the first week of September 1942, the whole of Talcher excepting the Talcher town (head quarters of the Raja) was controlled by the administration of the prajamandal.\textsuperscript{109}

The new Government with its army of volunteers, \textit{krusak sena} (peasant militia) marched towards the Talcher town on 6th September 1942. They were armed with crude arms and implements like swords, spears, bows, arrows, axes, spades, spikes, guns, kerosene, jute-rags etc. Because of inclement weather they could not reach the palace on 6th September 1942 and on 7th September 1942 when they were within the striking distance of Nijgarh, the crowd of about five thousand was tear-gased and machine gunned from the air. Six people were killed and twenty three others were injured.\textsuperscript{110} The state police chased the crowd and arrested two hundred forty three persons. A collective fine of Rupees twenty four thousand was imposed on the Congress villages and muzzle-loading guns were recovered from the people.\textsuperscript{111}

After the incident of 7th September 1942, the captains of the militia decided to stop the programme of open confrontation and organised a batch of gunners, 'the guerilla force'. The secret armed squads were organised to protect innocent subjects through guerilla warface.\textsuperscript{112} It successfully worked till May 1943. In the meantime, some of the most prominent leaders had to leave the state to evade arrest by the \textit{durbar} by escaping to the bordering British province.


\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Home Deptt.(pol.)}, File No.3/90/1942. Another account, however, puts the figure of the dead at four. They were Basudeb Sahu of Danara, Krutarth Pradhan of Danara, Bhagaban Sahu of Handidhua and Bhajan Naik of Brahmana Bahal. \textit{Talcher Prajamandal(Congress)ra Itihas}, Talcher Prajamandal, Cuttack, 1950, pp.64-65.

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Home Deptt.(pol.)}, File No.3/90/1942.

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Ibid}.
Pabitra Mohan Pradhan escaped to Bengal and remained underground for long five years. The prajamandal movement gradually lost its momentum and petered out.

The movement in the Nilgiri and the Nayagarh states was also widespread. In Nilgiri, after the arrest of Kailash Chandra Mohanty, the president of the Nilgiri Prajamandal and a member of AICC on 12th August 1942, there was a complete boycott of the state servants/employees. The officials were asked to tender resignation and threatened with social boycott. The people looted the granaries and seized hold of the pockets thereby stopping supplies to the state. Twenty two chowkidars complained that they were not even allowed to walk over the ground of the boycotters and their cattle not allowed to be taken out for grazing. However, large-scale arrests, collective fines and repressive measures by the state quelled the movement.

In Nayagarh, after the arrest of the prominent prajamandal leaders like Sridhar Das, Banchhanidhi Senapati, Laxman Moharana, Sukru Behera, Udaynath Prusty and Bidyabar Mantri on 9th October some people led by Kanduri Parida destroyed the bungalow at Barakola. Another group destroyed the Khalmoda police station and the Dimpipalli forest beat office. On the 10th October 1942, the people had planned to attack the police station at Nuagaon and other offices of the state. In the clash with the police on 10th October, two were killed and nearly fifty injured. One of them died in the Jail. Punitive tax was imposed on twenty two villages. There were, however, no more incidents of looting or arson in the state after 15th October 1942.

Other states like Athagarh and Mayurbhanj also felt the tremors of the Quit India agitation in 1942. But they were not so widespread or violent in their nature. Precautionary measures by the rulers in these states were sufficient enough to keep the agitation confined to a few protest meetings and the usual low-key hartals.

115. S.N.Pattanaik, *op.cit*,p.179
III

An examination of the main incidents which took place in course of the mass upsurge in August-September 1942, makes it clear that the communication system, i.e. railways, posts and telegraph drew the special attention of the people. The agitators believed that by disrupting the communication network they could capture a few isolated tehsils and thanas as a first step towards the occupation of the district headquarters. Attacks on the communication lines were also intended to hamper the allied war efforts and thus bring pressure on the British Government.

In case of the post offices usually the mob first entered and took out the furniture, forms and records and made a bonfire of them. In some cases, the telegraph and other instruments were smashed. In a few cases, cash, stamps and other valuable articles were looted. However, no harm was done to the staff working in the offices.116

There were attempts to destroy the public buildings and Government offices. Attempts were also made in many places to hoist the Congress flag on the public offices. These attempts some times resulted (as in Mathili) in police-mob scuffles, lathi-charge and firings. Quite a large number of Government buildings, Inspection bungalows and Revenue offices were destroyed by the mob.117

One of the most remarkable feature of the Quit India Movement was that barring a few cases private property was not attacked by the agitators. Peasants in the countryside had long-standing agrarian grievances. But inspite of the eruption of widespread violence, anti zamindari violence did not take place.

The youth, both educated and uneducated, played a leading role in the mass upsurge. They accepted the challenge of the arrest of the Congress leaders and were in command everywhere. The students came to the forefront in all the provinces. Regarding their role in the movement Linlithgow wrote to Amery:

"In all the disturbances the students have been prominent ...... the volume of the revolutionany propaganda spread through out the country by Commnists and other organisations combined with the nationalist and anti-British preachings of Congress has had a cumulative effect on the educated and impressionable youth of the country. To the younger generation, the "non-violent non-co-operation" of Gandhi has never made a really strong appeal. Either the instructions of the Congress or the Congress leaders themselves may have instigated and subsidised a revolt, the violence of which may have gone beyond their expectations or there may have been more sinister forces at work. What matters for the moment is that youth is in command and has been putting into exhibition a revolutionary programme which could hardly have sprung into existence at a moment's notice."

However, contrary to the Viceroy's thinking, the 'revolutionary programme' had indeed sprung into existence at a moment's notice. The programme generally followed all over the country had not been formally drawn up by any group either before or immediately after the momentous AICC meeting in Bombay. There was no central organisation to direct the movement. The second line of leadership in the Congress who had got together in Bombdy on 9th August 1942 and prepared the twelve point programme, of course, transmitted it to all parts of the country.

119. Regarding Gandhi's (supposedly) last message before his arrest, Pyarelal denied that Gandhi had given him any last message. His own view was, "This so-called last message, as a matter of fact, is only an assortment of pointers from Gandhi's AICC speeches on the 7th and 8th of August 1942 as recapitulated by the present writer to groups of Congress workers who came to Birla House on the morning of 9th August 1942 and recorded by some of them". Pyarelal compiled Gandhi's correspondence with the Government, 1942-1944, P.XXV., cited in A.C.Bhuyan, The Quit India Movement: The Second World War and Indian Nationalism, Manas Publications, Delhi, 1975, p.66.
They functioned in the name of AICC and issued circulars and appeals from time to time. It cannot, however, be said that the mass upsurge in the various parts of the country grew under their directions. There were no provincial organisation worth the name during the early days of the movement.

Assessing the situation with in ten days of the outbreak of the disturbances, Linlithgow wrote:

"Taking the country as a whole, the disturbance, though evidently planned by a common source, do not appear now to be co-ordinated by any single centre and are sporadic in incidence. I have not much doubt that desire of students to imitate subversive or destructive activities of students in other provinces of which they become aware, and anxiety of hooligan elements to turn so good an opportunity to profit are responsible for a good deal, helped no doubt in certain areas by plans being worked out or already in existence and implemented by Congress support."

Infact, there was no lack of organisation. But in the light of the virtual disappearance of the Congress, such organisations were of a purely adhoc and local nature.

Tottenham's report regarding the disturbances raise the issue of 'Spontaneity' versus 'Centrally-directed' which has been very often a matter of debate. This debate has become more complex because of the very violent character of the movement. Was the violent outburst really centrally directed?

Tottenham in his report based on Gandhi's speeches and writings in the months preceeding the movement, attributes the violent character of the movement exclusively to Gandhi. He, however, failed to see that during this period Gandhi

on a number of occasions made it a point to categorically emphasize on the non-violent character of the movement. Gandhi, in fact, combined this creed of non-violence with the demand of immediate independence. As he put it,

"I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain risks, which are obviously involved, I must ask the people to resist slavery. But even that readiness, let me assure you depends on the non-violent man's unflinching faith. All I am conscious is that there is not a trace of violence in the remotest corner of my being and my conscious pursuit of Ahimsa for the last fifty years, cannot possibly fail me at this crisis". 121

Just before his arrest, Gandhi had scribbled a note and given it to Pyarelal. These were his last instructions. According to D.G.Tendulkar the note said,

"Let every non-violent soldier of freedom write out the slogan,' Do or Die' on a piece of paper or cloth and stick it on his clothes. So that in case he died in the course of offering Satyagraha, he might be distinguished from other elements who do not subscribe to non-violence." 122

According to the Governments' report the message was slightly different.

"Everyman is free to go the fullest length under ahimsa by complete deadlock, strikes and other non-violent means. Satyagrahis should go to die and not to live. It is when individuals go out to seek and face death that the nation will survive. KARENGE YA MARENGE". 123

Despite there being different versions of Gandhi's last instructions, it is clearly evident that Gandhi had an unflinching faith in non-violence. The people were permitted to do whatever they liked but the only restraint was that of non-violence. The Congress did not break this barrier even under enormous pressure and the changed atmosphere of 1942.

Closely inked with the controversy of violence and non-violence is the level and extent of central direction. Maulana Azad, Who was the president of the Indian National Congress in 1942, revealed the Congress thinking later.

"From 14th July to 5th August (1942), my time was taken up in a series of meetings with Congress leaders from the different parts of the country. I wanted to impress upon them that if the Government accepted our demand and allowed us to function, the movement must develop strictly according to Gandhiji's instructions. If, however, the Government arrested Gandhiji and other Congress leaders, the people would be free to adopt any method to oppose the violence of the Government in every possible way. So long the leaders were free and able to function they were responsible for the course of events. But if the Government arrested them, the Government must take responsibility for consequences".124

Gandhiji called out to each individual to be free. The appeal was direct to the individual and the response was to be direct. This feature invested the Movement with flexibility and immortality. The movement was decentralised and the scope of central direction was deliberately made flexible. As the 'Freedom struggle Front' document suggested, "the detailed application of general principles in concrete acts and manoeuvres must be left to the primary fighting units". It further added that, "the purpose of the machinery was to outline the general policy and direction and to provide a loose and flexible coordination of the work of already established parties, groups or individuals to whom the widest possible discretion is to be left in carrying out day-to-day programme".125

This decentralisation was provided in order to safeguard the movement against Government suppression. As the document contained, "...in administration as in programme, the greatest decentralisation should be provided for. In that rather than in secrecy for which the scope is strictly limited as a movement of this character, lies the biggest safeguard against suppression."  

Thus, it becomes quite clear that the movement in the later stages was centrally organized but violence was not. It emerged out of concrete circumstances and due to the fact that enough scope was provided for local initiative which led to the extension of the meaning of non-violence and also because of very heavy Government repression.

The absence of a well established Central organisation with its branches in all parts of the country made the task of the Government in suppressing the movement less difficult than it would have otherwise been. Though the Government found the forces inadequate at a few places, it employed the requisite force to suppress the upsurge. Firing was frequently resorted to. According to the statistics available to the Government on 15th September 1942, three hundred and fifty had been injured as a result of police firing. The army was extensively used and the troops too were ordered to open fire on many occasions. The airforce was also used, particularly for reconnaissance and patrol. Besides, on one or two occasions, when warnings were not heeded to, aircrafts also opened fire on mobs.

A number of ordinances were specially promulgated to deal with the movement. To prevent the recurrence of attacks on lines of communication, the Government imposed collective fines on inhabitants of certain areas. To keep the Muslims away from the movement, the Government even exempted them from payment of collective fine.

To keep the excesses committed by the army and the police from the public, the Government also imposed strict censorship of the press.\textsuperscript{129}

Aided by its ruthlessness of intention and execution, the Government was further helped by the fact that by and large the people were unarmed and the movement lacked a well-established central organisation. Within weeks, the task of suppression was over. However, faced with brutal atrocities unleashed by the state, some of the leaders went underground and indulged in acts of sabotage to paralyse the Government.

Roughly from end of September the movement entered its longest but also the least formidable phase. This phase was characterised by terroristic activities by the youth. In organising the underground activities in Orissa and co-ordinating with branch offices in different districts, Surendranath Dwibedi played a conspicuous role. The underground movement in Orissa survived for three months and it collapsed once Dwibedi was arrested on 13th October 1942.

Evading arrest while coming back from Bombay on 9th August (along with Malati Devi), Dwibedi made his friend Mathura Nandan Sahu's house in Alisha Bazar the central office for issuing directions and for bringing out Congress bulletins. Because of strict police surveillance, he had to put on various get-ups and shift his place of hiding twice till his eventual arrest on 13th October 1942. But by then, he had set up a well-established underground organisation linking it with the underground organisations in Bihar and Calcutta.\textsuperscript{130} In Orissa, underground units (Branch offices, B.O.s) were set up in almost all district headquarters.


\textsuperscript{130} Dwibedi mentions how the Congress workers were sent with special instructions to meet the underground activists in a khadi bhandar on the college street in Calcutta. S.N. Dwibedi, \textit{op. cit}, p.127.
When Dwibedi started organising the movement, he had his task, well cut out. Three aspects had to be taken care of:

1. Bulletins had to be brought out and an organisation had to be set up to circulate them,
2. Underground units had to be set up throughout the province and networking had to be done for spread of the movement in different districts,
3. Contacts had to be established with underground workers leading the movement in other provinces.131

Since most of the first line Congress leadership was inside the jail, Dwibedi organised the movement through the efforts of the students. The students circulated most of the bulletins. They were circulated to let the people know all that was happening in and outside the province and to exhort the students, policemen, merchants and the general public to play their part in this supreme effort to achieve independence. Appeals were made to the Government servants to give up slavery (often with threatening letters to their person) and to the villagers to establish 'azad panchayats' and to refrain from paying fines. Directions were also provided in the bulletins on how to disarm and overwhelm the police parties.132

Giving a brief description of the happenings in other parts of India, a bulletin "The Final Revolution for Independence of India" read:

"Dear friends! Let us not spare the British who have sucked our blood for so long and let their blood be dropped at least one day in India. There is no time. Let us awake. Let all the government offices be burnt. Let telephone and electric wires be cut. Let treasury be looted and the poor paid the money.

132. Ibid, p.60.
Then thousands of people will follow. Let cars be detained and sahibs (Europeans) assaulted by night. There is none to order you to work. If anybody wants to do good for his motherland, let him die. Only Goddess Bhagabati can help us. Long live this revolution. If anyone is asked to leave his job for the sake of his motherland and he does not obey, then let him be killed."\[133

Another bulletin addressed to the inhabitants of Cuttack read:

"Inhabitants of Cuttack! Will you keep aside from this great sacrifice? Do not delay and plunge into this tide with firmness and courage. Paralyse government administration. Burn records of the police stations, courts and other offices. Sabotage telegraph, telephone and the railway communications. Uproot the posts. Demolish railway stations. Drag your brothers police, Deputy Magistrates and clerks from the slavery of the enemy. Do not sell any thing to those who are helping the government. Let the atmosphere created by you spread to the muffasil..."\[134

To the fellow countrymen in the government services an appeal read:

"Comrades! The zero hour has struck. You have heard Mahatma Gandhi's call. The liberation of our motherland is at hand and Gandhiji wants you to play a heroic role... Will you not respond to this call? Your interests lie entirely with your own men not with a few English masters who will leave you as soon as their interest is gone. The posterity will not forgive you when it will know that a tottering foreign administration survived only with the support of a few Indian officers if it survives at all... In the name of India and its teeming millions who bravely face bullets today for the cause of our own liberation, I appeal to you to

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133. *HFMU Papers*, R-1, File No. 31/3, pp. 120-123.
play a noble part. Decline to obey immoral orders. Resign government service at once. Declare yourselves free. Recognise no other authority except the Indian people."135

The 'Congress Varta', a bulletin issued immediately before Dwivedi's arrest and on the eve of the Durga Puja read:

"The mother wants destruction. Salvation lies in destruction. Take the charm of destruction. Be war-like and reduce the administrative camp of the enemy British to ashes. Drive away this power from our country. Wipe out all its symbols and colours. Let a stream of blood flow by our bloodshed. Play a blood ‘holi’. The real worship of the mother(Goddess Durga) will be performed."136

The purpose of these bulletins was to rouse the masses and to incite them to indulge in mass sabotage and destruction. Nevertheless, some of the bulletins categorically instructed the public to remain non-violent. One such read:

"Take care! Do not adopt violence to any body. Victory to non-violence."137 Even while dealing with the armed forces the instructions were "If we threaten and exasperate them by our fruitless action (violence) then they will consider us as their personal enemy. Moreover, their oppressions will take a brutal shape. So we will not only refrain from killing but we will also by our behaviour give them definite assurance that their lives are safe."138

Although the government records mention about the wide circulation of these bulletins and the existence of a widespread network of underground organisations in Cuttack and Balasore districts it does not mention any direct

135. An appeal made by Bhairab Chandra Mohanty, who had resigned from government service and who was later tried for his role in the Dwibedi conspiracy case. Home Deptt.(pol.), File No.3/31/1942.
involvement of the underground leaders in the subversive activities. However, as evident from the letters of the B.Os. [Branch Offices] to the C.O[Central Office] the leaders played a very active role in inciting the people to indulge in destructive activities at least at places like Basudevpur, Govindpur, Ersama, Tritol and Jajpur.139

The underground resistance, however, lost its force after the arrest of Surendra Nath Dwibedi. Biswanath Pundit and Anil Kumar Ghose directed the underground movement for sometime after Dwivedi's arrest but with the arrest of seventeen others the movement gradually petered out.140

The establishment of underground units throughout the province was a necessary preliminary stage towards a mass upsurge in the province. Dwivedi's activities, however, were confined to Cuttack and Balasore districts only as no Congressmen of repute were outside the jail in the other four districts.141

Another distinct handicap for Dwibedi was that he was the only prominent leader in the province who had evaded arrest and his arrest would have meant a virtual collapse of the underground movement. For that he had to be extra cautious and was virtually confined to his underground office in Alisa Bazar.

Despite frequent appeals through the pamphlets not many senior officials resigned from their jobs. This as Dwibedi points out was due to the fact that most of the higher government officials in Orissa were outsiders[non-Oriyas]. Dwibedi also mentions that he was not very well known in the government circles where he could influence the higher officials to resign.142 But the officials at the lower level were quite sympathetic towards the nationalist cause. Many

police and other lower level officials helped financially and in the circulation
of the bulletins.143

The underground movement failed to keep the Quit India movement alive
for very long. But it left a profound impact on the general public. Lok Nayak
Jayaprakash Narayan attributed the failure of the Quit India movement to ".Lack
of organisation, absence of a full programme of revolution, and lack of
knowledge and training the people who failed to create their own power and
resist the re-conquest of the liberated areas."144 Most of the underground workers
in Orissa as Dwivedi mentions, were students from schools and colleges who
had no formal training and some who had nothing to do with the Congress.145

Elsewhere in the province, the Congressmen who had been released after
short-term imprisonments tried to keep up the enthusiasm of the people by
leading attacks on remote police stations and post offices.146 But these isolated
instances did not pose any effective obstruction to the normal administration in
the province. By end of November 1942 most of the underground activists had
been rounded up.147 By the beginning of 1943 (February), situation had become
quiet. Moreover, much of the time of the Congressmen who were still around or
who had been released was devoted to organising relief work for the people
affected by a cyclone which swept over north Balasore on 15th and 16th October
1942.

144. Home Dept.(pol.), File No.3/64/1943.
145. S.N.Dwibedi, op.cit,p.86.
147. Along with Dwibedi fifteen others were arrested for their involvement in the ‘Dwibedi
conspiracy’ case. They were Nishamani Khuntia, Banka Bihari Das, Sachidananda
Mishra, Narayan Prasad Mohanty, Narasingha Charan Mohanty, Lokanath Mishra,
Nabaghana Behera, Biswanath Parida, Jadumani Jena, Goura Chandra Das, Pyari Mohan
Das, Dukhishyam Padhi, Ramakanta Das, Ghanashyam Pattanaik and Bhairab Chandra
An Analysis of the Movement

The narrative accounts of the events in the preceding pages makes it clear that the Quit India Movement was widespread in Orissa. The intensity of the movement in the province had a good deal to do with the wartime conditions. The location of the province in a potential war zone, the denial policy adopted by the Government, the influx of refugees from Burma and the wartime restrictions all added to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and desperation which prompted the people to apprehend that the British rule was crumbling.

Its distribution in the province was also determined by a number of contingent factors: the immediacy of the war, the Government's preparedness to put down any resistance that might interfere with the war efforts and the sharp difference of opinion amongst the provincial leaders on the stand to be adopted in face of the national crisis of 1942.

A remarkable feature of the Quit India Movement was that it was an all-embracing nationalist movement. The central thrust of the August movement was nationalist. Even when its programme in many cases was not Gandhian and took place outside the domain of the Congress, Gandhi enjoyed supreme influence over them and the people owed adherence to Congress. 148

Except for the muslims every other section of the society participated in the movement or at least seemed to have sympathy for the Congress. 149 Even the muslims, although they did not participate in large numbers, they were not hostile to the movement and only remained away from the movement as a community.

148. Underground leaders brought out bulletins in the name of AICC and Gandhi but at the same time incited the people to indulge in mass sabotage. *Home Deptt. (Pol.)* File no. 3/31/42.

149. *HFMU Papers, R-I, File no. 46/3, P.4.*
The communists (mostly students) going beyond the stand of the central organisation also actively participated in the movement.\(^{150}\) And it was not without any reason that the Government was suspicious about their stand, and had many of them arrested. The Quit India movement not only eroded imperialist hegemony but also furthered national consciousness.

Devoid of a high level of nationalist activity, Orissa was a recognized strong hold of Gandhian Congress. Since the First World War, the Congress had build up a strong base and both the Kisan Sabhas and the Communists were quite ineffective in comparison with Bihar or U.P. where the movement was intense.

The Congress Socialist Party as its name auggests functioned within the Congress and played the most prominent role in the movement. The CSP often differed in its methods from the Congress, but it had been the dominating creed within the Congress since the 1930's, often dictating the Congress leadership in the province.\(^{151}\) CSP, thus provided a good deal of local leadership in the course of the 1942 uprising.

The Coalition Ministry led by the Swarjists and the Forward Blocists, which functioned during this period was also sympathetic towards the Congress cause. As Dwibedi Mentions, the repressive measures of the Government were taken without the knowledge of the Ministers.\(^ {152}\) In another instance, Ram Nandan Mishra, the Veteran CSP leader from Bihar after his meeting with Dwibedi at his underground office in Cuttack on 20th August was in fact provided with a car by Jadumani Managraj (Parliamentary Secretary in the Coalition Ministry) so that he could move around without being detected by the police.\(^{153}\)


\(^{151}\) H.K Mahatab, _Sadhanara Pathe_ , PP-177-178.

\(^{152}\) S.N Dwibedi, _Op. Cit._ , P.94

\(^{153}\) Ram Nandan Mishra was provided with the car of the Finance Minister (Godavarish Mishra), _Ibid_ , P.94.
Though indirectly, Mangaraj also promised all possible help to Ram Nandan Mishra in organising the underground activities in the province.\(^{154}\)

The nationalistic ideology had penetrated into all sections of the society irrespective of what they professed. The Government also acknowledged this fact. "The arrest of the congress leaders appears to have induced the so-called Communists, Socialists, Forward Blocists and Student Federationists of this province to give their support to the Congress cause. Workers from these parties are concentrating on propaganda amongst students."\(^{155}\)

There was a general loss of confidence and morale among officials in the wake of the spread of violence in the province. Lower level Government officials were more particularly sympathetic to the movement. At some places the policemen reluctantly obeyed orders of their superior. As the Government's report mentioned, "......... there were a few instances of unnecessary timidity and lack of voluntary cooperation with the Magistracy and the police in suppressing lawlessness." Regarding the other services the report said, "the attitude of the teaching profession has not been very helpful, particularly of those serving under local bodies dominated by Congress ideas. Postal officials too were of little help and in several cases where Government property had been destroyed, remained undetected as they declined to give evidence. The village Chowkidars are reported to have been almost useless in the worst affected areas."\(^{156}\)

These instances of petty officials and Chowkidars who supported the movement even at the risk of their livelihood shows the depth of penetration of the national ideas. This was important since the movement was primarily a hegemonic struggle between the imperialist and the nationalist forces. No section of the society remained untouched and even landlords, the natural allies of the British did not remain unaffected.\(^ {157}\)

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155. HFMU Papers, R-I, File no. 31/3, P.77.  
156. HFMU Papers, R-I, File no.46/3, p.6.  
On-the-spot leadership emerged from almost all sections of the society. However, the students played the most prominent part in the movement. As in other parts of the country, the students and more particularly, the students of the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack took the leading part in the 1942 uprising. When all the senior Congress leaders were arrested in the province, the students of Ravenshaw College and some schools in Cuttack (Academy School) assisted Dwivedi in organising the underground activities in the province.\textsuperscript{158}

The Government's Report regarding the role of the students stated: "The students played an important part in the movement specially those of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack and appeared to be largely affected by an appeal by the local Congress which read as follows:

'Live Dangerously, 'ought to be the motto of every youngman of India. Live life to the fullest and best effect. The nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat. The best of life lies nearest to the edge of death. So be up and doing. The Congress has sent its clarion call. Mahatmaji is jail-rotting in a British dungeon. It is upto you Young sons of India to take up arms and march abreast. No youngman is worth his salt who hesitates and falters. Remember the battle of Balasore. The hour has struck, Leap the parapet."

\textit{Rise like lions after slumber}
\textit{In unvanquishable number!} \textsuperscript{159}

The students also took the leading part in the movement in the princely states.\textsuperscript{160}

In absence of a considerable Muslim population the August disturbances did not witness any instance of communal violence in the province. The Muslim community, as a whole, kept aloof from the movement.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Ibid}, P.70

\textsuperscript{159} Chief secretary to Government of Orissa to Additional Secretary to Government of India, dtd.11/40/1942, \textit{Home Dep'tt, (Poll)}, File no. 3/34/42.

\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Home deptt. (poll)}, File no.3/90/42.

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{HFMU papers}, R-1, File no.46/3, p.4.
Industrially backward, there were not many labour strikes in the province. However, the labour was sympathetic towards the Congress cause. On 12th August about three hundred labourers working on the aerodrome at Choudwar struck work for few hours as a protest against the arrest of the Congress leaders.162

Women's participation was evident in the initial phase of the movement when the disturbances were confined to the urban areas. Large number of women comprising of mostly school and college girls participated in the demonstrations.163 But as movement started shifting towards the countryside, active women's participation almost ceased to exist. The reason for this was the eruption of violence which was not conducive for active woman participation. Their sphere of activities remained limited to the constructive programme of the Congress. The women, however, had to bear the brunt of repression more severely. With the arrival of troops, the men abandoned their villages leaving behind women who were subjected to torture by the troops.164

Other than picketing of liquor, ganja and tari shops Congress also presented an alternative to the government by its constructive programme. The crux of the Congress constructive programme was encouragement of local self sufficiency. Farmers were asked to shift to food corps and to store food grains in this extra ordinary situation. Charakhhas were distributed to reduce the dependency on market for clothes and this programme received encouraging response from the people.165 The Congress tried to project itself as an alternative to the government in the wake of general belief that the downfall of the British empire was a matter of days. Attacks on ganja and tari and liquor shops were one of the essential ingredients of constructive programme. It was wide spread in the tribal areas of Koraput district.166

162. Home Deptt.(pol.),Fortnightly reports from the government of Orissa for first half of August,1942,File no.18/8/42.
163. HFMUPapers,R-1,File no.46/3,p.12.
164. Home Deptt.(pol.),File no.3/90/42
165. Reports from PCCs, AICC Papers,File no.p.22(part-1).dtd.15/3/1942.
An interesting feature of the Quit India Movement was that even when in its second stage, it had spread out from bigger towns to the countryside. It led to very few anti-landlord actions. The targets of attack were limited to the symbols of British authority. Despite the eruption of widespread violence, the peasants did not put their agrarian demands. This was marked in contrast to the pattern of events in the earlier campaigns of mass agitation against the British launched by the Congress in 1920-22 and 1930-34. This can be attributed to the intensity of anti-British feeling in the unusual circumstances of 1942 which meant that all other contradictions were pushed into the background.

The Quit India movement was most widespread in the coastal districts of Cuttack and Balasore and this had a good deal to do with the immediacy of the war and the pattern of mobilisation. Exposed to the danger of an enemy invasion which seemed imminent in the early months of 1942, the denial policy of the government and the consequent widespread of rumours caused hardships to the helpless population and to a large extent added to the feeling of insecurity and frustration. The common man in the coastal areas was guided by the feeling that the British were fighting their last battle to hold on to their position in the country. The anti-British feelings had become so pronounced that the people had even started expressing pro-Japanese sentiments openly. The sub-inspector of police of the Eraama P.S reported that Congress workers of the area were moving about in the coastal villages, and telling the people that the Japanese would attack India from that side and they would like men who would kill officials and burn government properties. 167 It was on these issues of local grievances that the Congress mobilised the populations for the Quit India movement.

Moreover, the coastal district of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore had been the traditional centres of nationalist activities during the earlier mass movements.

Their longer association with the British ideas and institutions\(^{168}\) had helped the people of these three districts to be in a position of authority. Naturally, most of the prominent provincial leaders hailed from these districts and the two Congress ashrams "Bharati Mandir" and "Satyabadi" which had been the citadels of political activities in the province were situated in Cuttack and Puri districts respectively.\(^{169}\)

As evident from the increase in membership and popularity of the Gandhian constructive programme, the DCCs, were better organised in the coastal districts than in the interior.\(^{170}\)

Puri district which had been a traditional center for nationalistic activities during the previous mass movements remained quiet during the Quit India movement. In Ganjam also the movement was not that widespread.\(^{171}\) This, to a large extent can be attributed to the fact that the leaders in these districts did not actively support the Congress-led movement. It was due to their dominant influence in those areas that the masses stayed away from the movement. The "satyabadi" group led by Godabarish Mishra and Nilakantha Das had become very critical of the provincial leadership during the late 1930's and had openly expressed their disapproval of the Gandhian methods.\(^{172}\)

Nilakantha Das and Godabarish Mishra subsequently had broken away from the Congress with their supporters and formed the Coalition Ministry in 1941.\(^{173}\) It was largely due to their following in Puri and Ganjam districts that these districts remained quiet during the Quit India movement, thus pointing to the critical role of the leadership.

\(^{168}\) When East India Company conquered Orissa in 1803, it established direct rule only in the Moghalbandi districts, Koraput and Ganjam districts joined the British province later. N.K. Jit, \textit{op.cit}, pp.2-3.

\(^{169}\) Two Bachelors of Arts, \textit{op.cit}, p.334.


\(^{171}\) \textit{HFMUPapers}, R-1, File no.46/3, pp.27-33.

\(^{172}\) Governor of Orissa to the Viceroy, \textit{Linlithgow Papers}, No.84, dtd.29/4/1942.

In the absence of a tradition of high level of nationalistic activities, Sambalpur district was relatively quiet during Quit India movement and the demonstrations against the arrest of the Congress leaders in the districts did not go beyond occasional protest meetings and two instances of burning of records in schools.\textsuperscript{174}

The Government's report regarding the disturbances in the Koraput district makes an interesting reading: "In the Koraput district where the trouble for a time being was wide spread, the ignorant hill tribes who had no idea of politics had been duped, partly by attractive promises that there would be no rents, no taxes, no forest laws and no shandy dues in a full Congress regime and partly by playing on their superstition." The rise in prices and lack of food stuffs and other articles of popular consumption spread a sense of grievance. There is however, no evidence to show that this was the main incentive behind the disturbances or more than a mere contributing factor.\textsuperscript{175}

The report sought to create the impression that the hill tribes were duped and their superstitions played upon for bringing them out. The illiterate masses were misled by the Congress and came out only to share the loot.

But the fact remains that the Quit India movement was not only the occasion when the Congressmen had mobilised the population of Koraput against the oppressive rule of the colonial administration. Although the Congress had not struck any roots in the district till the 1930's, office acceptance by the Congress in 1937 and subsequent intensive efforts by the ministry to popularise Gandhi's creed and Congress ideals had been a great success in this part of the province. The increase in the Congress primary membership was striking. In October 1938, it stood at 50,048. (Koraput district was second only to Cuttack district which had a

\textsuperscript{174} \textit{HFMU Papers}, R-1, File No.46/3, p.34.

membership of 58,878). The enthusiasm generated by the PCC was such that there was virtual deification of Gandhi and at some places "temple ritual took place at the Congress office." The effect of Gandhi’s popularity in the area can be seen from the fact that Laxman Naik, the president of the Primary Congress Committee at Mathili and many adivasi supporters had given up hunting and eating meat.

Moreover, Malkanagiri, where the movement was most intense in Koraput district had a rich legacy of popular movements. Koraput had a long tradition of fituri and Laxman Naik (who led the movement in malkanagiri) had come in contact with Ramachandra kutia, a koya youth who had joined the fituri and Sitaram Raju, who had raised the banner of revolt against bethi and oppressive forest rules in 1922-24. His association with these rebel leaders gave him the opportunity of going round the area as did his subsequent interest in astrology and medicine (known locally as desari traits). This in turn helped him to strike roots among the people of Malkanagiri area.

The war time hardship and the repressive measures of the police and the estate had stirred the hill tribes to strive for establishing a 'national government' where there would be no rent, no taxes, no forest laws and shandy dues. The government puzzled at the unexpected enthusiasm demonstrated by the unlettered tribals and eager to blame the Congress for the disturbances, charged it with the responsibility for inciting the tribals thereby understating the depth of penetration of the nationalistic ideas and the economic issues involved.

179. B.Pati,op,cit,p.191.
The participants in the Quit India movement came from a very broad social background. Although a systematic study of the social composition of the leadership as well as the participants in the movement has not been undertaken, yet, an over view of caste titles of the people arrested and the list of the dead reflects wider social participation in the movement. However, in the absence of any available data it would be unwise to draw a generalized conclusion because caste titles are not uniform throughout the province and some of the caste titles like Jena, Sahoo, Behera, Das are not confined to any particular caste.

There is no doubt that the Quit India movement had something to do with the achievement of independece. The movement failed to end the British rule in India. But it did reflect, on the otherhand, the anger of the people and their capacity to strike a severe blow at the government. It exposed the limitations of the government forces in handling such a popular upsurge. It also became clear during the Quit India agitation that the government would not be in a position to suppress another movement of such magnitude with forces available with it.

The Quit India, in a sense was also an indicator for the British to look for an honourable withdrawal. Now there could be little bargaining between the Congress and the Government on the issue of independence itself. As Mridula Mukherjee has rightly remarked, "The great significance of this historic movement was that it placed the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the national movement."