CHAPTER V

EMERGENCE OF NEW FORCES

On 26 January 1930 an independence pledge was taken by the Congressmen at different places in the country. The pledge denounced the British for having ruined India in all spheres and asserted that it was a crime against man and God to submit to such a rule. In a sense this inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement, the second major mass movement, against colonialism in India. On the occasion of the independence pledge, as well as in the subsequent Salt Satyagraha, the Congress workers of Orissa actively participated. To coincide with the breaking of salt law at Dandi by Gandhi and his followers on 13 April 1930, the Orissa Congressmen concentrated at Inchudi in Balasore district (and at many other places also). Since manufacture of salt was a nationalist demand since late 19th century in Orissa, the gathering there became so vast that it was 'difficult for the police to control'. The police was reported to 'have persuaded' local people 'to manufacture salt in their houses' and to refrain from joining the Congress organised Salt Satyagraha.¹ This indicates the success of the Salt Satyagraha at Inchudi, which, sources claimed, was second only to Dandi Salt Satyagraha in terms of the volume of participants.²

¹. FRBO, File No.18/V of 1930, April, Home Poll.
². Mahatab, Sadhanar Pathe, p.128.
The spectacular success of Salt Satyagraha and the subsequent Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 seems to be in contrast with the Congress development in the state during the intervening period between Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience, if the discussion is not developed beyond the chapter entitled 'Aftermath of Non-Cooperation'. But, the link between the 'aftermath' (discussed earlier) and the Satyagraha phase is provided by the developments preceding 1930. The present chapter attempts to examine these developments.

We trace the pre-Civil Disobedience nationalist wave to 1928 and 1929. But in no way does it prevent us from seeing the continuity of an underlying nationalist current, if not an intense wave, throughout the period of the 'aftermath'. Despite the atmosphere of frustration and apathy, the UPCC, with some sincere workers and with an organisational network, continued to make efforts throughout the period (1923-27) to overcome the sense of passivity and advance towards a mass movement. The first section of this chapter deals with the continuity -- nationalist efforts during the period, 1923-27. From the last part of 1927 onwards this process (the efforts to advance towards mass struggle) accelerated and coincided with the emergence

of youth forces, caste movements, labour and tribal upsurge, women's movement and Anti-Simon Commission Movement. These issues are dealt with in detail in the second section. The question of co-ordination between the Swarajists and non-Swarajists that was partially addressed earlier would find further discussion here. However, there was nothing unusual in such co-ordination because mass movement was the ultimate goal of both the trends and efforts for mass mobilisation were to be the main meeting ground for all Congressmen.

I

From the view of organisational efforts at building a mass base, the period between 1923 and 1927 may be divided into two phases, i.e., from 1923 to the middle of 1924 and from mid-1924 to mid-1927. The first phase witnessed extreme disorganisation of the party, while the second phase marked a rise in nationalist tempo at least in the rank and file. This has been partially touched upon in course of our earlier discussion on regionalism and the khadi campaign. Here the discussion would be confined to nationalists' attempt to consolidate their forces, as pointed out in the beginning.

IA

In December 1922, not less than 120 delegates from Orissa attended the Gaya Congress. Although many of them

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had also used the occasion to go on religious pilgrimage and mobilisation had been done on that line, the participation was very encouraging at a time when a full scale decline had already set in.

The Gaya Congress witnessed a split in party. Further disillusionment gripped the rank and file. The people, the passive supporters of the party, also maintained a distance from the movement. In order to clarify the confusion the second rung leaders of the Congress organised two public meetings at Cuttack on 8th and 9th of January 1923. In the meetings held at Juma Masjid and Paltan Masjid of the town, the speakers, which included Rajkrishna Bose, Narayan Birabar Samant and Ram Prasad Singh, described the split as a healthy trend in a vast assembly like the Congress. It would not have an adverse impact on the forthcoming movement, they argued. In a bold move, the UPCC, in its Cuttack meeting on 12 January 1923, condemned the death sentences on 172 people involved in Chauri Chaura incident. Even the Dipika in a relatively moderate tone appealed to the Viceroy to pardon them, 'for death sentences on so many people was inhuman'.

5. Rama Devi, op. cit., p.70; Seba, 4 Nov. 1922.
On 1 February 1923, three youths, Pranakrishna Padhiary, Rajkrishna Bose and Gokulanand Mohanty, formed a district committee (Cuttack) on national education and decided at Jagatsinghpur to (1) prepare the syllabus so as to incorporate a nationalist line of thought; (2) examine all the textbooks taught in the national schools and, if necessary, to change them; (3) frame the rules and regulations of the USSP (National University); (4) make efforts to spread national education; (5) and collect funds for the schools. But such attempts at revitalizing national education were without any follow up measures later.

On 18 March 1923 the anniversary of Gandhi's arrest was celebrated by the UPCC at various places in an attempt to create some political momentum. Meetings were held at Puri, Bolgarh, Berboi, Jajpur, Kantabania, Balasore, Jaleswar, Ganjam, Jharsuguda and Cuttack. Hartal was also observed and bonfires of foreign cloth were organised at certain nationalist pockets like Cuttack, Kendrapada and Jagatsinghpur. Similarly, in a press statement on 16 June, Gopabandhu Choudhury appealed to the party workers to celebrate 'Gopabandhu Das Arrest Anniversary Day' on 26 June. Accordingly, the 'Day' was celebrated at a few pockets such as

Cuttack, Puri, Satyavadi, Bir Ramchandrapur, Sarangajodi, Bolgarh, Kakatpur and Jharsuguda. Meetings were held and kirtans organised on the occasion.  

On 1 May 1923 Nagpur Flag Satyagraha began on the issue of police objection to a procession carrying the national flag. Volunteers insisted on their right to carry flags where they willed, but the police promulgated section 144 under Cr. P.C. and arrested the volunteers. This development soon spread to other parts of the country. Volunteers came from different places to join the volunteers at Nagpur.

The Satyagraha had its impact on the Congress workers in Orissa. The Balasore DCC, in its meeting at Guamal sometime in June 1923, passed resolutions to send volunteers as well as funds to Nagpur, while on 15 July the Jharsuguda unit of the Congress sent 4 volunteers and Khurda unit one volunteer there. The Satyagraha created new hopes among the youths in the Congress. Harekrishna Mahatab, who was released in late June 1923, in the capacity of UPCC Secretary called for a party meeting on 25 July at Cuttack to (1) pass a resolution to start a Satyagraha in Orissa on Nagpur line; (2) reorganise the khadi work and to apply for a loan from AICC to accelerate it; and (3) look into the question of

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15. Samaj, 7 July 1923.
national education 'which could no more be ignored'. On 18 July the UPCC observed a Flag Day. While in the latter part of May the over enthusiastic Balasore DCC (Mahatab came from Balasore) approved a Salt Satyagraha and the manufacture of 'illicit salt' in the coast on Nagpur Flag Satyagraha model, there were no follow up measures, either by the UPCC or by the overenthusiastic Balasore DCC.

The main reasons for such passivity were lack of cadres and large scale police repression on the slightest pretext. This was evident from one incident in March 1923. On the occasion of 'Gandhi Arrest Day' (18 March) the UPCC had appealed for a hartal. But the message could not reach a village Bhimdasapur, supposedly a nationalist hold, adjoining Satyavadi due to lack of workers. The weekly hat (market) of the village, which could have been a major area of nationalist operation (if it had been Non-Cooperation), thus started as usual. But thanks to the arrival of the alert police to stop the hartal, the people realised that there might be some Congress programme on the agenda. Accordingly, they observed a hartal in the hat.

17. Samaj, 21 July 1923.
18. FRBO, File No. 25 of 1923, July, Home Poll.
After his release on 8 January, Govind Mishra came to speak in a public meeting at Puri some time in February, only to be 'gagged' by the local police immediately. On 3 April 1923, Gopabandhu Choudhury came to attend a meeting at Banapur in Puri district. A procession was organised on the occasion, which was quickly disrupted by the police. Some processionists were even beaten up mercilessly, the nationalist sources reported.

The leadership also attributed the passivity to repression and lack of cadres. While referring to it in 1925, Pranakrishna Padhiary criticized those disillusioned cadres who believed that one year's efforts would be sufficient to mobilise the people, who were suppressed for hundreds of years.

Despite the repression and lack of a popular following the Congress managed to hold some conferences in the year. On 22/23 April the Balasore District Conference, on 13 May the Bhadrak Sub-Divisional Congress, on 29 June the Jagatsinghpur Sub-Divisional Conference, and between 10 to 12 November the Ganjam District Conference were held.

22. Samaj, 7 April 1923.
25. Samaj, 26 May 1923; Sadhana, 8 July 1923.
26. Samaj, 7 July 1923.
27. Searchlight, 16 Dec. 1923; Dipika, 24 Nov. 1923.
The release of some leaders like Harekrishna Mahatab, Nilakantha Das, Jadumani Mangaraj, Anant Mishra and some Kanika convicts, including leaders like Santha Behera, Gayadhar Samal and Baishnav Mohanty by June 1923, helped the successful organisation of these meetings and conferences. The split in the Congress and the divergent political opinions of the leaders did not stand in the way of their participation in these common meetings. Thus, the Ganjam District Conference witnessed Nilakantha Das and Niranjan Patnaik, leaders from two different Congress camps, suggesting to the audience that they should stick to the Gandhian constructive programme.

By June 1924 elections for different district and local boards were held, in which the Congress candidates had a spectacular victory everywhere. In Cuttack they had a simple majority, while in Balasore and Puri district boards, they won more than 2/3 seats. Towards the end of the month, two senior as well as very articulate leaders of the party, Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mahapatra were released from jail after 2 years. Moreover by then the party activists had been able to consolidate themselves.

29. Dipika, 24 Nov. 1923.
30. FRBO File No. 25 of 1924, June, Home Poll.
which was reflected in their holding the annual session of provincial Congress at Cuttack on 28/29 June 1924 and thereby marginalising the non-Congress Oriya unionists. After the formation of the UPCC in December 1920, this was the first ever annual session of the Congress to be held in Orissa. All these events created some kind of enthusiasm among the party rank and file and helped the scene of passivity to change marginally.

The increasing strength of the party was further demonstrated by some of the resolutions passed in the provincial Congress. The UPCC (1) endorsed the non-cooperation and constructive programme of the National Congress; (2) supported the Akali Movement in the Punjab, 'Untouchables' movement in Bhaiyak and the math movement in Tarakeswar; (3) demanded 'amalgamation' 'without which the natural development of Orissa would never be possible'; (4) demanded that the lower caste be allowed entry in schools and temples; (5) showed its concern for the development of national education and opposed the B&O Government proposal that instead of setting up a University at Phulwari (Patna) at the cost of 50 lakh rupees the money could be utilised for the development of primary education; (6) resolved to set up an enquiry committee to look into the peasants' discontents in Kanika; (7) expressed concern over the 'inhuman' rule in the native

31. Dipika, 12 July 1924; Searchlight, 9 July 1924.
states and decided to write to each native state to improve the condition of the native people there; (8) resolved to constitute a committee to enquire into the endowment properties (The report would be ready before December 1924); and (9) constituted a committee comprising Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Harekrishna Mahatab, Jagabandhu Singh, Nilakantha Das and Gopabandhu Choudhury to suggest permanent solution of floods. In a significant move, the first resolution, which reiterated its faith in non-cooperation, mentioned the boycott of councils as the last resort and was seconded by none other than Nilakantha Das, the Swarajist leader from Orissa in Central Assembly.  

The provincial Congress of 1924 was significant for various reasons which showed the firmer footing of the party after the Non-Cooperation Movement. First, Madhu Sudan Das, the veteran liberal, attended it and enrolled himself as a primary member of the party. Secondly, in order to fight communalism as well as untouchability, common dinners were served to the delegates, and young Congressmen irrespective of their caste and religion served the dishes on the occasion. Thirdly, unlike the resolutions on many earlier

32. Dipika, 12 July 1924.
33. FRBO, File No.25 of 1924, July, Home Poll.
34. Ibid.
35. Searchlight, 9 July 1924.
occasions in 1923, the resolutions of 1924 witnessed follow up measures.

In July the momentum was sustained in the form of the rousing receptions given to Gopabandhu at Satyavadi and some other places. Funds were collected on these occasions which the party badly needed. 36

So far as the question of native state was concerned, as soon as the party strength increased to a certain level in May 1924, the official report observed that the Congressmen were rapidly moving to start a 'fresh agitation' particularly in Kanika. 37 Speaking on the occasion of the UPCC of 1924, Govind Mishra strongly criticized the Kanika prince and pointed out that there existed a close link between the prince and the British Government. 38 Other leaders also showed their concern over the deteriorating administration in the native states in general. As a consequence the resolution on native states had been passed. Soon after the session, Nanda Kishore Das, on behalf of the UPCC, served a notice to all states relating to the unsatisfactory improvement in administration there and exhorting the princes to do it at the earliest possible moment. 39

36. Ibid.
37. FRBO, File No. 25 of 1924, May, Home Poll.
38. FRBO, File No. 25 of 1924, July, Home Poll.
But this time the Congressmen were pragmatic. Keeping the various constraints in mind, they tried to settle the issue in Kanika amicably. Even the letter to the prices was written in a relatively moderate tone. Further, in early December 1924, Gopabandhu Das visited Kanika and struck a compromise with the prince. Accordingly, criminal cases were to be withdrawn by both the parties - tenants and the prince. Under the circumstances this was perhaps a good deal from the tenants' points of view.

There was a growing antipathy towards the mahants of the maths in the nationalist circle. The mahants were supposedly the guardians of the religious endowment properties, but they used them extravagantly for their personal use. A loyalist organ, the Gadjat Basini, even wrote that many of them used motor cars and kept Seba dasi (temple girls) in the name of religion. The Akali Movement in the Punjab, fighting since March 1922 for reforms in Gurudwaras, inspired the Orissa Congressmen to launch a similar movement for reform of the maths. This was reflected in the UPCC resolution at Cuttack in 1924. In February 1925, a Mahavir Dal formed in Puri, the centre of maths, 'with the object of restoring the sanctity of holy places' and bringing

41. Gadjat Basini, 15 Nov. 1924.
42. Dipika, 12 July 1924.
religious reforms in the [maths]. Following the news of a dinner party being organised by the [mahant] of Emar Math, Puri, in honour of the Lt. Governor of B&O Government on 22 April 1925, the Puri Congress called a hartal on the next day. The dinner party, in which 12,000 rupees from the [math] funds had been allegedly spent, was strongly resented by the people. The resentment was reflected in the spontaneous response to the hartal. In the evening (23 April), a mass meeting was held and resolutions were passed condemning the [mahant], describing his action as anti-religious and congratulating the people of the town for their response to the hartal. Following the incident, Gopabandhu Das and 7 other leaders were 'gagged' under section 144 of Cr. P.C. Henceforth, the venue of the [math] movement shifted to the councils where the Swarajists demanded legislation for a proper popular control of religious endowment properties.

In 1923-24, after the settlement operation, the Government proposed a land revenue hike in Orissa. The proposal

44. Samaj, 25 April 1925.
45. Dipika, 2 May 1925.
46. Samaj, 25 April 1925.
was for a 25% hike on raiyati and 50% hike on baiyafti and nijcha land. The nationalist press extensively wrote against the proposed hike. In January, the Dipika pointed out that the settlement and consequent enhancement came at a time when the condition of the peasantry was deteriorating day by day. The agitated nationalists held a mass meeting at Puri on 29 March 1925 to protest against the enhancement. An action committee with both Swarajists and non-Swarajists like Gopabandhu Das, Jagabandhu Singh, Artatrana Mishra, Banamali Das (Puri district board chairman) and Dibya Singh Panigrahi was formed in the meeting to chalk out ways and means of extending the anti-revenue hike agitation to the villages. The Balasore District Conference at Sore on 4/5 April 1925 also passed a similar resolution protesting against the hike, and formed a committee to start a prolonged agitation on the issue.

Floods, a chronic problem in Orissa, had attracted the nationalists' attention for the previous half century. In the changed scenario, the Congressmen attempted to mobilise the flood victims to demand a permanent solution to

49. Samaj, 7 Feb. 1925.
51. Samaj, 4 April 1925; Searchlight, 17 April 1925.
52. Samaj, 11 April 1925.
the problem. In the UPCC of 1924 a resolution was passed to that effect and a committee was constituted comprising both Swarajists and non-Swarajists like Nilakantha, Jagabandhu Singh, Harekrishna Mahatab, Bhagirathi Mahapatra and Gopabandhu Choudhury. This provided support to the Congress attempts for mass mobilisation. On 12 August 1927 a committee called Banya Pratikar Samity (Flood Prevention Committee) was formed under the presidentship of Gopabandhu Das. While articulating the purpose of the committee, Gopabandhu wrote that, since no amount of (flood) relief could solve the chronic problem, it (committee) would organise the flood victims to demand prevention of floods.

On 22/23 October 1927 the first conference of the flood victims of Orissa was held at Cuttack. More than 350 delegates from Cuttack, Puri and Balasore, the three flood affected districts, attended it. Delegates even from far interior villages like Kakatpur, Brahmagiri (Puri), Bhograi and Baliapal (Balasore) came to join the conference. Decisions were taken to form district, sub-division, thana and even village units of the conference to consistently fight for the prevention of floods. To make it broad-based some landlords and zamindars such as Narayan Dhir Narendra (Madhupur prince) and Srichandra Ghose (zamindar), who were

53. Dipika, 12 July 1924.
also flood victims, were invited to the meeting. The conference passed resolutions:

(1) demanding the constitution of a flood enquiry committee with a non-official majority by the Government;
(2) to appoint a separate enquiry committee to trace the history of floods as well as to calculate the loss caused by floods in Orissa;
(3) to demand suspension of settlement operations and of collection of revenue in the flood affected areas;
(4) and to protest against the hike in land revenue.

By the beginning of November 1927, all the district units were formed, and by 12 November they had held their conferences mostly at centrally located villages such as Bhakud (Cuttack), Nimapada (Puri) and Balasore (Balasore district). The State committee was expected to form all the sub-division and thana units by the end of November 1927. The flood victims' agitation, which began in late 1927 and continued till the end of the year, provided a link with the new, emerging forces in 1928 and 1929. This forms the core of our discussion in the following section.

The developments between 1923 and 1927 demonstrate that the Congressmen were not confined only to the construc-

57. Sadhana, 3 Nov. 1927.
tive programme or speeches and debates in the councils or factionalism and regionalism in the party. They were constantly looking for opportunities to transform the 'non-active phase' into an 'active phase' of mass action. In fact because of their constant attempts, the people retained them in leadership when the new forces emerged in 1928 and 1929 and the movement was launched in 1930.

II

The two years preceding 1930 witnessed the beginning of a new phase in the Congress movement. New forces of labour, women, tribals and peasants, youths and 'low castes' rose and hectic nationalist campaigns began. Later, they together advanced civil disobedience in different parts of the country. It all began with the announcement of an all-white Simon Commission on 8 November 1927. Nationalists of different varieties showed extraordinary unity in their opposition to the Commission. New hopes were created for a broad united front to challenge colonialism in India.

In Orissa, the nationalist wave dated back to the flood victims' agitation in October and November 1927 and Gandhi's timely visit in December 1927. To campaign for khadi, Gandhi came on a Padyatra to Berhampur on 4 December 1927 and planned to cover all districts of Orissa within a period of 20 days. A reception committee, including people

from various nationalist groups like Hindu Mahasabha (Jana-
kinath Bose) and Liberals (Sridhar Mohanty), was constitu-
ted by Gandhians like Govind Mishra and Gopabandhu Das, who
co-ordinated Gandhi's Orissa programme. The coming toge-
ther of different nationalist trends on this occasion was
a significant development of these recent years. It widened
the scope for a combined nationalist showdown with the colo-
nial state in near future.

At Berhampur, Gandhi addressed a women's meeting on
4 December and suggested that they should boycott saris
made of foreign cloth and foreign ornaments, should not
consider anyone untouchable, to spin charkha at least half
an hour a day, and to liberally contribute to the khadi
fund. In a separate meeting of students there, he advised
them to realise their inner strength through prayer. Two
purses were presented to him, one by the Oriya and the other
by the Telugu people of Berhampur. On 6 December 1927 in
a meeting at Chhatrapur, another outlying tract like Berham-
pur, Gandhi touched upon the issue of regionalism and
requested the people to refrain from the 'unhealthy compe-
tition between sister languages'. Further he stated that
'provincialism...prevented the motion of nationalism'.

60. Dipika, 26 Nov. 1927.
61. Collected Works of Gandhi, 1927-28, Vol.XXXV, Ahmeda-
bad, 1969, pp.359-60.
62. Ibid.
In Khurda elaka, the police had warned people not to attend Gandhi's meeting, lest 'they (people) would be trampled upon by horses and shot down by soldiers'. Gandhi addressed two meetings in the elaka, one at Banapur on 8 December and the other at Bolgarh on 10 December 1927, which was a direct challenge to the fear-creating police. Furthermore, in both the places he referred to the issue of fear and described it as 'more deadly than disease'. He said: 'I feel humiliated that whereas I cannot put up with oppression from foreigners, country's zamindars and officials have been frightening people'. He advised people to fear no one except God. The fear felt by the local people worried Gandhi so much that in a write up, written in Orissa and published in the Young India (22 December 1927), he mentioned that 'Never since the days of Champaran (1917) have I witnessed such death like quiet as I did on entering political Orissa through Banapur. And I fear that the quiet in Orissa was worse than Champaran.... The workers of Orissa have to teach the ryot to shed the oppressive nervous timidity bordering on cowardice'.

Khadi being the main message of his Padyatra, Gandhi everywhere emphasised its spread and advised the Khadi workers 'to realise the spirit of the movement' and to 'shape'

64. Ibid., pp.369 and 372.
their 'life accordingly'. It is needless to repeat that Gandhi's visit and speeches activated the Congress workers on the eve of the Anti-Simon Commission Movement in Orissa.

Simon Boycott

Sometime between December 1927 and early January 1928, the UPCC in a meeting resolved to boycott the Simon Commission and to organise a hartal all over the State on 3 February 1928 as a mark of protest. The UPCC resolution was endorsed by different DCCs. For example, the Cuttack DCC in its meeting on 15 January 1928 endorsed the resolution and appealed to its members to make the ensuing hartal a great success. The hartal was a great success in Cuttack town and was reported to be the biggest of its kind in recent years. In the morning the Congress workers went in a procession shouting slogans and singing national songs and appealed to people to observe the hartal. All shops and godowns were closed. Except for one student in the medical school, no one attended classes in schools and colleges. The evening show of films was cancelled. This was followed by a public meeting in the town. Presided over by a liberal, Laxmi Narayan Sahu, it condemned the

68. Samaj, 8 Feb. 1928.
Simon Commission, for it had ignored Indian opinion, requested the Council members to withdraw their co-operation with the Commission, demanded that Indians be empowered to assess the constitutional status of the country, and condemned the Cuttack municipality for objecting to the observance of the hartal. In other places like Balasore, Sora, Khandatapada, Basta, Jaleswar, Bhadrak, Bhandari Pokhari in Balasore district and Sambalpur, Bargarh and Jharsuguda in Sambalpur district also a hartal with closure of shops, boycott of schools and meetings in the evening was observed. The hartal also spread to some villages such as Tihidi, Guamal, Ramchandrapur and GujiDarada in Bhadrak Sub-division.

Between February and April 1928, different district conferences were held. These resolved to boycott the Simon Commission. In early February the Ganjam District Conference at Adapada, on 8/9 April the Cuttack Conference at Kenduapatna, on 19/20 April the Puri Conference at Kakatpur and the Balasore Conference at Dhamnagar passed resolutions to that effect. In Sambalpur, a public meeting was held


70. *Ibid*.


73. *Dipika*, 5 May 1928.

during the period to boycott the Commission. The process culminated when the UPCC in its Puri meeting on 19 August 1928 passed a resolution calling upon the people of Utkal to effectively demonstrate their attitude through a complete boycott of the Commission. Presided over by Gopabandhu Choudhury, who had virtually taken over the leadership of the party after the untimely death of Gopabandhu Das on 17 June 1928, the UPCC meeting observed unprecedented unanimity in last 5 years amongst the members in their approach to various issues.

While the nationalists as a whole, under the leadership of the Congress Party, were unanimous in their boycott plan, the loyalists decided to co-operate with the Commission on the pretext of pleading for the cause of the amalgamation and the creation of a separate Orissa province. Srikrishna Mahapatra, the ex-Police Superintendent of Cuttack during Kanika firing episode in 1922 and presently a B&O Council member, described the grievance (of the Indians that they were not members of the Commission) as 'purely sentimental' and the boycott as 'fatal to the interest of the province'. He said that the only course left to the people of Orissa was to co-operate with the Commission. Laxmidhar Mohanty, a zamindar member of the provincial council from Orissa,

75. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
also supported the move for co-operation with the Simon Commission.  

The loyalists like Rajendra Narayan Bhanj Deo (Kanika prince) and Laxmidhar Mohanty formed a part of the seven member committee from B&O formed to work with the Commission. Earlier, under the banner of Orissa Liberal League, the loyalists had sent a telegram welcoming the Commission.

The general response of the liberals and a section of the nationalist press, which had taken the liberals' (non-Congress nationalists) side on many occasions in the past, was quite negative towards the Commission as well as towards the welcome move of the loyalists. A large section of the liberals such as Laxmi Narayan Sahu, Mathuranand Mohanty, Kritibas Nanda and Anand Das, who initially formed the above mentioned Liberal League, changed their opinion and deserted the loyalists after the 'telegram' issue. The Dipika wrote in late February 1928 that the Commission should go back because the majority of the people didn't like it. This was reflected in the anti-Simon Commission hartal. Referring to the success of the hartal it pointed out that Orissa could no longer afford to co-operate with the Government by welcoming the Commission. In the past she achieved nothing by her co-operation with the Government. Furthermore, when the rest of the country was unanimous in its

79. Ibid.
81. Dipika, 26 May 1928.
82. Ibid.
boycott plan, how could Orissa take an isolated stand? Referring to the loyalists' welcome, another paper satirically predicted that the Kanika prince would be the Governor designate, when the separate province (of Orissa) was granted by the Commission.

Gopabandhu Das, as the editor of the Samaj, regularly reported about the stiff resistance that the Simon Commission faced in different cities within the country. He described the boycott of the Commission as unprecedented in the last 10 years and ridiculed the Commission's claim in England that it was welcomed by the Indians. Referring to the non-inclusion of any Indian member in the Commission, he pointed out that if not the Congressmen, at least some loyalists, or liberals should have been included in it as a reward for their unqualified support to the British Government in the past. While congratulating the people for the success of the Anti-Simon Commission Movement in the month of February and March 1928, Gopabandhu urged them to foil all measures of the anti-people Government in future and requested the 'educated and leader like people' to lead them in that regard.

84. Dipika, 3 March 1928.
85. Reported in Searchlight, 4 Nov. 1928.
87. Ibid.
Nationalists' objection to the Simon Commission reached its height when Lingaraj Mishra, the Congress member from South Puri in the B&O Council, in a hard hitting speech condemned the non-inclusion of Indian members in the Commission as a 'direct challenge by the British Parliament to the sense of honour and self-respect of the Indians. He traced the history of the 'Oriya Movement', and remarked that always its petitions were consigned to the waste-paper basket. That is why Orissa was 'unanimous in her decision' that she would have 'nothing to do with the sham Simon Commission' or 'with any Committee or Commission' Orissa's grievances could be redressed only by 'throwing in (our) lot with the rest of India and by having nothing to do with this colossal hoax', he said. Lingaraj described the people who planned to welcome the Commission as 'title bearers and title seekers who were too anxious to prove true to their salt and to co-operate with the Government in any circumstances and at any cost'.

Bardoli Satyagraha

In 1927, the Bombay Government announced a revenue hike of 22% in the Bardoli taluka in the Surat district of Gujarat. The hike led to preparations for a no-revenue campaign by Congress leaders like Vallabhbhai Patel in Bardoli. Throughout the last quarter of 1927 and first

89. Sumit Sarkar, op. cit., p.277.
half of 1928 'Bardoli' intensified the nationalist wave in many parts of the country.

In Orissa, the news (of preparation for no-revenue campaign) had great impact in three ways. First, it led to the organisation of a no-rent campaign in some native States like Bamanda and Nilagiri. Secondly, it provoked the Congressmen to select a pocket (consequently Khurda was selected) to prepare a similar agitation. Thirdly, the Bardoli issue was highlighted in the nationalist press and appeals were made for people's co-operation with the movement there. We shall go on to discuss the impact of these three factors. This we shall do in reverse order.

(i) In mid-1928 the nationalist press highlighted the Bardoli issue and extended its support to the peasants there. In an editorial in the Samaj (23 May 1928), Gopabandhu described 'Bardoli' as the beginning of the next phase of the mass movement in India. The victory of Bardoli peasants would mean the victory of India and defeat of the British Government. He pointed out that the victory was inevitable if the people from all corners extended their help to the Satyagraha in their individual capacity. Referring to the monetary contribution from people, Gopabandhu wrote that it was the duty of all freedom loving persons to

90. Dipika, 12 May 1928.
91. Samaj, 23 May 1928.
financially help the Bardoli peasants. It was immaterial whether the latter required such help or not. Since similar agrarian conditions prevailed in Orissa and the people here had taken help from outside on many occasions in the past, 'Bardoli' provided them with the opportunity to repay this help and to share the national responsibility. He stated that even a small amount of money from the poverty-stricken people of Orissa would do, because it was not the amount of money but the concern for the cause that was more important.\footnote{Ibid.}

The UPCC constituted the 'Bardoli Fund' and Gopabandhu, probably in the last writing before his death, appealed to the people to contribute to it. He also asked people to observe Bardoli Day on 12 June and to regularly organise meetings and discussions on Bardoli Satyagraha everywhere in Orissa.\footnote{Samaj, 13 June 1928.} In response to the Congress appeal, some funds came subsequently from different parts of Orissa.\footnote{Ibid.}

(ii) When the Bardoli news broke out, the Orissa Congressmen selected Khurda to start a similar kind of agitation. Like Bardoli, Khurda was a nationalist base since the Non-Cooperation days. The nationalists also discovered many other similarities between Khurda and Bardoli: (A) Both came under the Khasmahal of the Government. (B) Village officers (known as Sarbarkar in Orissa) collected revenue in both the places. By and large, in

\footnote{Ibid.}
both elakas they had been deprived of their traditional tenancy and other rights, and consequently, had become the supporters of the Congress. (C) Like Bardoli, Khurda witnessed an enhancement of revenue in the recent (1923) settlement. In Khurda there was a fresh proposal for a 2 anna revenue hike per rupee in 1927, which was absent in other parts of Orissa. (D) While there was a 30 years settlement in the rest of Orissa, Khurda experienced a 15 years settlement. As a result, from 1837 until 1923, Khurda was settled 5 times, whereas the rest of Orissa was settled only twice. Khurda was even settled in 1867 when the rest of Orissa was exempted due to the great famine of 1866. Similarly, while the Bombay Province had a 30 years settlement, Bardoli had a 20 years settlement. (E) The average size of land holding in Khurda was 1.5 acres, whereas in the rest of Orissa it was 3.23 acres. The Congressmen observed that differences in revenue demands between the Bombay Presidency and Bardoli, the burden on the latter being heavier, helped the Congress there to start an agitation. Similarly they believed, they could do the same in Khurda.95

The nationalists also found some differences between Bardoli and Khurda. Bardoli's size was smaller than that of Khurda sub-division, the population of the former being only 90,000, whilst that of the latter was around 3½ lakhs in 1928. Secondly, the land at Bardoli was fertile and the

economic condition of the people was better - a necessary condition to sustain a movement. But in Khurda, land was not fertile and people were generally very poor. To overcome the first problem, in place of selecting the whole of Khurda sub-division the Congressmen concentrated only on a part called Pichukoli elaka although the whole sub-division was prepared for an agitation based on the Bardoli model.

The immediate cause of the no-revenue agitation was the fresh proposal of 2 anna hike of revenue in a rupee in 1927. On 27 October 1927 the Ryot Association was formed at Khurda and a memorandum was submitted to the Government against the proposal. The Government, on the other hand, instituted Registration camps where the peasants had to register contracts and thereby to accept the enhancement. The Ryot Association appealed to the people to boycott the camps at its meeting. The boycott movement was effective in Pichukoli elaka, 16 miles away from Khurda. On 12 December 1927, the registration camp was opened in the village only to witness an en masse boycott. On 10 December Mahatma Gandhi had just passed by the spot and had advised people to fear no one except God. Gandhi's visit had had a strong impact on the local people. As a way out, unwilling to

sign the contract, the peasants deemed it better to hide themselves at home. The Sub Divisional Officer and other officials went to the houses of some wealthy men in the village like Prabhakar Kar and Sanatan Rath, banged their door, dragged them out and forced them to sign the supposedly 'voluntary' contract. Following their signature, many others signed the contract. In another nearby village, the villagers were threatened and, when that did not work, prosecution and false cases of land encroachment were filed by the registration officer against a number of wealthy men who were also the leaders of the boycott.99 On 12 January 1928, knowing fully well that the movement could not be sustained for long, Godavarish Mishra and 5 other local Congress leaders met the District Collector of Puri and argued for only a 6 paise hike (in place of 2 anna) in a rupee and for a 30 years settlement (in place of 15 years), as in the rest of Orissa. If the Government agreed to their proposal, they promised to request the peasantry to sign the contract. The collector, however, disagreed and issued a fresh notice saying that if the people did not sign the contract at latest by 31 March 1928, the enhancement might rise to more than 2 anna per rupee. The Congress retaliated against this when a protest meeting was held at Khurda on 27 January 1928. Amongst others, Dukhishyam Das, a local leader and an organiser of

99. Ibid., pp.441-42.
the famous Bolgarh Congress of November 1925, addressed the meeting. 100 The Khurda no-revenue hike campaign, however, could not be sustained for long. By February 1928, the people could not withstand the official pressure and signed the contract. The main cause of the failure of the movement was its confinement to Pichukoli alone. Other parts of Khurda did not join it. Many Sarbarkars were dismissed and the comparatively rich peasants were prosecuted on false charges. When these supporters of the movement were singled out, there was no follow-up measure, except for some debates and speeches in the provincial Legislative Council by the Congress members and reporting in the nationalist Press. 101

(iii) The news of Bardoli inspired the tribals and peasants in some princely States like Bamanda, Nilagiri and Kujang to start campaigns against rent hikes. 'Bardoli' helped them to express their resentment in the form of no-rent and other organised movements.

In Bamanda, a native State adjoining Sambalpur, the Meefar Settlement (1923) had enhanced the revenue demand. Dayanand Satpathy, a primary school teacher and the unofficial correspondent of a non-Congress nationalist newspaper the Aasha, published from Berhampur, brought the news of

100. Ibid., pp.443-46.
Bardoli to the state. In a fashion similar to that of Khurda, the gauntias, who collected the rent in the villages on behalf of the native State and were relatively well off, led the peasants against the hike. Sometime in 1928, many gauntias such as Hara Pradhan, Bhagabatia Pradhan, Jagannath Garnaik, Daitari Hota and Bhagaban Patel led nearly 4000 peasants towards the Political Agent's bungalow at Sambalpur to demand redress. A no-rent campaign started with the failure to secure redress. Consequently six gauntias were arrested and four were deprived of their gaunti-rights. Dayanand Satpathy was dismissed from service and declared out of bound from the state. Along with 5 others, he was also 'gagged' for as long as he lived in the State. Thus very soon the movement was ruthlessly suppressed in Bamanda.

Since the beginning of January 1928, Nilagiri, a small native State adjoining Balasore, witnessed a peasant uprising against a rent hike as well as against increases in un-paid forms of labour like bethi and rasad. The custom of unpaid labour had existed for a long time but then it was customary and not very taxing. During British rule the amount of unpaid labour crossed all limits, for the native princes undertook developmental works like construction of

103. Ibid.
roads, canals and buildings on the basis of unpaid labour by the peasants. Specifically, in Nilagiri, where elephants were easily available in the local jungles, bethi was demanded for catching the elephants. One member from each family had to join the hunters and help to form traps to assist the hunters in catching elephants. With the rise in market value of tusks, elephant catching became a profitable business for the prince. Consequently its frequency increased. Furthermore, the operation could only begin during harvest time when elephants were easily located. In 1927 alone, elephant catching operations were organised four times, each operation lasting several days. Moreover, due to erratic firing by the hunters, not less than 20 peasants were killed in 1927. Besides, the State demanded bethi for 15 days continuously and rasad (free supply) of various items in early February 1928 on the occasion of the marriage of the prince's daughter. Unlike in earlier times, the demand had increased manifold to make the marriage gorgeous.

Hearing the news of agitation against illegal revenue demands in other parts of the country (Bardoli), the Nilagiri peasants sent telegrams to the Political Agent and C.F.

105. RECOS, op. cit., pp.67 & 86.
107. Ibid.
Andrews; formed a Sabha called 'Nilagiri Prapidit Praja Sabha' (Nilagiri Oppressed People's Sabha); and started migrating to nearby Balasore from 3 February 1928. In a few days, the number of migrants increased to nearly 2000. 108

On 13 February C.F. Andrews visited the Nilagiri refugee camp at Balasore. Around the same time, the Prajatantra, published by Mahatab, brought out a booklet highlighting the oppression in Nilagiri (Nilagiri Atyachar), and the Balasore Congress workers provided shelter to the refugees. 109 The Samaj also highlighted the issue and lamented that a popular movement all over Orissa was not coming out in support of the peasants of Nilagiri. 110 All these steps established a close link between the Congress and the Nilagiri movement in 1928.

In Kujang, a large zamindari estate adjoining Cuttack, Narayan Birabar Samant, a Congress leader and a member of the B&O Council, in October 1928 organised fishermen, demanding restoration of fishing rights. The zamindar, locally called Raja, had taken away their rights and the fishermen were agitating on this issue for quite some time. The success of Bardoli in August 1928 inspired Narayan to take up the issue two months later in October 1928. 111

111. Searchlight, 4 Nov. 1928.
The people of the princely states had a long tradition of defiance of authority and it would be too simplistic to assign their protest movements over much to Bardoli or to the leadership of the Congress. For example, in 1925 when the Congress movement was at low ebb and there was no such news of 'Bardoli', the ryots of Talcher formed an association named, Saubhagya Samity to bring social reforms and subsequently to start an anti-feudal agitation. Very soon the Samity was banned and its funds, equalling nearly 1,000 rupees, were confiscated by the state police. Since 1920, the Nayagarh peasants had been led by a local leader, Gati Mangaraj, who had been no doubt inspired by Gandhi as well as by the Congress ideals of non-violence, but most likely had no organisational relation either with the UPCC or with any Congress leader of the time. In 1920, he organised the ryots to collectively send a telegram to the Political Agent for redressal of their grievances against the state police. As a result he was arrested and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for a long term. Soon after his release in 1927, he mobilised the ryots to collectively send a memorandum to the Political Agent against rigorous forest laws. He also started a fast- unto-death before the office of the Political Agent for several days, only to be arrested and sent to jail once again. Such independent

112. RECONS, op. cit., p.103.

113. Ibid., pp.120-21.
developments and purely local leadership in the States, however, did not make the Garjat movements a rival to the Congress movement. In fact, the tribal and peasant movements in the native States and the Congress movement were inter-dependent and related to each other during this period. Their independent growth, which resulted from a lack of any formal organisational link with the Congress, in no way suggests that they opposed or were a challenge to the Congress movement.

Labour

The Congress emphasis on labour organisation from 1927 onwards was a noticeable feature in Orissa. In this regard the lead was again taken by Gopabandhu Das. On 19 February 1927, because of his political standing, he was invited to address a meeting of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway (BNR) employees at Jatani in Puri district. Following this meeting, a local strike of the railway employees began around the demand for improvement of general working conditions in BNR. The Puri Magistrate imposed section 144 under Cr. P.C. on Gopabandhu Das on 28 February 1927 in a move to break the strike. 114

Besides, Gopabandhu regularly maintained contact with the Oriya coolies in Calcutta. Soon after his release in

114. Searchlight, 11 March 1927.
June 1924, he went to Calcutta in early August and re-organised the Oriya Labour Union by calling a meeting on 10 August 1924. The Union had been suspended since mid-1922. He spent his last few days and addressed his last few meetings among the Oriya coolies in Calcutta in June 1928.

After Gopabandhu, Harekrishna Mahatab and Laxmi Narayan Sahu, a liberal turned Congressmen (since Simon boycott issue), were intensely involved in the Oriya Labour Union in Calcutta in mid-1928 and 1929. Their involvement filled the vacuum created by the death of Gopabandhu Das so far as the labour union was concerned. Their organisation soon started bearing fruits when the Oriya coolies and the Congress delegates from Orissa to the Calcutta Congress had a joint public meeting there on 29 December 1928. Presided over by Gopabandhu Choudhury, the meeting (a total of 10,000 people participated) demanded a separate linguistic province of Orissa and expressed its faith in the Congress.

Students and Youth

After the decline of Non-Cooperation, student and youth movements began to rise in 1924. Jadumani Mangaraj and some other youth leaders of the Congress took the

115. Dipika, 16 Aug. 1924.
116. Samaj, 6 June 1928; Dipika, 23 June 1928.
117. Searchlight, 17 May 1929.
118. Dipika, 12 Jan. 1929.
initiative to organise the All Orissa Students Congress at Cuttack along side the Congress-led UUC session in June 1924. 119 Godavarish Mishra, a senior Swarajist and a member of the B&O Council, was its President designate. The conference was postponed at the last moment, since the police objected to the participation of some Congress-affiliated students. 120

In February 1925, again efforts were made to organise student conferences in different districts. Accordingly, permission was sought from the school inspectors of respective districts for suitable venues. At Sambalpur and Puri this could not be obtained, 121 while at Balasore and Cuttack, all arrangements were made to hold conferences on 21/22 February. 122 At Ganjam a conference was to be held in April 1925. 123

On 15 and 16 January 1927, the All Orissa Student Conference was organised at Cuttack. Madhu Sudan Das, Bhikari Charan Patnaik (a liberal lawyer and dramatist) and the Principal of Ravenshaw College addressed the students on the occasion. 124

119. Dipika, 22 March 1924.
120. Searchlight, 27 Aug. 1924.
Though the student movement had an informal link with the Congress and its youth leaders, strictly speaking, till the end of 1927, it was not a wing of the UPCC. The student conferences were broad organisations of students of all varieties. School fields were used for holding the meetings and even the principals were invited to speak on the occasion. When permissions were not granted by the school authorities, the sessions were cancelled. The resolutions passed during the conferences would further illustrate the broad nature of the movement. The Cuttack conference in February 1925 passed the following resolutions: (1) mutual help at the time of need and distress among students; (2) efforts to improve the health and sanitation conditions in the villages; (3) establishment of libraries and study centres; (4) and the formation of volunteer corps to maintain discipline during different sports competitions. Likewise, the Balasore student conference also planned to pass resolutions to look into health and sanitation, and to establish more libraries. Though underneath the resolutions contained Gandhian constructive ideals, they were not overtly identifiable with the Congress party.

In 1928, however, the scene changed. The Cuttack District Conference held at Kenduapatna on 8/9 April 1928

passed a resolution to form the Youth League. Accordingly, notifications were issued to constitute the District Youth League at Salepur in Cuttack district on 14 June 1928. The Puri DCC held on 19/20 April also passed a similar resolution and appealed to the students and the youth to join the league in large numbers. On 28 June 1928 the UPCC celebrated 'Gopabandhu Day' (on the 12th day of Gopabandhu's death) and on that occasion the Orissa Youth League was formed at Cuttack. The League under the leadership of Bansidhar Mishra, who was also the Secretary of the Cuttack DCC, planned to bring out a newspaper called the Yubak, and for this a separate building and a separate printing press were looked for.

After the formation of the Youth League, the student movement came under its direct control. The league leaders lamented that 'the student conferences had done nothing in the past' and hoped to remodel them 'on the model of the student movement in Bengal, Maharashtra and Madras'. Consequently, the All Orissa Student Conference under the supervision of the League leaders held its annual session.

127. Dipika, 26 May 1928.
128. Dipika, 5 May 1928.
129. Dipika, 30 June 1928.
at Balasore on 13/14 October 1928. This was followed by
the holding of the League session in the same pandal.\textsuperscript{132}
Now the students conference with its leaders such as Pitambar Mishra, Uday Shankar Mishra and Kamala Kant Mahapatra
and the Youth League with its leaders like Bansidhar Mishra, Jadumani Mangaraj and Rajkrishna Bose, were an inseparable
part as well as the youth wing of the UPCC and of the
ensuing mass movement in Orissa. When the movement began
in 1930, Bose and Mangaraj in particular emerged as the
most militant leaders and provocative orators of the
Congress.\textsuperscript{133}

\textbf{Women}

Unlike the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Salt Satya-
agraha of 1930 witnessed some participation by women in
Orissa.\textsuperscript{134} The politicization of women dates back to 1924
when the first All Orissa Women Conference was held at
Cuttack on 29 June 1924 alongside the UPCC Conference.
Gopabandhu Das was invited to address the women there.\textsuperscript{135}
The organisers were Kishori Mani Devi, Haimabati Devi,
Sarala Devi and Rashamani Devi. In the meeting, Kishori
Mani Devi proposed to affiliate the Women's Conference to

\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Searchlight}, 19 Oct. 1928.

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Dipika}, 22 March 1930; FRBO, File No.17 of 1929, May,
\textit{Home Poll}.

\textsuperscript{134} See P. Kar, \textit{op. cit.}, p.174.

the All India Women's Conference; and Haimabati emphasised women education.\textsuperscript{136}

After a gap of 4 years the Puri District Women's Conference was held at Puri on 8 September 1928. A resolution was passed to start a girls' school in the town.\textsuperscript{137} In late March 1929 the Orissa Women's Conference was held at Balasore and between 18 and 20 May 1929 the Cuttack District Women's Conference was organised at Kendrapada. The latter emphasised diffusion of knowledge among women and widow remarriage, and passed a resolution against child marriage. Even a political resolution supporting the Congress and its proposed civil disobedience programme was passed in the conference.\textsuperscript{139}

Besides conferences, a committee to rehabilitate prostitutes was formed by seven women leaders including Jahnavi Devi, Monorama Mahapatra, Nishibala Naik, Rashpriya Devi and Kokila Devi in early October 1928.\textsuperscript{140}

The women's movement at this stage was confined to the middle classes. The wives and relatives of some nationalist leaders and lawyers were active in it. Like the

\textsuperscript{136} Dipika, 12 July 1924.
\textsuperscript{137} Dipika, 22 Sept. 1928.
\textsuperscript{138} Dipika, 6 April 1929.
\textsuperscript{139} Dipika, 1 June 1929.
\textsuperscript{140} Dipika, 6 Oct. 1928.
student movement of 1924-1925, it was also a loose wing of the Congress throughout the period. However, the passing of a political resolution in 1929 and the taking up of the prostitutes' cause marks a remarkable change in their political life in traditional Orissa.

Caste

From 1927, a 'low' caste movement began to emerge in different forms. In February 1927, around 20 'untouchables' led by Ram Chandra Das, an educated youngman from Bauri (comparable with Bhangi) caste, demanded reservation for 'untouchables' in the Cuttack district board. This was altogether a different trend in Orissa politics. The 'low caste' people had started demanding political rights outside of the Congress, as well as free from any upper caste nationalist initiative. This was followed by the Panas (one untouchable caste) mobility in the latter part of 1928. In the middle of September 1928 a Hindu Sanyasi, living on the borders of Balasore and Keonjhar native State, preached that the caste system had been abolished and that Swaraj was nearer since the British rule would not last much longer. Very soon 'low' caste Panas in large number accepted him as their leader. Matters came to a head when they assaulted a Brahmin for not acknowledging the divinity of the hermit. This led to a virtual fight between the two castes in many villages on both sides of the border. In the resultant

rioting and looting, four police cases in Balasore and six cases in Keonjhar were reported to have been registered. The retaliation by the 'low' caste people in this case was quite unprecedented and marked a new chapter in the history of the caste system in Orissa.

Such independent 'low' caste movements in 1927 and 1928 are not to be seen in isolation. The Congress efforts at fighting untouchability and at ameliorating the condition of the 'low' castes as a part of Gandhian constructive programme have to be seen in the context of 'low' caste movements. In June 1924, the UPCC passed a resolution to allow 'low' caste persons into schools and temples. A common dinner was also served on the occasion as a part of the campaign against untouchability.

Even within the Congress, one section accused others of not fighting untouchability in a true spirit. Such complaints reflected the deep concern of at least one section within the UPCC for a caste-oppression free society. One such complainant was Jay Mangal Rath from Ganjam. Not being satisfied with a mere resolution by the UPCC in 1924, he complained that there were many Congressmen who didn't have faith in the campaign against untouchability. He advised such Congressmen to resign from the party, 'for Swaraj would have no meaning, if untouchability was not

142. FRBO, File No.1 of 1928, Oct., Home Poll.
143. Dipika, 12 July 1924.
fought back in true spirit'. He proposed that the party terminate the membership of such Congressmen. Furthermore, he believed that the party campaign must aim at generating confidence among the 'low' castes and at launching Satyagraha against caste oppression. In early 1924, some Congress workers initiated the temple entry Satyagraha of 'low' castes in Ganjam only to be quickly outcasted by the caste Hindus. The upper caste pressure was so strong that they had to suspend the Satyagraha.

The Congress campaign against untouchability and the emergence of 'low' castes converged in the mobilisation of Gauda castemen (equal to Yadavs in UP and Bihar) at Sore in Balasore on 23/24 February 1930. Mahatab, Nanda Kishor Das, Mukunda Prasad Das and Jagannath Das, all DCC leaders, attended and addressed the Gauda meeting (on 23/24 February). The meeting passed the following resolutions: (1) Gaudas would no more carry the palankeen because carrying of one man by another was against human dignity; (2) they would observe complete prohibition; (3) they would not practise untouchability against 'low' caste people; (4) and child marriage would be stopped among the Gaudas. Subsequently their refusal to carry palankeen mobilised the high caste persons of the locality to socially boycott the Gaudas.

144. Gadjat Basini, 2 Aug. 1924; Dipika, 26 July 1924.
145. Gadjat Basini, 19 April 1924.
146. Dipika, 8 March 1930.
The sincerity of a section of the Congressmen at mobilising the 'low' castes and their linking up of the problem with Swaraj must have generated some amount of confidence among the 'low' castes to articulate their inherent resentment against caste oppression. The link between the Congress campaign and the 'low' caste movements is not to be ignored.

By the end of 1929, favourable conditions were created on all fronts to launch a major mass movement. The peasants, labour, youth, middle class women, 'low' caste men and tribals were politicized to some extent. Once again the Congress party emerged as the leader of all forces and co-ordinator of all resentments against British rule. The passivity of the 'aftermath' became a thing of the past. From March 1929, bonfires and boycotts of foreign clothes were organised frequently.