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POLITICS IN A BILINGUAL PROVINCE: THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, INDIA, 1919-1939

by
D.E.U. BAKER

This thesis was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Australian National University

9 June 1969
This thesis is based on my original research, and is all my own work.

D.E.U. Baker
Canberra, 9 June 1969
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILLUSTRATIONS</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY TO ABBREVIATED REFERENCES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1 A BILINGUAL PROVINCE: THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR IN 1919</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2 THE DIVERGENCE OF THE REGIONS: NATIONALIST AGITATION IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, 1919-1922</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3 REGIONS IN CONFLICT: THE SWARAJYA PARTY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES, 1923-26</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4 RESPONSIVE COOPERATION IN THE LEGISLATURE: HINDI LEADERSHIP IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, 1927-1937</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6 GOVERNMENT BY MAHAKOSHAL: THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, 1935-39</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION 409
APPENDICES 424
BIBLIOGRAPHY 450
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ILLUSTRATIONS

A. MAPS

1. The Central Provinces and Berar, India facing p.1
2. Regions and Districts 1919 facing p.7
3. Main Railways and Towns 1919 facing p.20

B. PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOME LEADING FIGURES IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, 1919-1939

1. Dr B.S. Moonje following p.28
2. Jamnalal Bajaj following p.61
3. Seth Govind Das following p.74
4. M.V. Abhyanker following p.151
5. Shri R.M. Deshmukh following p.176
6. Dr E. Raghavendra Rao following p.217
7. Dr N.B. Khare following p.252
8. Pandit R.S. Shukla following p.355
KEY TO ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AICC</td>
<td>All-India Congress Committee Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointments</td>
<td>Appointments Department, Governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>Civil Disobedience Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPBLA</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPLC</td>
<td>Proceedings of the Central Provinces Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>Forest Department, Governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>Fortnightly Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAD</td>
<td>General Administration Department, Governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Poll</td>
<td>Home Political Department, Government of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Public</td>
<td>Home Public Department, Government of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Papers</td>
<td>Confidential Reports on Indian Newspapers prepared by the Government of the Central Provinces and Berar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSG</td>
<td>Local Self Government Department, Governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministerial Crisis</td>
<td>The Central Provinces Ministerial Crisis (Allahabad, nd.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key to Abbreviated References

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mishra</td>
<td>D.P. Mishra et al. (eds.), <em>History of Freedom Movement in Madhya Pradesh</em> (Nagpur, 1956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPCC</td>
<td>Files of the Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPS</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh Secretariat, Bhopal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Manuscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSN</td>
<td>Maharashtra Secretariat, Nagpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAI</td>
<td>National Archives of India, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLI</td>
<td>National Library of India, Calcutta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCC</td>
<td>Provincial Congress Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Parliamentary Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P &amp; M</td>
<td>Political and Military Department, Governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reforms</td>
<td>Reforms Department, Government of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Glossary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>akhada, akhara</td>
<td>a gymnasium where young men learn the traditional arts of self-defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asahayoga</td>
<td>non-cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ashram</td>
<td>a spiritual retreat</td>
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<tr>
<td>bania</td>
<td>a member of one of the traditional trading castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charka</td>
<td>spinning wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>darshan</td>
<td>spiritual grace, gained from being in the presence of a great man, often a saint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dassera</td>
<td>a Hindu festival which celebrates the victory of good over evil, as exemplified in the victory of the Lord Rama over the demon king Ravana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhobi</td>
<td>washerman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gadi</td>
<td>(ministerial) seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandhi ki jai!</td>
<td>Long live Gandhi!</td>
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<tr>
<td>hartal</td>
<td>a traditional form of strike in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khadi, khaddar</td>
<td>hand-woven cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khilafat</td>
<td>the Turkish Caliphate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kisan</td>
<td>an agriculturalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kotwali</td>
<td>police station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lakh</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lathi</td>
<td>a stout bamboo stick used for purposes of offence and defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lokamanya</td>
<td>Revered of the People, used with reference to Lokamanya Tilak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahatma</td>
<td>Great Soul, used with reference to Gandhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malguzar</td>
<td>a former revenue collector in the Central Provinces, on whom the British administration conferred proprietary rights to land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mandal</td>
<td>society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mohulla</td>
<td>a ward or street; a quarter of a village or town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muharrum</td>
<td>annual celebration in the first month of the Muslim year</td>
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<tr>
<td>nagar</td>
<td>city or town, as in Nagar Congress Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>pailie</td>
<td>a measure of food</td>
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<tr>
<td>panchayat</td>
<td>a council or court of arbitration (with five members)</td>
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<tr>
<td>pandal</td>
<td>a temporary structure to house a meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>patel</td>
<td>the headman of a village</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raj</td>
<td>rule</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rai Bahadur</td>
<td>a title bestowed by the British on Indians for their services to the government, meaning 'Honourable'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh</td>
<td>National Volunteers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sabha</td>
<td>an assembly or association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahitya Sammelan</td>
<td>Literary Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>samadhi</td>
<td>tomb or shrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satyagraha</td>
<td>Truth-force or soul-force, a term coined by Gandhi to cover forms of non-violent coercion, e.g. civil disobedience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satyashodhak Samaj</td>
<td>Society for the Propagation of Truth - a non-Brahman educational and political organisation founded in Maharashtra by Jyotirao Phule</td>
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<tr>
<td>sowar</td>
<td>a cavalry soldier</td>
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<tr>
<td>swadeshi</td>
<td>indigenous, produced in one's own country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaraj, Swarajya</td>
<td>(lit. self rule) Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>tahsil, taluq</td>
<td>a revenue subdivision within an administrative district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamasha</td>
<td>entertainment or play, often staged in the Central Provinces and Berar for political purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vakil</td>
<td>pleader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vedanta</td>
<td>a system of philosophy which seeks to interpret the Vedas. The term often refers to Shankara's system of Advaita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vidyalaya</td>
<td>college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wada</td>
<td>communal dwelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The development of politics in the Central Provinces and Berar during the twentieth century is a neglected study. The historians of modern India have passed over the province in favour of provinces that enjoyed a longer history of British administration and had closer connections with the nationalist movement. As evidence of this neglect, there is only one political history of the province between 1919 and 1939, namely the History of Freedom Movement in Madhya Pradesh published in 1956 by the Government of Madhya Pradesh, the successor state to the former Central Provinces and Berar. In addition, Marathi writers have written a number of biographies of nationalists from the Marathi region, and several authors have written biographies and autobiographies in English of nationalists from both the Hindi and Marathi regions. But these apart, the general reader and historian alike will search almost in vain for a study of political developments in the province between 1919 and 1939. The writer of this thesis hopes to remedy that neglect in some measure. He also hopes to demonstrate that events of considerable significance to the Indian nationalist movement and contemporary Indian politics occurred in the province during the period under review.

A study of political events in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1919 and 1939 raises the question whether multi-lingual states form viable political units. The province was similar to many of the provinces of British
India in that its population comprised several large linguistic communities. The presence of these communities in the Central Provinces and Berar arose from the fact that the British authorities formed the province for administrative reasons, and took little account of the then largely unimportant questions of history, language and ethnicity. Between 1919 and 1939, however, these questions grew rapidly in importance owing to the establishment of democratic institutions and to the fact that the political leaders raised them to win the allegiance of the people. This study focusses attention on the growing importance of language in the Central Provinces and Berar. It also shows the effect which the growth of linguistic consciousness had on the balance of power in the province, and the extent to which it interfered with the processes of stable government. In doing so, it seeks to establish whether multi-lingual states are politically viable and whether they are likely to be more or less stable than linguistic states.

This study also focusses attention on the new classes and communities that were drawn into the vortex of politics in the Central Provinces and Berar as the nationalist movement gained momentum. In 1919 the middle classes were almost alone in their opposition to the government. By 1939, however, vast numbers of people from every walk of life had been caught up in the nationalist movement. The thesis proposes to describe this development with particular reference to the role of Gandhi as the author of the changed situation; to the groups who responded to his leadership; and to the
nature and extent of the challenge which nationalists presented to the government between 1919 and 1939.

A study of political developments in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1919 and 1939 also reflects differences in the political styles used to draw the people into the nationalist movement. On the one hand, the leaders of the Indian National Congress prescribed tactics of passive resistance and obstruction in their dealings with the government. On the other hand, many Congressmen, among whom were the followers of Tilak, condemned these tactics as impractical, and modified them to conform with their own ideological preconceptions and the realities of local politics. In examining these different styles of politics, this study proposes to raise two questions: What was the nature of the ideological differences between Gandhi and the disciples of Tilak? And, were nationalists subject to pressures - other than their need to oppose the government - that compelled them to abandon the tactics of passive resistance and obstruction for tactics of their own choosing?

This thesis will also examine certain aspects of British rule in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1919 and 1939. These aspects deal with the attempt of the British to maintain law and order and to create efficient government in the province. In discussing the government's attempt to maintain law and order, the writer will refer to the use of repressive measures to control the nationalist movement. The government's attempt to create efficient rule, however, provides a contrasting picture. Here, the writer proposes to
examine the role of Sir Montagu Butler, Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar between 1925 and 1933, and assess the contribution made by him to the province during a most critical period of its history.
1. THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, INDIA

The small dotted lines enclose Princely States permanently attached to the Central Provinces.
Chapter I

A BILINGUAL PROVINCE -

THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR IN 1919

The Central Provinces and Berar at the beginning of 1919 was an isolated and relatively backward province in central India consisting of two linguistic regions. These were areas where Hindi or Marathi was the language spoken by a majority of the population. The Hindi region covered the northern and eastern parts of the province and consisted of 14 districts grouped into the three administrative divisions of Narmada, Jabalpur and Chhattisgarh; while the Marathi region occupied the southern part of the province and consisted of four districts grouped into the division of Nagpur. Four additional Marathi districts lay adjacent to the division of Nagpur on its western side and comprised the division of Berar. The three Hindi and two Marathi divisions extended over an area of 100,000 square miles containing some 13 million inhabitants, and their government was in

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1 See Maps 1 and 2. The Hindi districts comprising the division of Narmada were Nimar, Hoshangabad, Narsimhapur, Betul and Chhindwara; the division of Jabalpur - Jabalpur, Sagar, Damoh, Seoni and Mandla; the division of Chhattisgarh - Raipur, Bilaspur and Durg. In 1919 the Hindi district of Balaghat was in the division of Nagpur. The Marathi districts comprising the division of Nagpur, were Nagpur, Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara; and the division of Berar - Amravati, Yeotmal, Akola and Buldhana. (Throughout this thesis, contemporary spellings have been adopted for all place names still in existence).
the hands of a Chief Commissioner with headquarters in
the city of Nagpur. The Central Provinces also contained
15 states, each of which was governed by a Feudatory
Chief, whose relations with the government were
controlled by a Political Agent. These states, however,
are excluded from this study as they lay outside the
British districts and did not for that reason share in
the political developments which took place there
between 1919 and 1939.

The composite nature of the Central Provinces and
Berar had a profound effect on these political
developments. The province had been a bilingual entity
since 1861 when the Viceroy, Lord Canning, merged the
Hindi Territory of Saugor and Nerbudda (which till then
had been part of the North-Western Provinces) with the
Hindi and Marathi State of Nagpur (which passed to the
Government of India in 1854), and constituted the
amalgam as the Central Provinces. In 1903 the Government
of India gave financial support to this amalgam by adding
to it the wealthy Marathi area of Berar, a territory
originally presented by the British to the Nizam of
Hyderabad. Despite its annexation, however, Berar did
not become an integral part of the Central Provinces,
but, under the treaty which the Government of India
signed with the Nizam on the occasion, remained a
possession of that ruler, the Government leasing it in
perpetuity for an annual rental of Rs 25 lakhs. The
physical integration of these territories into a single

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1 The Chief Commissioner in 1919 was Sir Benjamin
Robertson.
province did not provide an adequate basis for their political and cultural integration, and from the very outset different political institutions and values developed in the two linguistic regions, separating them from each other. Similarly, between 1919 and 1939 political developments in the Central Provinces and Berar separated rather than united the two linguistic regions, and 1939 closed with a strong demand in both areas for the permanent division of the province along linguistic lines.

A basic factor in the development of different political styles and institutions in the Hindi and Marathi regions was the physical structure of the province and its effect on communications. The most prominent physical feature of the Central Provinces and Berar was the massive Satpura Plateau which ran across the centre of the province, forming a watershed for its four great rivers - Narmada, Mahanadi, Godaveri and Tapti. This plateau, together with its southern and northern spurs, completely severed the Marathi plain of Nagpur and Berar from the Narmada valley to the north and the extensive plain of Chhattisgarh to the east - the two major subdivisions of the Hindi region. The plateau was also responsible for the development of separate road and railway systems, which ran parallel to it in the plain country on either side. Further, although these systems were linked, the connections between them were tenuous - circuitous highways and railway lines of different gauge - and did little to

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1 See Map 3.
create a sense of unity between the different linguistic regions of the province. The failure of the road and railway communications of the Central Provinces to bridge the gap between the Hindi and the Marathi regions was only too evident to observers of the contemporary scene, as the following extract from a speech delivered in Jabalpur in 1920 illustrates:

Jubbulpore is 188 miles from Nagpur and how often have we not exclaimed 'so near and yet so far'. A circuitous round about road to Jubbulpore from the capital of the province is a serious drawback to your advancement... A chord railway between Nagpur and Jubbulpore ...would bring Jubbulpore within six hours' railway journey from Nagpur. It could then be made a second capital of the province.¹

Social and cultural differences between the inhabitants of the Hindi and Marathi districts also contributed to the growth of distinct forms of political life in the two regions. With the exception of the aboriginal population, a majority of the inhabitants of the Hindi districts was descended from Hindi speaking migrants from northern India, while a majority of the inhabitants of the Marathi districts was descended from Marathi speaking migrants from western India. Although both linguistic communities were members of the wider Hindu community, each had a distinctive identity arising from its use of a common language and from its acceptance of the values, legends and religious forms that distinguish the outward aspect of Hinduism in one

¹ Hitavada, 10 April 1920, p.7. The speaker was the moderate politician Sir Hari Singh Gour.
linguistic region from that in another. Each linguistic community, too, had ties of sentiment with its parent region, and each had its own historical tradition that was connected with the region either of its origin or its adoption. The more articulate members of each community, for instance, remembered with pride the days when their homeland or linguistic region had been at the zenith of its power. In the Hindi region articulate Hindus looked back to the rule of the Guptas in Pataliputra on the Ganges, or to the kingdom of Mahakoshal that spread across central and northern India in the fourth century after Christ.\(^1\) Articulate Hindus in the Marathi districts of the Central Provinces, by contrast, looked back to the rule of the Bhonslas of Nagpur, or even earlier to the age of Sivaji and the Hindu resurgence in western India.\(^2\) In Berar, again, articulate Hindus drew inspiration from the Kingdom of Vidarbha, which flourished in the region during the classical age of Hinduism. The power such regional memories had on people's imagination is clearly reflected in the following passage, describing the Kingdom of Vidarbha, composed by the political leaders of Berar in 1930:

1\(^\text{Nehru Museum and Library (NML), All-India Congress Committee Papers (cited hereafter as AICC) 242, 1931, H. Vyas to Secretary AICC, 21 October 1931. See Appendix I.}\)

2\(^\text{See National Library of India (NLI), the Papers of Dr B.S. Moonje (cited hereafter as Moonje MS), Letter Pad 63, B.S. Moonje to _____ (c. 9 August 1931); ibid., Letter Pad 66, B.S. Moonje to _____ 23 April 1932; Letter Pad 82, B.S. Moonje to Dr Hedgewar, 5 January 1935.}\)
From the earliest times Berar occupies an important place in the history of India. It was known as Vidarbha in those early days. In the Upanishads, Ramayana and Mahabharata...there are numerous references to the sovereigns of Vidarbha...Scholars and scientists, poets and philosophers of great reputation flourished in Berar during this period of Hindu rule, and Berar became the most important seat of learning and culture in India. The literary style (Vaidharbi-riti) used by the scholars of Vidarbha was the subject of universal admiration among men of letters and was by common consent recognised as the best and the most approved style in Sanskrit as well as Prakrit literature.

Such memories did not merely evoke inspiration. With the historical and cultural tradition of which they were a part, they also united those who shared them and led them to realise that they were a distinct community with similar interests in the present and a common destiny in the future. As a result, each community selected its political leaders from its own ranks as those best qualified to advance its interests and lead it to its destiny.

Differences between the structure of society in the Hindi and Marathi districts also laid the basis for the development of distinct political institutions and styles in each region. The caste communities that comprised the population of the Hindi region were substantially different from those that comprised the population of the Marathi region. In addition the people of both regions were separated by time and space from their parent

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1 Berar's Position in the Indian Federation: A Case Prepared by the Berar All Parties Committee for Consideration by Members of the Round Table Conference (Bombay, 1931), p.1.
The Central Provinces and Berar

C.P. States
a. Kamardha
b. Khairagah
c. Nandgah
d. Chhindwana
e. Kanker
f. Bastar
g. Sarangarh
h. Sukti
i. Raigarh

Eastern States
j. Hark Bhakes
k. Korna
l. Sarguja
m. Wangle
populations in northern and western India. As a result, the two linguistic communities in the Central Provinces and Berar formed two closed social hierarchies, whose leaders were the leaders of society in their particular linguistic region only. These leaders were also the political leaders for the region, which, had the territory of Berar not existed, would have meant that the province contained two groups of political leaders - one for each of the linguistic regions. However, owing to the presence of strong regional loyalties in Berar, that territory possessed its own political leaders who comprised the third such group in the province. As for the social composition of these dominant groups, in the Hindi region they consisted mainly of Kanya Kubja and other Hindi speaking Brahmans, Rajputs and Marwaris; while in the Marathi region, including Berar, they consisted of Maharashtrian Brahmans, Marathas and Marwaris.

Striking differences in economic development and in the level of political sophistication between the Hindi and Marathi regions heightened the division of the Central Provinces and Berar into separate political units. In 1919 economic and political activity in the Hindi districts was at a low level compared with that in the Marathi region. This was mainly due to the lack of secondary industry in the region and hence of the type of urban centre associated with this form of economic activity. In 1919 there were only a few towns in the Hindi region that supported large secondary industries, these being Burhanpur with its cotton mills, and Jabalpur with its pottery, brewery, flour mills and gun
carriage factory. The Hindi region also possessed a number of towns that were important for other than industrial reasons. These were Sagar, which owed its importance to a long history as an administrative centre; and Raipur and Bilaspur, district headquarter towns owing their prominence to the building of railways. More typical of the urban centres of the Hindi region than the above mentioned, however, were the small towns that served as administrative centres for the vast rural areas of the region. Such a town was Narsimhapur, situated in a district bearing the same name in the Narmada valley:

Narsinghpur is not a very big place. Its population does not exceed 10,000 souls. There are only two main streets in the place and about three mohullas. There are less than twelve respectable and educated malguzars; there are about twenty gentlemen who adorn the bar, gentlemen having various years of experience and of various capacities. These really constitute the public of Narsinghpur... the people who really count. It is only a small agricultural district and there are the usual galaxy of landlords, malguzars and tenants who constitute the sole population.1

But whether large or small, the towns of the Hindi districts were unable to sustain any vital form of political activity in the region. This was partly due to the small number of towns and their remoteness from one another, and partly to their lack of the facilities necessary for stimulating activities of an intellectual

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and political nature among their inhabitants. The towns of the Hindi region possessed no clubs other than bar associations, for instance, and these were frequently unconcerned with political activity. Again, apart from the Bar libraries, public libraries were rare, and vernacular newspapers almost non-existent. Moreover, in 1919 some towns in the Hindi districts did not possess even one high school, and there were only two colleges - both in Jabalpur - to serve the needs of the entire region. As a result the quality of political life in the towns of the Hindi region, whether large or small, was poor. For one observer this was nowhere more evident than in Hoshangabad, a town situated on the Narmada river and similar in many respects to Narsimhapur:

Hoshangabad has no politics, and as such there is very little of those manifestations of life and activity which are the necessary concomitants of political existence. Consequently, when the whole province is busy in organising its political life and electing delegates for the provincial conference, Hoshangabad is enjoying its wonted sleep....It cannot boast of a District Congress Committee. All politics is taboo to the local bar, and one of its members has recently made himself famous by deposing against the institutions of village panchayats before the village panchayats commission.

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1 At 1 January 1919 there were six Hindi journals in circulation, one appearing weekly, two fortnightly, two monthly, and one quarterly. During the year their number increased by four and in 1920 by nine. See CPLC, vol.3, 3 December 1921, Appendix E, pp.422-4.

2 The district of Durg, for instance, had no high school.

3 Hitavada, 23 March 1918, p.3.
The political outlook in Hoshangabad was even less promising in summer, when

the civil courts (were) ... closed, the lawyers ... retired to their dens, the judges ... dispersed, and all that gave the appearance of life and activity to this somnolent valley of ours ... (was) non est. ¹

In the larger towns of the Hindi region, too, political activity was at a low level. In Bilaspur, for instance, residents complained that they 'seldom, if ever, (had) anything that ... (was) either sensational or controversial in local public affairs'. ² In Jabalpur, too, observers considered public life to be 'notoriously dull and apathetic'. ³ And outside the towns of the Hindi districts, on the vast plain of Chhattisgarh or in the remote fastnesses of the Central Plateau, political life in any form was virtually non-existent.

There was one other reason why the towns of the Hindi region were unable to play a major role in politics before 1919. This concerned the nature of 'the people who really count' - the groups of doctors, pleaders, traders and malguzars or landlords living in the towns of the region - and their disinclination to participate in political activity. There were several reasons for this disinclination, one being the restricted size of the urban groups. Besides, these groups had comparatively

¹ Hitavada, 22 June 1918, p.3.
² Ibid., 13 May 1916, p.6.
³ Ibid., 22 September 1917, p.8.
little influence on the government owing to their remoteness from Nagpur and to the lack of representation in government service of the leading caste communities from which they themselves were drawn. The limited size of the urban groups and their lack of influence with the government tended to inhibit them from participating in politics. Thus, although they 'constitute[d] the public ... the people who really count[ed]', the urban groups of the Hindi region lived out their lives in remote towns, often unaware of the political issues affecting the region, and equally often powerless to act upon them, even if they were aware of such issues.

The Hindi districts of the Central Provinces, nevertheless, possessed a distinctive form of politics resulting from the social and economic conditions prevailing in the region. Perhaps the most characteristic feature of political life in the Hindi districts before 1919 was the loyal affection with which the malguzars, the political leaders of the region, regarded the Government of the Central Provinces. This relationship had its basis in the land settlement undertaken by British officials in the area shortly after the formation of the province in 1861. In making the settlement the officials were anxious to find a body of men who could lay claim to be the leaders of the people and whom the administration could support as a means of establishing its authority over the area and its population. Such a body of men were to hand in the malguzars or revenue collectors who had inherited sizable properties, partly comprising the grants made to their forbears by some earlier administration, and partly the accretions to
those grants made during the process of revenue collection. Consequently, at the regular settlement which began in 1863 and ended in 1870, the incoming administration conferred proprietary rights on the malguzars, thus establishing them as the base of its power in the countryside. The malguzars for their part were in no mood to endanger their newly acquired rights to land by alienating the 'good sympathy' of the government, and as a result gave it their unflinching loyalty.\(^1\) This relationship of interdependence between the government and the malguzars of the Central Provinces found expression in two types of institutions - one formed by the malguzars and the other by the government. The former consisted of local associations through which the malguzars sought to protect their interests in land; and the latter of local bodies in the Hindi region and the Legislative Council of the Central Provinces which met in Nagpur.

The man who best typified the political style of the malguzars of the Hindi region was Pandit Bishnu Datta Shukul, a Kanya Kubja Brahman and leading malguzar from Sihora in the district of Jabalpur. Shukul was a graduate of the University of Allahabad in the neighbouring United Provinces, and between 1900-1920 he established himself as a 'one of (the)...most influential and spirited leaders' of the Hindi region.\(^2\) During this

\(^1\) The Private Papers of Sir G.M. Chitnavis, Chitnavispura, Nagpur (cited hereafter as Chitnavis MS), M.K. Padhye to Sir G.M. Chitnavis, 9 March 1907.

\(^2\) Bombay Chronicle, 14 January 1921, p.5.
period, Shukul became an Honorary Magistrate, and served as a member of the Local and District Boards of Sihora and Jabalpur respectively, and as Vice-president of the Municipality of Sihora, thereby earning a Rai Bahadurship from the provincial government. In 1915 Shukul entered the newly established Legislative Council of the Central Provinces to represent the interests of the *malguzars*, and remained a member of that body until 1917 when he was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council in Delhi as the member for the Central Provinces. As a *malguzar*, Shukul also took a keen interest in the cooperative movement, and by 1919 he had attained the position of Governor of the Federation of Cooperative Banks in the Central Provinces. Shukul's whole-hearted support of British rule, amply demonstrated by his services to the cooperative movement, local government and the legislature, was particularly evident during the Great War when he toured the district of Jabalpur, urging the people to invest their money in loans to help the British war effort. The following account of Shukul's activities in this regard appeared in 1917 in the *Hitavada*, an English weekly published in Nagpur:

The Honourable Rai Bahadur Pandit B.D. Shukul...(is) to be especially congratulated for convening a series of successful meetings in the interior with a view to persuade people to invest money in the war loan and see that not a single village nor a single individual should lag behind in helping (the) empire....The Pandit...(has) been personally visiting the various important centres and recounting to the people numerous benefits of British rule.

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*Hitavada*, 26 May 1917, p.3.
The loyalty which Pandit Shukul displayed towards British rule, however, was not inconsistent with his interest in the **Hindi Sahitya Sammelan**, an association for the development of the Hindi language. Through this association Shukul encouraged the use of Hindi, and thereby enriched the cultural life of the region and widened the social and political horizons of its inhabitants.

Yet another feature of political life in the Hindi region before 1919 was the increasing activity evident among the politicians of Chhattisgarh. This activity, at times nationalist and at times in support of the government, was more aggressive than that undertaken by Shukul in Jabalpur and represented a challenge by the politicians of Chhattisgarh to his leadership. It also heralded the collapse of the loyalist style of politics which had hitherto held sway in the Hindi region. One significant feature of the political scene in Chhattisgarh was the interest displayed by its inhabitants and leaders in local government. This was largely the result of the application of the Morley-Minto Reforms to the Central Provinces and Berar in 1914. These Reforms established a Legislative Council in the province for the first time, and to this council the Municipal Committees and District Councils were entitled to send five, and the landholders two, members. As a result the citizens of backward areas like Chhattisgarh put the pressure on the government to extend municipal reforms to the division and thus enable them to secure representation in the provincial legislature. A centre of such pressure was Durg, as is evident from the
following extract which appeared in the *Hitavada* in 1917:

Drug was created a district some ten years ago. It has hitherto been without a municipality and the local public affairs have been managed by a notified area committee. The inhabitants of the place have regarded it as a slur on their public spirit and patriotism and ever since the creation of the Legislative Council have asserted their demand for the management of their own affairs in their own way.

The Morely-Minto Reforms also provided an opportunity for young men with the requisite 'education, enthusiasm and experience' to participate in the work of local government and the legislature. One such young man was E. Raghavendra Rao, a member of a Naidu family with interests in land and business in the district of Bilaspur. Rao was born in Bilaspur in 1889 and received his primary and secondary education in the town before leaving for England to read law at Oxford. After completing his studies there, Rao joined the Middle Temple in London and was elevated to the Bar in 1914. In the same year he returned to Bilaspur where he joined the local Bar, and where his 'conspicuous ability,...sturdy independence,...and critical intellect' must have been evident to the prominent politicians who urged him to enter public life. Rao took their advice and within a

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2. Ibid., 13 May 1916, p.6.
few years had scored the initial successes in what was to prove a brilliant political career. In 1916 he became the first non-official President of the Municipal Committee of Bilaspur (a position which he occupied continuously until 1927); and in 1917 a member of the District Council of Bilaspur. Rao used these positions to contest one of the municipal seats in the Legislative Council in 1917, urging the acceptance of his candidature on the grounds of his 'young age and consequent ability to render service in any walk of public life'. The electors rejected Rao's candidature, however, and he had to wait for the elections to the Legislative Council established under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in 1920 before again attempting to participate in the politics of the legislature.

An equally significant feature of the quickening pulse of politics in Chhattisgarh was the growing interest of its leaders in the Indian nationalist movement. Although Rao had established contact with the leading nationalists of the Marathi region of western India, the foremost leader of nationalist activities in the division was Ravi Shankar Shukla, a Kanya Kubja Brahman lawyer from the town of Raipur. Unlike Rao, Shukla obtained his education wholly in India, graduating in Arts from Nagpur in 1899 and in Law from Jabalpur in 1909, when he was admitted to the Bar in Raipur. Some time after this date, Shukla came under the influence of Dr B.S. Moonje, a leading nationalist in Nagpur.

1 Hitavada, 5 May 1917, p.7.
This was an interesting association, for while Moonje's nationalist outlook was aggressively anti-British and drew its inspiration from Hindu sources, Shukla had more moderate views and probably supported the formation of a constitutional state on western lines. Despite these differences, however, it was probably due to the influence of Dr Moonje that Shukla joined the Indian National Congress and represented Raipur at its annual sessions; and most certainly due to his influence that Shukla became a member of the Provincial Association formed in 1916 to 'voice the opinion of people taking an intelligent interest in public affairs with a view to its ventilation and submission to government'.

Dr Moonje's influence was apparent, too, in Shukla's decision to organise a political conference in Raipur in 1918 which accepted resolutions sympathetic to the nationalist view. One such resolution was that relating to local government:

That with a view to train up the masses in the exercise of political responsibility and to make the local self government a success, this conference is of opinion that...the boards be wholly elected;...that members of the District Council be elected...directly by people residing in the district;...and that control and interference of government should be removed entirely from the internal management of local affairs.

By 1918 similar conferences were also being held in other Hindi districts, indicating that Shukla's nationalist

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1 Hitavada, 8 April 1916, p.6.
2 Ibid., 6 April 1918, p.6.
views found support elsewhere in the region. Like the conference organised by Shukla in 1918, these conferences also expressed support for nationalist objectives, and like their counterpart in Raipur helped to spread political awakening in rural areas...(;) served to educate and energise the people and hastened the transformation of the political struggle from a middle class movement to a mass movement.¹

Shukla also reflected a third feature of political life in the Hindi region of the Central Provinces before 1919. This was the growing realisation on the part of the leading residents of the region that they were members alike of a common cultural and political community. The leaders of the region contributed to this realisation in a number of ways, one of which was their participation in the movement to reform the Kanya Kubja Brahman community - the leading caste community in the region. Between 1909-1919 Shukla earned the reputation of being a 'leading and enthusiastic member...of the Kanya Kubja Sabha', an association of members of the community with branches throughout the Hindi region.² Through this Sabha Shukla and other leaders encouraged Kanya Kubja Brahmins to give their children a western education, and arranged annual conferences which liberalised the rules governing the conduct of members of the community. The following tribute to Shukla's work in organising the annual conferences of Kanya Kubja Brahmins comes from an

² Hitavada, 13 October 1917, p.3.
observer at the conference held in 1915 in Jabalpur:

Last year the conference was held at Raipur and you must have been struck with the great organising powers of Ravi Shankar Shukla....It is to his great and untiring efforts that this conference also owes much of its success this year....(There are) 400 delegates, including Pandit B.N. Datta Shukul.1

Through these conferences Shukla and others strengthened the Kanya Kubja Brahman community and enhanced its ability to play a dominant role in the public life of the Hindi region.

As the residents of the Hindi region realised that they had common interests, they became increasingly dissatisfied with the backwardness of the region. This dissatisfaction found expression in attacks on the Marathi region, which Hindi residents claimed was dominating the life of the province to the detriment of their region. In 1915, for instance, Hindi residents complained that at the annual political conference of the Central Provinces and Berar 'the Maratha element dominated...while the non-Marathas were practically nowhere'.2 Again, in 1916 the residents of Chhattisgarh complained bitterly that in the building of new colleges Nagpur and the Marathi region were receiving favourable treatment at the expense of their division:

Chhattisgarh has been left entirely in the cold so far as collegiate education is concerned. With no less than six high schools in our

2. Ibid., 11 December 1915, p.5.
division,...we were anxiously looking forward to the time when we thought that the university committee would plead for the establishment of a college in Raipur....Nagpur has at present two colleges, and the committee recommends that two more colleges should be provided there. Amraoti is shortly to have a college of its own....It is difficult to understand why equal facilities should not be given to our boys for higher education and why Nagpur alone should become more or less the exclusive seat for higher studies.¹

The dissatisfaction of Hindi residents with the rate of progress in their region also found expression in attacks on the provincial government, as in this extract from the Hitavada in 1917:

So far as local talent is concerned, the imperial and provincial services are absolutely blank and the subordinate services contain a few names which can be counted by the fingers of but one hand. It is incomprehensible why the local government is so apathetic to local youths.²

But with these verbal complaints the matter rested, for the political life of the Hindi region had not developed to the point where its leaders could compel the government to redress the balance in its favour.

Political life in the Marathi region of the Central Provinces and Berar was quite different from that in the Hindi region, and once again, economic and social factors

¹ Hitavada, 28 August 1915, p.7.
² Ibid., 4 August 1917, p.3.
were largely responsible for its distinctive features. Three features were clearly discernible by 1919. These were an aggressive nationalist movement enjoying the support of the leading politicians of the region; a two-fold division of political leadership in the region between the politicians in the division of Nagpur on the one hand and those in Berar on the other; and the existence of a long standing conflict between the politicians of the Central Provinces and Berar over the allocation of revenues from the government.

The vigour which characterised the political life of the Marathi region was due in large measure to the advanced state of its economic life. By contrast with the Hindi region, the Marathi region enjoyed a prosperous existence based largely on a flourishing cotton industry. This industry developed during the American Civil War, when supplies of cotton from the southern states were not readily available, and the demand for the commodity from other sources of supply was consequently high. As a result the acreage devoted to the growing of cotton in western India increased enormously, and supplies of cotton from that region began flowing to markets in all parts of the world. After the Civil War the demand for Indian cotton from these markets persisted, and this, together with the growing demand for the commodity in India itself, provided an incentive for

1 Throughout the thesis, the phrase 'division of Nagpur' refers only to the four Marathi districts of the Central Provinces - Nagpur, Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara. These four districts also comprised one of the three provinces of the Congress in the Central Provinces and Berar after the introduction of the revised constitution of the Congress at Nagpur in 1920.
the expansion of the industry and an assured prosperity for the Marathi region.

These favourable economic conditions resulted in the growth of a network of towns that served as centres for political activity in the Marathi region. The towns – for the most part long established administrative or trading centres – grew rapidly between 1860 and 1890 owing to the expansion of the cotton industry and the building of railways linking the cotton country with Calcutta and Bombay. At first, so far as activities connected with the cotton industry were concerned, the towns were merely centres for the sale of cotton grown in the surrounding countryside. However, with the increase in the amount of cotton produced, gins and presses sprang up in the vicinity of the markets, while in the more centrally situated towns, mills for the spinning and weaving of cotton were also established. These developments greatly enriched the social and economic life of the towns of the Marathi region, and created in them an environment that was conducive to the growth of political institutions. The following description of Amravati, the largest town in Berar, illustrates this point:

The town of Amraoti is divided into two very distinct portions, the old city within and the new suburbs outside the walls. Within the walls...the streets are mostly narrow and crooked, and drainage is very unsystematic. Houses are closely crowded and encroachments

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taking up land valuable either for drainage or ventilation have in the past been only too common. Outside the walls lie the weekly market and cotton market with the gins and factories, a quarter which is usually sanitary and clean; and Namuna, the best portion of the town, where are some of the Government offices and the houses of well-to-do pleaders and other citizens. The municipality was created in 1869 (and) consists of 24 members. Of the municipal buildings, the clock tower, the Municipal Hall and the boys' school...are alone important. Among the Government buildings...the Small Cause Court is the oldest, having been erected in 1868. The Telegraph Office...and General Post Office... were constructed about the same time. The High School was built in...1873. The other buildings are the Anglo-vernacular school, the Anglo-Hindustani school, the girls' school, the Urdu girls' school, and the normal school for women teachers. Besides Government buildings, there is the fine edifice recently erected to house the Victoria Technical Institute. The Lady Dufferin Hospital, the Catholic Dispensary and Convent school, a Free Library and a Theosophical Hall are perhaps the most important charities of the town. Amraoti contains two theatres... (and) a small club... (and) has long been known as the principal cotton mart of Berar.¹

The presence of groups of politically conscious citizens in towns like Amravati was another factor responsible for the vigour of political life in the Marathi region. These citizens, who belonged either to the socially dominant Maharashtrian Brahman community or to leading non-Brahman communities, possessed extensive interests in land from which they derived considerable

wealth. They were in addition well educated, and many possessed professional qualifications. The possession of social and economic power by members of the leading communities of the Marathi region aroused in them a strong desire for political power, and this expressed itself in activities designed to remove the British from the government of the province and the country alike, and to install Indian rulers in their stead.

The man who provided the inspiration for these activities was Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a Maharashtrian Brahman of Poona and the author of a nationalist movement that encompassed the entire Marathi region of western India. Tilak based his movement on a belief in the ideals and values of classical Hinduism as the instrument through which India could gain national independence or swaraj. For this reason he opposed the attempts made by other nationalists to remake India in the image of the West. A speech delivered by Tilak in Poona in March 1920 contains a clear statement of his nationalist viewpoint:

Mr Tilak exhorted the audience to give up the spirit of imitation and to realise truths of the Vedanta which alone could save India and the world. It alone could give them sound spiritual basis for reconstruction of society....(He said) it was a pity that India had lost the faculty of recognising her heroes...because (she was) under the hypnotism of the west....Shake off these bonds (he said). Assert your independence of spirit....Let us stick fast to our Vedanta and all our desires shall be fulfilled. With and through Vedanta alone...the regeneration of India...would be possible and assured.¹

¹ Bombay Chronicle, 8 March 1920, p.6.
Between 1890 and 1919 three remarkable men — all lieutenants of Tilak — introduced these ideas into the Marathi region of the Central Provinces and Berar. As a result, a distinctive nationalist movement took root in the area. Perhaps the most remarkable of the three men was Ganesh Shrikrishna Khaparde, 'a man of great erudition and humour and of a generous disposition'.

In Amravati, where he lived, and indeed throughout Berar, Khaparde was a much-loved figure, as the following tribute from a Muslim politician at the time of his death in 1938 indicates:

In Dadasaheb Khaparde, whom all Beraris consider as the grandfather of Berar and not only as the grand old man, we have...the embodiment of Muslim and Hindu culture. He was the personification of western and eastern ideas. He was liked and loved both by Muhammadans and Hindus alike. My memory of him goes back to my student days. He had a roaring practice then....At Amraoti he presided over almost all Muslim meetings and his charities did not know the limitations of caste or creed. He helped students of all communities.

Khaparde was born in 1845 at Hingoli in the State of Hyderabad where his father was employed by the government of the Nizam. He received his education in Berar and Bombay, graduating in Arts in 1877 and in Law in 1884, when he was appointed as an Extra Assistant Commissioner in Berar. Service, however, 'did not suit his temper', and in 1889 Khaparde joined the bar in Amravati, where 'he attained a position...which remained unexcelled in

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2 Ibid., p. 3. The politician was Abdul Rauf Shah.
those parts of India'.\(^1\) As a prominent lawyer and a leading member of the Maharashtrian Brahman community, Khaparde also played an important part in public life, and, following his contact with Tilak in the last decade of the nineteenth century, he introduced Tilak's nationalist ideas into the Marathi districts of the Central Provinces and Berar. At first Khaparde confined his nationalist activities to Berar, but after its annexation to the Central Provinces in 1902 he extended those activities to the division of Nagpur, thus laying the foundations of the nationalist movement in the Marathi region as a whole. But whether in Nagpur or Berar, Khaparde proved himself a tireless and devoted disciple of Tilak, working, like his leader, among students, professional men and government servants, many of whom were also members of his caste community. Like Tilak, too, Khaparde used the festivals of Sivaji and Ganapati to popularise nationalist ideas, and advocated the boycott of liquor and foreign cloth as a means of restoring a sense of national pride among the educated townsfolk of the region.\(^2\) Khaparde also followed Tilak's example in attacking the loyalist politicians of the Marathi region, who sought inspiration for the Indian nation of the future in western models. These politicians, mostly prominent landholders, dominated political life in Nagpur until about 1907, when they

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\(^1\) *Maharatta*, 8 July 1938, p.6.

suffered their first major reversal at the hands of Khaparde and his followers. The success of the nationalists' attack on the loyalists is brilliantly portrayed in the following letter, written by R.N. Mudholkar, a moderate politician from Amravati:

In Nagpur (Khaparde)...has been able to organise an active party of noisy, self sufficient, quarrelsome, impudent, unscrupulous men. It grieves me to say that they are all men of education, most of them graduates, some holding two degrees. These men hate...the old men.... They possess little influence with the men of position and respectability outside Nagpur and they are conscious of it....Yet, curiously enough, egged on as they are by my townsman, they bully, browbeat and speak in a dictatorial manner to the old leaders....Khaparde has many excellent qualities. He would never have used the horrid language he did, he would never have gone on abusing the Nagpur leaders in private houses, public meetings, station platforms and railway trains, but for the knowledge that the audience was for the most part sympathetic and responsive. It will take sheets to describe what Khaparde and his lieutenants are doing and how bad the young men have gone.

Tilak and his supporters from the Central Provinces waged a similar attack on moderate politicians at the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Surat in the same year, but this time they were defeated and left the Congress as a result. In 1908 Tilak was imprisoned on a charge of sedition, and a lull descended on Khaparde's

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1 The moderate politicians of Nagpur were led by Sir Gangadhaorrrao Chitnavis.

2 NAI, The Gokhale Collection, letters from R.N. Mudholkar, 9 April 1907.
activities in the Marathi region. Following his leader's release in 1914, however, Khaparde again took up active nationalist work and played a leading part in establishing the Home Rule League, newly formed by Tilak, in Berar. Tilak also provided the inspiration for Khaparde's decision to enter the Imperial Legislative Council to bring the nationalist viewpoint to the notice of the government; and to join the deputation sent to Great Britain in 1919 to convert the public and Labour party of that country to the idea of home rule for India.

Another of Tilak's lieutenants in the Marathi region was a young Brahman doctor, Balkrishna Shivaram Moonje of Nagpur. A bold and determined man with 'an inassuageable hatred of the British government', Moonje came to the fore as the leader of the nationalist movement in the division of Nagpur after 1907, replacing G.S. Khaparde who thereafter confined his activities to the territory of Berar.¹ Moonje was born in Bilaspur in 1872 and spent his early years in the town. During this period, the upbringing he received from his father left a permanent mark upon him, and in later years made him extremely receptive to Tilak's political ideology:

His (i.e. Moonje's)...father...was a staunch Hindu. Mindful of his son's future, he always exhorted him not to lose his ancient faith while he received English Education which, he was afraid, had denationalised many brilliant youths of the day. The advice given to him had a lasting impression upon him and from his very boyhood Dr Moonje has been of religious bent of

¹ NAI, Home Public, 953, 1924, p.270.
Dr B.S. Moonje
mind and proud of ancient Aryan glory. 1

Following his primary and secondary education, and a period spent at Hislop College in Nagpur, Moonje entered the Grant Medical College in Bombay, receiving his medical degree in 1898. For two years he served as a doctor in Bombay and then went out to South Africa to join the Boer War. On the conclusion of the War, he 'had to return to Nagpur and established himself as a very successful and expert eye-operator'. 2 Shortly after his return to Nagpur, Moonje came under the influence of Tilak and Khaparde, and under their guidance gradually assumed leadership of the nationalist movement in the division of Nagpur. Like Tilak, Dr Moonje supported the conservative Hindu view of politics and worked through religious festivals and the Rashtriya Mandal, an association of nationalists in Nagpur, to popularise that view. 3 Moonje also reproduced in the division of Nagpur the aggressive style of politics adopted by Tilak in Bombay. This was evident not only in the vigour of Moonje's opposition to British rule in India, but also in the institutions he established in order to develop a similar opposition in others. Typical of these institutions was the akhada which Moonje founded in 1907 for the students of Nagpur. In the following extract, Sir Gangadhaorrorao Chitnavis, a leading loyalist politician in Nagpur, described the use

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3 Besides Dr Moonje, the Rashtriya Mandal included in its membership N.R. Udhoji, A. Kolhatkar and Dr L.V. Paranjpe. See Mishra, op. cit., p.213.
Last year Dr Moonje asked me to give him some municipal ground where he could make an akhara for all students in Nagpur. This ground they used for (an) akhada where all students...used to meet. They employed some teachers to teach them the old art of playing the stick and many other games. (Their) motives...are to seduce boys from other schools to attend their special akhadas...and thereby to wean them from the legitimate influences...They aimed not only at the physical education of the boys, but...they were actuated by some ulterior motives there of nationalists...i.e. to create and mobilise a force of students against government and those who differed from them in politics.¹

Dr Moonje was also responsible for introducing two other features of Tilak's nationalist movement into the division of Nagpur. In 1916 he set up branches of the Home Rule League in the area, and in the same year, on the advice of Tilak, he led the members of the Rashtriya Mandal and their supporters back into the Indian National Congress.² To give further strength to their position, Dr Moonje and his supporters also made a determined assault on the last remaining stronghold of the loyalist

¹ Chitnavis MS, Sir G.M. Chitnavis to ________, 25 December 1908.
politicians - the Municipal Committee of Nagpur. These ventures were completely successful. By 1919 the members of the Home Rule League were in firm control of the Marathi section of the Provincial Congress Committee of the Central Provinces, and held a majority of seats on the Municipal Committee of Nagpur.  

Another feature of political life in the Marathi region was the bitter conflict between the division of Nagpur (in association with the Hindi districts) and Berar over the allocation of the surplus revenues of Berar. Owing to its fertility and favourable climate, Berar was a wealthy area and every year returned to the government revenues that far outstripped the cost of its administration. The Central Provinces, by contrast, was not even able to meet its own expenses. Thus, after the annexation of Berar to the Central Provinces, the government drew heavily on the surplus revenues of Berar to finance public works in the province proper. This aroused great resentment in Berar, but no suitable forum for airing that resentment existed until 1914, when the Government of India established a Legislative Council in Nagpur. To this Council Berar was entitled to send three representatives, and from its first session these members lost no opportunity to attack the

1 Hitavada, 15 June 1918, p.6; ibid., 13 July 1918, p.5. Provincial Congress Committee will hereafter be referred to as PCC.

2 Berar's Position in the Indian Federation, op. cit., p.4. Between 1902-16 the lowest surplus was Rs. 42,28,400, and the highest Rs. 1,03,48,500; the former occurred in 1902-3, and the latter in 1912-13.
government and the Central Provinces for their appropriation of the revenues of Berar.\(^1\) In 1918 one member gave voice to the complaints of many residents of Berar when he pointed out that

> the fact is patent that since the time that Berar was tacked on to the Central Provinces, the authorities commenced spending infinitely large amounts on buildings and communications with all possible vigour at the sacrifice of the convenience of Berar people....It would not be too much to say that the Central Provinces is being lavishly cared for without taking care to provide even the necessities of life to Berar....The latter has a just ground to consider that it is being treated as a step-child by the administration...and...is being neglected.\(^2\)

To overcome these difficulties, the leaders of Berar proposed several solutions, one of which was to give Berar a greater share in her own revenues. The other solution was more drastic and envisaged the establishment of a separate legislature in Berar, and the constitution of Berar as a separate province.\(^3\)

The support given to these measures in Berar was due not simply to the demand for 'financial justice', but also to the widespread belief that Berar was a homogeneous political unit with a destiny and interests

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2. CPLC, 13 March 1918, p.147. The speaker was Y.G. Deshpande.
3. Ibid., 29 July 1918, p.297; ibid., 22 July 1919, pp.244-5; Berar's Position in the Indian Federation, op. cit., pp.7-8.
peculiarly its own. There were good grounds for this belief. The majority of people in Berar, for instance, spoke Marathi, while the population of the Central Provinces was divided into Hindi and Marathi speaking sections each with its own interests and style of politics. Berar had an economic unity, too, deriving from its involvement in the cotton industry, that was not possessed by the Central Provinces, which comprised several agricultural zones with a different crop forming the staple in each zone. Further, the income which Berar received from the cotton industry gave it a degree of affluence which was unrivalled in the Central Provinces, save perhaps in the cotton growing areas of the division of Nagpur. The patterns of land settlement, too, differed between the Central Provinces and Berar. In Berar, as in Bombay, the government settled the land on the agriculturists, whereas in the Central Provinces it settled it on the malguzars.

The movement for the separation of Berar from the Central Provinces brought to light another feature of politics in the Marathi region, namely, the two fold division of nationalist leadership between the division of Nagpur and Berar. This was evident in the existence of separate Congress Committees to direct the nationalist movement in the two areas. Apart from the official nationalist organisations, too, the jurisdiction of nationalist leaders in the division of Nagpur was ordinarily confined to that area. This was also the

\[1\] Hitavada, 2 December 1916, p.6.
case with the nationalist leaders of Berar, with the exception of G.S. Khaparde, whose influence extended far beyond the bounds of Berar, owing to his connections with the Imperial legislature in Delhi and his participation in the Home Rule deputation to England. More typical of the nationalists of Berar was Madhao Shrihari Aney, a Maharashtrian Brahman pleader from Yeotmal, who besides being a lieutenant of Tilak was also a formidable protagonist of the distinct and local interests of Berar. Aney received his education at Morris College in Nagpur and at the University of Calcutta, and after graduating from those institutions in Arts and Law respectively, became a teacher in the Kashibai High School in Amravati between 1904-07. In 1908 he joined the Bar in Yeotmal and began practice as a pleader. Like many possessed of high social and economic status, Aney also entered the public life of Berar, and was responsible for introducing the nationalist movement of Tilak into the district of Yeotmal. Between 1916-19 Aney served as the Vice-president of Tilak's Home Rule League in western India and was the founder-President of the branch of the League in Yeotmal. In addition to his work for the Home Rule League, Aney also championed the cause of Berar and was closely associated with the campaign to persuade the government to redress the financial grievances of the territory. In waging this campaign Aney had the support of the Yeotmal District Association, a political organisation formed in 1915 before the Home Rule League was established in the district. Through this organisation Aney brought pressure on the government
to establish a separate legislature in Berar and mooted the possibility of serving Berar completely from the Central Provinces. The following extract from a circular letter which the Yeotmal District Association sent in 1917 to prominent citizens of Berar at the instance of Aney illustrates his case for a separate province of Berar:

A fertile tract, with an industrious population, these districts have all along been a province in themselves....The popular feeling in Berar was decidedly against the amalgamation of these districts with the Central Provinces and the experience of the last eleven years has not served in the least to reconcile the public opinion in Berar to this fact....The prevailing territorial division should be abolished, and a redistribution on the basis of linguistic, racial and historical affinities be suggested... In such a scheme, Berar will have to be linked to other parts of India.¹

Despite the cleavage in the nationalist leadership between the divisions of Nagpur and Berar, however, nationalists from the Marathi region worked together to disseminate nationalist values which had taken firm root in their region to the Hindi districts. They did so in order that the two regions could offer united opposition to the government. The men responsible for this were Dr Moonje and G.S. Khaparde. Between 1915-19 the two men, assisted by their lieutenants, presided at political meetings in the Hindi region, and formed branches of Tilak's Home Rule League in Hindi towns where their fellow Maharashtrian Brahmans lived in significant

¹ Hitavada, 3 November 1917, p.3.
numbers. Marathi nationalists were also responsible for drawing loyalist and nationalist politicians from both regions together for an annual political conference; for bringing Hindi politicians into the Provincial Association; and for establishing in the Hindi region branches of the Graduates' Association, an organisation founded by members of the Home Rule League to awaken public opinion on major political issues. Finally, nationalists from the Hindi and Marathi regions of the Central Provinces were linked by their membership of the Provincial Congress Committee which had its headquarters in Nagpur, and through that Committee to the wider organisation of the Indian National Congress. Time alone would tell, however, whether the efforts of the Marathi nationalists to unite the political leaders of the two linguistic regions would prove successful.

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1 Hitavada, 25 September 1915, p.5; 7 October 1916, p.3; 10 November 1917, p.7; 22 September 1917, p.8; 30 October 1917, p.5; Hardas, op. cit., p.287; Mishra, op. cit., p.271.
THE DIVERGENCE OF THE REGIONS: NATIONALIST AGITATION
IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, 1919-1922

Despite the attempt of Dr Moonje and G.S. Khaparde to draw the political leaders of the Hindi and Marathi regions into a common stance, between 1919 and 1922 the differences between them increased rather than decreased. The differences emerged during the two nationwide campaigns of agitation launched against the Government of India by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Through these campaigns, Gandhi aimed to arouse the people of India against British rule, and to create in them, over and above their existing loyalties, a new loyalty to the concept of the Political Nation. The first campaign, which took place in 1919, consisted of a Satyagraha to persuade the government to withdraw the Rowlatt Act. The second, which occurred between 1921-1922, took the form of a movement of non-cooperation. The two campaigns, however, failed to draw the Hindi and Marathi regions together. In 1919, the two regions responded differently to his call for a Satyagraha, thus confirming their earlier tendency to develop distinctive political styles. This tendency became even more marked during the campaign of non-cooperation. Whereas Gandhi had to prod the Marathi nationalists into accepting his leadership and style of agitation, the Hindi nationalists readily gave their allegiance to Gandhi and supported his campaign of non-cooperation. And although the
campaigns in both regions involved the urban middle
classes, the merchants, and the lower classes in town
and country, in other respects they differed greatly.
By March 1922, the Hindi and Marathi leaders were
deeply divided over Gandhi's leadership of the Indian
National Congress and over his modes of nationalist
agitation. This posed a severe threat to nationalist
unity, and hence to the political stability of the
Central Provinces and Berar.

I

The response of the Central Provinces and Berar
to Gandhi's call for a Satyagraha against the Rowlatt
Act showed that, despite the efforts of Dr Moonje, no
real unity existed between the politicians of the Hindi
and Marathi regions. The Act, which conferred on the
Government of India extraordinary powers to deal with
terrorist crime throughout the country, provided Gandhi
with an excellent opportunity to unite the peoples of
India against British rule. Accordingly, when the
Government of India introduced the legislation into the
Imperial Legislative Council on 6 February 1919, Gandhi
warned that he would launch a Satyagraha if the measure
was formally enshrined as the law of the land. Despite
this warning, however, the Government of India proceeded
with the bill, and it passed into law in the third week
of March 1919. Immediately thereafter, Gandhi called
upon the people of India to observe 6 April 1919 as a
'day of humiliation and prayer' in protest against the
repressive measure enacted by the Government of India.
So far as the Central Provinces and Berar were concerned,
the response of political leaders in both regions was negligible, yet their responses reflected the differing levels of political maturity and contrasting styles of politics obtaining in each region.

In the Hindi region loyalists and nationalists alike were unwilling to participate in the Satyagraha of 6 April 1919. They did, however, summon meetings to protest against the introduction of the Rowlatt bill into the Imperial legislature, but these meetings owed nothing to Gandhi's inspiration and were usually held long before he issued his call to action.\(^\text{1}\) And this, apparently, was as far as the leaders were prepared to go, for on 6 April only one hartal took place in the entire Hindi region. There were several reasons for this. Foremost among these was the opposition of Pandit Shukul and the loyalists to the notions of satyagraha and passive resistance.\(^\text{2}\) Again, as malguzars and members of the liberal professions, the loyalists had little reason to be discontented with their lot and hence to oppose the government. Ravi Shankar Shukla and the nationalists were also unwilling to join in the Satyagraha, possibly owing to the influence of Dr Moonje, who was himself cool towards Gandhi and his new style of politics. Again, although the Muslims of northern India strongly supported the Satyagraha on the basis of their

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\(^{1}\) Mishra, op. cit., pp.284-5.

\(^{2}\) See NAI, the Private Papers of G.S. Khaparde (cited hereafter as Khaparde MS), File 4, Part 3, Letter S2, B.D. Shukul to G.S. Khaparde, 20 March 1919.
opposition to British policy in Turkey, the Muslims of the Hindi region displayed no interest whatever in the agitation. There was only one exception to the apparent lack of interest by Hindi politicians in the Rowlatt Satyagraha, and that occurred in the town of Chhindwara. In that town on 6 April 1919 the only complete hartal recorded anywhere in the Central Provinces and Berar took place. The occurrence of a hartal in Chhindwara, however, was not primarily due to the popularity of Gandhi in the town, but to the presence there of his political associates, Mohammed and Shaukat Ali, who had been interned in the town in 1918. But although the Ali brothers were not permanent residents of Chhindwara, they persuaded the local Hindu and Muslim population to hold an effective and peaceful protest against the Government of India. According to one observer:

The day was observed here as a day of purification by Hindus, Muslims, Jains and Sikhs in exceptionally large numbers. Many, including women and children, fasted. Muslims...began the day...(by) reading the Koran. Later on, Hindus and Muslims gathered before a temple and jointly offered prayers to God for divine guidance of the government (and) grant of power to the people to bear oppression with courage and fortitude. The Jain temple remained full of worshippers throughout the day.... All bazaars remained closed. Such a complete and

1 NAI, Home Political, July 1919, 46 Deposit, Fortnightly Reports on the Internal Political Situation in the Central Provinces and Berar for the first half of April 1919, p.23. (These reports will be cited hereafter as NAI, Home Poll, July 1919, 46 Deposit, FR, First Half of April 1919.)
absolute suspension of business has been unknown in living memory. Villagers remained at home fasting and praying....The Muslims broke their fast at the end of the day,...and all Hindus and Muslims gathered before the temple. Mr Ghate presided and delivered an eloquent speech on the Rowlatt legislation....The success was beyond highest expectation and would have gladdened Mahatma Gandhi's heart.¹

Nationalist leaders in the Marathi region were also reluctant to participate in the Satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act. As in the Hindi region, the leaders held public meetings to protest against the legislation, but most of them were firmly opposed to the holding of hartals. As a result only four recorded hartals took place, and each was incomplete. Of the four, two occurred in the Central Provinces and two in Berar. The men primarily responsible for the half-hearted response to Gandhi's call for a Satyagraha in the Marathi region were Dr Moonje in the division of Nagpur and G.S. Khaparde in Berar. Of the two, Dr Moonje was less certain in his opposition than Khaparde. Dr Moonje's uncertainty was possibly rooted in the confusion which Gandhi caused throughout Maharashtra by mounting a nationalist agitation against the government, and at the same time over-riding Tilak as the acknowledged leader of the region.² The confusion was most marked in Poona, the centre of the nationalist movement in Maharashtra.

¹ Bombay Chronicle, 9 April 1919, p.7.
² Throughout this thesis, Maharashtra is used to denote the Marathi region of western India, except in Maharashtra P.C.C., where it refers to the province of Bombay.
nationalists first approved, then disapproved, of the Satyagraha, the latter response indicating that they had had second thoughts about the agitation and decided to stand against it. The newspapers of Poona clearly revealed the nationalists' indecision in the matter. On 2 March 1919, for instance, the Mahratta, a weekly published under the auspices of Tilak, expressed the hope that India would 'rise to a man to follow this war-worn field marshal of passive resistance (i.e. Gandhi) to stop the aggression of the Rowlatt bills'. A week later, however, it stated that, although

the Poona nationalists have...wired their support to the movement,...they have reserved for themselves the liberty to settle details....The divergence of opinion on the point of settling the details...shows how difficult the problem is, and any hasty conclusion on it will simply be harmful to the movement....The question should be approached and solved with full consciousness of the tremendous responsibility it involves.  

Statements from Nagpur, too, revealed an initial acceptance of, and a subsequent withdrawal from, Gandhi's plan of campaign. On 6 March 1919, the Maharashtra, a Marathi paper expressing similar views to those of the Mahratta, came out in support of passive resistance and urged its readers to sign the pledge to observe satyagraha against the government as requested by Gandhi. Within two weeks, however, nationalist opinion in Nagpur, for which the Maharashtra was the spokesman, seems to

1 Mahratta, 2 March 1919, p.101; 9 March 1919, p.113.
2 Bombay Chronicle, 7 March 1919, p.7.
have undergone a change in keeping with that already observed among political leaders in Poona. This change was evident on 23 March when Dr Moonje expressed hesitation about taking any course of action that would divide the nationalists of Maharashtra, be they from Poona, Nagpur or Berar.\(^1\) In Berar, G.S. Khaparde was much more forthright in his opposition to Gandhi's proposal for a Satyagraha than Dr Moonje. In March 1919, when asked in Bombay whether he would lead the passive resistance movement in that province, Khaparde replied that he did not believe in the movement. He also remarked that Gandhi would say one thing today and another thing tomorrow. He had no faith in the signatories (Guzerathi) to the satyagraha vow. He said that one stripe of with a whip was sufficient to deter them from their determination. He doubted the genuineness of the signatories to the vow.\(...) In the circumstances he said that the passive resistance movement was impossible.\(^2\)

Loyalty to the nationalist views and leadership of Tilak was the main factor behind the opposition of Moonje and Khaparde to the Rowlatt Satyagraha. In 1919 neither man desired to see Gandhi exalted to the position of national leader at the expense of Tilak, more particularly if the attainment of that position gave him

\(^1\) NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 3, B.S. Moonje to G.S. Khaparde, 23 March 1919.

entry to 'Tilak's country' - the Marathi region of the Central Provinces and Berar. In addition, Moonje and Khaparde saw in Tilak's aggressive style of leadership the embodiment of Maharashtra's proud resistance to foreign rule, and they were unwilling to renounce that style for the alien concept of non-violent soul force which Gandhi advocated as the only weapon capable of driving the British away from India. Thus, when asked whether he would practise passive resistance and withdraw from the Imperial legislature in protest against the Rowlatt Act, Khaparde ridiculed the concept of withdrawal as a political strategy and postulated a more active form of protest in its place:

He said that he did not like to throw up his work in that manner and sit at home like an old woman in a huff....He said that he was unable to lead the movement...as he could not walk on foot all the way from Amraoti to Delhi to attend the council meetings, as in the strictest sense of the term 'passive resistance' he could not travel by foreign railways....He gave it as his opinion that the best they could do would be to use swadeshi goods as a protest.2

It was highly probable, too, that Khaparde and Dr Moonje had reservations about one other aspect of the movement of protest organised by Gandhi against the Government of India in 1919. This concerned the participation of Indian Muslims in nationalist agitation

1 For evidence of Dr Moonje's loyalty to Tilak, see NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 2, B.S. Moonje to Damoherpant, 16 August 1919.

2 NAI, Home Poll, April 1919, 49 Deposit, FR, op. cit., p.5.
for the first time. It was not the participation of the Muslims _per se_, which they opposed, for Tilak himself had tried to persuade Muslims in Bombay to join the Hindus in opposing the partition of Bengal. Rather, they were suspicious of the conditions on which Gandhi had won over the Muslims, for they believed that in exploiting the pan-Islamic sympathies of the Muslims to win their support for the Satyagraha, Gandhi was actually turning their thoughts, not to the future nation of India, but to the Islamic states of the Middle East, thus alienating them completely from the Hindus. Evidence of these fears was reflected in a statement made by N.C. Kelkar, one of Tilak's foremost lieutenants in Poona, in reaction to Gandhi's appeal to the Muslims to join in nationalist agitation in 1920. It was highly probable that Kelkar, Tilak and their colleagues in the Central Provinces and Berar held similar views on Gandhi's appeal to the Muslims to join in the Rowlatt Satyagraha some twelve months before hand:

_The nationalist party in Poona is not favourably disposed towards Mr Gandhi's non-cooperation movement... My belief is that he is playing the game in order to please the Muhammadans... To speak the truth, the Indian Muhammadans ought to have no sympathy for Turkey, and the agitation in this part of the country is only superficial.... If government... take some drastic measures against Mr Gandhi, then his cause will prosper and there will be a series of riots, and then some of the emotional and rash Muhammadans will commit atrocities and the whole country will be in a state of confusion and consternation.... We have no heart in this movement, and government should not misunderstand our action. We have to keep up some appearances to please Mr Gandhi and his Muhammadan friends. My personal belief is that this is a pan-Islamic question, and the_
Hindus have no right to join the Muhammadans, and so long as the Indian Muhammadans have one eye towards Turkey and the other to the British government, their loyalty towards the latter is shaky and they are not fit to be the friends of the Hindus.  

Nationalist leaders in Berar had additional reasons for opposing the Rowlatt Satyagraha. During 1918, rumours that the Government of India intended to restore Berar to the Nizam of Hyderabad, who was a Muslim, gained currency in Berar. Some leaders linked these rumours with the noticeable increase of pan-Islamic sentiment among Muslims in India, and they feared that the restoration of Berar would contribute to a revival of Muslim power in India, as in Berar. Accordingly, when Gandhi called on Hindus and Muslims to observe a Satyagraha on 6 April 1919, appealing to the latter on the basis of their opposition to British policy in Turkey, the Hindu leaders of Berar declined to obey the call. These leaders had a further reason for opposing Gandhi's campaign of withdrawal and passive resistance in 1919. They regarded the legislature as the arena as in which they could best wage the nationalist struggle against British rule and at the same time remove the grounds for their dissatisfaction with the government's

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1 NAI, Home Poll, August 1920, 35 Deposit. N.C. Kelkar and Mr Deshpande's Views on Mr Gandhi's Non-cooperation Movement. Letter from G. Madurkar, 22 July 1920, pp.1-3.

2 NAI, Khaparde MS, File 5, Letter TI, S.B. Tambe to G.S. Khaparde, 12 June 1918.
policy towards Berar. Hence, they saw that participation in agitation outside the council would not only prevent them from attaining the latter objectives, but also antagonise the government at the very time when they needed its sympathy and support.

Despite the opposition of Tilak's lieutenants, nationalists in the Marathi region disclosed some support for the Rowlatt Satyagraha. A small hartal occurred in Nagpur, and a more successful one in Chanda where the bazaars closed, the people offered prayers and a public meeting protested against the passage of the Rowlatt Act.¹ In Berar, there was more support for Gandhi than in the division of Nagpur. Much of this was due to Wamanrao Joshi, a Brahman leader from Amravati, who accepted Gandhi's ideas and leadership early in 1919. Being a Brahman and an associate of Tilak gave Joshi two great advantages, and he utilised these to the full to win support for Gandhi in Berar. Shortly after the latter launched his movement of protest, Joshi set off on a tour of Berar to persuade people to adopt the new style of agitation. In Amravati and Akola, at least, he had considerable success, and on 6 April 1919 members of the Brahman, Marwari and Muslim communities observed a Satyagraha in those towns. In Akola on that day

An open air meeting of satyagraha was held in Nanabhai Icharam's compound. Maulvi Mahamad Usaf presided. All classes, especially the

merchant class, eagerly attended. Gandhi's and Tilak's photos were garlanded. Mr Wamanrao Joshi of Amraoti explained the satyagraha doctrine, and exhorted the public to stick to the satyagraha movement as no other force could surpass the spiritual force. Bazars were closed and the day was observed as a humiliation day. People observed the fast.¹

Owing to the disinterest of a majority of nationalists, however, the hartals were only partial, and efforts by Joshi to hold hartals elsewhere proved a failure.

II

The divergence between the Hindi and Marathi leaders, as seen in their response to the Rowlatt Satyagraha, became more pronounced during the campaign of non-cooperation launched by Gandhi in 1921. This divergence was first evident in 1920 - the year of Gandhi's preparation for the campaign. During the first part of 1920, the Hindi leaders were reluctant to support non-cooperation and concentrated their attention on the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms which were to come into operation in the Central Provinces and Berar in the same year. The interest of the Hindi politicians centred in particular on the enlarged legislature and the provision in the Reforms for ministers, since such changes offered their region the opportunity to compete more favourably with the Marathi region for its share of public works than in the past. This was evident from a speech made

¹ NAI, Home Poll, July 1919, 46 Deposit, FR, First Half of April 1919, p.23; Bombay Chronicle, 8 April 1919, p.8; 10 April 1919, p.8.
by a prominent Hindi politician at Jabalpur in April 1920:

Loud complaints are made by the Hindi speaking people that their interests are sadly neglected. It is for you now to organise and make your voice heard through your ministers in the council....You have been neglected so far because you have not cried aloud or not at all. You must now organise and convene district, tahsil and village conferences, pass resolutions and send them up to government for compliance.... But first formulate your demands.\(^1\)

Hindi politicians also stressed the usefulness of the Reforms in gaining self government for India. And with regional and national objectives in mind, they prepared to contest the elections to the new legislature to be held in December 1920.\(^2\)

But even while these preparations were being made, Gandhi was gathering support for a nationwide assault on the Government of India outside the legislatures. By September 1920 he had persuaded the Khilafat Committee (a body formed to safeguard the position of the Khalif of Constantinople) and the Indian National Congress to take part in a campaign of non-cooperation against the government. Through this campaign, Gandhi aimed to secure a revision of the peace treaty between Britain and Turkey, and to make an emphatic protest against the suppression of the Rowlatt Satyagraha in the Punjab.

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1. Hitavada, 10 April 1920, p.7. The politician was Sir Hari Singh Gour.
To these objectives, Gandhi added a third - that of swaraj, declaring that Indians could achieve this goal if they wholeheartedly took part in non-violent non-cooperation against the government. The agitation as devised by Gandhi consisted of constructive work and a series of boycotts against British institutions.

Hindi leaders led by Ravi Shankar Shukla responded enthusiastically to Gandhi's proposal for a campaign of non-cooperation against the government. They did so for a number of reasons, not the least of these being that the loyalist, Pandit Shukul, was aging, and the nationalist-minded Shukla was fast replacing him as the leader of the Hindi region. Again, although the nationalist movement in the Marathi region was long established and possessed its own distinctive style, that in the Hindi region was in its infancy. As a result nationalists in that region were prepared to support any leader who could capture their imagination and confidence and at the same time assist their attack on British rule. In addition some who in 1920 were ready to enter public life did so on the wave of enthusiasm created by Gandhi; others followed him in the belief that non-cooperation would awaken the Hindi region to political activity on a large scale.

Hindi leaders made their decision to support Gandhi against a background of repeated disagreements with the Marathi leaders on passive resistance and non-cooperation. The first of these disagreements occurred at a conference of politicians held at Khandwa in April 1919. During the conference Raghavendra Rao proposed, and Shukla seconded, a resolution congratulating Pandit Shukul
on his withdrawal from the Imperial legislature in protest against the Rowlatt Act and calling on other members of that body to follow suit. G.S. Khaparde, who was the president of the conference and who had not resigned from the Imperial legislature, interpreted the resolution as an attack on him. Accordingly, he threatened that unless Rao withdrew the resolution, he would resign from the presidency. This Rao did, but not before the incident had created a great deal of misunderstanding between Hindi and Marathi representatives at the conference. In his diary, Khaparde described his confrontation with Raghavendra Rao:

This was the first day of the Central Provinces and Berar conference....Mr Rao whom I took to be a reasonable man, I am sorry, turned out quite the reverse. He developed obstructive tactics and it appeared a few supported him....Rao wanted a resolution to thank Sukul and all who resigned. I thought it was not proper. He was defeated by a large majority. Later on, towards the close, a man who is the president of the Kanya Kubja caste desired to revive the subject, but I as president would not allow it to be reopened. There was a good deal of wrangling.

The misunderstanding created at Khandwa increased further owing to a conflict between Dr Moonje and Pandit Shukul over a political journal for the Hindi region. During 1919 Dr Moonje sponsored the production of a Hindi weekly Sankulp to promote the nationalist views of Tilak in the Hindi region. In Jabalpur, however, Pandit Shukul and

1 Hitavada, 26 April 1919, p.5.
2 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 19 April 1919.
other Hindi leaders countered this move by producing the Karmavir, a Hindi weekly expressing views similar to those of Gandhi.\(^1\) There were also acute differences between Raghavendra Rao and Dr Moonje over the preparations to enter the legislature. During May 1920 Hindi and Marathi politicians met in conference at Sagar and formed a committee with a view to conducting a joint electoral campaign. Prominent members of the committee were Dr Moonje for the Marathi region, and Rao and Shukla for the Hindi region. During June and July 1920 Moonje repeatedly urged Rao to hold a meeting of the committee, but on each occasion Rao raised objections, thus indicating that he and his Hindi colleagues were having second thoughts about entering the legislature.\(^2\) Despite Moonje's protests, however, the committee did not meet, a result that apparently caused little concern in the Hindi region where the leaders decided at an early stage to support non-cooperation.

By the close of 1920 the nationalists of the Hindi region had withdrawn from the elections to the legislature and thrown in their lot with Gandhi. The man most responsible for this was Ravi Shankar Shukla. As early as March 1920 Shukla declared his support for the Khilafat movement in a meeting in Raipur at which

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1. NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 1A, B.S. Moonje to Narsopant, 11 January 1919; Letter Pad 3, B.S. Moonje to B.D. Shukla, 19 August 1919; Hitavada, 11 October 1919, p.4; 31 January 1920, p.5.
2. NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 4, B.S. Moonje to D. Laxminarayan, 31 May 1920; B.S. Moonje to E.R. Rao, 9 June, 11 June, 10 July 1920.
About 2000 persons, Hindus and Muslims, gathered .... Mr Syed Asgharali thanked the president... and the Hindu brothers present for their heart felt sympathy with their Muslim brothers, to which Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla replied in most emphatic terms saying that we are no more Hindus or Muslims but Hindustanis in the strictest sense.

Shukla's declaration set in motion a wave of sympathy for the Khilafat movement throughout the Hindi region. Shukla was also the first Hindi nationalist to withdraw his nomination from the election to the provincial legislature. He did so on 20 September 1920, just eleven days after the Indian National Congress had decided at Calcutta to join the Khilafat committee in launching non-cooperation. Following Shukla's withdrawal, his close political associates from Chhattisgarh also withdrew their nominations. Among these men were Rao; Thakur Chhedilal, a Rajput barrister-at-law and son of the landlord of Akaltara in the district of Bilaspur; and Ganshyam Singh Gupta, a Bania by caste, and a pleader and Vice-president of the Municipal Committee of Durg. A month later, politicians and leaders from the divisions of Jabalpur and Narmada followed their colleagues from Chhattisgarh. These included Pandit Shukul, who rather than face public obloquy and political

1 Hitavada, 3 April 1920, p.3.
2 See Bombay Chronicle, 18 June 1920, p.8; Mishra, op. cit., pp.292-3; Hitavada, 10 July 1920, p.7; 21 August 1920, p.3.
annihilation by pursuing his opposition to non-cooperation, renounced his Rai Bahadurship and withdrew from the elections to the Council of State.\(^1\) Further, by the time the annual session of the Congress met in Nagpur in December 1920, the first students had left their high school in Jabalpur.\(^2\)

The Marathi nationalists, however, did not pledge their support for Gandhi as the Hindi leaders had done, and Gandhi had to compel them to fall into line. The leaders of the Marathi region disclosed their opposition to Gandhi in two ways: first, by persisting in their attempts to enter the reformed legislature; and second, when these attempts proved fruitless, by working to prevent a victory for Gandhi at the Congress session in Nagpur. In planning to enter the provincial legislature, the Marathi nationalists followed the lead given by Tilak. After the failure of his deputation in England, Tilak returned to India and adopted a policy of responsive cooperation with the new Reforms. Under this policy nationalists were to enter the legislatures to advance the cause of self government for India and work the Reforms for the benefit of the people. These aims were particularly important to the Marathi nationalists, who, while pledged to eject the British from India, also represented urban groups who were strongly entrenched in

\(^1\) Hitavada, 25 September 1920, p.7; 30 October 1920, p.3; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 4 October 1920; Report on the Police Administration of the Central Provinces for the Year 1921 (Nagpur, 1922), p.1.

\(^2\) Bombay Chronicle, 20 November 1920, p.12.
government service and the professions and who possessed extensive interests in banking and land. Under responsive cooperation the Marathi leaders could advance the cause of self government and to protect the interests of these groups at the same time. Hence their desire to enter the legislature. Their desire to do so had the full encouragement of Lokamanya Tilak. In February 1920 Tilak sent Kelkar to the Marathi region to address public meetings on the Reforms, and in April formed the Congress Democratic party to practise responsive cooperation in the councils. These activities bore fruit, for during May and June the Marathi nationalists joined the party in large numbers and intensified their preparations for the elections. These preparations were especially evident in the district of Wardha. In May 1920 the District Congress Committee arranged a 'swarajya tour' to explain the Reforms to villagers in the interior of the district, and invited nationalists from all over the province to join the tour. Nationalists from the district also undertook an intensive campaign in the town of Wardha and its environs.

Whether in town or country, these efforts bore fruit, as is evident from a description by G.S. Khaparde of an electoral meeting in the town of Wardha on 27 June 1920:

> We got down at Wardha. On the platform were Balwantrao Deshmukh of Chanda, Atre, Trimbak

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1 Mahratta, 7 March 1920, p.1; Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India, op. cit., pp.324-27.

Rao Deshpande, Arjunlal Sethi, the brother of Abhyankar, Joshi, Kedar pleader and many others with volunteers. The meeting was held in the theatre... (and) I presided. More than a thousand people were present. The Wardha Congress committee visited 27 villages and did very good propaganda... and elections work.... The meeting was successful.¹

Despite growing support for non-cooperation during July, Tilak continued to inspire the Marathi nationalists to persist in their preparations for the elections.² He did so by exhibiting an unmistakable coolness towards the Khilafat agitation and non-cooperation alike. As regards the latter, when asked by a questioner in Bombay whether he believed in non-cooperation, Tilak replied

We are all believers,... but the question is: what sort of non cooperation...? He said it did not matter which method was adopted - whether method of total abstinence or the Sinn Fein method of contesting seats and boycotting parliament.... As long as the people were unanimous in working it out.... The danger was that no such unanimity could be expected from the moderates. If Congressmen abstained, they would succeed in posing as the elected representatives of the people of India. It was all a question of practical politics.... If it were necessary for the achievement of success to contest the council seats, he would be prepared to do so. But he was of the opinion that if it came to this, it was better to boycott

¹ NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 27 June 1920.
With advice such as this, the Marathi nationalists intensified their electoral activities and in July moved to select candidates to represent the Congress Democratic party at the elections.\(^2\)

Gandhi had his way with the Marathi leaders, however, despite their determination to contest the elections. Two events occurred in August and September 1920 to tilt the scales in favour of Gandhi. The first was the death of Tilak on 1 August 1920, an occurrence that left the Marathi nationalists without a leader and hence more open to pressure from Gandhi. The second event was the overwhelming vote in favour of non-cooperation at the special session of the Congress in Calcutta in September.\(^3\) These events undermined the determination and unity of the Marathi nationalists and caused them to waver between loyalty to their late leader and obedience to the decision of the Congress.\(^4\)

In the division of Nagpur, Dr Moonje moved quickly to prevent nationalists from dividing on the issue of non-cooperation by withdrawing from the elections to the provincial legislature. This precipitated a withdrawal of their nominations by the majority of nationalists in

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\(^{1}\) NAI, Home Poll, F-678, 1-9, 1922, Resume of the Political Situation in India since the Inception of the Non-Cooperation Movement, p.3; Bombay Chronicle, 1 September 1920, p.10.

\(^{2}\) Hitavada, 17 July 1920, p.5.

\(^{3}\) Pioneer, 11 September 1920, p.5.

\(^{4}\) Hitavada, 9 October 1920, p.5.
the Marathi region. The reluctance with which they did so is clearly evident in the following description of events in Amravati on 28-29 September 1920 as seen by G.S. Khaparde:

I reached Amravati about 5 p.m. and walked to my house. Godbole and Gopal Rao Dovle were there. I sat and talked with them. Later on came my sons Balwant and Baba and Shevade, Wamanrao Joshi and many others. They do not care for non cooperation, but think that since Congress has passed a resolution, it should be carried out....Everyone recognises that (non cooperation)...is foolish and suicidal, and yet they do not like to dissent publicly from Gandhi's view and programme because Congress, they say, has adopted it.

Although the Marathi nationalists had yielded to Gandhi on the question of the elections, they were determined not to allow him to score any further points against them. At first Dr Moonje and his supporters on the Provincial Congress Committee tried to prevent the pro-Gandhian members of the committee from implementing the remaining items of the programme of non-cooperation. They realised, however, that their real showdown with Gandhi would take place at the annual session of the Congress in Nagpur, and they thus decided to make a last ditch stand against him there. Accordingly Dr Moonje and

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2 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 28 September 1920.
4 See Bombay Chronicle, 21 September 1920, p.8.
his supporters canvassed support in the Central Provinces and Berar, Bombay and Bengal for a rival resolution to the official motion endorsing non-cooperation (to be submitted to the annual session), and invited the old nationalist, Arabindo Ghosh, to become the president of the session. These moves were only partially successful, for while Dr Moonje received encouraging promises of support for the anti-Gandhian resolution, Ghosh declined the invitation on the grounds of his retirement from nationalist politics. Nationalists from the division of Nagpur, however, received welcome support from Berar in their stand against Gandhi. Khaparde declared publicly that the resolution passed at the special session of the Congress at Calcutta was 'not mandatory but advisory', and announced that he, for one, intended to stand for election to the Council of State. Supporting Khaparde in his defiance of Gandhi was a fellow-nationalist, Ramrao Madhaorao Deshmukh, who, although a comparative newcomer to politics, was an enthusiastic advocate of the views of Lokamanya Tilak. Deshmukh's support posed some threat to Gandhi's position in Berar, for he was an influential barrister in Amravati and a member of one

1 NML, AICC, 11, 1920, N.R. Alekar to V.J. Patel, 26 November 1920; Times of India, 27 December 1920, p.11; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 2 December 1920; Hitavada, 11 December 1920, p.6; Bombay Chronicle, 2 September 1920, p.12.
3 Times of India, 7 October 1920, p.9.
of the leading Maratha families in the territory. ¹

Gandhi met this opposition to non-cooperation in the Marathi region with a well organised campaign of propaganda and persuasion. In Berar, his chief propagandist was Wamanrao Joshi, who toured the territory 'speaking against Lokamanya Tilak, and declaring himself the disciple of Gandhi'. ² In addition, supporters of Gandhi from Nagpur, and even Gandhi himself, came to Berar to convert the unbelievers to non-cooperation. ³ And where argument failed, personal abuse and social boycott were kept in readiness. ⁴ These methods appear to have been extraordinarily successful, for during November 1920 the Berar Provincial Congress Committee approved of non-cooperation, and in Tilak's former stronghold of Amravati, Khaparde complained bitterly that 'people here...(are) out of hand and can think of nothing but non-cooperation'. ⁵

In the division of Nagpur Gandhi drew on the support of various groups, including some who were new to politics, to persuade Dr Moonje and his followers to accept non-cooperation. Among these groups were the

¹ NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 24 October 1920.
² Ibid., 15 November 1920.
³ Bombay Chronicle, 3 September 1920, p.7; Times of India, 24 November 1920, p.10.
⁵ Bombay Chronicle, 30 November 1920, p.8; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 9 November 1920.
Marwari merchants and members of the lower classes in Nagpur. Gandhi had been unable to make any significant inroads into the Maharashtrian Brahman community. As a result he turned to Jamnalal Bajaj, a prominent Marwari and owner of a huge industrial and mercantile empire, who lived in Wardha. By 1920, Bajaj, who was a religious man, had become a devoted follower of Gandhi and frequently gave him large sums of money to further his political and social activities. In Bajaj, however, Gandhi did not merely possess a valuable source of finance. He also had a man who could win the Marwaris of the Marathi region to his side, and at the same time exercise a leadership that would challenge the nationalist credentials of the Marathi leaders who were opposed to non-cooperation. Between October and December 1920, Bajaj fully realised Gandhi's expectations. He first renounced the Rai Bahadurship presented by the provincial government in 1918, and then launched a campaign to persuade his fellow Marwaris to support non-cooperation. During November 1920, Bajaj issued a circular in which he declared:

Fellow business-men, our trade, industry and commerce will flourish a hundred-fold by our participation in the great national endeavour for swaraj. We must shed our fear complex.... If we do not do the right thing on this occasion, we shall shut the doors of prosperity to our future generations and we shall be

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committing a moral crime against the nation.\footnote{1}{Bombay Chronicle, 6 October 1920, p.9; T.V. Parvate, Jamnalal Bajaj: a Brief Study of His Life and Character (Ahmedabad 1962), pp.29-30.}

Such appeals were successful, for in December the government observed that 'the class most affected (i.e. by non-cooperation)...(were)...the Marwari traders and shopkeepers'. Besides drawing the Marwaris into Gandhi's camp, Bajaj also set up his own lieutenants in Wardha and tried 'his level best...to make this a model district in non cooperation'.\footnote{2}{NAI, Home Poll, 35 Deposit, FR, February 1921, First Half of December 1920, p.21; Hitavada, 20 November 1920, p.6.}

Gandhi also undermined the Marathi nationalists by winning the support of large numbers of people in Nagpur, most of them from the lower classes who had had little previous connection with political activity. Those who actually carried out this work included Bajaj and his chief lieutenant in Wardha, Arjunlal Sethi; men like Pandit Sunderlal, the editor of Bhawishya of Allahabad, and Bhagwandin, who took up permanent residence in Nagpur; popular orators from other provinces; and pleaders who relinquished practice in Bombay and entered the Marathi region as itinerant preachers.\footnote{3}{NAI, Home Poll, 35 Deposit, February 1921, FR, First Half of December 1920, p.21.} These men used a variety of methods to convert their hearers to non-cooperation, the most popular being the public meeting as the following extract from the Times of India for 17 December 1920 illustrates:

\text{...}
During this week mass meetings are held every day and speeches on non-cooperation are delivered. Last evening, under the auspices of the Bharat Sewa Sangha, in the cotton market an open air meeting attended by 5000 people, with Mr Sunderlal ...of Allahabad in the chair, was held;...Pandit Arjunlal Setti and Mr Bhagwandin delivered speeches on non-cooperation; caps and foreign articles worth about Rs 5000 were burnt to ashes amid enthusiasm.1

At such meetings, too, the popular orators abused the government or poured scorn on the Brahman nationalists for refusing to accept non-cooperation. They also incited their hearers to boycott the reluctant nationalists or indulge in rowdyism if the latter dared to criticise Gandhi in public. Finally, hard on the heels of the lesser orators came Vallabhbhai Patel, the General Secretary of the Congress, and Gandhi himself to put the finishing touches to a strenuous campaign.2

At the annual session of the Indian National Congress which took place in Nagpur in the last week of December 1920, Gandhi compelled the still reluctant Marathi nationalists to accept non-cooperation. He did so by isolating them from the delegations from Bombay and Bengal who came to Nagpur with the intention of opposing non-cooperation. Others who arrived in Nagpur with this intention were the Muslim leader M.A. Jinnah;

1 Times of India, 17 December 1920, p.10.
2 NAI, Home Poll, December 1920, 74 Deposit, FR, First Half of November 1920, p.20; February 1921, 35 Deposit, FR, First Half of December 1920, p.21; February 1921, 77 Deposit, FR, Second Half of December 1920, p.16; Times of India, 1 December 1920, p.10.
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, a leading Hindu from the United Provinces; and Lala Lajpat Rai, the 'Lion of the Punjab'. Gandhi considered it imperative to overcome this opposition, for he believed that he could only defeat British rule in India if he had the unanimous support of the Indian National Congress. He thus won over the delegations from Bombay and Bengal, leaving the national leaders and delegates from the Central Provinces and Berar without support. Alone in their opposition to non-cooperation, the latter found it impossible to withstand the noisy support which the other nationalists gave to Gandhi. G.S. Khaparde recalls the scene on 28 December 1920, shortly before the delegates voted on non-cooperation:

Today the confusion was greater than ever. Gandhi proposed his creed...Jinna opposed and was very badly treated by the audience. I wished to speak. Dr Moonje asked me not to and recommended that I should not even vote against the motion. This I would not submit to and I went to the platform, when at last he said that he would use physical force. The confusion was so great (however) that I also deemed it wise not to speak.  

Thus, when the vote was taken, the Marathi nationalists joined the other delegates to the annual session in recording an overwhelming vote in favour of non-cooperation.  

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2. NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 28 December 1920.  
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The Hindi and Marathi regions of the Central Provinces and Berar diverged further from each other during 1921 by sponsoring distinctive campaigns of non-cooperation. This was partly due to the fact that the Hindi leaders accepted, and most Marathi leaders rejected, the programme of non-cooperation laid down by Gandhi. In the Marathi districts, too, Gandhi's supporters tried to stage the campaign as their leader intended, and this further distinguished the agitation there from that in the Hindi region. Another important element in the existence of separate and distinct campaigns in the different parts of the Central Provinces and Berar was their division into separate provinces of the Indian National Congress under the revised constitution accepted at the annual session at Nagpur in December 1920. This constitution established three provinces in the Central Provinces and Berar - one each in the Hindi region, the division of Nagpur, and Berar. Under the constitution each province comprised a separate unit of the Congress with its own leadership that was responsible for organising nationalist activity within that particular province. This arrangement formalised the three-fold political division of the province, and resulted in three campaigns of non-cooperation - two in the Marathi region and one in the Hindi region.

Despite differences between the Hindi and Marathi agitations, each benefited directly from the economic
conditions prevailing in the province during 1920-21. During this period a series of disasters struck the province leaving few people unaffected. Poor seasons resulted in a 'failure of crops unparalleled since 1899-1900', and caused widespread distress in the countryside. The shortage of food in turn raised the price of grains which 'pressed with unexampled severity on the urban population'. The latter were also victims of the 'grave industrial and commercial depression' which followed the post-war boom. In addition, cotton growers in the Marathi region were badly hit by a slump in the price of cotton. These disasters created unrest and frustration among people in the towns and rural areas alike which agitators turned to good account in launching their programme of non-cooperation.

The decision of the Hindi leaders to link the political fortunes of their region to those of the Indian National Congress gave the campaign of non-cooperation there its distinctive shape. Hindi leaders launched a campaign which bore a strong resemblance to that laid down by Gandhi, and in so doing drew in groups with previous political experience as well as groups who had not participated in political activity before. The first

phase of the agitation took place in the towns of the region, and moved from there during the second phase to the surrounding rural areas and the more remote highlands of the Central Plateau. As a result people all over the Hindi region took part in nationalist activities for the first time, and thus advanced the area still further towards its goal of political maturity.

The campaign of non-cooperation in the towns of the Hindi region first affected members of the middle classes who had previously taken part in political activity. These comprised the lawyers, who suspended practice and boycotted British courts in conformity with the directives of the Indian National Congress. Although only 34 lawyers participated in the boycott, the agitation was a success from other points of view. It took place in most of the important towns of the region, and occurring as it did in the early months of 1921, formed a dramatic curtain-raiser to the agitation to follow. The lawyers' boycott could hardly have had a more successful beginning:

After his visit to Wardha, Gandhi left Nagpur for Chhindwara on 6 (January). All along the route large numbers of people mustered strong at every station to have darshan of the great leader(s)....(There was) a rousing reception at Chhindwara....The little town of Chhindwara can

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1 CPLC, vol.3, 1921, p.170. The numbers of lawyers who suspended practice in the various Hindi districts were as follows: Chhindwara 7, Sagar 6, Damoh 3, Nimar 3, Durg 3, Bilaspur 3, Balaghat 2, Betul 2, Narsimhapur 2, Jabalpur 1, Seoni 1, and Raipur 1. There were some 900 lawyers in the province.
rightly feel proud of having taken the lead in such a pronounced and enthusiastic manner as was evidenced by the fact that six leading vakils... announced that they had suspended practice. About Rs 2500 was subscribed on the spot, which was neither anticipated or previously asked for.¹

From Chindwara the movement spread to other towns, where it encompassed established leaders like Raghavendra Rao, and those new to public life such as D.K. Mehta, a leading lawyer in the town of Seoni, and established the nationalist credentials of both.

The next group to participate in the campaign of non-cooperation were the students. These were also drawn from the middle classes, but up to that time had played little part in the political life of the Hindi region. The boycott of schools and colleges had got off to an early start in Jabalpur in November 1920, and students from the Hindi region voted in favour of non-cooperation at the All-India Students Conference held in Nagpur in December. During January 1921, however, this enthusiasm languished, and nationalist leaders assisted by the nationalist press conducted a strong campaign to persuade the students to observe the boycott.² These appeals had an immediate effect in Jabalpur. On 8 February the Bombay Chronicle reported that

¹ Bombay Chronicle, 10 January 1921, p.9.
² Times of India, 28 December 1920, p.13; NAI, Report on Indian Papers Published in the Central Provinces and Berar (cited hereafter as Indian Papers), no.6, 1921, p.53, Karmavir (Jabalpur), 29 January 1921.
29 students of Government college here have withdrawn themselves unconditionally and more are expected to follow suit. An ashram has been started for those desirous of devoting themselves to the congress organisation work. Many boys have left the affiliated schools and joined the national school already started.... Great enthusiasm prevails in the city.¹

Support for the boycott of schools and colleges in Jabalpur led to a withdrawal by students from secondary and tertiary institutions in other towns of the Hindi region. And as in Jabalpur, nationalists in some towns founded national schools to train the non-cooperating students as workers for the Indian National Congress.²

As the campaign of non-cooperation developed, it involved other social groups besides the middle classes. These groups included the merchants and lower classes of the towns, both of whom were new to politics. With the boycott of schools well under way, nationalist leaders turned their attention to the boycott of liquor shops and the liquor trade in general. Their aim in so doing was to paralyse the Reformed constitution by depriving the government of its excise revenue. To this end nationalist leaders and itinerant agitators urged Hindu,

¹ Bombay Chronicle, 8 February 1921, p.10.
² For the number of students taking part in the boycott, see CPLC, vol.2, no.8, Appendix B, pp.725-9. The percentage of non-cooperating students was highest in Chhattisgarh where 50 per cent of the students left their high schools, and 50 per cent left Anglo-vernacular schools. In the division of Jabalpur, 23 per cent of students left high schools and 35 per cent Anglo-vernacular schools. In the division of Narmada, 9 per cent left high schools and 29 per cent Anglo-vernacular schools.
Muslim and Parsi liquor contractors to boycott the excise auctions, and posted volunteers outside their liquor shops to prevent the sale of liquor. In some towns, too, Municipal Committees or District Councils tried to prevent the sale of liquor within municipal limits. The appeal of leaders and local bodies was so successful that in some places the liquor contractors boycotted the auctions, and members of the lower classes were drawn into the agitation. This occasionally resulted in violence, as in Raipur. The following report by the Commissioner of Raipur describes the situation in the town after the arrival of Pandit Sunderlal and Kutubuddin, a Muslim agitator, in January 1921, to launch the boycott:

He explained how feeling at Raipur had been intensified by the speeches of Sunderlal and Kutubuddin and that he had been warned by the non-violent non-cooperators of the presence of elements in the town making for violence. He referred to the picketting of liquor shops, the interruption of the excise sales, the appearance of 2000 men, many armed with lathis, at the railway station to meet Kutubuddin whose arrest was expected, and the stoning of Europeans driving through the city....Mr Clarke represented

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1 NAI, Home Poll, June 1921, 45 Deposit, FR, Second Half of March 1921, p.17; Home Poll, F-179, 1929, General Political Situation in India, Notes on Boycott Movements, p.27; NAI, Indian Papers, no.7, 1921, p.70, Maharashtra (Nagpur), 9 February 1921; Madhya Pradesh Secretariat (MPS), Local Self Government Department (LSG), File 8-1, 1923, Annual Review of the working of District Councils and Local Boards in the Jubbulpore Division for the Year 1921-2, pp.9-10.
that in consequence of both the general growth of self-consciousness and the direct challenge to the authority of the government maintained by the extremists, there had been (a) noticeable disturbance of the law-abiding instincts of the people.¹

The government could not ignore the situation in Raipur, nor the excitement prevailing in other towns of the Hindi region. Accordingly it abandoned the liquor auctions in six districts and partially suspended them in four, and 'took prompt action to suppress any further tendency towards intimidation, violence and arson through prosecutions'.² In so doing, it conceded victory to the nationalists.

The boycott of foreign cloth was another item in the campaign of non-cooperation in the towns of the Hindi region that affected, among others, the merchants and the lower classes. The boycott included the attempt by nationalists to persuade people in the region to spin and wear clothes of home-spun cloth or khadi. The agitation began some time after the campaign against liquor had begun to subside, and reached its peak after

¹ Maharashtra Secretariat, Nagpur (MSN), Police Department, File 1-1, no.642, 1922, Increase in the Special Armed Force in the Central Provinces, Proceedings of the Conference of Commissioners held at Pachmarhi on 27 June 1921, p.8.
² The government abandoned the sales in Raipur, Durg, Nimar, Hoshangabad, Seoni and Damoh; and partially suspended them in Balaghat, Chhindwara, Jabalpur and Betul. NAI, Home Poll, F-179, 1929, General Political Situation in India, Notes on Boycott Movements, p.27.
Gandhi's call to nationalists to don 'the peaceful white khadi from 1 October (1921)'.\(^1\) Again, as in other aspects of non-cooperation, Raipur and Jabalpur led the agitation, followed by the other towns of the region. In Raipur, the Municipal Committee played a leading part in popularising the boycott. As Gandhi noted with approval

> The Raipur municipality has adopted by a majority the following proposals that all the boys reading in the municipal schools should have the national uniform of khadi coat or kurta and khadi cap from 1 August 1921;...that this committee expects its servants to use country-made cloth; (and)...that all dresses supplied to municipal servants should be of khadi....It is a wise use the Raipur municipality has made of its powers.\(^2\)

Nationalist leaders used a variety of other methods to encourage the widest possible participation in the boycott. These methods were invariably successful. In Jabalpur during March railway men responded to the call of local leaders to replace their European hats with white Gandhi caps; while 2000 people attended a bonfire of foreign cloth in the town in September.\(^3\)

In Sagar, too, large crowds of people witnessed a 'huge bonfire of foreign clothes' held at Muhurrum on the instructions of the Provincial Congress Committee. And there could have been few in Sagar who

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\(^1\) NAI, Indian Papers, no.42, 1921, p.467, Prajasewak (Hoshangabad), 6 October 1921.


were unaffected by the following events that took place in their town:

Following Gandhi caps, khadi is coming to the front....Even the gods in temples were softly dressed in garments of khadi on show nights.... The other day a huge charka was taken out in a grand procession (it is termed the swadeshi gun)....A Sunday market is held for sale of locally spun yarn and woven khadi.¹

In addition, groups of townsfolk participated in the boycott by picketing cloth shops, and some merchants agreed not to indent further supplies of foreign cloth for a fixed period of time. The Provincial Congress Committee of the Hindi region also drew members of the Muslim community into the agitation by requesting all subordinate Congress Committees to arrange activities connected with the boycott at Muhurrum in September 1921. These activities were carried out on a large scale and contributed to harmony between the Hindus and Muslims of the region.²

From the towns of the Hindi region, the campaign of

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¹ Bombay Chronicle, 16 September 1921, p.6; Hitavada, 27 August 1921, p.3.
² NAI, Home Poll, F-18, 1921, FR, First Half of September 1921, p.12. The report does not specify whether the activities of the pickets and merchants took place in the Hindi or the Marathi regions, but it is unlikely that they were confined to the latter. Hitavada, 22 October 1921, p.6; 27 May 1925, p.5; 3 June 1926, p.6; NAI, Indian Papers, no.39, 1921, p.422, Karmavir (Jabalpur), 17 September 1921.
non-cooperation spread out into the rural areas where it encompassed people who had not participated in nationalist activity before. The agitation, which affected areas close to the main centres of population and those in the more remote parts of the region, was largely the work of nationalists from the towns. Foremost among these was Seth Govind Das of Jabalpur, who during 1921 rose from virtual political obscurity to become the most prominent leader of the campaign of non-cooperation in the Hindi region.¹ Govind Das was born in 1896 into the most influential Marwari family in Jabalpur with interests in banking, textiles, pottery and land and with a record of loyal service to British rule. Following the completion of his Arts degree in 1914, Govind Das devoted himself to the cause of Hindi, but contacts with Shukul and Gandhi strengthened his desire to enter politics. He stayed his hand in this direction, however, until the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Nagpur when he decided to enter public life as a disciple of Gandhi. Following this decision, Govind Das quickly attained a premier position among the nationalist leaders of the Hindi region, typifying the identification of the merchants with the movement of non-cooperation. Govind Das's rise to power was partly due to the death in January 1921 of Pandit Shukul, the former leader of politics in Jabalpur, and partly due to the unpopularity of Ravi Shankar Shukla who had refused to suspend his

¹ See B. Hooja, A Life Dedicated: Biography of Govind Das (Delhi, 1956).
Seth Govind Das
legal practice in Raipur. Govind Das's political success was also due to the energy and determination with which he took up his new political career in town and country districts alike. As for the latter, during 1921 Govind Das toured the rural areas of Jabalpur preaching and establishing Congress Committees as required under the new Congress constitution. He also made contact with political workers in the towns and villages of the Hindi region by sending out circular letters urging them to adopt the programme of non-cooperation in its entirety. To supplement the work of urban nationalists such as Govind Das, the District Congress Committees of the Hindi region also employed itinerant preachers drawn either from the region itself or from neighbouring provinces. In addition, those who came into the towns from rural areas at the time of Muhurrum must have returned home full of stories of the meetings, processions and bonfires they had seen, thereby acting as unwitting missionaries of non-cooperation. Local leaders, too, were active in asking tenants not to pay rents to their malguzars, or in igniting bonfires of foreign cloth that 'left an everlasting influence on the minds of poor innocent villagers'. Congressmen also went among the Gonds, an aboriginal community living in remote areas of Balaghat, and organised several of them to act as preachers of non-cooperation to their own

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1 NAI, Home Public, 953, 1924, p.268.
2 Hooja, op. cit., p.56.
There was evidence aplenty of the effectiveness of these activities in the rural areas of the Hindi region. Tahsil headquarters towns and larger villages became centres of nationalist activity; and thousands of people enrolled as members of the Congress organisation. In addition the name of Gandhi and the notions of satyagraha and swaraj spread through rural areas; the number of offences against the regulations in force in government forests rose; and a general unrest seemed to pervade the whole countryside. The most eloquent tribute to the work of nationalists in the rural areas of the Hindi region in 1921 was contained in a report on the situation in Seoni compiled by the district magistrate:


2 Hitavada, 26 March 1921, p.7. The enrolment figures were as follows Jabalpur 28200, Sagar 22000, Raipur 17721, Chhindwara 14774, Bilaspur 14388, Hoshangabad 11488, Damoh 9071, Seoni 7417, Betul 6836, Durg 6463, Narsimhapur 6194, Balaghat 3013, Mandla 1500. The total number of enrolments for the Hindi region was 149065.

3 Ibid., p.7; Forest Administration of the Central Provinces for the Year 1920-21, part I (Nagpur, 1922), pp.3-4; see CPLC, vol.2, no.11, Appendix C, 13 August 1921, pp.950-953.
The Khilifat and non-cooperation agitations were carried on vigorously by local agitators as well as by men from other districts and provinces, the declared object of these gentlemen being to create universal hatred of government and to make government impossible. Sedition has penetrated the interior and a propaganda of misrepresentation of all acts of government has bewildered the masses. The weapon of social boycott has been threatened against weavers, as also really loyal and peaceful men of influence. In fact, short of actual violence no stone has been left unturned to bring lawful authority into contempt and to surcharge the whole atmosphere with suspicion and hostility towards the government. 1

Although the results of non-cooperation in the divisions of Nagpur and Berar were similar in some respects to that in the Hindi region, in other respects they were quite different. In all campaigns alike, nationalists drew new social groups into the struggle against the government besides using those with previous political experience. The pattern of the campaigns in the two regions, however, was quite different. This was mainly due to the presence in the Marathi region of two groups of nationalists - those who accepted Gandhi's leadership and political philosophy, and those who rejected both in favour of the political philosophy of Lokamanya Tilak. Each group was determined to use the forms of agitation laid down by its leaders and at the same time emerge as the leading opponents of the

government in the Marathi region. It was the presence of these rival groups and the effect their rivalry had on events in the Marathi region in 1921 that distinguished the Marathi and Hindi campaigns and widened the gulf between nationalists in the two regions.

Gandhi used his lieutenants in Nagpur to persuade the Marathi nationalists to implement the resolution on non-cooperation they had accepted in December 1920. These lieutenants were the same men who had won people in Nagpur to non-cooperation in December, namely Pandit Sunderlal, Arjunlal Sethi and Bhagwandin. Between December 1920 and January 1921 these men opened the campaign of non-cooperation in Nagpur by appealing to the lower classes to support the boycotts, and by persuading many students to boycott their schools and colleges. This latter was a relatively easy matter, as the students had a long record of opposition to the government. In addition, by early January 1921 the three leaders had established a national school in the city and an ashram to train students and others in the art of non-violent agitation against the government. The Marathi nationalists, who at first were unsympathetic to non-cooperation, responded to this challenge by assuming direction of the campaign in the division of

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1 See pp.62-3.
3 Mishra, op. cit., pp.307-8; Bombay Chronicle, 10 January 1921, p.9.
Nagpur. On their own confession, they did so to prove that the form of agitation devised by Gandhi was 'bound to fail'. Nevertheless, it must also have been clear to them that they could not allow the Gandhians to usurp their leadership of the nationalist movement in Nagpur; nor could they appear reluctant to take up the cudgels against the government. Whatever the reason, the Marathi nationalists did not launch their campaign of non-cooperation on Gandhi's terms. This was clear from the account of an interview between Dr Moonje and a deputation of students during January 1921 published in *Hitavada*:

From an account of the interview between the non-cooperating students and Dr Moonje published in the *Young Patriot* recently, we gather that the faith of the...doctor in the weapon of potential magical powers is only skin-deep. Driven to the wall..., the doctor came out with quite a heroic impatience with the pace things were running and made a clean breast of himself.... He is quite aghast at the idea of national regeneration by means of the spinning wheel.... He has no faith in non-cooperation, says he. But why does he pose to be a non-cooperator then? Because he...remarks that he wants to prove that the Mahatma's non-cooperation movement is bound to fail because it is an impossibility.... Dr Moonje wants to prove the futility of the non-cooperation movement....This is not a myth. This is exactly what Dr Moonje said to the deputation that was sent by the student non-cooperators.¹

In assuming control of the campaign of non-cooperation, the Marathi nationalists first promoted the boycott of schools and courts. In doing so they drew heavily on

¹ *Hitavada*, 5 February 1921, pp.4, 6.
the urban middle classes, who had traditionally regarded
them as the political leaders of the region. The Marathi
nationalists, however, supported these boycotts with
considerable scepticism, and they were neither surprised
nor displeased when the agitations collapsed before the
year was out. Their decision to support the boycott had
immediate repercussions in Nagpur, where the first and
third year Arts and Science students at Hislop College
'unanimously decided to withdraw in a body'.¹ During
February and March 1921, students of other colleges and
high schools throughout the division of Nagpur followed
their example, and nationalists of all persuasions set
up schools to cope with the exodus.² Despite this
promising start, however, the boycott was of temporary
duration only, for after the summer holidays many

¹ Times of India, 14 February 1921, p.9; NAI, Home Poll,
June 1921, 12 Deposit, FR, First Half of February 1921,
p.17.
² See CPLC, vol.2, no.8, 1921, Appendix B, pp.725-729 for
decline in enrolments in schools and colleges in the
division of Nagpur. 32.5 per cent of students left Hislop
College, 27.5 Morris College, 27.2 Medical College, 24.6
Engineering College, and 4.3 Agricultural College. The
percentage of students leaving high schools in Nagpur
ranged from 72 per cent at Neill City High School to
25 per cent at Patwardhan High School; in Wardha the
range was from 72.6 per cent at the Hinganghat High School
to 47 per cent at the Wardha High School. 59.5 per cent
of the students left Bhandara High School, and 5.6 per
cent Chanda High School. The percentages of students
leaving the Anglo-vernacular schools in the four districts
were as follows: Chanda 51 per cent, Nagpur 50 per cent,
Bhandara 33 per cent and Wardha 22 per cent. In the
division of Nagpur nationalists founded 36 Vernacular
and 12 Anglo-vernacular schools, in addition to the
national schools in Nagpur. See Memorandum on the
Development of Education in the Central Provinces and
Berar (Nagpur, 1930), p.44.
students returned to their schools and colleges. They did so partly because Dr Moonje and his colleagues allowed the boycott to lapse; and partly because many national schools were too poor, and their staffs not sufficiently enthusiastic, to continue on a permanent basis. The Marathi nationalists were also sceptical about the boycott of courts, but supported it in January 1921 following the challenge held out by the followers of Gandhi. As a result by mid-1921 some 40 pleaders had withdrawn from courts in the towns of the division. Leading lawyers demonstrated their disbelief in the boycott, however, first by returning to the courts to defend nationalists charged with sedition, and then by resuming practice only six months after they had begun the agitation. But, despite the Marathi nationalists' disbelief, there was little doubt that by participating in the boycotts they regained the political initiative they had lost to the Gandhians by allowing them to begin the struggle against the government.

With the initiative in their hands, the Marathi nationalists launched a massive campaign against the sale of liquor. In so doing, they upset the programme of agitation laid down by Gandhi and demonstrated their loyalty to the nationalist movement of Maharashtra in

1 See CPLC, vol.2, no.8, 1921 Appendix B, pp.44-5; NAI Home Poll, September 1921, 1 Deposit, FR, First Half of July 1921, p.20.

2 22 lawyers participated in the boycott in the district of Nagpur, 7 in Wardha, 6 in Chanda, and 5 in Bhandara; NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 6, B.S. Moonje to ________, 13 May 1921; Hitavada, 13 August 1921, p.6; 10 September 1921, p.6.
which the liquor boycott had a central place. To assist them in carrying out this campaign, the Marathi nationalists drew heavily on non-cooperating students and members of the low class weaving communities of Koshtis and Momins. Owing to the economic threat provided by the cotton mills of Nagpur, these communities lived in a constant state of insecurity and hardship and had long been restive on that account. For this reason, too, they had long been associated with political activity in Nagpur and it was not surprising that they were drawn into the liquor agitation in February 1921, when food was in short supply and prices high. For this situation, the Koshtis and Momins held the government responsible. It was thus possible that these and other groups from the lower classes of Nagpur joined in the agitation to express their antagonism towards the government.

Although the lower classes got out of control, the liquor agitation nonetheless resulted in a victory for the Marathi nationalists. There were three stages in the agitation. The first stage began well before the annual session of the Indian National Congress, when 'it formed no part of Gandhi's non-cooperation'.

1 See A.H.L. Fraser, Among Indian Rajahs and Ryots: A Civil Servant's Recollections and Impressions of Thirty-Seven Years of Work and Sport in the Central Provinces and Bengal (London, 1911), pp.121-2.


3 NAI, Indian Papers, no.19, 1921, p.196, Maharashtra (Nagpur), 4 May 1921.
this stage, the leader of the campaign, Dr L.V. Paranjpe, a Brahman medical practitioner and a prominent lieutenant of Dr Moonje, launched a boycott of liquor shops in Nagpur using students as pickets. Dr Paranjpe also tried to persuade the liquor contractors to boycott the liquor auctions due to be held in the last week of February 1921. The second stage of the boycott began on 22 February 1921 when the lower classes of Nagpur joined the agitation and violence occurred as a result. Action by the government brought the lower classes into the agitation. On 22 February the government ordered Dr Paranjpe to stop the boycott of liquor shops, and arrested Dr M.R. Cholkar, the Vice-president of the Municipal Committee of Nagpur and another lieutenant of Dr Moonje, on a charge of sedition. The government also arrested two Muslim volunteers for allegedly causing violence at a liquor shop and went ahead with its plan to hold the liquor auctions. These incidents provoked the lower classes of Nagpur to violence on 23 February:

This incident (i.e. the arrest of Dr Cholkar) coupled with the arrest of two Muslims for some alleged violent proceedings at the liquor shops drew a large crowd to the court the next day where the picketers were to be tried and the auction sales of the shops to be held. The crowd is reported to have laid violent hands upon some contractors who had bid at the auction sales; (an) attempt to disperse by the reserve police seems to have provoked the mob

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1 Pioneer, 25 February 1921, p.4.
2 Ibid., p.4; NAI, Home Poll, April 1921, 43 Deposit, FR, Second Half of February 1921, p.18.
to violence. Policemen were assaulted and some Europeans passing in a motor were attacked.... In the city some shops were looted in the evening and some liquor houses were demolished. ¹

In the disturbances, two European officers and seven policemen were injured. To prevent any further outbreak the government called out the soldiery and prohibited all meetings for one month. At the end of this month, on 24 March 1921, the nationalists expressed their opposition to the government by holding a meeting when speeches were delivered exhorting the audience to carry on the non cooperation and temperance movements vigorously, not caring for arrests and imprisonments. The people... burnt their foreign caps.²

This meeting marked the beginning of the last stage of the liquor boycott, when the mobs took control of the agitation with disastrous consequences. Following the meeting on 24 March, tension rose in Nagpur, and three days later a mob of 400 Koshtis and others bearing stones and lathis looted liquor shops in the city. The police immediately went to the locality of Koshtipura and arrested 30 suspects. The Koshtis retaliated, and the police retreated, firing as they did so. In this firing, nine people were killed and 14 seriously wounded. This caused considerable excitement, and, fearing further retaliation, the police vacated control posts in the inner part of the city. With the removal of the police the mob went beserk, burning four of their posts and

¹ Hitavada, 26 February 1921, p.4.
² Bombay Chronicle, 28 March 1921, p.6.
assaulting individual policemen in different parts of Nagpur. By 30 March all was quiet again, and when an armed patrol marched through the city to re-establish the police posts, it met no opposition. The following day, the government prohibited public meetings in Nagpur for two months within a radius of 10 miles from the city. And with that order, the agitation ceased.\footnote{Hitavada, 9 April 1921, p.7; ibid., 30 April 1921, p.6; NAI, Home Poll, June 1921, 45 Deposit, FR, Second Half of March 1921, p.17; MSN, General Administration Department (GAD), File 12-2, no.380, 1921, Paper Relating to the Two Disturbances and Firing at Nagpur, p.74.}

Although the Marathi nationalists lost control over the mobs, they turned the liquor agitation to good account. During the agitation, the government admitted defeat by closing the liquor shops and abandoning the auction sales. This caused a drop in the consumption of liquor and a consequent loss of revenue by the government.\footnote{See Report on the Excise Revenue of the Central Provinces and Berar for the Year 1921-2 (Nagpur, 1923), p.4.} The government suffered an even greater defeat on 28 June 1921, when the city magistrate dismissed its case against Dr Cholkar for want of evidence.\footnote{NAI, Home Poll, July 1921, 1 Deposit, FR, Second Half of June 1921, p.19.} The stocks of the Marathi nationalists rose as a result, and at the elections to the Municipal Committee of Nagpur in August 1921, they won a majority of seats and Dr Cholkar was elected President. In
conjunction with the municipal poll, the nationalists also held a poll on prohibition, and these results, too, were a striking vindication of their agitation against the liquor trade.¹

The Gandhians disapproved of the turn of events in the Marathi region and tried to draw the merchants and people of the towns into the boycott of foreign cloth - 'Gandhi's principal item'. Their efforts, however, met with only limited success. The centre of the boycott was Wardha, which as

a growing commercial town and... a large cotton centre contains many possibilities for making the local merchants realise the high importance of embarking upon the large enterprises for hand spinning and generally for the promotion of swadeshi.²

The nationalists of Wardha, led by Bajaj and Gandhi, achieved many of these objectives. They held bonfires of foreign cloth; encouraged ordinary townsfolk to spin and wear khadi; and possibly persuaded some merchants of the district not to indent foreign cloth.³ In Nagpur,

¹ NAI, Indian Papers, no.36, 1921, p.374, Young Patriot (Nagpur), 29 August 1921; Hitavada, 20 August 1921, p.5. The total number of voters at the elections was 2675, and in the liquor poll 2343. Of these 2332 voted against liquor, six were indifferent and five voted for liquor.

² NAI, Indian Papers, no.43, 1921, p.486, Young Patriot (Nagpur), 17 October 1921; Bombay Chronicle, 7 January 1921, p.9.

however, the Marathi nationalists remained unmoved by the agitation. For while they accepted the boycott of foreign cloth, as enjoined by Tilak, they rejected the importance Gandhi placed on khadi and charkha, and thus launched the boycott in Nagpur on 1 August 1921 in a half-hearted manner. During September Seth Govind Das came to Nagpur to boost the boycott, but although 20 merchants agreed not to indent foreign cloth, the Marathi nationalists remained lukewarm towards the agitation. Their attitude drew the severest condemnation from the Gandhian press in Nagpur:

The worst charge against them is in the matter of the charkhas. Gandhi has staked his all on spinning and wearing of khaddar....Not only have several of these people not put on khaddar but in the Nagar Congress Committee a sum of money was allocated to charkhas only when the secretary offered to resign. Since then, no effort on an adequate scale seems to have been made to carry out Gandhi's principal item. Their object is to damn the movement by faint effort.

These attacks, however, made little difference to the leaders of Nagpur, who, although opposed to non-cooperation, were firmly in control of the Indian National Congress in the division.

The Marathi nationalists and Ghandians alike aroused opposition to the government in the rural areas of the

1 NAI, Home Poll, F-18, 1921, FR, Second Half of July 1921, p.11; see also Times of India, 1 April 1921, p.10.
2 Bombay Chronicle, 14 September 1921, p.7.
3 NAI, Indian Papers, no.43, 1921, pp.486-7, Young Patriot (Nagpur), 17 October 1921.
division of Nagpur. The Gandhians did so by sending non-cooperating students and orators into the countryside; while the Marathi nationalists made contact with the villagers at district conferences, and as they toured the division collecting money, enrolling Congressmen, or establishing Congress Committees in the tahsils and villages. But, whether Gandhians or Marathi leaders, the urban visitors found a ready welcome among village people. Their visits had contrasting results. Sometimes they evoked non-violence, as villagers refused to carry out their long established duty of extinguishing forest fires; removed forest produce; resorted to illicit grazing; or declined the customary food and services to officers on tour. Sometimes the visits of the urban nationalists had violent results, as villagers attacked the police, looted grain, or started fires. In some villages, too, the visits of Brahman nationalists resulted in counter demonstrations by members of the depressed Mahar community who bore a grudge against the socially dominant Brahmans.

In Berar, as in the division of Nagpur, the Gandhians launched the campaign of non-cooperation, but the Marathi nationalists quickly assumed control and thereafter

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directed the campaign along their own lines. In so doing they strengthened their leadership of the Indian National Congress in that area. The Gandhians led by Wamanrao Joshi directed the campaign of non-cooperation in Berar from January till the end of March 1921, when Joshi was arrested. During this time they launched the boycott of schools and courts with some assistance from the urban middle classes, and aroused other opposition to the government in the towns and neighbouring villages. The following is a description of the success achieved by the Gandhians up to the end of February 1921. The town referred to is Amravati, where Wamanrao Joshi had his headquarters:

A recent visit of the Commissioner of Berar to a typical town of the interior disclosed a most serious state of things. There was a hartal of shops in consequence of his arrival and the municipal weekly market was stopped. An arbitration court has been set up and a national school opened. Collections of cotton were being made from each cart entering the cotton market to provide funds for the so called national work. All this was done at the instance of political leaders who employed a considerable number of
volunteers to enforce their orders both in the town and in the neighbouring villages.\(^1\)

Joshi did not remain long in control of non-cooperation, however, for during his campaign to promote the boycott of schools, he urged the people to overthrow the government 'by violent methods' and was arrested on 31 March. Six weeks later he was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment.\(^2\)

Following Joshi's arrest, the followers of Tilak took charge of the campaign of non-cooperation and directed it along their own lines.\(^3\) Their campaign bore a striking resemblance to that undertaken by the Marathi nationalists in the division of Nagpur. The leader of the followers of Tilak was Balkrishna Ganesh Khaparde, a pleader in Amravati and the elder son of G.S. Khaparde, Gandhi's leading opponent in Berar. Until Khaparde and

\(^1\) NAI, Home Poll, April 1921, 43 Deposit, FR, Second Half of February 1921, p.18. Despite the efforts of Joshi, however, the boycott of schools was not very successful in Berar, where only 14 per cent of all students left the high schools. The highest percentage of students leaving high schools occurred in Khamgaon where 31.7 per cent of students boycotted the school; the next highest was Amravati with 21.3 per cent; followed by Akola with 10.5 per cent, and Yeotmal with 8.4 per cent. The Muslim High School in Amravati lost 11 per cent of its students. In addition the Urdu Normal School in Amravati lost 11.4 per cent of its students, and the Marathi Normal School in the same town 5.6 per cent. Nationalists founded 16 Anglo-Vernacular and 13 Vernacular National Schools in Berar.


\(^3\) See Mishtra, op. cit., p.319.
the Tilakites came to the fore, they 'wobbled over non-cooperation' in some places supporting certain items in the campaign, and in others refusing to have anything to do with it. After the disciples of Tilak assumed control, however, they made it quite clear that they intended to carry out the campaign on their own, and not Gandhi's, terms. This was evident from a letter which B.G. Khaparde wrote to Gandhi in May 1921:

If you expect me to support the non-cooperation movement exactly on your own basis and lines, I am sorry I shall not be able to do so. I do not believe in its religious character or efficacy, and regard it purely as a political instrument for gaining freedom for my motherland; and as such I use it and follow it as far as I can....The ultimate goal, which alone can be an incentive to such humble services and sacrifices as I can undertake and do, is freedom of my countrymen from the present condition of bondage; and Panjab and Khilafat grievances occupy secondary position in my mind. In order to reach the goal, the working of the government must be made very difficult, it not impossible....I would say we must succeed in bringing the government to a fix where we can dictate our own terms, and they would be compelled to accept them for their very life and safety. I believe non-violent non-cooperation to be one of the ways for bringing this about. The present programme of putting non-cooperation in practice will need alteration as we proceed and gather experience.

1 NAI, Home Public, 953, 1924, p.280; Times of India, 2 March 1921, p.9; NAI, Indian Papers, no.4, 1921, p.21, Prajapaksha (Akola), 16 January 1921; ibid., no.6, 1921, p.57, Lokmat (Yeotmal), 28 January 1921.

As indicated in the letter, Khaparde and the disciples of Tilak modified Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation after they assumed control of the campaign in Berar. These modifications were clearly evident in the boycotts of courts, liquor and foreign cloth. While Joshi led the campaign of non-cooperation, the supporters of Tilak opposed the boycott of courts, but after Joshi's arrest, Khaparde and a few of his colleagues suspended practice. In doing so, however, Khaparde did not thereby support the boycott, but appeared to do so to show that the boycott of courts alone could not lead to swaraj. Consequently, the boycott retained its unpopularity in Berar, and only 11 pleaders suspended practice. As for the boycott of foreign cloth, Khaparde and his colleagues supported the boycott enjoined by Tilak but they expressed doubts about the charka and ridiculed the burning of foreign cloth. As disciples of Tilak they also supported the campaign against liquor, but were unable to prevent the mob in Amravati from wrecking the principal liquor shop in the town. The followers of Tilak, assisted by the Gandhians also aroused opposition to the government in the rural areas of Berar, fomenting non-violent agitation not

1. NAI, Home Public, 953, 1924, p.280; NAI, Indian Papers, no.6, 1921, p.51, Lokmat (Yeotmal), 28 January 1921. Nine pleaders suspended practice in the district of Amravati, and one each in Yeotmal, Akola and Buldhana.

2. NAI, Indian Papers, no.18, 1921, p.177, Lokmat (Yeotmal), 22 April 1921; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 1 August 1921.

3. NAI, Indian Papers, no.6, 1921, p.57, Lokmat (Yeotmal), 28 January 1921; Police Administration Report, 1921, op. cit., p.5.
unlike that in the rural areas of the division of Nagpur.

IV

Between 1921 and 1922 the Hindi and Marathi leaders adopted widely differing views on the place of Gandhi and non-cooperation in the Indian nationalist movement. These differences threatened the unity of the nationalist movement in the province itself. At the beginning of 1921 Gandhi's opponents in the Marathi region adopted only those items of non-cooperation which in their view would weaken the position of the government. The other items they viewed with scepticism and only promoted them to prove their impracticability. During the latter part of 1921, however, the Marathi nationalists felt that circumstances had changed sufficiently for them to disavow non-cooperation and Gandhi's leadership of the Indian nationalist movement. One of their strongest arguments against non-cooperation was that it had failed to bring swaraj, as they had prophesied before the movement began. The Marathi press was quick to attack Gandhi on this point. On 27 November 1921 the Prajapaksha of Akola asked pointedly

Where is swaraj now?... (Gandhi) believes in non resistance and patient suffering and this is the reason why he could not take the people with him, nor could they follow him. This was

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1 A Review of the Administration of the Province: The Central Provinces and Berar 1921-22 (Nagpur 1923), p.xx; NAI, Indian Papers, no.9, 1921, p.94, Lokmat (Yeotmal), 18 February 1921.
the main difficulty that came in the way of attaining swaraj. The only way to accomplish swaraj is to resort to counteraction. It now remains the duty of every province to prepare the ground for these last effective steps in counteraction. Each PCC ought to have a free scope to work the scheme of opposition on its own lines without any interference from the National Congress.¹

And not only had non-cooperation not brought swaraj, insisted the Marathi nationalists, but support for the boycotts was daily collapsing. As evidence of this they pointed to the pleaders who had returned to practice and the students who were once more at work in colleges and schools.²

The Marathi nationalists also held non-cooperation responsible for an outbreak of violence that occurred in Malabar in August 1921. In that month the Muslims of Malabar, or Moplahs as they were more commonly known, revolted against the British authorities in the area. During the revolt they also attacked members of the Hindu community and converted many of them to Islam by force. These incidents confirmed the worst fears of the Marathi nationalists concerning the movement of non-cooperation. From the beginning of the satyagraha movement, they had watched with suspicion and foreboding as Gandhi aroused the Muslims on the one hand and instilled the principle of non-violence into the Hindus on the other. Thus, it was not surprising that the

¹ NAI, Indian Papers, no. 49, 1921, p. 561, Prajapaksha (Akola), 27 November 1921.
² See ibid., no. 25, 1921, p. (?) Lokmat (Yeotmal), 10 June 1921.
Marathi nationalists saw the revolt in just those terms. On 6 September 1921, for instance, the *Nagpur Samachar* said that

> It is no doubt very difficult to attribute the riots to any definite cause, but they might be the outcome of the blending of the non violent non-cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi and the Khilafat agitation which in reality should concern only Turkey.¹

As a result, the Marathi nationalists led by Dr Moonje questioned the philosophy underlying non-cooperation and determined to protect the Hindus against a repetition of such attacks.²

The Marathi nationalists had further reasons for condemning non-cooperation. They belonged for the most part to the urban middle classes, and were anxious to protect their interests in government service, the professions, banking and land. The Brahmans among them, too, faced growing opposition from the non-Brahmans of the Marathi region. Since 1900, a movement of protest against the social dominance of the Brahmans had been at work among members of the non-Brahman community. By 1921, however, this movement had developed a strong

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¹ NAI, Indian Papers, no.37, 1921, p.387, *Nagpur Samachar* (Nagpur), 6 September 1921.
² Ibid., no.43, 1921, p.482, *Prajapaksha* (Akola), 16 October 1921; NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 8, Circular, 17 February 1922; ibid., Letter pad 10, B.S. Moonje to Gulab Babu, 13 March 1922; B.S. Moonje to Mr Menon, 16 March 1922; B.S. Moonje to Nagarjee, 19 March 1922; Letter Pad 11, B.S. Moonje to Malavanker, 31 March 1922.
political flavour. In that year non-Brahman leaders warned their caste-fellows not to participate in the campaign of non-cooperation which was mostly led by Brahmans; and urged the government to give the non-Brahmans separate electorates to enable them to 'throw off the Brahmanical yoke'. The non-Brahman movement thus threatened the political leadership of the Brahmans of the Marathi region, and they could not afford to ignore it.¹

The nationalists of Berar had additional reasons for condemning non-cooperation. Besides attacking British rule, they also desired to gain the assistance of the government in solving the problems confronting Berar. The nationalists believed that they could do both by entering the legislature rather than by launching a campaign of non-cooperation. One problem was posed by the recurrent rumours that the Government of India intended to return Berar to the Nizam.² There was also the perennial problem of the revenues of Berar. This problem assumed an added urgency in January 1922 when a committee appointed by the government to investigate the provincial finances released its findings. The committee, which was known as the Sim Committee,

² Hitavada, 12 November 1921, p.4.
supported the pooling of revenues from the Central Provinces and Berar, and also directed that the Central Provinces should receive 60 per cent, and Berar 40 per cent, of the revenues allocated to works in either part of the province. The leaders of Berar objected to both conclusions.

To serve their interests as nationalists and leaders of the urban middle classes, the Marathi nationalists urged that Tilak's policy of responsive cooperation in the councils replace that of non-cooperation. Although suggestions to this effect came from the division of Nagpur, the strongest clamour for responsive cooperation came from Berar. The nationalist press took a strong stand on the issue, as witness the following extract from the Bharat of Amravati:

If they want to banish the drink evil, let them go into the councils and bring about prohibition ....People are grown sick of mere vituperation and defiance of authority. They certainly prefer the Lokamanya's Responsive Cooperation to the Mahatma's non-violent Non-cooperation....It is now high time that the followers of both should speak out their minds candidly. If Lokamanya's life work is not to be wasted, his followers should not sit with folded arms any longer. The followers of the Mahatma are shirking their political responsibilities....It is hoped that ...the Tilakites will discard renunciation and

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1 Hitavada, 14 January 1922, pp.5-6. The Committee was so named from its president George Gall Sim, who was Financial Commissioner of Railways for the Government of India.

2 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 9 October 1921; NAI, Home Poll, F-18, 1921, FR, Second Half of September 1921, p.53.
chalk out a practical and vigorous line for the attainment of swaraj.¹

Such appeals did not fall on deaf ears, for between 1-3 December 1921 two conferences took place at Akola. Their purpose was to review the programme of non-cooperation. One conference was attended by members of the four Provincial Congress Committees of Bombay, Maharashtra, the Central Provinces and Berar, and the other by nationalists from the Marathi region of the Central Provinces and Berar alone. Each conference reflected the strong opposition in the Marathi region of western India to non-cooperation, for each requested that the campaign be withdrawn and that nationalists pursue a policy of 'obstructive cooperation' in the legislatures instead.²

In 1922 the demands of the Marathi nationalists for responsive cooperation became more insistent. The occasion for this was Gandhi's decision to launch mass civil disobedience against the government in January 1922; and then to suspend the campaign within two weeks owing to an outbreak of violence in the United Provinces. At the same time, Gandhi counselled nationalists to work the constructive programme until the country became sufficiently non-violent for civil disobedience to begin again. This provoked a violent reaction in the Marathi region. The Maharashtra of Nagpur thundered its disapproval of Gandhi's 'political blunders'; while the

¹ NAI, Indian Papers, no.45, 1921, p.512, Bharat (Amravati), 27 October 1921.
² NAI, Home Poll, F-18, 1921, FR, First Half of December 1921, p.6.
nationalists condemned the 'new programme of social reform', and urged that 'Gandhi should either have carried his policy through to the bitter end or should have retired from the political arena'.¹ The Marathi nationalists carried their condemnation of Gandhi and non-cooperation into the councils of the Indian National Congress. At a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Delhi between 24-26 February, Dr Moonje led the attack on Gandhi and the resolution on constructive work, but he was unable to defeat the motion. Dr Moonje refused to admit defeat, however, as he believed that the time has come for examining the principles on which this movement of non-cooperation is based - particularly as to whether those principles are practicable or otherwise.²

In this belief he first canvassed support for a review of the nationalist programme in the Punjab and Bengal.³ Then he persuaded the Nagpur Provincial Congress Committee to appoint a Sub-committee 'to review the whole situation and to suggest a programme of work for (the) future'. ⁴

¹ NAI, Indian Papers, no.9, 1922, p.109, Maharashtra (Nagpur), 1 March 1922; NAI, Home Poll, F-18, 1922, FR, Second Half of February 1922, p.61.
² NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 9, B.S. Moonje to V.R. Joshi, 2 March 1922.
³ Ibid., Letter Pad 9, B.S. Moonje to Professor Ruchiram, 2 March 1922; B.S. Moonje to Mr Roy, 28 February 1922.
⁴ Ibid., Letter Pad 10, B.S. Moonje to M.S. Aney, 21 March 1922.
In these moves, Dr Moonje received the fullest support from the nationalists of Berar. In February 1922 the nationalist press there vociferously attacked Gandhi for turning the Congress into 'an organisation for doing... mere social service'; and during April Aney urged his fellow Beraris to capture 'all public and semi-government institutions as well as the councils' subject to the approval of the Indian National Congress.

During 1922 the Hindi leaders, still linking the fortunes of their region to those of the Indian National Congress, supported non-cooperation. In January 1922 the Provincial Congress Committee met at Hoshangabad and resolved that civil disobedience begin 'where a favourable atmosphere of mass satyagraha may be prepared'. And although Gandhi suspended the agitation, nationalists in the Hindi region continued to favour, and even practise, some form of non-cooperation with the government. Much of this activity took place in Chhattisgarh. In Bilaspur and Durg, Congressmen prepared for a resumption of civil disobedience by enrolling new Congressmen, enlisting volunteers and inciting tenants not to pay their rent.

1 NAI, Indian Papers, no. 8, 1922, p. 86, Udaya (Amravati), 21 February 1922; ibid., no. 16, 1922, p. 210, Lokmat (Yeotmal), 14 April 1922.
2 Mishra, op. cit., p. 310.
Nationalists in Durg also attacked the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and called on the ministers and councillors to resign from the legislature. In addition, village agitators and subordinate Congress officials of Dhamtari tahsil in the district of Raipur supported civil disobedience so strongly that they launched their own campaign without reference to the leaders of the Congress, either at the national or the district level. The agitation had its roots in the opposition of the villagers of Sihawa tract in Dhamtari to the regulations in force in government forests in Sihawa. As a result local agitators and Congress officials from Dhamtari found it an easy matter to persuade 125 men from villages in the tract to 'cut and remove each a head load of fuel from the reserved forest without licence'. The leaders of Dhamtari also organised a campaign of non-cooperation against the officials who came to investigate the theft of wood. The following report describes this campaign, and demonstrates the extent to which notions of non-cooperation had penetrated the Hindi countryside by 1922. The author was the District Magistrate of Raipur:

By the date 24 February I arrived at Sihawa with Messrs Taylor and Bailey....There was partial hartal (and)...many difficulties had to be overcome; both watermen, for example, were

2 MPS, Political and Military Department (Confidential), No.27, 1922, Removal of Forest Produce from the Sihawa tract of Raipur district, Memo by R.J. Bailey, p.37.
3 Ibid., Letter no.45 from the Divisional Forest Officer, South Raipur division, to the Deputy Commissioner, Raipur, p.2.
withdrawn from the camp by volunteers on the second day; and one of my sowars, when attending market, was first told that he would be sold nothing and then that he could have two pailies for a rupee, four times the market rate....In Sihawa the children of almost every village have been taught to shout Gandhi ki jai as soon as the hoof-beats of an officer's horse are heard....No violence is now preached, but, as reported....at Balargaon the villagers are exhorted to boycott foreign goods and to make extravagant demands from government officers both for supplies and service....The forest guard at Umargaon gave evidence....but has had to leave the village since, and today I hear that a criminal case against two volunteers for snatching and burning a school master's headdress has failed....I also found also at Sihawa that vaccination has been suspended because Nagri volunteers had set the people against it;....and....because...(a teacher) maintained relations with officers, his school at Ghatula had been boycotted....We found (also) that forest subordinates and practically all others were boycotted in all leading villages and were unable to obtain the services of barber, waterman and dhobi.  

In Raipur, too, Ravi Shankar Shukla symbolised the mood of Hindi nationalists by taking part in a personal act of non-cooperation against the government. In so doing he asserted his leadership in the face of the unauthorised Satyagraha in Sihawa, and regained some of the popularity he had lost for refusing to suspend his legal practice in 1921.  

On 25 March 1922 nationalists in Raipur held their district conference. Before the conference, they

1 MPS, Political and Military Department (Confidential), A Note by the District Magistrate, Raipur.

2 NAI, Home Public, no.953, 1924, p.268.
issued the customary free tickets to the police. The police authorities considered the number of such tickets insufficient, however, and on the day of the conference, a sub-inspector tried to enter the conference pandal without paying for an extra ticket. Shukla, warned beforehand that the police intended to force an entry, decided to oppose them and thus court arrest. One observer described the scene thus:

Volunteers were lined up and Messrs Rao, Lakhe and Shukla formed the front line. Mr Shukla was standing hand in hand with Mr Lakhe. The police city inspector arrived with a junior magistrate, two sub-inspectors and about eight or nine constables with handcuffs. Sub-inspector Girdharilal began enforcing his entrance in spite of protest...between Shukla and Lakhe. As he pressed forward, they allowed their hands to go as far as they could and as soon as the sub-inspector began to use force, to release their hands and pass through, Mr Row said 'That is enough for purpose', and he and Mr Shukla immediately left off their hands. Exactly at this moment, the city inspector ordered Mr Shukla's arrest.

Following this, the police handcuffed Shukla and marched him on foot to the kotwali where they held him for 48 hours before releasing him. The government subsequently formed a committee to enquire into the handcuffing, but Shukla refused to appear before the committee. In this way, he again demonstrated his support for non-cooperation, and that at a time when Marathi leaders were pressing for a return to the councils.

1 CPLC, Vol.2, 13 September 1922, pp.576-7. Wamanrao Lakhe was a leading nationalist in Raipur.
2 Ibid., p.622.
Between 1923-6 nationalists from the Hindi and Marathi regions clashed in the legislature of the Central Provinces, and serious divisions occurred in the nationalist movement as a result. The clash arose from a series of disputes concerning larger ideological questions as well as the personnel of the ministry. On 31 December 1922, after the Congress had refused to allow its members to enter the councils, Congressmen from all over India formed the All-India Congress Khilafat Swarajya party for that purpose. During the early months of 1923, nationalists established branches of the Swaraj party, as it was called, in the Hindi region and the divisions of Nagpur and Berar in preparation for the elections to the legislature to be held at the end of the year. Nationalists from the merchant community and the lower classes in the towns and rural areas of the province, however, who still supported Gandhi, fought determinedly to prevent members of the Swaraj party, or Swarajists, from contesting the elections. But this opposition came to nothing, and at the elections in November 1923 Swarajists in the Central Provinces and Berar won an absolute majority of seats in the provincial legislature.

Differences between the Swarajists in the legislature
caused a permanent cleavage in the ranks of nationalists in the Central Provinces and Berar. After an initial period of harmony, during which the Swarajists obstructed the work of the Council, members of the party from all parts of the province raised the question of forming a ministry. As there were, in fact, three Swaraj parties and only two ministerships, successive moves by Swarajists from one region or another to form a ministry ended in frustration and failure. In 1925, the Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar, Sir Montagu Butler, resolved the situation by appointing a former leader of the Swaraj party of Berar as Home Member. This precipitated the division of Swarajists from all parts of the province into two groups. One group comprised the orthodox Swarajists who, in obedience to the Indian National Congress, refused to accept office in the government. This group drew most of its support from the Hindi region. The other group comprised those nationalists who were pledged to a policy of responsive cooperation in the legislature. This group drew most of its support from the Marathi region, where its members formed the new Responsive Cooperation party. They were joined by a number of former Swarajists from the Hindi region who formed the Independent Congress 'party'. But whether in the Hindi or the Marathi regions, the responsive cooperators had one aim in common. They desired to persuade the electors of the Central Provinces and Berar to regard their parties - and not the Swaraj party or the Indian National Congress - as the main nationalist party in the province.
In 1922 nationalists in the Central Provinces and Berar intensified their efforts to persuade the Indian National Congress to abandon non-cooperation and allow them to enter the Councils. As for the division of Nagpur, on 14 April 1922 the Sub-committee formed by Dr Moonje to review nationalist policy recommended that the Congress modify the programme of non-cooperation. On 7 May the Provincial Congress Committee accepted that recommendation. Nationalists from Nagpur again demonstrated their opposition to non-cooperation by absenting themselves from a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held in Bombay on 9 June 1922, and by treating with indifference a committee appointed at that meeting to assess the support for civil disobedience in India. At the same time, Marathi nationalists strengthened their links with Congressmen in other parts of the country who also desired to enter the legislative councils.

The nationalists of Berar fully supported these moves. On 25 May 1922 the Berar Provincial Congress Committee recommended that the Congress allow its members to enter the councils. At the same time, G.S. Khaparde,

1 The Pioneer, 10 May 1922, p.3; Hitavada, 26 April 1922, p.6. See p.99.
4 NML, AICC, I, 1922, Secretary Berar PCC to Secretary AICC, 17 June 1922.
overjoyed that the principles he had espoused in 1920 were at last 'coming by their own', led moves to revive the Congress Democratic party formed by Tilak in 1920. By mid-August Khaparde was confident that such a party would command substantial support among nationalists. As a result he issued a manifesto condemning Gandhi and non-cooperation and urging his fellow-nationalists to revert to the modes of agitation used by the Congress before Gandhi appeared on the scene.

Experience has shown that, like most short-cuts, ...(non-cooperation) is a delusion and a snare ....It divided the Nationalists into non-cooperators and independents of the Tilak school, who still hold fast to their method....The congress itself has become a one man show....The reforms are condemned root and branch; and anybody and everybody trying to work them is hated as the enemy of his country....All wisdom is regarded as the monopoly of the followers of Mr Gandhi....There is a retrogression of a serious kind and a great deal of unnecessary suffering absolutely inefficient to accomplish any political end. The goal has receded further than ever and nothing but disaster stares the people in the face if the course followed in the last 18 months is perversely persisted in....Fortunately there is a revulsion of feeling visible,...(and) advantage may be taken of these to give a turn to the present disruptive trend of thought and a reversion to the sane methods of the Indian National Congress in pre-non cooperation days.2

In his manifesto Khaparde also requested that all

1 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 11 April 1922; NAI, Home Poll, F-18, 1922, FR, First Half of April 1922, p.16.
2 NAI, Jayaker MS, File 402, Letter 85, a Proposal by G.S. Khaparde, 15 August 1922.
nationalists who agreed on the importance of entering the legislatures should meet to discuss the best means of achieving that objective. This appeal had gratifying results. On 4 November 1922 Dr Moonje, C.R. Das and N.C. Kelkar came to Amravati to confer with Khaparde. Following this meeting the nationalist leaders published another manifesto advocating entry to the councils which they intended to submit to the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Gaya in December. The nationalists of Berar signified their approval of the manifesto by attending a meeting of the Home Rule League of Maharashtra at Yeotmal on 10 December 1922. At this meeting they agreed that nationalists must persuade the electorate of the need to enter the councils to win 'more rights' from the government.

The supporters of Gandhi in the Marathi region strongly opposed the moves by the middle class leaders to enter the councils. The Gandhians were recruited in the main from two groups who had been drawn into political agitation in 1921, namely, the merchant community and the lower classes of the towns. The former was led by Jamnalal Bajaj and the latter by Pandit Sunderlal. During 1922 Bajaj and Sunderlal held a number of meetings throughout the division of Nagpur to condemn the

2 NAI, Home Poll, F-18, 1922, FR, First Half of December 1922, p.1; NAI, Indian Papers, no.51, 1922, p.604, Prajapaksha (Akola), 17 December 1922.
'regular Mahratta Brahmin leaders' and the new doctrines. Bajaj also tried to undermine the control exercised by Dr Moonje and the Marathi nationalists over the Provincial Congress Committee, complaining to the All-India Congress Committee in May 1922 that

the public opinion of this province is strongly against the new scheme drafted by the Nagpur PCC, and against the postponement of the PCC elections to October next....Many of the existing members or office-bearers of the PCC and bodies subordinate to it do not represent the real opinion of the province. The view recently put forward by the spokesmen of Nagpur are not the views of the public.2

The All-India Congress Committee subsequently ordered Dr Moonje to hold the elections to the Provincial and other Congress Committees by 15 August 1922. This Moonje did, but when the results foreshadowed a 'complete change' in the composition of the Provincial Congress Committee in favour of Bajaj and the Gandhians, he coopted his own supporters to the Committee and thus retained control over the organisation.3


2 NML, AICC, 1, 1922, J. Bajaj to General Secretary, AICC, 5 May 1922 (two letters).

Similar clashes between the Gandhian populists* and the long established Marathi leaders occurred in Berar. As the Udaya complained in June 1922

Ever since the recommendation by the Berar PCC for a revision in the present congress programme, some political upstarts have made it a point to tour round in Berar, convene public meetings and to excite and prejudice the mob against the Nationalists...It will after all widen the gulf already existing between the literate and the illiterate classes.¹

The elections to the various Congress Committees provided another focus of interest in the clash between the two groups of nationalists in Berar. During 1922 the Gandhians contested the elections with a view to removing the Marathi nationalists from control of the Congress organisation. These attempts failed, however, and consequently 'the Tilakites maintain(ed) their ascendancy in Berar'.²

A determined conflict between Gandhian populists and the middle class leaders also took place in the Hindi region. At first the initiative lay with the Gandhians. The leader of this group was Pandit Sunderlal, who, after serving a term of imprisonment for taking part

* The term 'populist' in this thesis refers to the Gandhian leaders who attempted to draw the mass of people in town and country into agitations based on Gandhi's principle of non violence.

¹ NAI, Indian Papers, no.14, 1922, p.307, Udaya (Amravati) 13 June 1922.
² NAI, Home Poll, F-18, 1922, FR, Second Half of September 1922, p.1; NAI, Indian Papers, no.33, 1922, p.137, Lokmat (Yeotmal), 11 August 1922.
in the campaign of non-cooperation, went up into the Hindi region in 1922 to 'revive enthusiasm for the Gandhi programme'. His chief assistant was Makhanlal Chaturvedi, a Kanya Kubja Brahman who was well known throughout the region as the editor of the *Karmavir*. In April 1922 Sunderlal and Chaturvedi attended the political conference of the Hindi region at Chhindwara to promote the constructive programme. The two leaders not only won the support of a majority of those who attended the conference, but on its completion won control of the Provincial Congress Committee from Rao and his associates.

During the remainder of 1922 both men took up the cause of civil disobedience - Sunderlal by undertaking a massive tour of the Hindi region, and Chaturvedi by his writings in the *Karmavir*. Considerable success followed these efforts. During April Sunderlal opened a national school at Khandwa in Nimar, and in May he persuaded a conference of Gonds in the Narmada division to 'pass a resolution on the Gandhi programme'. There were reports, too, from the towns of a revival of the boycotts of liquor and foreign cloth, and of attempts to popularise spinning and khadi. There were also many reports of acts of

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non-cooperation that did not conform to the constructive programme or the agitation that had taken place during 1921.\(^1\) As a result, so strong was the support for non-cooperation in the Hindi region, that on 10 August 1922 the populist dominated Provincial Congress Committee 'resolved to inform the All-India Congress Committee that collective civil disobedience is the only weapon to restore the Khilafat and remedy the Punjab wrongs'.\(^2\)

The populists, however, were unable to prevent the middle class nationalists from preparing for the elections to the provincial legislature. The leader of these men was Raghavendra Rao. Even during the campaign of non-cooperation, Rao had expressed doubts about that form of agitation. This was evident from the reports of a speech made by Rao at the provincial conference held at Bilaspur in May 1921. According to the *Hitavada*:

\((\text{Rao's})\) address, in spite of a conscious attempt to fall in with the prevailing political passion of the hour shows that the speaker is quite uneasy about the immediate result of all the raging propaganda that he sees all about him.\(^3\)

Similarly, in 1922, Rao encouraged Hindi Congressmen to participate fully in the work of local government in contravention of the principles of non-cooperation.\(^4\)

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2. Ibid., F-18, 1922, FR, First Half of August 1922, p.83.
4. Ibid., 26 April 1922, p.5; NAI, Indian Papers, no.22, 1922, p.284, *Karmavir* (Jabalpur), 27 May 1922.
During 1922, too, Rao and his colleagues refused to cooperate with Sunderlal and the populists, and as a result the campaign for civil disobedience aroused little support among the urban middle classes. Thus, Rao and his colleagues must have been heartened when the campaign began to languish, and even the *Karmavir* declared that participation in the 'forthcoming council elections (would)...infuse fresh life in the country'.

Against a background of increasing interest in the elections, Rao, Shukla, Mehta, Govind Das, Chhedilal and others issued a manifesto from Chhindwara on 16 December 1922, which declared that

the present programme should be so adjusted as to rejuvenate its vigour and make it aggressive in offering resistance to the government....(The) forthcoming elections provide a suitable occasion to justify an adjustment of the programme....We do not stand for the proposal of entering councils, nor do we wish them to be worked for what they are worth...but to capture the electoral machinery as to close all avenues of cooperation created by the state (and)...to offer effective resistance to a system of government which we desire to mend or end.

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II

Whether in the Central Provinces and Berar or India as a whole, the Gandhians were unable to prevent the middle class nationalists from forming a party to contest the elections to the legislatures. The two groups clashed at the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Gaya in December 1922. Those who desired to contest the elections opposed the official motion endorsing non-cooperation, but were not strong enough to defeat it. The middle class nationalists immediately disassociated themselves from the resolution, and on 31 December 1922 formed the All-India Congress Khilafat Swarajya party to contest the elections to the councils in December 1923. The Swarajists, as the members of the new party were called, elected as President and Secretary of the new party respectively, C.R. Das of Bengal, and Motilal Nehru, a prominent nationalist from the United Provinces. The main objective of the party was to put pressure through constitutional means on the British government to grant self government to India. If such pressure failed to achieve its objective, the Swarajists were to destroy the reformed constitution by obstructing the work of the government in the legislatures.

Following the establishment of the national Swaraj party, the middle class nationalists formed branches of the party in the divisions of Nagpur and Berar and the Hindi region of the province. The leading Swarajist in the division of Nagpur was Dr Moonje. During the early months of 1923 Dr Moonje circulated a constitution for the proposed party, and directed the formation of party committees and the enrolment of party members throughout
the division. 1 By May 1923 the Swaraj party was in existence, and Moonje informed Motilal Nehru that

we are in a position to start intensive agitation in our province...I am enclosing a cheque of Rs 1000 in payment of our provincial contribution as fixed by you toward the finances of the all-India Swaraj Party. 2

By June 1923, the Swarajists in the division were hard at work persuading the voters to defy the Indian National Congress and return them to the provincial council in December. 3 Similar reports also came from Berar, where the move to enter the legislature had the backing of the Gandhian leader, Wamanrao Joshi, and the Marathi nationalists led by M.S. Aney. Between January and May 1923 Aney presided over the formation of Swarajist organisations in Berar and toured the territory urging the voters to support the Swarajists at the elections. By June the nationalists of Berar had the work of canvassing well in hand. 4 In the Hindi region Raghavendra Rao took the lead in forming a Swaraj party after a period of apparent inactivity. In October 1923 the following report appeared in the Lokmitra of

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1 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 14, Circular, 14 February 1923; Letter Pad 15, Circular, 23 March 1923; Letter Pad 15, Circular, 5 May 1923.

2 Ibid., Letter Pad 15, B.S. Moonje to M. Nehru, 6 May 1923.


A Swaraj party headed by Mr Raghavendra Rao of Bilaspur has been formed for the Hindi speaking districts; and another party for the southern Marathi speaking districts has also been brought into existence under Dr Munje. These two parties working side by side and acting in coordination and consultation with each other will set up their own candidates for every constituency.... Accordingly the process of selection and elimination is going on vigorously.

During 1923 the populists replied with bold but unsuccessful moves to divert the attention of the people from the elections to the constructive programme and non-cooperation. Their first move was in accordance with the resolution accepted at Gaya that nationalists should prepare for civil disobedience by collecting Rs 25 lakhs, enrolling 50,000 volunteers and implementing the constructive programme. In no part of the province, however, did the Gandhians achieve their objectives. In the division of Nagpur, their appeals evoked little response, as the following reference to an attempted boycott of foreign cloth demonstrates:

The number of volunteers is very small, and though they...are acquitting themselves honourably, they find it difficult to carry on picketing from shop to shop....This state of affairs is in our opinion partly due to the lack of enthusiasm among the local Congress workers...; but mainly due to the apathetic attitude of the local Maharashtra leaders who have...no faith in picketing.

1 NAI, Indian Papers, no. 43, 1923, p. 517, Lokmitra (Chhindwara), 20 October 1923.
2 Ibid., no. 10, 1923, p. 103, Pranavir (Nagpur), 1 March 1923.
In Berar, the Gandhians under Wamanrao Joshi had even less success than in the division of Nagpur. This was mainly due to the fact Joshi advocated that nationalists enter the council and participate in civil disobedience as well. Support for the former in the towns was so strong that Joshi aroused little support for civil disobedience and had difficulty in persuading nationalists to chair his meetings. It was in the Hindi region, however, that the populists had their greatest defeat, perhaps because that area had once been the scene of their greatest success. From the beginning of 1923 the townsfolk of the region responded apathetically to Sunderlal's appeals for men and money, and showed little sympathy with the boycott of foreign cloth. The cloth merchants, too, renounced the vows they had taken earlier to stock only Indian goods and began to indent fresh supplies of foreign cloth. These setbacks threw the Gandhians onto the defensive, and with the continued conflict between Sunderlal and Raghavendra Rao, they suffered further reverses. This conflict undermined the people's confidence in the Gandhian movement and discouraged them from responding to Sunderlal's appeals for support.

3 For the effects of the rivalry see NAI, Indian Papers, no.7, 1923, p.69, Lokmitra (Chhindwara), 16 February 1923; NAI, Home Poll, F-25, 1923, FR, First Half of March 1923, p.16.
In March 1923 the populists turned from these failures to a series of dramatic demonstrations to win the population to the Gandhian cause. These demonstrations consisted of satyagrahas in which the Congress or National Flag was the dominant feature.\(^1\) The leaders of the Satyagrahas were Pandit Sunderlal in the Hindi region, and Jamnalal Bajaj in the Marathi region, and each drew heavily on the lower classes in town and country to provide volunteers for the demonstrations. The first phase of the agitation began in Jabalpur on 11 March 1923, when the District Commissioner refused to allow nationalist members of the Municipal Committee to fly the National Flag on the Town Hall in honour of members of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress who were visiting the city at the time. Six days later the nationalists flew the flag from the Town Hall in reprisal, and, when the police forcibly removed it, carried it in procession to the civil lines. A group of volunteers led by Sunderlal, however, refused to get permission to take out such a procession. Consequently they were arrested, but released the following day.\(^2\)

This incident apparently awoke Sunderlal and the populists to the possibilities of arousing popular support for the Congress by demonstrating with the National Flag. Accordingly, on 11 April 1923 they appointed a sub-committee in Jabalpur to 'vindicate the

\(^1\) This flag, adopted by the Indian National Congress, consisted of bands of green, white and saffron with a small charka in the centre.

\(^2\) Hitavada, 28 March 1923, p.5.
honour of the national flag', and called for donations and volunteers for the purpose. The response in men and money, however, was poor and the Gandhians could do little more than hoist the Flag in Jabalpur during May.¹

The Gandhians also held a number of Flag demonstrations in the other towns of the Hindi region using townsfolk as volunteers. These occurred at the same time as the demonstration in Jabalpur, and constituted the second phase of the agitation. The most important demonstration took place in Bilaspur, the home of Raghavendra Rao, in defiance of Rao and his colleagues who opposed any form of civil disobedience including that based on the National Flag. On 31 March 1923 Gandhians hoisted the Flag on the Town Hall in Bilaspur, just as the twentieth session of the provincial Rajput Conference was opening in the town. As the Hitavada saw the demonstration:

The provincial Rajput Conference...provided a suitable occasion of vindicating the honour of the national flag to those to whom was entrusted the work of decorating the Town hall....Official efforts to persuade them to bring it down were unavailing. The flag was flying the whole day in front of the district court and the district commissioner's bungalow....(There was) excitement and enthusiasm in the town and volunteers were ready for all emergencies.²

During April 1923, Flag demonstrations also took place in Chhindwara, Seoni and Narsimhapur. In the latter district,

¹ Hitavada, 11 April 1923, p.3; NAI, Home Poll, F-25, 1923, FR, First Half of April 1923, p.17; ibid., F-25, FR, Second Half of May 1923, p.50.
² Hitavada, 4 April 1923, p.5.
the message of the Flag penetrated into the villages.¹

On 13 April 1923 Jamnalal Bajaj opened the third and most important phase of the agitation – the Flag Satyagraha of Nagpur. This Satyagraha was a populist demonstration against the middle class nationalists of the city and province. In addition to Bajaj, the leaders of the campaign were Awari, a Parsi militant, and Bhangwandin, the foremost inmate of the Asahayoga Ashram and a leading agitator in the campaign of 1921. By 1923 both men were well known as leaders of the lower classes of Nagpur, and it was not surprising that these classes figured prominently among the demonstrators in the Flag Satyagraha. Others who took part included members of the Depressed communities and aboriginal tribes of the Central Provinces, and a small number of men with a similar social background from neighbouring provinces. In addition, the Satyagraha was simple in nature, consisting of attempts to carry the National Flag through a prohibited area, and thus had an immediate appeal to the popular mind.²

The Flag Satyagraha in Nagpur had three distinct stages. During the first stage Bajaj drew his support from the city of Nagpur and the districts of the division.³ The agitation began on 13 April 1923, when observers

¹ Hitavada, 18 April 1923, p.4; ibid., 25 April 1923, p.5.
witnessed the following scene on the western edge of Nagpur:

On the anniversary of the Jallianwallah Bagh, a procession of 30 or 40 volunteers and about 100 other persons marched from the city into the civil station singing national songs and carrying swaraj flags....(in) imitation of a similar procession that had taken place in Jubbulpore.¹

The government led by Sir Frank Sly, possibly fearing a repetition of the events of 1921, took a strong stand against the demonstration. On 13 April, Hyde Clarendon Gowan, the District Magistrate of Nagpur and a civilian of some twenty years' standing, forbade the first procession entry to the civil station. When the satyagrahis stepped forward to defy his prohibition, Gowan ordered their arrest.² The populists decided, however, to persist in their defiance of the government, and on 30 April 1923 made plans to place the Satyagraha on a permanent footing.³ The following day Gowan again intervened and banned all processions with the National Flag for two months. This did not deter the populists. On 2 May a procession carrying the Flag and singing songs marched towards the civil station, but when they tried to enter the prohibited area they were arrested as before. This pattern of events was repeated on many days following. According to one observer

¹ Hitavada, 18 April 1923, p.5.
² Mishra, op. cit., p.323; NAI, Indian Papers, no.24, 1923, p.253, Pranavir (Nagpur), 7 June 1923.
³ Hitavada, 2 May 1923, p.5.
Every day ten volunteers march to the prohibited area and court arrest. They are duly arrested and carried off amidst the enthusiastic cheers of thousands of sympathetic onlookers.¹

Owing to the number of arrests, the supply of volunteers from the division of Nagpur was soon exhausted, and the leaders of the Satyagraha called for volunteers from the Hindi region to carry on the agitation.² The influx of Hindi agitators, in response to these appeals, began in mid-May and lasted until mid-June and constituted the second stage of the Satyagraha. Among those who recruited volunteers in the Hindi region included national school teachers, itinerant preachers, pleaders and district leaders.³ The fruits of their work were clearly evident in the hundreds of volunteers who arrived in Nagpur - some on foot, and some by train - from the districts of Seoni, Sagar, Jabalpur, Narsimhapur, Balaghat, Betul and Hoshangabad between May and June, to take their place in the daily processions to the civil station.⁴ For the most part illiterate and unemployed, these men responded readily to the inducements held out to them to come to Nagpur. The case of Jhadoo, son of

¹ Hitavada, 2 May 1923, p. 4; CPLC, vol. 3, 9 August 1923, pp. 247-8; Hitavada, 9 May 1923, p. 4; India Office Records (IOR), History of Services, Central Provinces and Berar, H.C. Gowan, pp. 3-5.
² Mishra, op. cit., p. 323; Hitavada, 30 May 1923, p. 4.
³ See for instance A Compilation of Important Political Trials in the Central Provinces and Berar, op. cit., pp. 1-2, Cases under Section 117 of the Indian Penal Code.
⁴ Mishra, op. cit., p. 323.
Harnam, from village Botijhari in Balaghat was typical of many satyagrahis:

A few days before I arrived at Nagpur, one Pathan, whose name I do not know, visited my village along with others, and asked me to join as a volunteer for a sabha to be held at Nagpur for obtaining swaraj. During swaraj things would be sold at a very cheap rate. Anandi Patel of my village, advised me to join, promising to look after my mother and assured me that when swaraj is obtained Mahatma Gandhi will give me a good appointment. With all these hopes I accompanied the Pathan who brought me to Balaghat, where several other volunteers joined us, and we all came to Nagpur. I did not pay the railway fare. On arrival at Nagpur I was told that I would be required to carry the flag for which I will get at the most one month's imprisonment and this sacrifice will bring the swaraj. With this idea I came to jail.¹

Owing to the frequent arrests, the supply of Hindi volunteers also tapered off and Bajaj was compelled to seek assistance from neighbouring provinces.² The use of volunteers from these provinces constituted the third stage of the Satyagraha, which lasted from early June until the final procession of 18 August 1923. This stage of the agitation began well, but soon ran into trouble as the numbers of volunteers and onlookers declined.³ Bajaj, too, was arrested, and Vallabhbhai Patel, a leading Congressman from Gujarat, came to Nagpur with his brother

³ See Hitavada, 1 August 1923, p.6.
Vithalbhai to lead the declining Satyagraha. Shortly after his arrival Vithalbhai entered into conversations with Sir M.V. Joshi, the Home Member, and the Governor, Sir Frank Sly, in an attempt to end the agitation without loss of face on either side. These talks were successful and, as a result, the government and the nationalists agreed to suspend hostilities. Patel, for the nationalists, conceded that the government had the right to regulate processions, and he accepted the conditions it imposed on processions through the civil station. The government, for its part, agreed to release all volunteers imprisoned during the Satyagraha. As a result, when the Gandhians carried the Flag into the civil station on 18 August 1923, they conformed to the regulations imposed by the government. The government permitted the Flag to pass 'without let or hindrance' and the day 'ended in peace and reconciliation all round'.

The Flag Satyagrahas held in Nagpur and other towns in the Central Provinces in 1923 failed to deter the middle class nationalists from contesting the elections.

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1 G.I. Patel, Vithalbhai Patel; Life and Times, Book I (Bombay, n.d.), pp.513-7. Vithalbhai and Sly had been friends since their student days in England.

2 Hitavada, 22 August 1923, p.3; ibid., p.4; Patel, op. cit., p.516. The provincial government agreed to release the prisoners without consulting the Government of India, and the latter expressed its strong disapproval of the release. See NAI, Home Poll, F-280, 1-34, 1923, Civil Disobedience in the Central Provinces, Telegram from Government of India, p.28.
to the legislature. In the words of the Mahratta, the
'local Swarajya party is not spited at all and its
weathers are unwrung'. From the inception of the Nagpur
Satyagraha, Dr Moonje regarded it as an attempt to 'thwart
the attempts of the leaders of the Swaraj party', and
refused to have any part in it. The Maharashtra spelt
out Dr Moonje's objections in greater detail:

The non cooperators ask the Swarajists as to why
they raise mere protests against the government
action instead of taking an active part in the
struggle. To this our answer is that although
we fully approve of the weapon of civil
disobedience, we shall not be dictated to as to
when and against what injustice it should be
used. We will lend our support to that
satyagraha which will meet with our approval...
at a proper time and under favourable circumstances
....It is the intention of the government to fill
its councils with sycophants and it is zealously
working towards that end....The government will
therefore achieve its object if the Swaraj party
joins the satyagraha movement.

Accordingly, with the Satyagraha at an end, the
Swarajists threw themselves into the task of persuading
the voters to return them to the provincial council at
the elections.

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1 Hitavada, Extract from the Mahratta, 9 September 1923, p.15.
2 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 15, B.S. Moonje to Gopal
Menon, 31 May 1923; ibid., Letter Pad 16, B.S. Moonje
to Narsopant, 22 June 1923.
3 NAI, Indian Papers, no.29, 1923, pp.334-5, Maharashtra
(Nagpur), 18 July 1923.
At the elections in November 1923 the Swarajists in the Central Provinces and Berar won an absolute majority of seats in the provincial legislature. Only two months before the elections, the leaders of the Indian National Congress finally bowed to Swarajist pressure and summoned a special session of the organisation to decide whether to permit Congressmen to contest the elections. This session, which was held in Delhi in September 1923, approved of council entry, and following its decision Swarajists in the Central Provinces and Berar turned to their campaigns with renewed vigour. As a result of these campaigns, they won a decisive victory over the moderate politicians who constituted the majority of members in the first reformed Council. There were many reasons for this remarkable result. Among these were

their efficient party organisation, their catching programme combined to high sounding promises, the magic name of the Congress, (and) the fickleness of the electorate....Almost all the Indian government servants voted for their candidates... Many Bengalis voted for the nominees of the party because of respect for their leader in Bengal, C.R. Das. The illiterate voters in many cases were led to expect that the Swarajists have only to enter the councils to wrest swaraj from the hands of the British. The Liberals were

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1 In the division of Nagpur, the Swarajists captured the nine Hindu seats and the one Muslim seat allotted to the division. A Swarajist sympathiser also won the seat reserved for the University of Nagpur. In Berar the Swarajists won 12 of the 14 seats; and in the Hindi region 19 of the 23 seats. A Swarajist sympathiser also won the seat reserved for mining interests. In the Central Legislative Assembly the Swarajists won five of the six seats.
not properly organised and some leading lights in Nagpur scandalised the public by expressing their desire to vote for the Swarajists in preference to the nominees of their own party. 1

In fighting the elections, the Swarajists divided into three parties - one each for the Hindi region and the divisions of Nagpur and Berar - and conducted campaigns appropriate to the local situation in each part of the province. These campaigns revealed that the three parties held conflicting views as to the course of action to adopt once they entered the legislature. In the division of Nagpur, where the Swaraj party launched a heavy attack on the moderate politicians, some Swarajists favoured a policy of obstruction, and others a policy of responsive cooperation in the council. 2 In Berar, by contrast, most Swarajists supported the policy of responsive cooperation. 3 The main feature of the campaign there, however, was the conflict between the Brahman and non-Brahman Swarajists, on the one hand, and their non-Brahman opponents of the Satyashodhak Samaj, on the other. This was an anti-Brahman body, formed in the province of Bombay, that had been at work in the Marathi region since 1901. By 1923 the leaders of the Samaj had established a number of branches in

1 Hitavada, 12 December 1923, p.4; 19 December 1923, p.4.
3 Ibid., p.1; NAI, Indian Papers, no.41, 1923, pp.492-3, Prajapaksha (Akola), 7 October 1923.
Berar and had enrolled some thousands of members. The organisation was particularly active between 1922-3, and at the time of the elections staged a number of tamashas or plays attacking members of the Brahman and Marwari communities. The Satyashodhak Samaj, supported by the non-Brahman press of Berar, also attacked the middle class nationalists and urged non-Brahmans to vote for members of their own community rather than for Swarajists. The Swarajists countered this propaganda by holding lectures and meetings and by canvassing through the Congress Committees in the districts, towns and tahsils of Berar. Their campaign, too, received strong support from the nationalist press.

The campaign conducted by the Swarajists in the Hindi region differed from the campaigns of their Marathi colleagues in several important respects. In the first place, the Hindi campaign did not get under way until after the special session had taken place at Delhi,


3 NAI, Indian Papers, no.42, 1923, pp.503-4, Prajapaksha (Akola), 14 October 1923; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 13 October 1923; NAI, Home Poll, F-25, 1923, FR, First Half of November 1923, p.1.
mainly owing to continued conflicts between the Gandhians and the Swarajists. Following that session, however, Raghavendra Rao assumed leadership of the campaign, which, so far as most Swarajists were concerned, took its stand on the policy of obstruction. To ensure the success of the party, Rao enlisted the support of several well known moderate politicians, who had apparently shed their belief in cooperation with the government in favour of 'the aims and objects of the Swaraj party'. Rao made these aims and objects explicit in a meeting in Balaghat in October 1923, when he emphasised that non cooperation and civil disobedience still continued to be the bed rock of their (i.e. the Swarajists') faith....(They would) ignore the ephemereral advantages that maybe dyarchy yielded (and)...exert such pressure through the strength of the electorate as will bring the sovereign authority to terms and annihilate those institutions as instruments capable of evil in the hands of the bureaucracy.

III

Following the elections, Swarajists from all parts of the province launched a crippling attack on the government in the Legislative Council. They did so despite some tendencies to disunity within their own ranks. Between December 1923 and January 1924, the Swarajists from the Hindi region, Nagpur and Berar formed three separate

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2 See NAI, Indian Papers, no.41, 1923, p.493, Lokmitra (Chhindwara), 6 October 1923; NAI, Home Poll, F-25, 1923, FR, First Half of October 1923, p.1. One prominent moderate who joined the Swaraj party was Beohar Raghubir Sinha, a malguzar from Jabalpur.

3 Hitavada, 17 October 1923, p.6.
Council parties. The formation of these parties represented something more than nationalist tactics. Each party received its greatest support from the more affluent and educated sections of the population living in those three areas. In view of the linguistic and administrative divisions within the province, it was natural for voters in each area to consider that their interests were quite distinct from those of voters in other parts of the province. Obviously, voters and councillors alike felt that separate parties would best serve those interests. The Swarajist councillors from Berar led the way by forming the Swaraj party of Berar on 20 December 1923 under the leadership of Shripad Balwant Tambe, a Brahman pleader from Amravati. Early in January 1924, Swarajists from the division of Nagpur formed their party under the leadership of Dr Moonje. And on 17 January 1924 the Hindi Swarajists formed the Hindi Swaraj party and elected Raghavendra Rao as their leader in the Council. The electorate's pressure on the Swarajists to represent its interests was also reflected in the popularity of the stance of responsive cooperation, particularly among the Marathi Swarajists. By adopting this stance, the Swarajists could attack the government and at the same time assist it in developing the resources of the province. And under the reformed constitution,

1 Hitavada, 2 January 1924, p. 4.
2 Pioneer, 20 December 1923, p. 5. The party had two secretaries, W.J. Moharir and R.A. Kanitkar; and two whips, R.M. Deshmukh and D.K. Kane.
3 Ibid., 19 January 1924, p. 7.
opportunities for such development were considerable.

Before the Swarajists entered the legislature, Dr Moonje and Rao established a precarious unity between the three parties. The question of a common organisation and policy was one that exercised Moonje's mind soon after the elections. On 22 December 1923 he wrote:

The next most important thing that we have to decide is the policy and the line of conduct that we have to adopt in the council... We must be a well-organised party in the council. I am hopeful that we shall be able to discharge the unique responsibility that has fallen on our province in a way that will command the approval of our All-India Swaraj party and our voters.¹

Accordingly, Moonje sounded out the leaders of the other Swaraj parties and arranged meetings with their members. These meetings resulted in the formation on 14 January 1924 of a united Council Swaraj party under the leadership of Dr Moonje.² It was not Moonje, however, but Rao and the Hindi Swarajists who determined the policy to be adopted by the party in the Council. Following the meeting of Swarajist councillors on 14 January 1924, the following news item appeared in the Hitavada:

¹ NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 19, B.S. Moonje to Mr Golwelker, 22 December 1923.
² Ibid., Letter Pad 19, B.S. Moonje to S.B. Tambe, 26 December 1923; ibid., B.S. Moonje to Mr Kabeer, 26 December 1923; ibid., Circular, 31 December 1923; Pioneer, 17 January 1924, p.6.
As is well known, the Mahratta section of the Swaraj has no faith in obstruction. . . . It is an open secret that the members from the Hindi districts who are staunch wreckers, being in a majority, were able practically to coerce the members from the Mahratta districts including Berar into submission. 1

But despite Dr Moonje's submission to the Hindi majority, he made it clear that the policy of obstruction was merely on trial and was not to be regarded as a permanent measure. 2

In implementing the policy of obstruction, the Swaraj party retained its unity and at the same time compelled the Governor to suspend the reformed constitution. The Swarajist attack occurred between 15 January and 10 March 1924, and was directed at three targets - the ministers, government business and the budget for 1924-25. The Swarajists opened their attack on the ministerships shortly after the elections, when the Governor, Sir Frank Sly, invited Dr Moonje to form a ministry. Moonje refused the offer on the grounds that to accept would be 'contrary to the declared policy of the party'. 3 In so doing, he compelled Sly to offer the ministerships to a moderate politician, S.M. Chitnavis, who was reluctant to accept the post, and to

1 Hitavada, 7 May 1924, p.8.
2 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 19, Circular, 31 December 1923.
Syed Hifazat Ali, a virtually unknown Muslim member of the Council. The Swarajists were angered by the appointment of ministers who did not command the support of the legislature, their anger, no doubt, heightened by the fact that they were themselves unable to accept office. Accordingly, they launched a savage attack on the legislation which the government brought before the House on 16 January 1924. Two days later, Raghavendra Rao moved a vote of no confidence in the ministers. In the course of his speech Rao asserted the Swarajists' right to dismiss the two ministers:

By virtue of our pledge, we may not accept the office, but...no one I hope can maintain that it takes away our constitutional right of exercising our legitimate vote of dismissing any person who on our behalf and in our name wants to exercise the right of governing the transferred subjects....We desire to tell them (i.e. the government) in unmistakeable terms that we do not and possibly cannot give our sanction to it, so far as it rests on our responsibility.2

The council accepted the motion by a huge majority and the ministers resigned. In what could hardly be described as a conciliatory move, Sir Frank Sly persuaded the ministers to withdraw their resignations and remain in office.3 This infuriated the Swarajists all the more, and they retaliated by forcing Sly to suspend the reformed constitution. The Swarajist counter-attack had

1 CPLC, vol.1, no.2, 16 January 1924, pp.7-27; ibid., vol.1, no.4, 18 January 1924, pp.70-5.
2 Ibid., pp.73-4.
3 PP, 1924-5, x, cmd.2632, p.318.
all the air of a carefully planned campaign. First they defeated four bills introduced by the government; then they rejected the supplementary budget demands; reduced the demand for the ministers' salaries; and finally threw out the demands for all grants over which the council exercised control. Following this onslaught the ministers tendered their resignations to the Governor and the latter prorogued the council. In the circumstances, there was little that Sly could do but accept defeat. Accordingly, he restored as many of the rejected grants as possible, certified the existence of an emergency, and assumed responsibility for the ministers' portfolios.

IV

Between 1925-6, the Swarajists' unity collapsed as the members of the three Swaraj parties vied with each other to form a ministry. The most insistent pressure to do so came from the Swarajists of Berar. There were many reasons for this. The leaders of Berar believed that in taking office they could more effectively weaken the foundations of British rule and hasten the grant of self government to India. As the Prajapaksha of Akola remarked on 4 January 1925

1 CPLC, vol.2, no.1, 4 March 1924, pp.7-11; ibid., vol.2, no.3, 6 March 1924, pp.127-130; ibid., vol.2, no.5, 8 March 1924, pp.245-252.

The present attitude of the Swarajists has... given a free licence to the bureaucracy to act in any way it chooses. This can be stopped if the Berar Swaraj party decides to change its present tactics. It will do well to remember that if, under the influence of the Swarajists of other provinces, it fails to alter its present policy at this juncture, it will be doing a distinct disservice to the province. It ought not to forget the salutary teachings of the late Lokamanya. ¹

However, the Swarajists of Berar were not merely ideological nationalists. They also represented the interests of landholders, professional people, and the urban middle classes. The problems of Berar were their problems, and they realised that they could deal with those problems much better by accepting office than by remaining in opposition. Foremost among the problems affecting Berar was the drain of its revenues into the Central Provinces. This drain directly affected the Swarajists, for as landholders they contributed large sums of revenue to the provincial government. Again, although the government had tried to implement the findings of the Sim Committee, the formula for apportioning the divisible expenditure between the Central Provinces and Berar had not functioned as planned. Instead of receiving 40 per cent of such expenditure in 1924-25, Berar received only 27 per cent. ² The failure of the government to observe the Sim ratio and the drain of revenue into the Central Provinces were a cause of deep.

¹ NAI, Indian Papers, no.2, 1925, pp.19-20, Prajapaksha (Akola), 4 January 1925.
² CPLC, vol.1, no.1, 4 March 1926, pp.3-4.
resentment among the Swarajists of Berar. No less a person than S.B. Tambe, the leader of the Berar Swaraj party, voiced this resentment in the legislature—and he voiced it during the Swarajist attack on the budget in March 1924. On 7 March Tambe declared that

The affairs of Berar...are not in proper hands ....Since the amalgamation of the provinces, what is the state of affairs? The revenues of Berar have been spent for the ornamentation of the Central Provinces, I might say....The revenues of Berar were spent on so many government buildings. The buildings in Nagpur and other parts of the province are a proof of that. I believe, if you look at the actual figure spent on buildings, it would come to nearly three crores of rupees, and all that money was out of Berar revenues.1

There were other reasons, too, why the Swarajists of Berar desired to accept office. They realised that to do so would enable them to influence the decisions of the government on the question of the land settlement. In 1924 the government decided to revise the land settlement in Berar by enhancing the revenues and reducing the duration of the settlement. This decision threatened the Swarajists' interests in land, besides compelling them to contribute further to the drain of revenue to the Central Provinces, and it thus provided a good reason why they should become part of the government

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1 CPLC, vol.2, no.4, 7 March 1924, pp.199-200.
itself.\(^1\) The Swarajists of Berar must also have realised that participation in the government would help them to withstand the opposition of the non-Brahmans, and provide some guarantee against a surprise restoration of Berar to the Nizam.\(^2\)

The Swarajists of Berar were not the only contenders for office during 1925. So also were the members of the Swaraj party of the division of Nagpur. These men were fervent nationalists, but like their counterparts in Berar, they, too, were under pressure to defend local interests. Tilak's policy of responsive cooperation provided them with the means to do so. It also provided them with the means of attacking the government. Consequently it was to this policy that many of the Swarajists from Nagpur turned when they saw that obstruction had failed to advance the cause of self government, and that the government was likely to withdraw the reformed constitution from the Central Provinces.\(^3\) It was to responsive cooperation, too, that they turned when their electors demanded that they work

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1 See NAI, Indian Papers, no.50, 1924, pp.577-8, Prajapakshna (Akola), 7 December 1924; ibid., no.51, 1924, p.591, Swatantra Hindusthan (Amravati), 13 December 1924; CPLC, vol.1, no.5, 7 March 1925, p.177; ibid., vol.1, no.12, 19 March 1925, pp.623-43.

2 For references to these problems see NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 22 April 1924; Hitavada, 13 February 1924, p.4; 21 May 1924, p.3; 30 July 1924, p.4; 13 August 1924, p.2.

3 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 20, B.S. Moonje to M. Nehru, 14 March 1924.
the constitution and accept office. As Dr Moonje wrote in August 1924

The governor appears to have decided to convene no more meetings of the council until...March (1925)...He does not propose to appoint any ministers now. We are thus practically shut out of the council government. The people have begun to ask us questions as to what we propose doing....Unless we find out a way,...we shall render ourselves liable to public criticism...If the people find that other provincial councils are functioning and it is only the CP council...which is not functioning..., people will begin to be disaffected towards us and will attribute it to our lack of resourcefulness in our 1 statesmanship and tactical manoeuvring.

The opposition of the electorate was not an academic question to Dr Moonje, for during 1924 the Swarajists lost heavily at the elections to local bodies in the division of Nagpur. The non-Brahmans were in part responsible for these results.2

Pressure from the electorate was also the main reason why Raghavendra Rao and Ravi Shankar Shukla led the Hindi Swaraj party in the quest for office. Rumours that the two leaders favoured the formation of a ministry appeared in the press during 1924, and by March 1925 both men were openly committed to that position.3 They took

1 NLI, Letter Pad 24, B.S. Moonje to ______, 2 August 1924.
3 Hitavada, 9 January 1924, p.4; 27 August 1924, p.5; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 1, 4 July 1926.
this stand on the cries of the Hindi electorate for public works. During the cold weather of 1925 Sir Montagu Butler, the new Governor of the province and a man determined to relieve the Central Provinces of the charge of backwardness, toured the northern districts of the Hindi region. He found there a great clamour for development, as he told the Council in 1926:

In the last 20 years, fortune had put money into the cotton districts... (but) the wheat tracts of the north had had to bear the full brunt of the financial stringency.... In each of these districts I found much to be done and little to do it with. .... Everywhere was the same talk of money needed; money for schools, money for roads, money for everything. ¹

Despite these demands, it was not the Hindi Swarajists but their colleagues from Berar who led the moves to form a ministry. In 1925 the latter twice attempted to take office, but on each occasion failed to do so. This was mainly due to the fact that Swarajists from the division of Nagpur and the Hindi region also desired to form a ministry. It was also apparent that Sir Montagu Butler preferred to form a ministry supported by Swarajists from the Central Provinces, rather than one formed by Swarajists from Berar. Sir Frank Sly, whose term as Governor did not expire until 25 January 1925, opened the way for the Swarajists of Berar to form a ministry by declaring on 11 January that he intended giving the council another opportunity to work the

¹ CPLC, vol. 1, no. 1, 4 March 1926, p. 5.
constitution.\(^1\) Despite an attempt by Motilal Nehru to thwart the formation of a ministry, the Swarajists of Berar made plain their determination to take office. In March 1925 they secured seats on a number of government committees and Tambe was elected President of the legislature. During March, too,\(^2\) they announced that they intended to form a government. At this, Swarajists from the Central Provinces closed ranks against the members from Berar, possibly because they sensed some threat to their interests, and poured 'contempt and ridicule' on them.\(^3\) This made the Beraris more determined than ever, and they issued an ultimatum declaring that they would not reject the budget as they had done in 1924. They further declared that they intended to sponsor either a Swarajist or a non-Swarajist ministry.\(^4\) Following this declaration, B.G. Khaparde, who had become leader of the Berar Swaraj party after Tambe's election as President of the Council, nominated two members of the party as prospective ministers.\(^5\) Then in the Council on 12 March 1925 the Berar Swaraj party voted with the government on the first demand of the budget for 1925–26, and prepared to vote

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4. Ibid., p.7.
5. One of the nominees was Ramrao Deshmukh of Amravati.
Despite these moves, however, the Swarajists of Berar failed to form a ministry. They could not rely on support from the Central Provinces, and the new Governor, Sir Montagu Butler, would not guarantee, even if the Beraris did vote the salaries, that he would choose his ministers from Berar. Accordingly, the Swarajists from Berar dropped their plan to form a ministry. As the *Hitavada* saw the situation:

In a moment of weakness they (i.e. Swarajists of Berar) committed a serious blunder on that fatal day on which the ministers’ salary was to be voted upon. Council was to reassemble at 3 p.m. Shortly before 3, some shrewd fellow whispered into the ears of some of the...Beraris, played upon their distrust of the government and induced one of them to go and ask government to give a pledge that two particular individuals would be appointed ministers before the voting of the demand. His Excellency, the Governor as new could not be expected to give a pledge and did not know the names of those mentioned.... The poison in the whisper had its effect (and)...suspicion and personal interests triumphed.

And with Butler’s refusal to guarantee that his ministers would come from Berar, the Swarajists of Berar joined their colleagues from the Central Provinces in reducing

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3 Ibid., p.7. Rumour had it that the Home Member, Sir M.V. Joshi, who was also from Berar, played a leading part in advising the Governor against accepting Deshmukh.
Butler's hesitation on the ministry did not extend to the Swarajists from the Central Provinces, and he attempted to form a government with their support. His attempt to do so met the same fate as the attempt by the Swarajists of Berar. Early in January 1925 Dr Moonje disclosed his plans to form a ministry 'if an occasion arises'. Writing to a friend, he said that

I am not...to be one of the two ministers. In my mind I have fixed the persons - one of the two ministers shall be Mr Row, a non Brahmin from CP Hindusthani and another Mr Deshmukh Barrister a non Brahmin or Mr Tambe a Brahmin from Berar. So you see my insisting upon acceptance of ministerships is inspired purely by considerations of the interests of the party in my province.

A small group of Swarajists from the division of Nagpur and the Hindi region, however, prevented Dr Moonje and Butler from forming a ministry. They differed on their grounds for so doing. The Swarajists from Nagpur supported the policy of obstruction and were strongly opposed to any move by Dr Moonje to form a government. Most of the Hindi Swarajists, by contrast, desired to form a government, but internal quarrels as to who should

1 CPLC, vol.1, no.7, 13 March 1925, pp.296-313.
2 Chitnavis MS, Sir M. Butler to Sir G.M. Chitnavis, 11 March 1925.
3 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 27, B.S. Moonje to Mr Reddy, 8 January 1925.
4 Hitavada, 8 April 1925, p.3.
constitute the ministry prevented them from supporting Dr Moonje. Rao objected to a ministry consisting of himself and Deshmukh' on the ground that such a combination might not be sufficiently homogeneous.' He suggested in place of Deshmukh Shyam Sunder Bhargava, an influential landlord from Jabalpur.\(^1\) Shukla, however, resented being excluded from the ministry and persuaded a number of Hindi Swarajists to withdraw their support from Rao.\(^2\) The combined opposition of Swarajists from Nagpur, Chhattisgarh and Berar left Moonje and Rao with insufficient numbers to form a ministry. Thus although Butler desired to select ministers from the Central Provinces and actually called Rao and Moonje to Government House for discussions on the subject, the two leaders were unable to form a ministry.\(^3\)

As a result, Butler turned to Berar to help him launch the reformed constitution in the Central Provinces. This time he was successful. Butler took this step because the Swarajists of Berar still desired to take office, in spite of their failure to do so in March 1925. They demonstrated this in the Council by supporting the government in divisions on the budget.\(^4\) Outside the House, too, the Swarajists publicly advocated

\(^1\) Hitavada, 8 April 1925, p.3; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary I, 4 July 1926.
\(^2\) Hitavada, 8 April 1925, p.3; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary I, 4 July 1926.
\(^3\) Chitnavis MS, Sir M. Butler to Sir G.M. Chitnavis, 11 March 1925; CPLC, vol.1, no.7, 13 March 1925, p.295.
\(^4\) Ibid., vol.1, no.10, 17 March 1925, pp.479-83.
responsive cooperation as being 'in the interests of Berar'. The Swarajists' attempt to revive responsive cooperation received the assistance of no less a person than G.S. Khaparde, who during June 1925 vowed 'to get responsive cooperation back, and until it was accomplished, ... not (to) retire' from politics. And following discussions that Khaparde had with the followers of Tilak in Poona on 3 August 1925, this vow seemed to be on the verge of fulfilment:

I returned to the wada where I dined in company with Jagganath Maharaj, Tatyasaheb Kelkar, Baburao Gokhale, Dhondo Baba, Ketkar and others. We were all in a very pleased mood and sat talking long. The responsive cooperation party of Lok Tilak is revived and may function soon.

Sir Montagu Butler responded to these statements and events with a series of skilful moves that brought the former Swarajist leader S.B. Tambe into the executive council of the Central Provinces as Home Member. The government first made a tempting financial offer to Berar. It was able to do so not only because the provincial finances were in a sound condition, but because in 1925 the Government of India had given the Central Provinces a non-recurring grant of Rs. 9 lakhs. Butler was aware

1 NAI, Indian Papers, no. 31, 1925, p. 406, Swatantra Hindusthan (Amravati), 25 July 1925.
2 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 14 June 1925.
3 Ibid., 3 August 1925.
of the resentment in Berar over the government's failure to implement the Sim ratio and the Swarajists' failure to form a ministry. Accordingly, he decided to use the grant to reconcile Berar with the government. In July 1925 he set out on a tour of Berar to find out on the spot, if really there was scope for a big programme of work. Given certain adjustments, it seemed clear that money, at least to make up most of Berar's deficiency under the (Sim) settlement, would be forthcoming.\(^1\)

Butler apparently found sufficient scope for expenditure in Berar, for on his return he decided to earmark two thirds of the non-recurring grant for the territory.\(^2\) To ensure that the Swarajists of Berar would respond favourably to this decision, Butler also used his tour to win the confidence of the people. During the tour, Butler mixed freely with the leading citizens of Berar, his manner contrasting strongly with the more formal style of his predecessor, Sir Frank Sly, who had a reputation for being a 'conservative by temperament and a bureaucrat by life-long training.'\(^3\) Butler's tour was a great success, for where Sly had left resentment and suspicion, Butler created sympathy and good-will.\(^4\)

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1. GPLC, vol.1, no.1, 4 March 1926, pp.3-4.
2. Ibid., vol.2, no.1, 3 August 1925, pp.173-81.
3. NAI, Indian Papers, no.4, 1925, pp.42-3, Hitavada (Nagpur), 21 January 1925.
4. NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 27 November 1924; ibid., 11 December 1924. See also Hitavada, 25 March 1925, p.9.
Butler's success was clearly evident in the relationship he developed with G.S. Khaparde, as portrayed by the latter in his diary. Two of Khaparde's entries were noteworthy in this respect:

15 July - I got early through things that I may visit His Excellency the Governor.... I had my interview.... He was very glad to see me and sat talking for over fifteen minutes.... We talked of the Berar land revenue bill which is at present on the anvil. He said he would have a talk with me before settling about it finally.

16 July - The first thing to come up was an invitation to dinner from the Governor. I accepted it of course.... I sat to the right of HE (and).... after the ladies retired, Sir Montagu Butler asked me to sit near him. He asked what the Swarajists would do.... (and) said that he would like to see me at Nagpur.... I agreed to call in on him there.¹

On his return to Nagpur, Butler offered the Swarajists of Berar an opportunity to form a ministry. On 3 August 1925 he came in person to the council to inform members that he intended to 'invite the leaders of the dominant party amongst you to confer with me during the next few days on the question of forming a ministry'.² This conference, however, failed to produce a ministry. Two Swarajist leaders - B.G. Khaparde of Berar, and Rao from the Hindi districts - expressed interest in Butler's offer. Dr Moonje tried to prevent

¹ NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 15 July 1925; ibid., 16 July 1925.
² CPLC, vol.2, no.1, 3 August 1925, p.6.
the two leaders from combining by opposing any cooperation with the government until Britain granted a further instalment of home rule to India. Rao was not of this opinion and offered to form a ministry with Berar. The Swarajists of Berar, however, refused to take Rao's offer seriously. According to the Hitavada

the Hindi Swarajists have practically given the Berar group a blank cheque in the matter of accepting office. The Berar group (however) did not feel certain about the bonafides of the proferred help and naturally refused to ride for a fall.2

In addition, some Swarajists from Berar opposed Khaparde's leadership of the party and this further complicated the situation.3 As a result, Rao was forced back into Dr Moonje's arms, and when the two leaders, along with B.G. Khaparde, met Butler on 6-7 August 1925 at Government House, they declined to accept office. This compelled Khaparde to abandon his plans to form a ministry and once again it appeared as if Butler would have to admit failure.4

Butler, however, refused to let the matter rest there, and within two months announced the appointment of Tambe, a former leader of the Berar Swaraj party as

1 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 31, B.S. Moonje to Mr Prakasham, 16 August 1925; ibid., Letter Pad 33, B.S. Moonje to Mr Sadanand, 12 June 1925.
2 Hitavada, 9 August 1925, p.6.
3 Ibid., 13 August 1925, p.4.
Home Member. During October 1925 the Home membership, hitherto occupied by Sir Moropant Joshi, fell vacant. Butler saw his chance to elicit nationalist participation in the Reforms and at the same time heal the divisions in the political life of the province. Accordingly he offered the post to Tambe, who immediately accepted and so became the first follower of Tilak in western India to practice responsive cooperation as a member of a provincial government. In all probability Tambe accepted the post with the support of his Swarajist colleagues, who met him at Khaparade wada in Amravati on 2 October, and who six days later were present at the hill station of Pachmarhi where Tambe formally accepted Butler's offer. On 17 December 1925, Tambe was formally sworn in as Home Member at Government House in Nagpur.

V

Tambe's acceptance of the Home Membership completely altered the lines of political division in the Central Provinces and Berar. Within a year, all politicians - moderate and nationalist - had divided into two groups: one group supported the Congress policy of obstruction

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1 Views of Local Governments on the working of the Reforms, 1927, op.cit., p.467.
2 NAI, Khaparade MS, Diary, 2 October 1925; ibid., 9 October 1925.
3 Pioneer, 19 December 1925, p.3.
in the council and the other the policy of responsive cooperation with the government. Each group thus had a different platform on which to appeal to the electorate. The Congress appealed to the people on the basis of its opposition to the government. Those supporting responsive cooperation made the same appeal, but declared that they would advance the interests of the people at the same time. Responsive cooperation thus had a particular appeal for the urban middle classes. For, they realised that, were it successful, it would enable them to participate in government and promote their interests and those of the districts in which they lived.

Following Tambe's acceptance of office, the Swarajists of Berar moved to form a Responsive Cooperation party to attack the government and advance the interests of Berar. In so doing, they hoped to persuade the Congress to recognise responsive cooperation. The nationalists of Berar responded favourably to Tambe's action. Among the nationalist newspapers, Udaya merely chided Tambe for not resigning from the Swaraj party before accepting office; while Prajapaksha 'heartily congratulate(d)' him and had 'no hesitation in predicting that his tenure of office will always be sympathetic towards the popular party'.¹ Of the nationalist leaders,

¹ NAI, Indian Papers, no.42, 1925, p.580, Udaya (Amravati), 13 October 1925; ibid., p.582, Prajapaksha (Akola), 13 October 1925.
too, G.S. Khaparde was 'disposed to overlook (the incident)...with a mild disclaimer'; while his son B.G. Khaparde and other Swarajists wrote to Tambe congratulating him on his acceptance of Butler's offer.\(^1\)

The Swarajists of Berar followed these expressions of opinion with bolder postures. On 25 October 1925 the executive of the Berar Swaraj party supported responsive cooperation. And in December Aney and Deshmukh resigned from their positions in the Swaraj party.\(^2\) These events, however, produced no change in the policy of the All-India Swaraj party, which by the end of 1925 was fully merged with the Congress. This was evident from the resolutions passed at the annual session of the Indian National Congress in Kanpur in December. These resolutions reiterated the faith of the Congress in civil disobedience and obstruction, and directed the Swarajists to walk out of the councils in March 1926, if by that time the government had not replied to their demand for self government for India. The Swarajists of Berar thus realised that they had failed to change the policy of the Congress. As a result at Yeotmal on 10 January 1926 they decided to abolish the Berar Swaraj party by resigning from it en masse.\(^3\) Shortly afterwards many Swarajists

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\(^1\) NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 18 October 1925; Hitavada, 29 October 1925, p.4.


\(^3\) Pioneer, 13 January 1926, p.7; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 11 January 1926.
from Berar resigned their seats in the Council and contested by-elections on a platform of responsive cooperation. All members were successful. As a result, they warmly supported a proposal to form a Responsive Cooperation party in western India, and agreed to meet at Akola in February 1926 for that purpose.

In the division of Nagpur, the position was somewhat different. There Tambe's action led to a division of the nationalists into two groups: one, led by Dr Moonje, which supported responsive cooperation; and another which remained loyal to the Congress and was led by a former lieutenant of Moonje's, Moreshwar Abhyanker. A Maharashtrian Brahman, Abhyanker was born in 1886 into a professional and landed family at Dhanodi Bahadur in the district of Wardha. In 1904, after an indifferent record at primary and secondary school, Abhyanker went to England to study law. Five years later, he was called to the Bar, and he returned to India to commence practice in Nagpur. There he came under the influence of Dr Moonje and joined the Nationalist party of Lokamanya Tilak. In 1916 Abhyanker, then an eminent lawyer, accepted Tilak as his 'political guru' and joined the Home Rule League. Like many of the staunch followers of the Lokamanya, Abhyanker vigorously opposed Gandhi and the resolution on non-cooperation at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in 1920. Again, although he suspended practice

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1 NAI, Indian Papers, no. 9, 1926, p. 99, Prajapaksha (Akola), 28 February 1926.
M.V. Abhyanker
in 1921, he did so unwillingly and 'continually tried to modify the scheme'. During 1922 Abhyanker continued to oppose Gandhi, and after the annual session of the Congress at Gaya joined the Swarajya party. In 1924, following a successful election campaign, he took his seat in the Central Legislative Assembly as the Swarajist member for the division of Nagpur.

Abhyanker's election to the Assembly reflected a rivalry with Moonje that reached a climax in 1925 when Tambe joined the government. This rivalry first became manifest when each desired to represent Nagpur in the Central Legislative Assembly. The central executive of the Congress settled the matter by choosing Abhyanker, a decision which seemed to indicate that it regarded Abhyanker and not Moonje as its leading representative in the city, and which probably further exacerbated relations between the two men. The personalities of the two leaders also divided them - Dr Moonje, virile and aggressive; and Abhyanker, proud and commanding, unwilling to act as a subordinate to Dr Moonje. Their experience as Swarajists widened the rift. Dr Moonje supported responsive cooperation; while Abhyanker, possibly under the influence of Motilal Nehru in the Assembly, strongly favoured the policy of obstruction. Thus, shortly after

2 Abhyanker, op. cit., p.218.
3 See Hitavada, 6 January 1934, p.7.
Tambe joined government in 1925, Khaparde noted that

Gokhale thinks that Abhyanker of Nagpur has become an out and out Gandhyite and will give us a good deal of trouble. He is an admirer of Pandit Motilal Nehru and dead against Responsive cooperation of Tilak.

Khaparde's prognosis proved correct. In the storm that followed Tambe's acceptance of office, Abhyanker went on the 'war path', as Moonje described it, 'to kill the poison left as legacy by...the great Lokamanya'. In doing so, Abhyanker condemned not only Tambe, but also Dr Moonje for tacitly supporting Tambe's act of cooperation with the government.  

Following the Congress at Kanpur in 1925 the estrangement between Abhyanker and Moonje and their respective followers became complete. Early in 1926 Dr Moonje withdrew from the Swaraj party and resigned the seat of Nagpur in the Legislative Council. A by-election for the seat followed almost immediately, and both the Congress and the responsive cooperators fielded candidates. Abhyanker and Moonje clashed violently, but as 'Abhyanker was swimming on the high tide of Congress prestige' and had the assistance of 'Pandit Motilal...non Brahmins and even the Muhammadans', the

1 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 24 November 1925.
2 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 34, B.S. Moonje to Narsopant, 17 November 1925.
3 Abhyanker, op. cit., p.246.
4 Hitavada, 14 January 1926, p.3; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary I, 13 January 1926.
Congress won the seat. Following the victory Abhyanker held 'congratulatory meetings' and denounced Moonje as 'dishonest and a traitor to the Congress', but the latter was already on his way to Akola to participate in the formation of the Responsive Cooperation party.

The formation of the Responsive Cooperation party at Akola on 14-15 February 1926 sealed the division between the Responsivists, on the one hand, and the Swarajists or Congressmen, on the other. Nationalists from three main areas came to Akola. These were the former Swarajists from Nagpur led by Dr Moonje; those from Berar under B.G. Khaparde; and those from the province of Bombay under the leadership of N.C Kelkar and M.R. Jayaker, a leading lawyer in Bombay city. As a result of their discussions, the nationalists agreed to set up a Responsive Cooperation party with provision for separate branches in the areas represented at the conference. The policy of responsive cooperation figured prominently in the manifesto of the new party drawn up at Akola. The manifesto declared:

1 NLI, Moonje MS, Diary I, 2-13(?) February 1926. The Congress candidate N.R. Udhoji polled 1,324 votes; and the Responsivist B.S. Niyogi 1,133. Only 50 per cent of the electorate voted.

2 Ibid., 16 February 1926.

3 The President of the Responsive Cooperation party was M.R. Jayaker; the Vice-president J. Baptista; General Secretary D.V. Gokhale; and as Secretaries of the division of Nagpur, Berar, and Maharashtra respectively Dr M.R. Cholkar, B.G. Khaparde, and L.B. Bhopatkar.
We believe that the best course under the present circumstances is that of Responsive Cooperation which means working the Reforms, unsatisfactory, disappointing and inadequate as they are, for all they are worth; and using the same for accelerating the grant of full responsible government and also for creating in the meanwhile opportunities for the people for advancing their interests and strengthening their power and resistance to injustice and misrule.¹

Following the conference, the Responsivists established branches of the party in the Marathi region of the Central Provinces and Berar. Discussion between Motilal Nehru and the Responsivists followed in April 1926 on the question of an alliance between the new party and the Congress. These discussions failed, however, and the Responsivists completed their break with the Congress by joining the National party, newly formed by Malaviya to unite all politicians who supported responsive cooperation.²

Tambe's acceptance of office also paved the way for the creation of two opposing nationalist parties in the Hindi region. These were the Indian National Congress under Seth Govind Das, and the Independent Congress 'party'*.  

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¹ Indian Review, 1926, vol.27, no.4, p.273.  
² Ibid., 1926, vol.27, no.4, p.265.  
* The Independent Congress 'party' was the first of many similar groups which were not parties in the usual sense. These 'parties' were temporary phenomena, formed either before an election to defeat an opposing group, or after an election to give them power to manoeuvre in the legislature. They had no independent existence outside the legislature. Such 'parties' will hereafter be distinguished from the more traditional parties such as the Congress or the Responsive Cooperation party by the use of inverted commas.
led by Raghavendra Rao. The former appealed to the people on the policy of obstruction in the Council; and the latter on its opposition to the government and promotion of regional interests. Rao's 'party' had a particular appeal for the urban middle classes of the Hindi region, for he formed it at a time when the tide of resentment against the government and the Marathi region for neglecting the Hindi region was running high. This resentment mounted steadily between 1921-6, and was articulated through public meetings, debates in the legislature and the columns of the Hindi press. The resentment sprang from the strong belief of many Hindi leaders that

the neglect of the Hindi districts commenced about the beginning of Sir Frank Sly's government and at the end of it attained full bloom....As the Maratha Brahmans were holding the ropes, they were given the plums and prunes of office; and the needs of all the areas where the Maratha element predominated received very courteous treatment....The Hindi-speaking areas were sent to the devil....No attempt was paid to the development of industries; nothing was done for the expansion of primary education and no steps were taken to lay out good roads to afford means of communication, and no new schools or colleges were established in the north to give higher and secondary education.

1 Hitavada, 22 July 1925, p.6.
3 NAI, Indian Papers, no.3, 1926, pp.37-8, Lokmitra (Chhindwara), 16 January 1926; ibid., no.4, 1926, pp.49-50, Lokmitra (Chhindwara), 23 January 1926.
Resentment increased still further in August 1925 when Swarajists from the divisions of Nagpur and Berar joined together to prevent Rao from forming a ministry. And when Sir Montagu Butler appointed Tambe, a Marathi, as Home Member in October the leaders of the region exploded:

They find to their great amazement and regret that appointment of Home Member, instead of going to Hindi districts has again gone to the wilds of Berar.... It is not understood why Berar is always given special prominence in the selection of an executive councillor.... The people of the Central Provinces are entitled to say that they refuse to be governed by a cabinet which consists of people who are incompetent and who have no knowledge of the province.

Accordingly, some Hindi leaders demanded that the region be separated from Berar and join the United Provinces to 'gain a hearing'.

While this tempest was at its height, Butler tried hard to link the Hindi region with the government. In so doing he took a somewhat different line from Sir Frank Sly. There were those who believed that

Sir Frank cherished the idea that the Marathi Brahmins were far more politically-minded than the people of the Hindi-speaking districts; and that there would be less political trouble if the Marathas were placated in one form or other.

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1 CPLC, vol.2, no.5, 8 August 1925, pp.467-514.
2 Hitavada, 22 October 1925, p.6.
3 Ibid., p.4; 29 October 1925, p.7.
4 NAI, Indian Papers, no.4, 1926, pp.49-50, Lokmitra (Chhindwara), 23 January 1926.
For Butler, however, the work of a Governor involved more than the maintenance of law and order. During his term of office he attempted to associate the important leaders, groups and areas of the province with the work of government. In so doing he stabilised political life in the Central Provinces and Berar. He also persuaded nationalists to work the reformed constitution, and thus helped the province to pass from control by British officials to a state of readiness for provincial autonomy under Indian rule.\(^1\) Butler's choice of Tambe as Home Member was the first step in the implementation of this policy. So far as the Hindi region was concerned, Butler initiated this policy following the appointment of Tambe. Between December 1925 and January 1926 he toured the region, investigating its problems and meeting its leaders. Butler found the region badly in need of public works, and on his return set to work to see what could be done to ease the situation.\(^2\) Finding that the finances of the province were sound enough to give Berar her share under the Sim ratio, Butler decided to withdraw the non-recurring grant from Berar and allocate it completely to the Central Provinces. Accordingly, on 4 March 1926 he came to the council to announce the re-allocation of the grant.\(^3\) At the same time Butler arranged to send the grant for the ministers' salaries


\(^2\) See p.139.

\(^3\) CPLC, vol.1, no.1, 4 March 1926, pp.5-6
to the council for the third time. He did so with an eye on the Hindi Swarajists, many of whom were reported to be 'wavering (and)...looking for a suitable opportunity to repudiate their allegiance to the party'.

The decision of the Congress that the Swarajists should leave the councils, however, temporarily thwarted Butler's plan to bring the Hindi leaders into the government. As the Government of India had not responded to the Swarajists' demand for self government, the All-India Congress Committee ordered Swarajists to leave the legislatures in all provinces. Rao, who had been elected leader of the council Swaraj party in the Council after Dr Moonje resigned the post, received his order on 8 March 1926. At first he refused to obey the order, but declining support in the legislature compelled him to lead the Swarajists from the council chamber. Before he did so, the Swaraj party rejected the grant for the ministers' salaries and thus wrecked the Marathi Responsivists' chances of forming a ministry. With the salaries rejected and more than half the members absent from the council, there was little that Butler could do but prorogue the legislature and take over the administration of the transferred subjects.

1 NAI, Indian Papers, no.15, 1926, p.156, Lokmitra (Chhindwara), 10 April 1926.
2 Pioneer, 10 March 1926, p.7.
3 Ibid., p.7; CPLC, vol.1, No.5, 9 March 1926, pp.266-88.
4 Hitavada, 26 April 1926, p.7.
Within three months Rao had responded to Butler's initiatives by forming the Independent Congress 'party' in the Hindi region. The membership of the 'party' comprised those Swarajists who desired to accept office in the government hoping thereby to advance self government and promote the interests of the Hindi region. The Hindi Swaraj party had long been divided on the issue of accepting office. In 1926 the differences between the Swarajists who favoured obstruction and those who supported responsive cooperation came to a head over the choice of candidates to represent the Swaraj party at the forthcoming elections to the legislature. The Provincial Congress Committee, which was in the hands of the obstructionists, opposed the nominees of Rao. Accordingly, in July 1926 Rao resigned from the Swaraj party and formed the Independent Congress 'party'. The programme of the new 'party' was similar to that of the Responsive Cooperation party of the Marathi region. As Rao said,

We...opine that the present political situation in the country warrants a modification of the programme which Congress chalked out at Cawnpore to secure more effective coordination of opinion in this province....The policy of obstruction... should be pursued having regard to the verdict of electorate throughout the country....(We) are

1 Views of Local Governments on the Working of the Reforms, 1927, op. cit., p.467; NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 29, B.S. Moonje to M. Nehru, 7 April 1925.
2 Hitavada, 9 May 1926, pp.6, 7; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 1, 12 July 1926.
3 Pioneer, 4 August 1926, p.6.
of opinion that unless and until Congressmen are returned in a majority in two of the major provinces, the Central Provinces alone should not be harnessed to an obstructive programme.\(^1\)

And on this statement, Rao went to the electorate.

VI

Voters in the Marathi region behaved somewhat differently from those in the Hindi region at the elections to the provincial legislature in November 1926. In the Marathi region the voters strongly favoured the nationalist programme of the Responsive Cooperation parties. In the Hindi region they showed a preference for the programme of the Indian National Congress. The rival nationalist parties in the Marathi region began their election campaigns in June. In the division of Nagpur the Congress and the Responsive Cooperation party battled with each other to win the support of the electorate. The leaders of the rival parties were Abhyanker for the Congress and Moonje for the Responsive Cooperation party, and both fought a vigorous campaign in which neither asked nor received any quarter. The following report illustrates the vigour with which the two leaders fought the campaign:

Dr Moonje and Abhyanker are the two dominant figures... On one occasion their coming together at the same meeting was very dramatic. Dr Moonje and his supporters had just addressed a gathering and warned against Abhyanker who was expected to

\(^1\)Pioneer, 4 August 1926, p.6.
come in a couple of days, when lo and behold Mr Abhyanker was there, having torn his way down by a motor car from a very long distance. . . . Jumping up on the platform he challenged the statements of his rival party's speaker and encouraged by the audience, which always enjoys sensational theatricalities, he harangued the Responsivists down. The meeting resumed the following day.¹

Despite Abhyanker's energy and bitter condemnation of the Reforms, the electors of the division of Nagpur voted strongly for the Responsive Cooperation party. This was due to the advantages which Dr Moonje had over his opponents in the Congress. It was Moonje and not Abhyanker, for instance, who inherited the 'cream of the Swaraj party and...the latter's splendid organisation'.² It was Moonje, too, who controlled the Provincial Congress Committee and who used the body to run the elections for the benefit of his own party.³ Moonje also exploited the differences between the 'thoroughly irrational' policy of obstruction and the more active policy of responsive cooperation - the policy 'of the Congress

¹ Hitavada, 24 October 1926, p.7.
² Ibid., 3 October 1926, p.5.
³ Ibid., 31 January 1926, p.6; 31 October 1926, p.5; See NML, AICC, G-57 (ii), 1926, A. Rangaswami Iyengar to M. Nehru; AICC, G-57 (iii), 1926, M.V. Abhyanker to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 2 July 1926; ibid., Matters on Agenda of Working Committee, 4 July 1926; ibid., A. Rangaswami Iyengar to J. Nehru, 14 July 1926; AICC, G-52 (i), M.V. Abhyanker to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 18 July 1926.
Democratic party of the great Lokamanya'. ¹ In addition Dr Moonje had an advantage over Abhyanker in that he was a well established leader and commanded a following among all sections of society. The Hitavada put the point well:

A clever manager of men, (Dr Moonje) ... commands a compact following who will go with him in all his activities. ... (He has) a dogged tenacity, the quality of moving with all sorts of men. He is neither well read or always well meaning, but he can lead a mob and ... an educated audience. ... Till now nobody challenged his authority or his leadership and it was all smooth sailing. ... But a new star has risen in the Congress firmament ... (who) preaches his programme with astonishing fearlessness, (but) ... his somewhat aristocratic bent of mind and his affluent circumstances keep him a little apart from the masses and he cannot mix with a crowd with the easy facility of Dr Moonje.²

Dr Moonje was, in fact, a gifted politician who used 'all the resources of his diplomacy to discredit ... Abhyanker'. Abhyanker, however, knew 'nothing of diplomacy and ... therefore resort(ed) to vehement adjectives and expletives'.³ But these tactics were inadequate to overpower Dr Moonje.

Moonje and his party had a further advantage over Abhyanker and the Congress in their pledge to defend Hindu interests in the legislature.⁴ In making this

¹ Hitavada, 13 June 1926, p.10.
² Ibid., 7 February 1926, p.6.
³ Ibid., 10 October 1926, p.6.
⁴ Ibid., 11 November 1926, p.
pledge, they drew on the nationalist tradition of Maharashtra. Since 1921 Moonje had actively defended Hindu interests inside and outside the province, thereby winning a degree of personal support that was denied to Abhyanker.¹ First, Dr Moonje tried to rehabilitate the Hindus of Malabar who had been affected by the revolt of the Moplahs in 1921. He then opposed Gandhi, whom he believed to be indirectly responsible for the Malabar revolt and the growth of Muslim nationalism in India.² By 1926, too, Dr Moonje had become an enthusiastic worker for the Hindu Mahasabha, a body formed in 1915 to protect the religion and culture of the Hindus. Between 1922-6 relations between Hindus and Muslims throughout India deteriorated, and Dr Moonje determined to strengthen the Hindu community to meet the situation. To do this he organised a branch of the Mahasabha in the Central Provinces in 1923, and as one of its leaders preached the message of Hindu unity and strength.³ Dr Moonje also organised and trained Hindu


² NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 16, B.S. Moonje to Dr Kurtkoti, n.d. June 1923; ibid., Letter Pad 12, B.S. Moonje to Narsopant, 11 April 1922; Letter Pad 22, B.S. Moonje to Mr Muckerjee, ⁴ June 1922; Letter Pad 31, Press Interview, 22 June 1925; Letter Pad 25, Press Interview, 3 July 1925; Letter Pad 32, B.S. Moonje to Mr Rajgopal Acharyya, 8 July 1925; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 1 July 1922.

³ See NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 15, B.S. Moonje to Dr Kurtkoti, 24 February 1923; Letter Pad 20, B.S. Moonje to Dr. Laxminarayan, 19 March 1924.

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volunteers, his purpose being to instill a sense of discipline into Hindu youths in addition to protecting Hindus from attack by Muslims at the time of riots.¹ Finally, Moonje tried to unite Hindus by attacking untouchability, a practice that was alienating members of the Depressed community from those Hindus who perpetuated it.² As a result of his activities Dr Moonje detected a slow change in the 'Hindu mentality' in the province, as witness his description of the situation in Salod Fakir, a village in the division of Nagpur:

Salod Fakir (has)...hardly 10 or 15 houses of Mohamedans and the whole village consists entirely of Hindoos....Until a year ago the Mohamedans were able to terrorise for the last so many years the whole Hindu population, not only of that village alone, but of the surrounding villages also, to such an extent that they could commandeer anything they liked without paying for it....But latterly owing to the activities and the propaganda of the Hindu sabha, the Hindu mentality is very slowly changing. In this village....Trimbak Rao Deshpande, a Brahmin young man, has taken it into his head to fight this Muslim domination and terrorising, and has been able to bring about some combination among the Hindoos.³

Between 1922-26 Dr Moonje also went outside the Central Provinces and Berar to address Hindus on the need to organise themselves and develop a spirit of self

¹ NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 19, B.S. Moonje to Mr Sinha, 18 December 1923.
² See ibid., Letter Pad 16, B.S. Moonje to ______ 5 June 1923.
³ Ibid., Diary 1, 21 March 1926.
confidence. These activities were all grist to Dr Moonje's mill in his campaign against the Congress in Nagpur in 1926.

In Berar the electorate divided its support between the Responsive Cooperation party and a group of candidates standing on a non-Brahman ticket. Both groups advocated the acceptance of office. The Responsivists had their campaign well in hand by June 1926 and in the following months canvassed widely throughout Berar. Unlike the Responsivists in the division of Nagpur, however, they encountered little opposition from the Congress. Wamanrao Joshi, reportedly out of pocket, was in Poona 'pursuing his literary activities in the theatrical atmosphere.' Furthermore, the All-India Congress Committee refused to finance an electoral campaign in Berar unless it could be sure that the Congress would win some seats. Matters improved in September 1926, however, when the All-India Congress Committee appointed Abhyanker to conduct the campaign there. A month later he was joined by Joshi on the latter's return from Poona. Despite the presence of

1 NLI, Diary I, 23 April 1926; NAI, Home Poll, F-187/26, Communal Tension in Bengal, Appendix 2, Extract from the Swarajya of Madras, p.18.
2 Hitavada, 7 October 1926, p.5; NML, AICC, G-57 (iii), 1926, M.V. Abhyanker to A. Rangaswami Iyengar, 2 July 1926.
3 Ibid., A. Rangaswami Iyengar, to J. Nehru, 14 July 1926.
4 Hitavada, 16 September 1926, p.5; ibid., 7 October 1926.
these leaders, however, Berar remained a stronghold of Responsivism, and the Congress fielded only two candidates for the 17 seats allotted to Berar. More serious rivals for the Responsivists were the non-Brahmans who nominated nine candidates to contest the elections. The organisation behind these candidates was the Satyashodak Samaj, which during the campaign preached opposition to the Brahman Responsivists and staged tamashas in every important village in Berar.

In contrast to Berar the electorate in the Hindi region recorded its preference for the Congress policy of obstruction. Seth Govind Das dominated the campaign for the Congress, and accompanied by leading Congressmen toured extensively in the northern districts and Chhattisgarh, attacking Raghavendra Rao and the Independent Congress 'party'. Abhyanker, too, went to Chhattisgarh 'to break the citadel of the Independent Congress party'. The nationalist press in the Hindi and Marathi regions also campaigned against Rao: in Khandwa, Govind Das' paper Deshbandhu wreaked 'personal vengeance' on Rao; while from Nagpur the Marathi Tarun Bharat arraigned Rao before the bar of the province for allegedly saying that he had 'never believed in non-

1 Hitavada, 30 September 1926, p.5.
2 Ibid., 8 August 1926, p.5.
3 Ibid., 14 October 1926, p.5.
4 Ibid., 19 September 1926, p.5; 3 October 1926, p.5.
5 Ibid., 10 October 1926, p.9.
cooperation and the Swaraj party'. In addition, Hindi Congressmen won back to the Congress several nationalists who had originally thrown in their lot with Rao. Thus, although Rao made a determined bid for victory and called in outsiders of the stature of Malaviya and Lajpat Rai to assist him, the electorate recorded its preference for policies of the Indian National Congress.

The Congress campaign in the Hindi region owed much of its success to a fiery young nationalist, Dwarka Prasad Mishra. Born into a Kanya Kubja Brahman family in the United Provinces in 1901, Mishra was educated in Kanpur and Allahabad, where he completed his B.A. before going to Calcutta to study journalism in the office of the Bengali newspaper Amrita Bazar Patrika. In 1921 Mishra accepted employment under Govind Das in Jabalpur, and from that time on the two men became inseparable companions. One important result of this relationship was that Mishra commenced legal studies with a view to entering politics. In 1926, while still a law student, Mishra threw himself wholeheartedly into the Congress election campaign. In a letter to Motilal Nehru, in October 1926, Govind Das wrote of the part Mishra played in the campaign and of the likely prospects for the Congress in the elections:

Believe me, Central Provinces situation has miraculously changed in our favour. The Independent Congress party candidates are expecting defeat in most of the places. Even

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1 *Hitavada*, 14 October 1926, p.5; 7 October 1926, p.4.
2 Ibid., p.4.
the position of the leaders of this party is very critical. Ravi Shankar Shukla's defeat in Raipur is certain. To strengthen the chances of our candidates against Bhargava, I have induced Behoar Raghuvir Singh to stand as an independent candidate. Thakur Chhedilal also is not safe. Mr Rao is individually still very strong, but his position is also uncertain.

...You can know the details from Mishraji... who is the father of the changed situation.

He being my closest friend, cannot be properly praised by me. But I will be a faithless friend if I do not tell you that no one in the whole of CP Hindi has worked so sincerely for you as the young bearer of this letter.

At the elections in November 1926, the electors of the Central Provinces and Berar voted solidly for responsive cooperation. As a result, although the Congress won 16 seats - the largest number gained by any single party, - the Responsive Cooperation parties and allied groups won 33 seats. In the Marathi region the

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1 NML, AICC, 78-A, 1926, Govind Das to M. Nehru, 21 October 1926.

2 So far as the voting percentages of the main parties were concerned, the Congress polled 28,268 votes or 30.7 per cent of the provincial total of 92,003 votes. The Responsive Cooperation parties of the Marathi region followed with 21,628 votes or 23.6 per cent; and the Independent Congress 'party' with 10,196 or 11.08 per cent of the votes. The Independent, non-Brahman, and other Hindu candidates polled 25,998 votes or 28.25 per cent of the total. The Muslims polled 5,913 votes, equal to 6.36 per cent of the total.

Congress polled badly and secured only four of the 24 Hindu seats, three of these being the urban seat of Nagpur-Kamptee and the municipal seats of East and West Berar. The Responsivists, by contrast, did well to win seven of the ten Hindu seats in the division of Nagpur, and, less successfully, to win six of the 14 Hindu seats in Berar. The Congress polled much better in the Hindi region than it did in the Marathi region. There Congressmen won 11 of the 20 Hindu seats and had the promise of support from one Independent. The Independent Congress 'party' won only seven seats, a key defeat being that of Shukla in Raipur South. Of the smaller 'parties', the Independents won nine seats, the non-Brahmans three, and one seat went to a moderate politician. The elections for the Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of State were held at the same time as those for the provincial legislature. In the former the Congress also polled badly, winning only one of the six seats, while in the latter, the Congress and the Responsivists secured one seat each. Particular significance attached to the provincial results, however, for they placed the Responsivists in a strong position to form a ministry.

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1 For these and the following results, see Hitavada, 11 November 1926, p.7; 14 November 1926, p.7; 18 November 1926, pp.6, 7; 21 November 1926, pp.5, 6, 7; 28 November 1926, p.5.
Chapter 4

RESPONSIVE COOPERATION IN THE LEGISLATURE: THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR UNDER HINDI LEADERSHIP, 1927-1937

From 1927-37 the responsive cooperators dominated the legislature of the Central Provinces, and during that time the Hindi region acquired a commanding position in the political life of the province. In 1927, Dr Moonje, who had formerly played a leading part in provincial politics, entered the arena of national politics as a member of the Central Legislative Assembly and a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha. At the same time, Moonje tried to control politics in the Central Provinces and Berar from behind the scenes, thus keeping political initiative in Marathi hands. This, however, he failed to do owing to the emergence of Raghavendra Rao as the central figure in the political life of the province. Rao owed his leading position to his own skill as a politician and to a noteworthy alliance between himself and the Governor, Sir Montagu Butler. Between 1927-37, he utilised both to dominate the government and so transfer political power from the Marathi to the Hindi region.

Responsive cooperators refers to all nationalists who supported the formation of ministries. The Responsivists are members of the Responsive Cooperation parties of Nagpur and Berar.
The transfer of power was clearly reflected in Rao's political career during the period. This career opened in 1927 when Rao became Chief Minister of the Central Provinces. Rao's attempts, as Chief Minister, to dominate the government annoyed the Marathi nationalists, who had provided Rao's colleague in the first ministry. As a result they withdrew their support from Rao and compelled him to form a second ministry with the assistance of other groups in 1928. This ministry also collapsed owing to opposition from the Marathi nationalists. Following this collapse, the Marathi nationalists themselves formed a ministry in 1929 in an attempt to restore the political importance of their region and keep faith with their supporters. A year later they launched a campaign of civil disobedience against the government with the same end in view. Participation in government and agitation against government at one and the same time, however, placed the Marathi nationalists in a difficult situation, and in 1930 they were compelled to relinquish their hold over the ministry. This gave Sir Montagu Butler the opening he had desired. Butler had long realised that the key to stable and effective government in the province lay with Rao and the Hindi region. Consequently, soon after the resignation of the Marathi-led ministry in 1930, he appointed Rao as Home Member of the province. Over the next seven years, Rao fully confirmed Butler's analysis of provincial politics. During this period he dominated the government and the legislature; formed successive ministries with his own nominees; secured the passage of significant legislation; and rose to the position of Acting Governor of the
Central Provinces and Berar. The Marathi nationalists at the same time continued their efforts to restore the political importance of their region. But these moves were largely unsuccessful, and the period closed with Rao's appointment as the first Premier of the United Central Provinces and Berar.

I

Between 1927-9 the Hindi region enlarged its area of power in the Government of the Central Provinces. This was apparent in the activities of two ministries formed during the period. In each of these ministries the Chief Minister was Raghavendra Rao. During the first ministry Rao tried to enlarge his responsibilities as Chief Minister and the ministry collapsed as a result. Rao then formed a second ministry in which the Hindi region held the reins of power.

It was not Rao, however, but Dr Moonje of Nagpur who formed the first ministry. Moonje had been elected a member of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1926, and although his duties there and in the arena of national politics in general were to remove him to some extent from the Central Provinces, he tried, nevertheless, to retain his influence in the province by controlling politics from behind the scenes. One such activity was his establishment of a ministry in the Central Provinces in 1927. Moonje's first step was to unite all the responsive cooperators into a single party to provide a base of support for the ministry in the legislature. On 26 November 1926, soon after the elections, Moonje wrote
to Rao urging that

this time we have to be very careful....The Swaraj party shall be there to magnify our mistakes and even to misrepresent us. We cannot be too cautious, and unless we form a compact whole even at the cost of much personal inconvenience and hopes, we may involve ourselves in ridicule.¹

In less than a month Moonje and Rao had formed 'a compact whole'. On 19 December 1926 members of the Responsive Cooperation parties of Nagpur and Berar and members of the Independent Congress 'party' of the Hindi region formed the United Nationalist 'party'.² The 'party', however, had a strength of only 20 members, and could be easily overwhelmed by a combination of the Congress party and other groups in the Council. Accordingly, Moonje began negotiations to effect a union between the United Nationalist 'party' and the Independent 'party', which included the non-Brahmans. These negotiations, too, were successful, and on 9 January 1927 an enlarged Nationalist 'party' comprising 33 members came into being.³

To safeguard the unity of the Nationalist 'party', Dr Moonje nominated the leaders of its constituent 'parties' to important positions in the legislature and the ministry.

¹ NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 36, B.S. Moonje to E.R. Rao, 26 November 1926.
² Hitavada, 23 December 1926, p.6.
He secured the Presidency of the Council for the leader of the Independent 'party', S.M. Chitnavis. To do so, he had to withdraw the nomination of Y.M. Kale, a Responsivist from Berar, to whom he had originally promised the post.¹ Raghavendra Rao, of the Independent Congress 'party', was elected leader of the Nationalist 'party', and also received Dr Moonje's endorsement as the chief partner in the ministry which the 'party' desired to form. Dr Moonje allocated the other ministership to Ramrao Deshmukh of the Responsive Cooperation party of Berar.² As Moonje was largely responsible for forming the coalition and the ministry, his Responsive Cooperation party in the division of Nagpur had to rest content with the Secretaryship of the Nationalist 'party'.³

With these preparations complete, the stage was set for the formation of the ministry. On 11 January 1927 the Council voted the ministers' salaries, and on the following day, the Governor, Sir Montagu Butler, called Rao to Government House and entrusted him with the formation of a ministry.⁴ Rao nominated Deshmukh as his colleague and the Governor paved the way for their assumption of office by restoring the reformed constitution. This took place on 31 January 1927. On

¹ Hitavada, 13 January 1927, p.9; 23 January 1927, p.8.
³ The Secretary was K.P. Vaidya, the member for Nagpur District East.
1 February, Rao and Deshmukh took office - the former as Chief Minister and Minister for Education, and the latter as Minister for Local Self Government.¹

Although Dr Moonje tried to unify the disparate elements that comprised the Nationalist 'party', it appeared likely that conflicts between them would imperil the stability of ministry. The Responsivists of Berar, staunch nationalists as they were, strongly resented the government's failure to reach the Sim ratio or to suspend the land settlement in Berar.² Consequently, they could be expected to put pressure on their minister to deal with those issues to the satisfaction of Berar. Any efforts on his part to do so, however, would curtail the flow of revenue from Berar into the Central Provinces, and this could hardly meet with the approval of the Hindi members who came into the Council deeply conscious of many genuine grievances with regard to our treatment in the province....They begin with the concentration of all higher and technical studies at Nagpur to the detriment of the educational growth of our part of the province....(In addition) all government activities are concentrated at Nagpur with the advantage that money and patronage are distributed in a much greater proportion in spheres round about and the northern districts are neglected and starved and thus have stunted growth.³

³ Hitavada, 26 July 1928, p.3.
Shri R.M. Deshmukh
Sentiments such as these created tension between the Hindi and Marathi ministers, and resulted in the collapse of the ministry. Deshmukh attempted to secure the interests of Berar, while Rao resisted Marathi efforts to control the ministry and promote the interests of the Marathi region. He did so by attempting to enlarge the sphere of his own responsibilities as Chief Minister, thus further exacerbating his relations with Deshmukh. The struggle for power in the ministry was evident first in the failure of Rao and Deshmukh to observe the principle of joint responsibility in dealing with their portfolios. Both ministers were dissatisfied with the group of portfolios they received under the reformed constitution.1 Rao received the group of portfolios headed by Education; and Deshmukh the group headed by Local Self Government. These two portfolios in particular gave the minister in charge the power to make appointments and allocate finances - a dangerous power, should he use it to favour one region at the expense of another. To prevent this Deshmukh suggested to Rao that they should jointly administer all portfolios - 'I shall look to work in Berar and Nagpur division, and you would look to the rest of the Central Provinces'.2 The two ministers, however, found that joint responsibility was unworkable in practice. In April 1928 one political commentator reported that

the so called joint responsibility has become more or less a mere fiction. ... There is apparently more frequent joint consultation between the reserved and transferred halves of the government than there is between the two ministers themselves.¹

Joint responsibility, in fact, could not work while the Hindi and Marathi regions were engaged in a struggle for dominance in the Central Provinces. One aspect of this struggle was reflected in the differences between Rao and Deshmukh. As minister for Public Works, Deshmukh ensured that Berar received 38 per cent of the divisible revenues of the province as determined by the Sim Committee.² This reduced the amount of money available for public works in the Hindi region and created a great deal of resentment there.³ As a result, Rao told Deshmukh that 'I am sorry (but) I cannot share the responsibility of your policy and administration in ... Public Works Department'; and Hindi members of the legislature demanded that Rao take over the portfolio.⁴ Rao also differed with Deshmukh over his appointments to local bodies as Minister for Local Self Government. In

¹ Hitavada, 8 April 1928, p.2. The 'reserved half' of the Government refers to the Department of Justice, Police and Land Revenue that remained in the hands of British officials. The 'transferred half' comprised those Departments that were placed under ministerial control.

² Ibid., 8 July 1928, p.2.


making certain appointments, Deshmukh apparently
dissented from the advice tendered by the Commissioners
and Deputy Commissioners of the districts in which the
appointments occurred. Rao attacked Deshmukh for doing
so, complaining to him that he could not 'share the
responsibility of the likely consequences of the advice
tendered by you'. 1 Rao's complaint was grounded in the
belief that Deshmukh was not giving sufficient
representation in the local bodies to Muslims, non
Brahmans and members of the Depressed community - three
groups from which Rao was drawing increasing support
inside and outside the legislature. 2 Differences also
occurred between Rao and Deshmukh as to the attitude of
the ministry towards the Indian Statutory Commission, a
committee of politicians led by Lord Simon who were to
come to India in 1930 to review the question of giving
a further instalment of self government to that country.
The Government of India required each provincial
government to submit its views on the subject to the
Commission. Rao took the view that the ministers
should not associate themselves with the preparation of
such a case. 3 According to the Hitavada, however, the
views of Deshmukh and Khaparde on Rao's proposed boycott
of the Commission were more equivocal. 4 Rao also
believed that Deshmukh favoured making some approach to

4 Hereafter, Khaparde refers to B.G. Khaparde, the elder
sor of G.S. Khaparde.
Differences between Hindi and Marathi members of the Nationalist 'party' heightened the discord within the ministry and hastened its collapse. Responsivists from the Marathi region frequently attacked the budget grants under the care of the ministers, concentrating their attention on those of Raghavendra Rao. Representatives of the Hindi region, for their part, criticised the attainment of the Sim formula inside and outside the legislature and once again condemned the government for neglecting the interests of the Hindi region. By mid-1928 Hindi resentment on this issue had grown to such an extent that members of the Independent Congress 'party', Independents and Congressmen alike urged the separation of the Hindi region from the remainder of the province. This provoked an immediate reaction from the Responsivists of Berar who tabled a resolution in the Council that immediate steps should be taken to constitute a sub-province on linguistic basis consisting of Berar and

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3 CPLC, vol.2, 5 March 1927, p.142; ibid., 21 March 1927, pp.977-8; Hitavada, 10 June 1928, p.3; ibid., 26 July 1928, p.3.
4 Ibid., 29 September 1927, p.7; 26 April 1928, p.5; 20 May 1928, p.3; 22 July 1928, p.1; 28 July 1928, p.3; 5 August 1928, p.2; 9 August 1928, p.2; 16 August 1928, p.5.
Marathi CP'. The movement to separate the Marathi from the Hindi region had the strongest support of Ramrao Deshmukh. At the height of the quarrel between the two regions, Dr Moonje intervened in an attempt to heal the breach. Writing to one of the sponsors of the resolution for the separation of the Hindi and Marathi regions, Dr Moonje declared

You have given notice of moving a resolution in the next session of your legislative council asking for separation of Berar and CP Marathi from the CP Hindi....I do not know what provocation our Berar friends have received to inspire them to move for separation. I may on the other hand assure you that none of us here in CP Marathi as far as I know desires for such separation. We have lived together in friendliness from the days of the Bhonsla Rajas and we do not welcome such a move....(I must) request you to reconsider.

As a result, the resolution was withdrawn, and one source of danger to the ministry averted.

Dr Moonje, however, was powerless to prevent the Hindi and Marathi ministers from attempts to force each other out of office. By 1928 the Responsivist section of the Nationalist 'party' had had enough of Rao's attacks on Deshmukh's administration of the Departments of Public Works and Local Self Government. Accordingly, in March

1 Hitavada, 20 May 1928, p.3; 22 July 1928, p.1; 5 August 1928, p.2; 9 August 1928, p.2.
2 Ibid., 9 August 1928, p.2.
3 NLI, Moonje MS, B.S. Moonje to D.D. Rajurker, 9 August 1928.
of that year they brought a vote of censure against Rao at a meeting of the Nationalist 'party' in Nagpur.¹ The vote failed, however, and Deshmukh had to content himself with carrying on a press campaign against Rao from Amravati.² In August, the Responsivists launched another attempt to remove Rao from the ministry by tabling a motion of no confidence against him in the Council. Rumour strongly associated the Home Member's name with this move. Writing to Sir Frank Sly, then in England, Sir G.M. Chitnavis stated that

there is some intention on the part of some of the members...to move a vote of no confidence in the present ministry. The Governor seems to be very concerned about this. The notices which govern such a move have their birth in a spirit of envy, and that too mainly inside the executive council itself....There is a well-expressed feeling that Mr Tambe has a hand in this affair of no confidence and that his friends are working for it and canvassing matters.³

In early August, Dr Moonje also tried to persuade Rao to resign from the ministry on the grounds that the government had secretly drawn up a case for the

¹ Hitavada, 19 April 1928, p.2; 20 May 1928, p.3; 20 September 1928, p.1.
² Ibid., 20 May 1928, p.3.
Rao, however, survived all attempts to remove him, and at the same time launched a campaign against Deshmukh with the aim of forcing him to leave the ministry altogether. At first Rao tried to persuade Deshmukh to accept a reshuffle of the portfolios in favour of the Hindi region. And as Rao's complaints against his colleague related mainly to the Departments of Public Works and Local Self Government, it was likely that he desired to secure control over those portfolios in particular. To compel Deshmukh to surrender these key portfolios, Rao threatened to hand in his resignation to the Governor and thus bring about Deshmukh's own resignation. Deshmukh refused to submit to Rao's threat, however, and countered by informing him in May 1928 that

it is about time for me to protest against your menacing attitude and against the implications in your statements about my Local Self Government policy. I am not used to threats or bullying from anybody....I have tried my best not to give any cause to you to complain and I have tried my best to keep the ministry going by such support to you as lay within my power to give. If you are bent on breaking the ministry, the responsibility for the action and

2 Hitavada, 20 May 1928, p.3.
the consequences is yours. You must decide for yourself and take such course in the matter as you see fit. Any advice from me at this stage would...be of no avail. ¹

Rao retaliated by forcing Deshmukh from office, and by forming a government in which the Hindi region held the major share of power. He did so by withdrawing the Independent Congressmen from the Nationalist 'party' and by building a personal following among the Muslim, non-Brahman and Depressed members of the Council. ² This following gave Rao a base of support for manoeuvres against Deshmukh. Rao knew, too, that in any move against his colleague, he could count on the support of the Congress party which had vigorously opposed the ministry ever since it came to power. ³ As a result, by mid-August Rao's preparations for the ejection of Deshmukh from the ministry were complete. He intended that his supporters would move a vote of no confidence in Deshmukh on 18 August 1928. But Deshmukh forestalled the motion and resigned before the House met for the business of the day. Accordingly, the motion against him lapsed. ⁴ The following day Rao also tendered his

resignation to the Governor, intimating his readiness to assist him in facilitating the 'reconstruction of the ministry'. At the same time, Rao formed the Democratic 'party' from his supporters in the House, and awaited Butler's next move. On 25 August Sir Montagu Butler invited Rao and Khaparde to Government House to discuss the formation of a ministry. Khaparde was unwilling to assist in forming a ministry with Rao, possibly because he feared a recurrence of the conflicts of the previous ministry. The Governor therefore invited Rao to form a ministry and to propose a colleague. Rao readily accepted Butler's offer and chose as his colleague, the volatile Tukaram Jairam Kedar, the Responsivist member for the Division of Nagpur. Rao completed his victory over the Marathi politicians by assuming for himself the portfolios of Education, Local Self Government and Public Works, leaving Kedar the less important portfolios of Agriculture and Excise. On 25 August 1928 Rao began his second ministry.

II

The rise of the Hindi region, evident in Rao's

2 Hitavada, 26 August 1928, p.1; 30 August 1928, p.7.
3 Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1928, pp.263-4; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 29 August 1928; Hitavada, 13 September 1928, p.2.
activities as Chief Minister, was accompanied by a decline in the political fortunes of the Marathi region. This was seen to greatest effect in Deshmukh's exclusion from the government at the hands of Rao. It was also to be seen in the career of Dr Moonje between 1927-9. During that period, Dr Moonje emerged as a staunch defender of Hindu interests in the Central Provinces, and, to an increasing degree, in India as a whole. Many of his activities to further these interests, however, failed to achieve their objective. This failure was not due to Moonje's lack of enthusiasm for the interests of Hindus; but to the fact that the problems to which he gave his attention were deep-seated and complex, and beyond the ability of individuals to resolve.

One of Moonje's more successful ventures was his work in the Central Legislative Assembly, where he took an active interest in military affairs. This interest, as the Hitavada rightly observed was a 'necessary complement of his larger activities in connection with the strengthening and consolidation of the Hindus'. As evidence of this interest, Moonje participated in the debates on the military budget in 1928, and in 1929 he moved a resolution on compulsory military training in approved schools and colleges. He thus acquired a reputation for being an 'expert on military subjects'.

1 Hitavada, 15 August 1929, p.1.
and in 1929 the Viceroy nominated him as non-official member of the Interview and Record Board for the Army and Air Force entrance examination. But the Government of India would allow Moonje to go no further, for in 1929 it refused him permission to introduce into the Assembly a bill providing for physical and military training in Indian schools.

Dr Moonje also had to face the failure of his attempt to weld the Hindu community together to enable it to achieve its political objectives. The problem facing Dr Moonje was seen to best effect in the Marathi region of the Central Provinces, where developments largely paralleled those in other parts of India. During the twenties a claim by members of the Depressed community that they should enjoy equal rights with other Hindus, particularly members of the Brahman community, caused serious conflict in Hindu society. From 1920 onwards the Depressed community in the Central Provinces and India as a whole took part in activities to establish that claim. Leaders of the Depressed community held conferences at the provincial and district level at which they condemned the Brahmans for perpetuating untouchability, and enunciated means by which the Depressed community could escape that status and attain

1 Hitavada, 5 April 1928, p.1; NLI, Moonje MS, Assorted Letters, Telegram d. 28 May 1929.
2 Hitavada, 22 September 1929, p.____.
self-respect. One of these means was through conversion to Islam. Another consisted of challenging the social customs that preserved untouchability. As a result by 1929 some Depressed people had become Muslims; more common, however, were their attempts to drink from public wells or enter Hindu temples. To raise their social status, the leaders of the Depressed community in the Central Provinces also entered politics. They did not submit to nationalist leadership, however, but established ties with the provincial government on the grounds that 'until we are actually given... liberty and equality, we should fight to maintain the British government which sees no differences and knows no untouchables'. The Depressed leaders hoped that their link with the government would result in the provision of educational facilities for members of the community, and in nominations of Depressed members to local bodies.

Dr Moonje attempted, albeit with little success, to

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1 See Hitavada, 1 September 1927, p.3; 22 September 1927, p.5.
2 Ibid., 20 February 1924, p.3.
3 NAI, Home Poll, F-112, 1926, FR, First Half of February 1926, p.8; Hitavada, 11 March 1926, p.3. One of the earliest attempts by the Depressed community to force entry to Hindu temples was the Satyagraha to gain entry to the famous Amba Temple in Amravati in 1927.
4 Hitavada, 7 March 1923, p.3.
5 Ibid., 29 April 1926, p.8; 17 February 1927, p.3; 18 November 1928, p.1; 28 March 1929, p.3.
weld the caste Hindus and the Depressed classes into a single community. During the twenties, Moonje conceded that untouchability had prevented the Depressed community from cultivating any 'sense of dignity as citizens of the land';¹ and as President of the Hindu Mahasabha from 1927 he supported resolutions condemning untouchability, and advocating temple entry and interdining between caste Hindus and members of the Depressed community.² Despite Moonje's support, however, the Depressed community in the Central Provinces and Berar continued to attack the caste Hindus in an effort to achieve social equality with them. They also persisted in their separatist political movement, and in 1928 found a valuable ally in Raghavendra Rao. In return for Rao's advocacy of the cause of the Depressed community, the Depressed members of the Council joined the Democratic 'party' to aid his assault on the Responsivists of the Marathi region.³

Dr Moonje was also unable to heal the gulf between members of the Brahman and non-Brahman communities in

¹ NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 1, 17 March 1927.
² Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1927, pp.416-22; Hitavada, 21 April 1927, p.6. See also NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 23, B.S. Moonje to Dr Deshmukh, 4 July 1924, ibid., Letter Pad 25, B.S. Moonje to B.R. Deshmukh, 11 October 1924.
the Marathi region. During the twenties the movement by non-Brahmans to win social and political equality with the Brahmans of that region grew rapidly, and by 1929 had assumed threatening proportions.¹ This movement caused Moonje grave concern because it destroyed Hindu unity, and he tried in a limited way to remove the grounds for the non-Brahman revolt.² Moonje considered it imperative that the Brahman community of Maharashtra should make a declaration of rights to assure the non-Brahmans that they had equal social standing with the Brahmans. In this regard, on 17 July 1927 Moonje stated that

the non Brahmins ought to be satisfied if such a public declaration is made of equality of rights, social and religious, between castes.... This era of intercaste equality and cooperation should be ushered in by a preliminary round table conference....Without this leap of self-abnegation from our long-established vested interests and right of caste-system, we are doomed to ignominious extinction.³

The Brahmans, in fact, made such a declaration, and Moonje turned to heal the branch between the Brahmans and the non-Brahmans in the political field. Here he achieved

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² See NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 1, 23 May 1926; Diary 2, 22 December 1929.

³ Hitavada, 17 July 1927, p. 9.
little. In 1928, at his suggestion, the Hindu Sabha of Nagpur appointed a Committee to study the problem. In 1928, too, Moonje gave consideration to a plan to admit non-Brahmans to the Rashtriya Mandal, which, although far less powerful than in previous years, still retained its Brahman composition.

Despite these moves, however, Dr Moonje was unable to heal the breach between Brahmans and non-Brahmans in the Marathi region. Throughout the twenties, the non-Brahmans continued to hold district and provincial conferences, and, if anything, the non-Brahman attack on the Brahman community increased rather than decreased. This was particularly evident in the attempts by non-Brahmans to wrest control of the local bodies of the Marathi region from the Brahmans. To do so the non-Brahmans fought vigorous electoral campaigns, in which they made extensive use of tamashas to crack Brahman opposition. According to one report in the Hitavada, these tamashas were introduced by non Brahmin politicians...in Berar...to catch the non Brahmin vote at the polls. From Berar they were introduced at Wardha and from Wardha they went to Nagpur. Recently they were availed of at the local board elections at Bhivapur, and they are now being used by some non Brahmin candidates

1 Hitavada, 18 December 1927, p.12; NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 45, 9 August 1928.
2 Ibid., Letter Pad 48, 12 November 1928.
to fight out the municipal elections at Nagpur ...(Their) object is to represent Brahmins as the moral wrecks of humanity,...(and) most vulgar and immoral scenes are enacted before an ignorant and unthinking audience...(to) create intense feelings of contempt and hatred for the Brahmin class.¹

The electoral campaigns invariably resulted in the election of non-Brahmans to the local bodies in large numbers. As a result the local bodies themselves became arenas for the clash of Brahman and non-Brahman.² Even the Hindu Sabha of Nagpur was not safe from such tensions - a situation which caused Moonje to declare in 1928 that 'I am grieved to find that our whole public life in Nagpur is affected with mutual distrust'.³ Like the Depressed leaders, the non-Brahman leaders also supported the government, either to widen the opportunities for employment open to non-Brahmans, or to persuade it to advocate constitutional reforms that would favour the non-Brahman community.⁴ Between 1927-8 the non-Brahman political movement received the welcome support of Raghavendra Rao. As Chief Minister, Rao took up the cause of the non-Brahmans, and in return many non-Brahman

¹ Hitavada, 2 February 1928, p.2.
² See ibid., 24 June 1928, p.3; 1 July 1928, p.9; 17 February 1929, p.1.
⁴ MPS, GAD, 24-21, 1925, Resolutions Passed at the Central Provinces and Berar non-Brahman Conference held at Wardha on 21-2 May 1925, pp.2-9.
members of the legislature took Rao's side in his quarrel with Deshmukh. And when Rao broke with Deshmukh and formed his second ministry, the non-Brahmans continued to support him as members of his Democratic 'party'.

Dr Moonje also attempted to deal with the conflict between Hindus and Muslims in the Central Provinces and Berar and in India as a whole. He achieved greater success in the former than in the latter. In the Central Provinces and Berar, the problem, as Dr Moonje saw it, was one of uniting the Hindu community and strengthening it to defend itself when attacked by Muslims during periods of communal tension. To achieve those ends, Dr Moonje continued to hold meetings and conferences, urging Hindus to see, in particular,

that every boy and girl between 12 to 20 to the lowest untouchable goes to the akhada to receive physical training and to acquire skill in wielding a lathi and dagger to prevent breaches of public peace.

These appeals appear to have met with some response.

Moonje was not so successful, however, in challenging the Muslims at the national level. The problem facing Moonje there was caused, not by communal

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tension, but by the demands of Muslim leaders that they participate in discussions on the new constitution which Britain was to prepare for India. During 1927, the leaders of the Muslim community met in Delhi under the presidentship of M.A. Jinnah and drew up a list of demands that they believed should be included in the proposed constitution. These demands were known as the 14 points. The enumeration of these points greatly alarmed Dr Moonje, creating as they did for him the prospect of 'the whole of India from Peshawar to Karachi ...formed into a tract of overwhelming Moslem majority'.

To Dr Moonje this threatened the integrity of the Indian nation, and raised the additional possibility that Muslims inside India would unite with those outside. He feared that such a union would facilitate an invasion of the country by the latter. It was for this reason that Dr Moonje believed that the 'Muslim peril is not a temporary phase; it is aimed at the root of the entire Hindu religion and culture in India'.

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1 These points included demands for the separation of Sind from Bombay; the introduction of the Reforms into the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan; the representation in Bengal and the Punjab to be according to population; the grant to Muslims of one-third of the seats of the Central Legislative Assembly.

2 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 44, B.S. Moonje to M.R. Cholkar, 5 March 1928.

3 Hitavada, 24 November 1927, p.10.

4 NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 1, 23 April 1927.
peril, Moonje encouraged Hindus in the Central Provinces and Berar and throughout India to take part in military training. He also attempted to establish the Hindu Mahasabha, rather than the Indian National Congress as the rightful representative of the Hindu community in constitutional discussions with the Muslims. Between 1927-8 Dr Moonje began discussions with Jinnah on the proposed constitution for India. At the same time he requested the leaders of the Indian National Congress to recognise (that) Hindu-Moslem differences political and religious are matters essentially for settlement in first instance between Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha. If however any settlement is made behind back of Hindu Mahasabha, Hindus will not accept and fresh needless internecine controversy may arise in Congress.

Moonje failed, however, to reach more than a small measure of agreement with Jinnah. Moreover, the Congress showed that it had no intention of allowing the Mahasabha to monopolise discussions on the proposed constitution. During 1928 the Congress assisted by other political parties set about the task of drawing up a constitution

1 NLI, 20 March 1927; ibid., Letter Pad 41, Dr Moonje's Bill for Compulsory Military Training, 28 August 1927; Hitavada, 9 October 1927, p.5.
2 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 38, B.S. Moonje to the President, Indian National Congress, 15 May 1927; Letter Pad 43, B.S. Moonje to M.A. Jinnah, 3 December 1927.
3 Ibid., Letter Pad 42, B.S. Moonje to Srinivas Iyengar, 26 October 1927.
and by August had produced a document which 'indicated the will of the nation as to the main principles of the constitution acceptable to it'.¹ Thus, although the constitution contained provisions which the Mahasabha originally opposed, there was little that Moonje could do but accept it.²

III

Between 1928 and 1931 the Marathi nationalists launched a series of bold moves to revive the Responsivist cause and restore the Marathi region to its former position of prominence in the province. These moves consisted of the removal of the second ministry of Raghavendra Rao, and its replacement by a Responsivist ministry led by R.M. Deshmukh of Berar; the launching of a Responsivist campaign of civil disobedience; and the expansion of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, a society formed in 1925 to inspire Hindus to serve with love and discipline the country of their birth.³ These activities were each designed to reach different sections of the population. The formation of a ministry in which the Marathi region held the major share of power was calculated to appeal to the voting population, which

¹ Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1928, p.142.
² NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 49, Press Statement, 21 December 1928.
³ Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh means National Volunteers Association.
largely belonged to the middle class; the campaign of civil disobedience was aimed at the lower classes of the town and country; and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh tried to attract within its fold 'the lower and middle economic and social groups', and, in particular, the student community.¹

The moves to displace Rao from office came at a time when Berar was experiencing a mood of deep insecurity. This mood stemmed from the growing importance of the Hindi region in the life of the province, and was reflected in the volume of criticism of the government that flowed from Berar during the ministries formed by Raghavendra Rao. Between 1928-9 the leaders of Berar bitterly attacked the constitutional provisions which prevented legislation affecting Berar from coming before the provincial Council. The immediate occasion for this outburst was the government's acceptance of the Berar Land Revenue Code and its provision for the enhancement of land revenue in Berar.² At the same time, the leaders of Berar continued their condemnation of the government for failing to implement the Sim ratio and for countenancing the drain of revenue

from Berar to the Central Provinces. The years of Rao's ministries also witnessed a revival of the rumours that the Nizam of Hyderabad was about to re-establish his ownership of Berar.

Between 1928-9 the leaders of Berar attempted to remove the causes of their region's insecurity. As a first step towards this end, on 28 October 1928 the representatives of all the political parties in Berar met at Akola to hold what became known as the All-Parties Conference. The main achievement of this Conference was a motion urging the government to form a separate Legislative Council for Berar. Khaparde also attempted to ease the mood of insecurity in Berar when he moved a resolution in the Council on 24 January 1929, calling for the separation of the Hindi and

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1 Hitavada, 10 March 1929, p.1; ibid., 4 April 1929, p.1. In 1927-8, Berar received 37.8 per cent of her share of the divisible revenues. In 1928-9, after Deshmukh's influence made itself felt Berar received 38 per cent. Thereafter Berar's share of the divisible revenues declined. In 1929-30 it was 35.2 per cent, and in 1930-1 34.3 per cent. See CPLC, vol.1, 10 March 1930, Appendix E, p.941.

2 Hitavada, 29 March 1929, p.6.

3 Ibid., 8 November 1928, p.11. Because Berar was not a part of British India, no bill affecting the territory could come before the Legislative Council of the Central Provinces. From the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the members of the provincial legislature representing Berar formed the Berar Legislative Committee. This Committee discussed proposed legislation for Berar sent to it from the provincial government. It then returned the measure to the provincial government who decided the final form of the legislation and sent it to the Government of India. The latter ratified the legislation and applied it to Berar.
Marathi regions and the creation of a separate Marathi province. Khaparade doubtless realised, however, that this was a long term objective; and that present circumstances called for a ministry that would secure the interests of Berar and the Marathi region as a whole, and at the same time advance the cause of self government for India.

Thus, almost immediately after Rao formed his second ministry, the Responsivists launched a campaign to remove it from office and replace it with a Responsivist ministry. Within five months they had achieved their objective. The Responsivist campaign against the ministry took place inside and outside the legislature. Outside the legislature, the Marathi press led the attack on Rao. According to one government report

The Marathi press...accuse(s) the Honourable Mr Rao of having broken up the ministry for personal ends. His acceptance of His Excellency's offer to form a new ministry has given offence to...the Berar papers, who regard this as an affront to Berar and the Maharashtrians. They accordingly advocate a vigorous campaign for bringing about his downfall.

In the legislature, Khaparade made preparations for a test of strength between the new Democratic 'party' and the Opposition. For this test, Khaparade won the support of three groups, in addition to that of the Responsive Cooperation party of Berar. These were the Responsivists

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1 CPLIC, vol.1, 24-5 January 1929, pp.312-80.
2 NAI, Home Poll, F-1, 1928, FR, Second Half of August 1928, p.1
of Nagpur, who were reported to be 'full of sound and fury at Rao because he refuses to be their creature'. They were also furious with Kedar for accepting a ministership without the 'knowledge and consent' of the Responsive Cooperation party.\(^1\) Khaparde also secured the support of the Congress party, which was only too ready to upset the government, and particularly one formed by their chief opponent in the Hindi region, Raghavendra Rao. Finally, Khaparde turned the tables on Rao by persuading the Muslims to defect from the Democratic to the Nationalist 'party'. He did so by promising

> to give one of them a ministry if they joined them in turning out openly Kedar and clandestinely Rao from office....Three or four Muslims are reported to have joined or (are) about to join the Nationalist party on getting assurance that one of them will be nominated for ministership.\(^2\)

The combination of Responsivists, Congressmen and Muslims was sufficient for Khaparde's purpose, and on 17 January 1929 the test of strength between the ministry and the Opposition took place. On that day, G.S. Gupta, the Congress member for Durg, moved certain amendments to

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\(^1\) *Hitavada*, 20 September 1928, p.5; 8 November 1928, p.1; 20 December 1928, p.1.

the State Aid to Industries Bill. The House accepted the amendments, and as a result, Kedar, the Minister for Industries, resigned. Rao also resigned and on 18 January 1929 he informed Sir Montagu Butler that the amendments which the legislative Council carried...to the State Aid to Industries bill has (sic) precipitated a constitutional crisis....I need hardly comment on the unwisdom of the amendments carried by the council. As I am jointly responsible with my colleague, I have no option but to stand by him. In the circumstances we shall be grateful if Your Excellency accepts our resignation. I know this will cause great inconvenience to Government...but we are helpless.

Butler accepted the resignations of Rao and Kedar. The same day he notified the Council that he was temporarily taking charge of the transferred subjects and that he would attempt to form another ministry.

After the collapse of Rao's ministry, political power in the province swung back to the Marathi region with the formation of a ministry led by Ramrao Deshmukh of Berar. Deshmukh's ministry, however, was formed with

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1 See CPLC, vol.1, 17 January 1929, pp.40-50. The amendments included the enlargement of the scope of the word 'industry' to include 'enterprise subsidiary to or directly benefiting agriculture'; the inclusion of livestock in the definition of the word 'machinery'; and the addition of spinning to the list of cottage industries.

2 Ibid., p.65.


considerable difficulty. Despite the momentary eclipse of Rao, Khaparde, the leading Responsivist in the Council, found it almost impossible to secure candidates for the ministry who were acceptable to the members of the Nationalist coalition and the Governor alike. He himself had promised the former Muslim Democrats a ministership. But in so doing he met with determined opposition from Dr Moonje, who declared that

our people should not combine with the Moslems for the formation of another ministry....I would have no ministry....I regard it as a sin to combine with the Moslems in the formation of another ministry.1

Again, many non-Brahman Nationalists strongly opposed Khaparde's inclusion in a ministry, despite Butler's desire to have him in the government. Other non-Brahman Nationalists supported Khaparde's nomination but refused to accept that of Ramrao Deshmukh.2 Matters were further complicated in March 1929 when four Hindi Democrats promised that they would support the Nationalist 'party' on the condition that Khaparde gave them a ministership. According to the Hitavada

they base(d) their claim to a place in the cabinet on the ground that there was scarcity in the Jubbulpore division and that someone from those districts should therefore be taken as a minister.3

1 NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 50, 18 January 1929, B.S. Moonje to M.R. Cholkar, 18 January 1929.
2 Hitavada, 10 March 1929, p.1; 14 March 1929, p.2.
3 Ibid., 10 March 1929, p.1.
In March, therefore, Khaparde had three groups - the Responsivists, the Muslims, and the Hindi defectors - from which to form a ministry. And when Butler requested him to do so in the same month, it appeared likely that he would succeed. When Khaparde submitted his nominees to the Governor, however, the latter rejected them - possibly on the grounds that his party 'had kept its most prominent men out and put forth the names of certain designing men to whom they were driven by sheer necessity'.\(^1\) Khaparde did not make the same mistake in July, when Butler again invited him to form a ministry. This time, he submitted a list of nominees to the Governor and placed the onus of selecting the ministers on him. The two men Butler chose were Ramrao Deshmukh and the former Democrat, P.C. Bose, a pleader from Jabalpur. On 1 August 1929 the ministry took office, with Deshmukh as Chief Minister and Minister for Agriculture; and Bose as Minister for Education.\(^2\)

During its early months in office, Deshmukh's ministry did much to restore the declining political fortunes of the Marathi region. Deshmukh secured the

\(^1\) *Hitavada*, p.1; 14 March 1929, p.2; 31 March 1929, p.2. Khaparde submitted to Butler the names of Hifazat Ali and K.P. Pande - both defectors from the Democratic party.

\(^2\) Ibid., 7 July 1929, pp.1, 8; 14 July 1929, p.8; MPS, GAD, 5-52, 1929, Appointment of Rai Bahadur P.C. Bose, B.A., LL.B., and R.M. Deshmukh, bar at law, as Ministers of the Government of the Central Provinces; *Hitavada*, 4 August 1929, p.3.
Chief Ministership, and he acquired a Hindi colleague who was reported to be 'virtually under the thumb of the Berar group'.¹ The Marathi region also won back Sir Montagu Butler to its side. Soon after Deshmukh took office, Butler went out on tour in Berar, and according to one observer he managed the task quite well. A little flattery of Berar and Beraris(;) some homely words of wisdom(;) some personal touches (and) a promise to examine all...(problems) sympathetically at Nagpur.²

Deshmukh's ministry also showed that it was strong enough to withstand the attempts to overthrow it. Its most consistent opponents were the Opposition parties consisting of the Congress party and the Democratic rump. One month after the ministry took office, it appeared likely that members of the Responsive Cooperation party from the division of Nagpur might also join with the Opposition to defeat the ministry. Leaders of that party, among them Dr Paranjpe and Dr Cholkar, opposed the ministry because it was unable to act 'independently... of the reserved half of the government and of the official bloc'.³ They thus supported the moves for a

¹ Hitavada, 14 November 1929, p.1
² Ibid., 4 August 1929, p.1.
³ Ibid., 22 August 1929, p.3; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 11 August 1929; ibid. Letter Pad 55, Draft Statement, 14 August 1929.
motion of no-confidence in the ministry which were being canvassed by its opponents in the Council. The younger section of the party, however, who actually sat in the legislature, supported the ministry, and when the Congress party moved the vote of 'no-confidence' on 23 August 1929, these members joined with other members of the Nationalist coalition to maintain the ministry in power. ¹ This test over, Berar won further laurels in January 1930. In that month, Sir Montagu Butler went on leave before returning to serve a second term as Governor of the Central Provinces. During his absence, the Home Member, S.B. Tambe of Berar, was appointed to serve as Acting Governor.²

By July 1930, the Responsivists had left the ministry to follow the example of the Congress in launching a campaign of civil disobedience against the government. This campaign formed the second of their moves to restore the political fortunes of the Responsive Cooperation party and revive the pre-eminence of the Marathi region in provincial politics. At first many Responsivist leaders were strongly opposed to the idea of civil disobedience, mainly because it was devised by Mahatma Gandhi and not by Lokamanya Tilak.³ The most

¹ Hitavada, 15 August 1929, p.1; CPLC, vol.2, 23 August 1929, pp.120-193.
² Hitavada, 14 November 1929, p.8.
³ See NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 16-17 July 1930. Dr Moonje believed that work in the Councils was 'the one link which bound us to the methods of political agitation of the great Lokamanya'.
persuasive advocate for a Responsivist campaign of civil disobedience was M.S. Aney. In advocating that campaign, however, Aney had not surrendered his faith in Tilak and Responsive Cooperation in favour of Gandhi and non-cooperation; but as he later confessed 'circumstances forced his hand and he could not do otherwise'.¹ Aney made his first move in support of civil disobedience in January 1930. In that month, when Congressmen all over India resigned their seats in the legislatures in preparation for civil disobedience, Aney, too, left the Central Legislative Assembly. Three months later he joined the Berar War Council - a body formed in place of the Provincial Congress Committee to conduct the campaign of civil disobedience in Berar.² The Khapardes - father and son - and Ramrao Deshmukh did not support Aney's move. At a meeting of the Responsive Cooperation party of Berar in Amravati on 19 April 1930,

Deshmukh said that only if he and Bose were allowed to continue as ministers for one year more, they would succeed in securing dominion status for India....G.S. Khaparde and B.G. Khaparde also supported the idea of work in the councils....Aney was present and it is reported that there were differences of opinion between the council workers and those who desired to leave the councils.³

Dr Moonje, too, was firmly of the opinion that the

¹ NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 21 August 1930.
² NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 1 February 1930; Mishra, op. cit., p.385.
³ NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 1 February 1930; Mishra, op. cit., p.385.
Responsivists should remain in the councils, regardless of what the Congress decided to do, and he refused to resign from the Assembly. Moreover, in January 1930, the same month in which Aney left the Assembly, Moonje tried to form an all-India Hindu party to contest the by-elections for the Assembly seats left vacant by the Congress party. Dr Moonje believed that such a party could advance the cause of self government, and feared that

if we are not sufficiently active and bold in this emergency, the whole initiative and the position and the honour of opposition would go to Mr Jinnah....This would be an humiliation to us Hindus....We shall never have a more favourable occasion than the present one to make our mark and regain the position of leadership in the legislature.

In spite of his conviction, however, Moonje failed to arouse any enthusiasm for his Hindu party, and he had to content himself with retaining his seat in the Assembly and spurning the pressures on him to resign.

By August 1930, however, most of the Responsivists had followed Aney from the legislatures and Deshmukh had resigned his ministry. Of all the reasons for this change of front, the Responsivists' loss of faith in the

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1 NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 30 March 1930.
2 Ibid., Assorted Letters, B.S. Moonje to M.R. Jayaker, 13 January 1930; B.S. Moonje to Vijayaraghavachariar, 13 January 1930.
3 Ibid., Diary 2, 18 January 1930; Hitavada, 23 January 1930, p.1.
value of holding office was one of the more important. This loss of faith was particularly evident in their attitude to Tambe. In April 1930, in his capacity as Acting Governor, Tambe warned the nationalists that the government would be 'compelled to take drastic action' against those who broke the law during a campaign of civil disobedience.¹ In his capacity as Acting Governor, Tambe also certified the cuts which the Nationalists made in the budget grants for 1930-1. His action in so doing drew a stinging retort from the Nationalist member for West Berar:

The recent restoration of the cuts passed by the legislative council by His Excellency has disillusioned (us)....His Excellency, who was once a disciple of Lokamanya Tilak and was once a Swarajist...has failed to catch the public imagination....He is nothing more than a mere Babu in office, who wholly depends upon the advice he gets from the government members in the council.²

And when in June 1930 B.G. Khaparde finally resigned his seat in the legislature, he did so in protest against the government's attitude towards the 'political propaganda and agitation in this province'.³

While the Responsivists desired to participate in civil disobedience as a means of attacking the government,

¹ Hitavada, 27 April 1930, p.9.
² Ibid., 27 March 1930, p.8. The member was T.S. Dighe.
³ Ibid., 26 June 1930, p.8.
they also desired to win popular support for their party. The Responsivist leaders were aware that, by seeming to support the government at a time when Congressmen were storming the barricades against it, they could seriously endanger their standing with the people. The leaders thus decided to follow the example of the Congress and begin agitation. In addition, the government was of the opinion that in resigning from the Council to participate in civil disobedience, the Responsivists were canvassing for the support of voters in the elections to the Council to be held in November 1930 - the last such under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. There was some truth in this opinion. Whatever the intentions of the Responsivists, between May and July 1930 they resigned from the Council and the ministry in preparation for civil disobedience.

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1 NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 30 March 1930. Aney's idea was that by resigning from the Councils, the Responsivists would 'strike the imagination of the people'.

2 Hitavada, 27 April 1930, p.9.

3 MPS, Political and Military Department (P&M) 302/CDM, 1930, Note on Civil Disobedience in the Central Provinces and Berar, p.6. This Note gives a shrewd analysis of the many reasons that prompted the Responsivists to undertake civil disobedience. Hitavada, 19 June 1930, p.1; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 21 May 1930. Aney told the ministers to resign 'and thus wash away their sins, so that they may have some luck during the next general elections'. NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 16 July 1930. G.S. Khaparde thought that the resignations of the Responsivists were 'due to election necessities and nothing else'. Ibid., Diary, 31 August 1930. Khaparde told the Commissioner of Berar that his son was participating in civil disobedience 'to bring back the people to responsive cooperation'.
The Responsivists won considerable public interest and support in launching their campaign of civil disobedience. Much of this was due to the nature of the campaign, which consisted of cutting wood and grass in government forests in defiance of the regulations in force therein. The leader of the campaign or Forest Satyagraha, as it was named, was M.S. Aney. As early as May 1930, Aney conceived the idea of launching a Satyagraha against the regulations relating to the use of government forests. He was aware that in so doing he would have the support of many of the poorer people in the villages of Berar who considered the regulations unduly repressive. Dr Moonje, however, began civil disobedience before Aney, using forms of agitation similar to those advocated by the Indian National Congress.

In May both men were overshadowed by the arrests of Abhyanker and Wamanrao Joshi; and Moonje had to face the additional possibility that some of his supporters in

1 Hitavada, 25 May 1930, pp.1, 13.
2 See MPS, Forest Department, (Forest), 1-41, 1931, Orders of Government that Forest Grievances be checked etc., Note by Mr De, Commissioner of Berar; MPS, Forest, 1-42, 1931, Correspondence Relating to Forest Grievances; MSN, Forest, 8-5, 1932, Grievances Against the Provisions of the Working Plan, Yeotmal. Among the grievances listed in these files are the need for grazing passes, the reduction of watering facilities, and restrictions on grazing.

3 NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 3 May 1930; Hitavada, 1 May 1930, p.7; 4 May 1930, p.10. Dr Moonje participated in civil disobedience by preparing salt, thus breaking the Salt Act; and by reading proscribed literature.
Nagpur might join forces with the Congress in attacking the government. Accordingly, Moonje and Aney combined to lead a united campaign of civil disobedience that drew its support from Responsivists in the divisions of Nagpur and Berar. The campaign followed Aney's original plan for a Forest Satyagraha, and began amid great excitement at Pusad near Yeotmal on 10 July 1930. As Dr Moonje records:

Having finished my morning exercise, bath and tea, I was at the meeting in the bed of the river exactly at 6.30 a.m. The audience was large and included several women. The tri-coloured flag was worshipped and Aney and 10 volunteers were presented with scythes, one each. Besides a scythe, Mr Aney was presented with an axe also for cutting wood in the forest. The whole function was most imposing. Then started the procession of volunteers under the leadership of Mr Aney, followed by the mass of women and men who had assembled for the meeting .... The volunteers then entered the forest and began to cut grass.

Following this incident, the police arrested Aney and his volunteers. And when Dr Moonje and other leaders and volunteers from Nagpur and Berar took part in the Satyagraha, the police arrested them also. On 24 July 1930 the Satyagraha at Pusad concluded, and the scene shifted to Amravati, where, according to G.S. Khaparde, his son had 'conceived the mad idea of following in the

1 Hitavada, Diary 2, 15 June 1930; Hitavada, 8 June 1930, p.8.
2 NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 10 July 1920.
3 Ibid., Diary 2, 10 July 1930; Diary 2, 11 July 1930.
steps of Aney and Moonje'. The father, however, seems to have dissuaded the son from doing so, and by the end of July the Responsivist Satyagraha was virtually at an end.

Ironically, Deshmukh resigned from the ministry just as the Satyagraha was drawing to a close. Deshmukh believed that the Responsive Cooperation party could hold office and attack the government at the same time. Consequently he was reluctant to resign his ministership. However, pressure from political colleagues in Berar and the Hindi supporters of his colleague Bose compelled him to take that step. Accordingly, on 12 July 1930, two days after Aney had launched the Forest Satyagraha at Pusad, Deshmukh informed Butler that he proposed to resign, but at the latter's request he agreed to continue in office until the end of the month. He thus remained in office during the height of the Satyagraha. On 30 July 1930 Deshmukh resigned from the ministry, and the Governor appointed his colleague Bose to administer his portfolios on a temporary basis.

One other development in the Marathi region, while not directly political, aided the Responsivist cause and

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1 Hitavada, 24 July 1930, p.8; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 16 July 1930.
2 See NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 8 July 1930; Hitavada, 24 May 1930, pp.1, 8; 6 July 1930, p.1; 20 July 1930, p.1.
helped restore the importance of the Marathi region in the life of the province. This development comprised the formation and extension of the *Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh*. The Sangh was neither a political nor a Responsivist organisation. Yet its objectives were implicitly, if not explicitly political, and many Responsivists were associated with it. The *Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh* began in Nagpur in October 1925. Its founder was Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a Brahman medical practitioner. Hedgewar had been profoundly disturbed by the development of the Khilafat movement between 1920-2 and the subsequent withdrawal of the Muslims from the Indian nationalist movement. The presence in India of organised Muslims with pan-Islamic sympathies and weak and disorganised Hindus was a matter of serious concern to Hedgewar, and he determined to form a group of men

to consolidate the predominant position of the Hindu society in Hindustan - the land of the Hindus...to give self respect as a Hindu...to respect and be proud of our old glory and culture, and create (the) ambition to restore Hinduism to its high pedestal of the world teacher of history.

To give practical shape to these aims, Hedgewar sought

1 *Shri Guruji: the Man and His Mission* (Delhi, 1956), p.25
2 Ibid., p.24.
to build a disciplined brotherhood of young men - their bodies strengthened by daily exercise; their ties with one another forged through frequent meeting; and their desire to spread respect for Hinduism confirmed by worship, regular instruction and the personal example of their leaders.\(^1\) By 1927 Hedgewar's plans had taken practical shape in the existence of a small number of branches of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh in the Marathi region. In 1927, too, Hedgewar decided to expand the Sangh throughout the Marathi and Hindi regions and to establish branches of the organisation in neighbouring provinces.\(^2\) So far as the Central Provinces and Berar was concerned, this decision resulted in a great expansion of the Sangh, particularly in the Marathi region. This expansion was evident from its membership figures, which, from a few hundred in 1927, by 1931 had grown to 6,000.\(^3\)

IV

Despite the Responsivists' counter-attack, from 1930 onwards the political initiative among non-Congressmen in the Central Provinces and Berar returned

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1 Curran, op. cit., pp.6, 14, 45-6.
2 Ibid., p.13.
to the Hindi region and Raghavendra Rao. The reasons for this lay in Rao's outstanding political skill and in his close relationship with the Governor, Sir Montagu Butler. Rao also derived considerable advantage from the fact that participation in civil disobedience had failed to induce the voters to return the Responsivist leader and former minister, Ramrao Deshmukh, to the Council. Deshmukh's colleague, Bose, also lost his seat. Soon after the collapse of the Responsivists' campaign of civil disobedience, the Responsivist leaders decided to contest the elections to the Council to be held in November 1930. Deshmukh evinced no particular desire to return to the legislature in Nagpur, as was evident from the discussions he had with G.S. Khaparde in Amravati on 5 August 1930. Khaparde reported that

He looked very care worn and tired. He wishes to stand for the Legislative Assembly. He feels, he said, tired of Nagpur council and local politics. He did not sit long, as my eldest son and his friends were not here.

Some time later, Deshmukh tried, but failed, to obtain Responsivist nomination for the Assembly seat of Berar. Consequently he agreed to suggestions from leaders of the party that he stand once again for the seat of Amravati Central in the provincial legislature. His opponent for the seat was Punjabrao Deshmukh, a barrister from Amravati. Like his namesake, Punjabrao

1 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 30 July 1930; ibid., 2 August 1930.
2 Ibid., 5 August 1950.
Deshmukh was a Maratha, but unlike Ramrao Deshmukh, he was strongly associated with the non-Brahman movement. And it was on the basis of his support among non-Brahmans, that Punjabrao Deshmukh defeated his rival in Amravati and in so doing weakened the Responsivist party in the Legislature. Bose, the colleague of Deshmukh, also lost his seat of Jabalpur. The defeat of both men ruled out any possibility that either would make an early return to the ministry.

Deshmukh's defeat coincided with the re-emergence of Raghavendra Rao as a commanding force in provincial politics. Rao's re-emergence had a rather dramatic quality. The Governor, Sir Montagu Butler, had a high opinion of Rao's political ability, and had long desired to bring him into the government. The defeat of Rao's ministry in 1929, and Tambe's occupancy of the Home Membership, however, made this impossible. In October

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1 See Hitavada, 20 April 1930, p.12; 1 May 1930, p.9; 5 June 1930, p.6; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 15 October 1930. From April–June 1930 P.S. Deshmukh toured the district of Amravati on foot to 'acquaint the villagers with what is happening in the country'. This tour undoubtedly helped him to win the elections.

2 Hitavada, 13 November 1930, p.1; 16 November 1930, p.9. The Congress was largely responsible for the defeat of Bose.

3 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 13 February 1929; Hitavada, 27 January 1929, p.2; 28 February 1929, p.1; 7 March 1929, p.1; 10 March 1929, p.2; 21 July 1929, p.7. D.P. Mishra stated that during 1929 Butler 'was averse to the formation of any ministry in which Rao was not included'. 
1930 Tambe retired from the Home Membership, and Butler seized the opportunity to appoint Raghavendra Rao as the new Home Member. The appointment was made permanent in January 1931.\(^1\) Rao's appointment as Home Member heralded the permanent elevation of the Hindi region to a place of power in the government. It also marked the beginning of an extraordinary political relationship between Rao and Butler that helped the province to weather the storms of political instability and prepare for the introduction of the reformed constitution in 1937. The exchange of letters between Rao and Butler at the time of the former's permanent appointment as Home Member demonstrate the quality of this relationship. On 25 January 1931 Butler wrote to Rao

> I understand that an announcement will be made any moment now that His Majesty has been pleased to appoint you permanently to my council in Mr Tambe's place. As I mentioned to you before, you will not be likely to run the full five years as the new constitution should be in force before then, but I look forward to our association together for whatever period it may be.\(^2\)

Four days later, on receiving formal notification of the appointment, Rao replied:

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1. NML, Rao MS, T.F. Selby to E.R. Rao, 8 October 1930. A marginal note by Rao reads: Reached Pachmarhi at 9.30 and was offered the Home-Membership, accepted and immediately taken to the cabinet meeting, sworn and returned a full-fledged executive councillor. Sgd. ERR, 8-10-30; Hitavada, 1 February 1931, p.8.

Dr E. Raghavendra Rao
Just a line to say how deeply I feel the obligation I am under to Your Excellency for my permanent appointment to the council by his Majesty. For this and all your personal kindness to me since you joined the province, I desire to thank you most warmly.¹

The key to Rao's power lay in the Legislative Council. For the greater part of the period from 1930-7, Rao could rely on the support of a majority of members in the Council. These members were grouped together into the Democratic 'party', a body originally formed by Rao in 1928. Some of this support Rao gained by his own powers of leadership, and some by the skilful distribution of patronage.² Among the groups from which Rao drew support were the Hindi section of the Democratic 'party', and some of the Hindi members who were elected to the Council in place of the Congressmen from that region who had resigned their seats in 1930.³ From 1930 onwards, Rao also continued to draw support from the Depressed members, the Muslims, some non-Brahmans from the Marathi region, and the official bloc which the

¹ NML, E.R. Rao to Sir M. Butler, 29 January 1931.
³ This and the following information on the Democratic 'party' comes from Hitavada, 27 November 1930, p.1; 4 December 1930, pp.1 and 9; 7 December 1930, pp.1 and 8; 14 December 1930, p.8; 18 December 1930, p.8. In the Hitavada, 10 September 1931, p.9, Kedar reveals that the Home Member attended meetings of the Democratic 'party' to direct its behaviour in the Council.
Governor brought to full strength to reinforce Rao's position in the Council. From this pool of members, Butler and Rao formed their successive ministries. The first such ministry was that formed from the Democratic and the non-Brahman 'parties'. On 15 December 1930, the Governor appointed the Democrat G.P. Jaiswal, a pleader from the division of Jabalpur, and Punjabrao Deshmukh, of the non-Brahman 'party', Ministers for Industries and Education respectively. 1

Between 1931-3 Rao demonstrated his grip on provincial politics by frustrating continued attempts to unseat this ministry. In doing so he retained political initiative with the Hindi region and ensured the continued stability of political life in the province. There were two major assaults on the ministry formed by Deshmukh and Jaiswal, and both of them originated in the Marathi section of the Council. The first, in 1931, was led by B.G. Khaparde and T.J. Kedar, Rao's former colleague in the ministry, who was still a member of the Democratic 'party'. These men or their supporters moved resolutions against the government in January 1931, and attacked the budget in March. 2 In August of the same year Kedar launched another attack against Rao, because the latter had prevented him from winning the election

1 Ibid., 18 December 1930, p.9.
2 For some examples of this, see CPLC, vol.1, 17 January 1931, pp.223-45; ibid., 27 February 1931, pp.420-51; ibid., 28 February 1931, pp.486-544; ibid., 2 March 1931, pp.574-635.
for the vacant Presidentship of the Council. To give
force to his attack, Kedar formed the People's 'party'
consisting of some members of the Democratic 'party'
and placed the group at the disposal of the Opposition.1
Rao's skill in debate, his fine sense of tactics and
strategy, and his ability to control the Democratic
'party', however, countered all attacks. The Hitavada,
reviewing Rao's performance during the budget session
in March 1931 when the Opposition attacked his Departments
of Law and Order, commented:

One of the noteworthy features of the budget
session was the very easy manner in which the
honourable Mr Rao was able to carry through the
council the budgets of the departments under
his charge. Though there was much discussion,
there was little or no reduction in the
allotments provided for the police, jail and
judicial departments: a unique achievement.
This was rendered possible because the Home
Member had the backing of the Democratic party
in the council.2

In 1933 a group of non-Brahman Democrats launched
the second assault on the ministry. P.S. Deshmukh,
however, anticipating defeat, resigned from office and
helped to bring in a new ministry that remained loyal to

1 Hitavada, 7 June 1931, p.7; 12 July 1931, p.10;
13 August 1931, p.7; 20 August 1931, pp.7 and 8;
27 August 1931. The Presidentship of the Council fell
vacant when Sir S.M. Chitnavis died in June 1931. Kedar
wanted the post, but Rao outmanoeuvred him, securing the
post for S.W.A. Rizvi, a Muslim councillor. In so doing
Rao drew a number of Muslim members into the Democratic
'party'.
2 Hitavada, 21 March 1921, p.1.
the Home Member, Raghavendra Rao. The leader of the
dissident non-Brahman Democrats was K.S. Naidu of Wardha,
who was also leader of the Democratic 'party' in the
Council. Between 1931-2 Naidu gradually weakened in
his allegiance to the Democratic 'party', and in 1933
launched a full scale attempt to unseat the ministry.  
The reasons for Naidu's withdrawal of support from the
Democratic party and his attack on the ministry
concerned the non-Brahman movement. Naidu and
P.S. Deshmukh were both members of the non-Brahman party.
But between 1932-3 differences developed between them on
the grounds that Deshmukh was giving preference to
members of the Maratha community in making government
appointments and nominations; and that he was leading
a non-Brahman agriculturists' association, the Shetkari
Sangh, which Naidu considered 'hostile to the interests
of the non-Brahman party'.  

The Responsivists of Berar took immediate advantage of this rift to ally with Naidu
and defeat the ministry. On 23 April 1933 the Hitavada
reported that

(Ramrao) Deshmukh (was) . . . negotiating a sort of
alliance between the Nationalist and Democratic
parties. Consultations are said to be going on

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For evidence of Naidu's opposition to the ministry,
see CPLC, vol.2, 31 August 1931, p.303; ibid., p.316;
ibid., 1 September 1931, p.387; ibid., vol.3, 1 March
1932, pp.673-4.

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Ibid., vol.3, 20 January 1932, pp.146-7; Hitavada,
21 January 1932, p.1; 9 March 1933, p.7; 18 May 1933,
p.5; 15 June 1933, p.5; 22 June 1933, p.8.
between him and the leader of the Democratic party....(This is) very intriguing.\textsuperscript{1}

The rumoured alliance did materialise, but by that time P.S. Deshmukh had resigned from the ministry and, with no visible opposition from Raghavendra Rao, secured the support of the People's 'party', the Muslims, the Depressed members, the Hindi members and some non-Brahmans for another Democratic ministry.\textsuperscript{2} The ministers proposed by Deshmukh, and presumably accepted by Rao, were Muhammad Yusuf Shareef, a Muslim barrister from Nagpur; and V.B. Chaobal, a young non-Brahman lawyer from Amravati, whom the \textit{Hitavada} described as 'more or less (Deshmukh's)...alter ego'. The Governor, aware perhaps that the combinations and personalities behind the proposed ministers would ensure some continuation in the administration, accepted the nominees and on 5 August 1933 he installed the new ministers in office.\textsuperscript{3}

V

The first three years of Rao's Home Membership coincided with a further decline in the political fortunes of the Responsivist party and the Marathi region. This decline was evident in the nature of the legislation

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Hitavada}, 23 April 1933, p.1.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 25 May 1933, p.1; 30 July 1933, p.7-8; 3 August 1933, pp.5, 6 and 8; 6 August 1933, p.8.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., 6 August 1933, pp.7, 8 and 9.
sponsored by the government; in the policy it followed in making appointments to the government service; in the rumoured failure of the government to defend the interests of Berar; and in the failure of Moonje and the leaders of Berar to secure their political objectives at the discussions on the new constitution for India held in London between 1930-3.

The Responsivists suffered major reverses in the legislation sponsored by the government and its policy on appointments to the government service between 1930-3. The legislation and the policy on appointments both represented an attempt by Deshmukh and Rao, who were supporters of the non-Brahman movement, to put the principles of that movement into practice. As for legislation, the Responsivist reverse was most clearly evident in the Hindu Religious and Charitable Trusts Act which provided for the 'satisfactory management' of religious and charitable endowments. In so doing the Act encroached upon the private management of such assets, which in many cases were in the hands of Brahmans from whom the Responsivist party drew a great deal of support.¹ So far as appointments were concerned, on 29 January 1932 the government issued a Circular in which it declared that its policy in making appointments was to 'secure a fair and adequate representation of the various communities'.² This statement enabled the government to discriminate against the Brahman community

¹ See CPLC, vol.6, 24 July 1933, pp.19-37.
and to favour the non-Brahman community when making appointments - a policy that the Responsive Cooperation party firmly opposed. One observer described the practical results of the Circulars:

It is well known to everybody how Mr Kolte, a well qualified and local non Brahmin candidate, was preferred to a slightly better qualified Mr Pendse a Brahmin for the lectureship in Marathi. It is also well known that he (i.e. PS Deshmukh) is striving to give adequate number of seats to the non Brahmins in schools and colleges, a proposal which it is rumoured has made many Brahmans angry.

For the same reason, the Responsivists could not have welcomed the Circular issued by the government on 15 December 1932, forbidding government servants from taking part in the activities of the Rashtriya Swayam Sangh. For at the time the Sangh was a predominantly Brahman organisation whose ideology closely resembled that of the Responsivist party.

The Responsivists also claimed that the ministry which held office under the patronage of Rao had failed to protect the interests of Berar. As proof of this claim, the Responsivists complained that the government had refused to suspend the revised land settlement,

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1 See Hitavada, 27 November 1932, p.1, 29 June 1933, p.8; CPLC, vol.2, 31 August 1931, pp.315-37, particularly the speech by B.G. Khaparde, pp.323-4; MPS, Appointments Department, 15-48, 1933, Notes Regarding the Constitution of Selection Committees.

2 Hitavada, 6 July 1933, p.7.

despite insistent demands from the agriculturists of Berar. The Responsivists also attacked the government for not granting remissions or suspensions of revenue to help farmers in Berar to cushion the effects of depressed market conditions and a run of poor seasons. Furthermore, the Responsivists pointed out that since their exclusion from the government, the Sim ratio had fallen to its lowest level. For this development they blamed P.S. Deshmukh, the 'so called Berar minister'.

During the discussion on the budget on 28 February 1933, a non-Brahman from Berar revealed that

Since the present minister from Berar has been installed on the ministerial gadi, we are watching how far he has proven himself to be a failure. He could not raise the proportion of the Sim formula so far. The percentage has still gone down this year....(I desire) to bring to the notice that the government should guard the interests of the Berar people who are a hopeless minority in this house.

3 Ibid., vol.7, 26 February 1934, p.451. In 1930-1, the proportions of divisible revenue shared by the Central Provinces and Berar respectively were 66 per cent and 34 per cent; in 1931-2, 70 per cent and 30 per cent; in 1932-3, 69 per cent and 31 per cent; in 1933-4, 68 per cent and 32 per cent; and in 1934-5, 68.5 per cent and 31.5 per cent.
5 Ibid., vol.5, 28 February 1933, p.660. The member was U.S. Patil, a supporter of the Responsivist party.
The failure of the government to sponsor the demand for a separate province of Berar during the discussions on the proposed constitution for India came as a major reverse to the Responsivist party in Berar. These discussions devolved around three Round Table Conferences held in London between 1930-3. At these Conferences, Indian politicians presented their views on the subject of a constitution for India. The British government continued its deliberations on the subject for a further two years after 1933, and then embodied its conclusions in the Government of India Act of 1935. Between 1930-3 the Responsivists of Berar tried to persuade the provincial government to support the formation of a separate Berar under the new constitution.\(^1\) The Responsivists' demand for a separate Berar rested on the claim that in a united province comprising the Central Provinces and Berar the interests of Berar would suffer. As one Responsivist complained

I am afraid there will be no device under the new constitution such as the Sim formula... whereby surplus Berar revenue can be spent on Berar....In the new constitution...there will be no government block. There will be no nominations. We know that in the past, whenever the government wanted to help the Berar members with some particular demand, government had to utilise its own strength to support the Berar case....Under the new constitution, whatever the weightage the Berar members will have,...they will never be able to carry any resolution of theirs with a view

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to get the revenues of Berar spent in Berar.\[^1\]

As their first move to effect the separation of Berar from the Central Provinces, the Responsivists tried to persuade the Government of India to accredit them to the Second Round Table Conference in 1931. Tambe had attended the first such Conference in 1930, but apparently the question of Berar did not come up for discussion. The Responsivists were thus unwilling to let the next Conference pass without presenting their case. Accordingly, on 6 May 1931 Ramrao Deshmukh presented Berar's case for separation from the Central Provinces to the Viceroy, and requested him to give Berar a seat at the next Round Table Conference. The grounds on which Deshmukh made his request were that

Berar, being a peculiar unit with a position dissimilar to any other in India, requires a special representation on the Round Table Conference if justice is to be done to her case....(I) request the name of M.S. Aney to represent Berar.\[^2\]

After Deshmukh had made his request, the Responsivists formed a committee from all political parties in Berar, known as the All Parties Committee, to negotiate with the

\[^1\] CPLC, p.297. The speaker was R.A. Kanitkar.

\[^2\] NAI, Reforms Department (cited hereafter as Reforms), 35/31-R, KW III, Representation of Various Interests on the Round Table Conference. Letter from R.M. Deshmukh to the Viceroy; Hitavada, 7 May 1931, p.10. Lord Irwin completed his term as Viceroy in 1931, and Lord Willingdon succeeded him in the same year.
British government on the future of Berar.\(^1\) The Committee immediately set to work. By August 1931 they had produced a Memorial setting out the case for the separation of Berar, and appointed R.A. Kanitkar of Buldhana to take it to London for use 'as occasion offers'.\(^2\)

The Round Table Conference made only a marginal use of the Responsivists' Memorial on the separation of Berar. For this the provincial government was in great measure responsible. On the question of a new constitution, the government took sides with the Central Provinces (which largely comprised the Hindi region) and urged that if Berar became a separate province, the Central Provinces would not be able to function as a viable economic unit.\(^3\) Moreover, in the representations which the provincial government sent to the Government of India on the issue, it belittled the Responsivists and their idea of a


\(^3\) NAI, Reforms, 175/1/32, Question of the Administration of the Berars under the New Constitution. Letter from Chief Secretary to the Government of the Central Provinces, 17 February 1932.
separate Berar. It urged the Government of India not to take any serious notice of the views of Ramrao Deshmukh, and attacked the Memorial prepared by the All Parties Committee, declaring that

> it purports to be signed by certain members of the legislative council who do not belong to the Nationalist...party, and who are known to be out of sympathy with separation....(Thus) doubt exists about the bonafides of the memorialists, and Governor in council hopes Secretary of State will be warned that it will not be safe to receive the memorial until it has been authenticated through the local government. It is also desirable that the credentials of R.A. Kanitkar should be examined carefully before he is heard.

Thus, when the Responsivists of Berar forwarded their Memorial to the Government of India, the latter suppressed the document. Consequently, although Tambe was an accredited member of the Conference, the British officials in charge of the discussions did not raise the issue of Berar at all. And there the matter would have rested, had not the delegation from Hyderabad raised it during the closing hours of the Conference. When they did so, Dr Moonje, who was representing the Hindu Mahasabha at the Conference, urged Tambe to make a statement in reply:

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1 NAI, Reforms 118/30, Notes by K.S. Fitze on Berar, p.19; ibid., 51/3/33, Non-official Evidence Before the Joint Select Committee, Letter from G.P. Burton, Chief Secretary to the Government of the Central Provinces, 2 September 1931.

2 Ibid.

3 *Hitavada*, 6 December 1931, p.7.
I told Mr Tambe to make a request to the Prime Minister to make him a concession of a few minutes to speak in reply...only so far as the question of Berar is concerned. He got the concession and then I told him to go home at once and write out a small note in consultation with Kanitkar and come back and read it out. 'Quick;' I said....(On his return) Mr Tambe made a short speech and read out the statement. That was all.¹

The second Round Table Conference showed that, so far as the British authorities were concerned, the separation of Berar was not a real issue. This was confirmed between 1932-3 as the British and Indian governments turned their attention to persuading the Nizam of Hyderabad to allow Berar to join a federation of Indian states and provinces as an integral part of the Central Provinces.² By the end of 1933 these efforts had achieved complete success. On 29 November 1933 the Viceroy administered a final rebuff to the Responsivists when he announced at a banquet in Hyderabad that the Nizam was

prepared to accede to the federation in respect of his territories known as the Berars and desires that these territories together with the Central Provinces should be administered together as if they were one province to be known by the name of the Central Provinces and the Berars.³

¹ NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 5, 14 March 1933.
² See NAI, Reforms, 175/1/32, Question of the Administration of the Berars under the New Constitution; ibid., 51/3/33-R and KW, Non-official Evidence before the Joint Select Committee; ibid., 133/33- R and KW, Question of the Administration of the Berars under the New Constitution.
³ Ibid., p.22.
The Responsivists of the Marathi region suffered a further defeat at the Round Table Conferences held in London between 1930-3. This defeat concerned the rejection by the British government of the claims which Moonje advanced at the Conferences on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha. Moonje's overriding concern in participating in the discussions was that the British government should not grant the Muslims statutory majorities in Bengal, the Punjab, and other areas in north-western India, as he feared that such provisions would seriously endanger the unity of India. As he wrote in August 1930:

I have already long ago thought over the matter and made up my mind...I cannot let...Hindus of the Congress school of thought, or...Hindus...like Pandit Malaviya...or the Liberals go...to barter away the whole future destiny of India and the great Hindu community...at the cost of true nationalism and the evolution of India as a solid united nation with several sects and communities welded into one. I must have my protest recorded and carry the message of the mission of the Mahasabha right up to the heart of the British Empire.

Moonje indeed carried the message of the Mahasabha to London, but otherwise he achieved practically no result. The British government agreed to create separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims, and granted the latter statutory majorities in Bengal, the Punjab and other

1 Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1930, p.324 (b-d); NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 61, B.S. Moonje to M.R. Jayaker, 4 September 1930; Letter Pad 65, B.S. Moonje to Mr Vijayaraghavachariar, 18 September 1930, B.S. Moonje to General Secretary, Hindu Mahasabha, 2 October 1930.

2 Ibid., Diary 2, 29 August 1930.
newly created provinces in northern India.¹

VI

While Marathi politicians and the Marathi region declined in importance, between 1934-7 the political fortunes of Rao and the Hindi region rose to new heights. During this period, Rao proceeded from triumph to triumph, 'like a perpetual film reel', as one observer remarked.² Rao's first triumph occurred in 1934, when he forestalled an attempt by the Responsivists to remove Shareef and Chaobal from the ministry. He did so by removing them himself, and calling into being a ministry of his own choosing which agreed to work under his leadership. The ministry of Shareef and Chaobal had many weaknesses. Among these were the divisions between its supporters.³ The Opposition, too, was a force to be reckoned with. In 1934 Naidu continued his alliance with the Responsivists, while the latter grimly determined to retrieve lost ground and reinstate themselves in office.⁴

¹ NLI, Letter Pad 64, B.S. Moonje to M.S. Aney, 19 October 1931; Diary 4, 1 December 1931; Diary 5, 19 August 1932; Diary 5, 28 August 1932; Letter Pad 67, B.S. Moonje to Mr Kelker, 18 October 1932.
³ Hitavada, 28 January 1933, p.1; 3 August 1933, p.6; 23 November 1933, p.1; 22 February 1934, p.1.
⁴ Ibid., 29 October 1933, p.9; 19 November 1933, p.5; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 6, 27 November 1933. In the latter extract, Moonje notes that Naidu was reportedly 'coming round to the views of the Mahasabha'.

The Responsivists received an opportunity to do so in 1933 when the government issued a Memorandum warning local bodies against allowing their employees to participate in the activities of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. During the thirties, the Sangh caused the government some concern owing to the increasing tendency of its leaders to take part in political activities.¹ This concern was reflected in a government report on the demonstration organised by the Sangh in Nagpur at Dassera 1932, when 1,000 uniformed volunteers marched past the Raja of Nagpur, Dr Hedgewar and others. The report ran thus:

The drill is reported to have been good. The chief speakers at the celebrations were Munje and Hedgewar, the second of whom gave an objectionable and provocative address, the main gist of which was the settlement of the political future of India was for the Hindus alone to decide. No interference by foreigners or by non Hindu residents of India should be brooked.²

By the end of 1932, the Sangh's activities so concerned the government that it issued a Circular prohibiting government servants from participating in its activities.³ During 1933 the government discovered that some teachers in the schools controlled by District Councils were members of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. Accordingly,

² NAI, Home Poll, 18/13, FR, First Half of October 1932, p.1. For other information on the activities of the Sangh, see NAI, Home Poll, F-88, 1933, Activities of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh.
³ See p.224.
in December 1933, it issued a Memorandum through the Department of Local Self Government warning local bodies against allowing 'their servants to be associated with any private organisation of a communal nature.'

Incensed by the Memorandum, the Responsivists made a determined effort to overthrow the ministry. One important reason for their chagrin, apart from the Memorandum's threat to the Rashtra Swayam Sewak Sangh, was that it was the Muslim Minister for Local Self Government, M.Y. Shareef, who had signed the document. Intense activity among the Responsivists and other members of the Nationalist 'party' followed the publication of the Memorandum. The leader of this activity was Dr Moonje, who urged that the Responsivists must either ask Shareef 'to withdraw the circular or turn him out'. R.M. Deshmukh, Naidu and the leader of the Depressed members in the Council also held this view. The government, however, stood firmly by the Memorandum, whereupon Moonje and his followers initiated moves to defeat the ministry. They

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2 The Circular of 1932 caused a flurry in Responsivist circles, but nothing came of it. See NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 5, 8 January 1933; 10 January 1933; 18 January 1933; 20 January 1933; 21 January 1933, 7 March 1933; 14 March 1933.
3 NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 6, 15 January 1934.
5 For Fao's defence of the government's action, see CPLC, vol.7, 3 March 1934, pp.695-702.
tried first to win the support of the Democrats, the People's 'party', and a small group of Hindi councillors who had broken away from that 'party'.1 But these efforts were unsuccessful, and the Responsivists next attempted to defeat and demoralise the ministers and their supporters on the floor of the House.

Rao countered these tactics with a brilliant move that further strengthened his position in the government. Events in the legislature during March 1934 revealed the precarious position of the ministry and the Democratic 'party'.2 Time and again the Opposition challenged the ministry in divisions and compelled the government to use all the means at its command to save the ministry from defeat. This was evident in a division on 2 March 1934, when a member reported seeing

some officials and non officials embracing each other in the lobbies...It may be called by the prosaic name of wrestling...(and) it should be prevented....In plain and simple language, it so happened that some of our voters were physically, bodily and forcibly removed from us ....One was in the grips of one of the highest officials in this house. I tried to extricate the gentleman and the official was angry....The whipping is being actually carried out and a bit too hard.3

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1 See NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 6, 22 January 1934; ibid., 26 January 1934; Diary 7, 7 March 1934; ibid., 8 March 1934.
2 See, for instance, CPLC, vol.7, 2 March 1934, pp.644-61; ibid., pp.661-8; ibid., 3 March 1934, 711-753; ibid., 5 March 1934, pp.822-63; ibid., 7 March 1934, pp.935-44.
3 Ibid., vol.7, 3 March 1934, pp.710-1. The member was B.G. Khaparde. Khaparde later denied that the words 'one of the highest officials in this house' referred to Rao.
This particular division proved inconclusive, but in subsequent divisions the government was defeated.\(^1\) Despite this, the ministry refused to resign. This so inflamed the Opposition, that on 9 March 1934 they brought a vote of no-confidence against Shareef. There were frenzied scenes in the House when the motion was put, but the President saved Shareef by his casting vote.\(^2\)

It was clear to Rao that the government could not operate for long under such conditions. Already he had been compelled to abandon important legislation.\(^3\) His own position as the leading member of the government was also in danger. Considerable tension existed between Rao and some of the senior British civilians, possibly owing to the power that Rao had acquired during the regime of Sir Montagu Butler.\(^4\) Consequently, although Rao believed that Shareef's ministry ought to give way to a more stable ministry, the civil servants decided to

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\(^1\) See CPLC, vol. 7, 2 March 1934, p. 665; ibid., 5 March 1934, pp. 822-63; ibid., 9 March 1934, pp. 1104-5.

\(^2\) Ibid., vol. 7, 9 March 1934, pp. 1104-50.

\(^3\) Ibid., vol. 7, 19 January 1934, pp. 13-16; ibid., 22 January 1934, pp. 121-8; 130-2; ibid., 23 January 1934, pp. 147-67.

\(^4\) NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 68, B.S. Moonje to Mr Dick, 30 November 1933; ibid., Diary 7, 8 March 1934; NML, Rao MS, Mrs P.J.H. Stent to E.R. Rao, 15 July 1937. There was friction, for instance, between Rao and Eyre Gordon, the Revenue Member, possibly owing to Rao's aspirations to the Revenue portfolio. See NML, Rao MS, E.R. Rao to Sir M. Butler, 5 July 1932; ibid., Sir M. Butler to E.R. Rao, 9 July 1932. There was also friction between Rao and Hyde Gowan, who in 1932 was a member of the Executive Council of the Central Provinces.
support the tottering ministry. In so doing, they aimed to 'humiliate Rao and teach him a lesson'.\(^1\) Rao's position was further weakened by the fact that in 1933, Hyde Gowan, the former Chief Secretary to the government, had succeeded Butler as Governor of the Central Provinces. Gowan lacked Butler's political flair, and found it difficult to work with Rao.\(^2\) The latter thus decided to re-assert his power and create the conditions for stable government at the same time. Accordingly, during March 1934 Rao abandoned Shareef and Chaobal for a ministry of his own choosing.\(^3\) The immediate fruits of this decision were evident in the successful vote of no-confidence against Chaobal in the Council on 9 March 1934.\(^4\) A week later B.G. Khaparde became chief minister, bringing in as his colleague in the ministry K.S. Naidu.\(^5\)

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1. NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 7, 8 March 1934.
2. NML, AICC, P-13, 1937-8, Note by S.D. Mishra, member of the Bilaspur Enquiry Committee, 17 March 1937. There were rumours that Rao was grieved at not being appointed Governor when Butler's term expired. This was possibly another source of the friction between himself and Gowan.
3. NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 4 April 1934. Kedar and Shareef went to Delhi to persuade the Government of India to demote Rao. See also CPLC, vol.8, 18 August 1934, pp.145-7, 170-2; ibid., 20 August 1934, pp.257-8. This extract relates to the charges which Shareef brought against Rao in his journal, the People's Voice, on 14 and 28 March 1934.
So began a further three years of triumph for Raghavendra Rao and the Hindi region. During this period, the ministry came under constant attack, but Rao's tactical skill averted any defeat.\(^1\) Khaparde, too, assisted the province to return to stable and efficient government, particularly by his work in the Secretariat, where he won a good reputation from those who associated with him. As his aging father in Amravati recorded with some pride:

> The honourable Sir M. Dadabhoy turned up with a companion and we sat talking for a good while.... He said my eldest son Baba is gathering golden opinions about himself and all the officers and people speak very highly of him. I am naturally very glad to hear it.\(^2\)

Despite Khaparde's inclusion in the government, however, it was the Hindi region and not Berar that benefited from the final decisions affecting the province under the new constitution. These decisions, made in 1934-5, represented a victory for the views of Raghavendra Rao. The decisions concerned the utilisation of the revenues of Berar in the united province, and the representation to be given to Berar in the new legislature. As for the revenues, the Responsivists held that they 'should be spent wholly or mainly' in Berar.\(^3\) The government, however, maintained that the revenues should be spent in the united province, as they had been

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2. NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 28 August 1934; ibid., 12 October 1935.
in the former Central Provinces. This was also the view of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform which issued its report in November 1934. In the section devoted to the revenues of Berar, the Committee advocated the pooling of revenues from the Central Provinces and Berar, and, in place of the Sim ratio, suggested

that the Governor might appropriately be directed in his instrument of instructions to constitute some impartial body to advise him on the principles which should be followed in the distribution of revenues.2

This judgement represented a victory for Rao and the less wealthy Hindi region, and a crushing defeat for the Responsivists and Berar.

The Responsivists also lost heavily to the Hindi region in their attempt to secure a weightage of seats for Berar in the new legislature. They sought weightage to prevent the continued defeat of members from Berar by the more numerous members from the Central Provinces.3 Hindi leaders, however, rejected the notion of weightage, and asserted that the strength in numbers was the only

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1 This is the logical deduction from the government's view that, were Berar separated from the Central Provinces, the latter would become a deficit province. See also Indian Delimitation Committee, vol.1, Report (Simla, 1936), p.75.


3 See Hitavada, 14 July 1935, p.16; Delimitation Committee Report, op. cit., pp.73-4.
acceptable basis on which to assess representation in the Council. In 1933 the provincial government established a committee to decide the issue, but the representatives of Berar and the Hindi region maintained their respective positions and a deadlock ensued. Accordingly the government put forward a compromise scheme which the Government of India approved in 1935. This scheme gave Berar a larger representation in the new legislature than the territory would have obtained on the basis of its population, but it completely rejected the claim for weightage 'on the scale claimed by Berar'.

Rao capped these victories by a further series of political triumphs. Between 1934-6 he was responsible for the enactment of important legislation designed to lift the province out of the financial doldrums and prepare it to enter the period of provincial autonomy.

1 Hitavada, 21 July 1934, p.7; 25 July 1935, p.14; Delimitation Committee Report, op. cit., p.74; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 7, 26 July 1935.
2 Hitavada, 4 August 1935, p.5; Delimitation Committee Report, op. cit., pp.74-5.
4 Ibid., p.75; under the final arrangements Berar secured 22 general reserved and special seats; the four Marathi districts of the Central Provinces 18 seats; and the Hindi region 49 seats. There were in addition 14 Muslim and 9 special seats, the latter allotted to the Central Provinces.
under the new constitution. Perhaps the most significant acts of legislation were those relating to the establishment of the High Court of the Central Provinces and Berar. This was a project on which Rao had 'set his heart'. But he was not merely content to raise the existing Court of the Judicial Commissioner to that of a High Court of Judicature. He also desired to house the Court in a building which would 'go down to posterity as a fine specimen of classical architecture'. The bill to establish the Court, the taxation measures to finance the project, and Rao's vision of a splendid building dominating the civil lines of Nagpur drew strong criticism inside the Council. This was particularly evident during the debate on the Court Fees Amendment bill, which established the High Court. The *Hitavada* reported that

The Nationalist party showed its teeth and expressed its determination to fight the bill tooth and nail....The Home Member was feverishly canvassing all available strength in favour of the bill though some of the government members were despondent....Rao again successfully foiled the efforts of the

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1. This legislation included the following: the Motor Vehicles Taxation Act 1934; the Games Act 1934; and the Court Fees Amendment Act.


3. The phrase was that of K.P. Pande, the member for Jabalpur North. CPLC, vol.9, 24 February 1936, p.530.

opposition to delay the consideration of the bill... He knows his chessboard and moves his men well.  

As the *Hitavada* intimated, Rao proved master of the situation, and the taxation measures and the Court Fees bill passed into law. Consequently, on 2 January 1936, the Secretary of State issued letters patent from London constituting the High Court of the Central Provinces and Berar.  

One further honour, more brilliant perhaps than the creation of the High Court, awaited Rao before he completed his term as Home Member. Early in 1936 it became known that Sir Hyde Gowan was to proceed on leave for four months prior to the inauguration of the united Central Provinces and Berar. To govern the province in his absence, Gowan nominated Rao as some small return for the invaluable work which you have done for the province, and in gratitude for the unfailing help and support which you have given to me, and which have rendered my task far lighter than I ever dreamed it could be.  

The British government approved the nomination, and on 1 April 1936, the King issued a warrant appointing Rao as Acting Governor of the Central Provinces. The period of the appointment was from 16 May until 11 September.

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1936. It was a proud day for Rao when he took the oath at Pachmarhi on 16 May and assumed the office which Butler, his political mentor, had once occupied. 'I felt a trifle embarrassed', he later confessed to Butler, '(but) the short period passed away without a hitch and I was able to hand back the province intact'. But there was a great deal more to Rao's Governorship than his own understatement would indicate. A letter written by a senior official to Rao after he had returned to his duties as Home Member indicates how one Indian Governor acquitted himself:

Yesterday most people who count had only one thought - the regime of the last four months. By common consent all went off so well that the name of Mother India stood far higher than it did on 15 May! One's thought naturally went to Mr Tambe's governorship. He came and went unnoticed and without leaving any impression.... Chitham said, and I heard someone (else) also, but I can't recollect his name just at present, that His Excellency has done marvellously in these four months. Extensive touring, lavish entertainment, judicious mixing of parties, though-provoking speeches, and in spite of Nagpur-directed Congress propaganda, spontaneous and cordial welcome all round, have impressed and been noted in all quarters, friendly and otherwise. For us, generally, no less than individually Government House no more. We

1 MPS, GAD, 1-7, 1936, Appointment of the Honourable Mr E. Raghavendra Rao as Acting Governor of the Central Provinces during the Absence on Leave of His Excellency Sir Hyde Gowan, pp.27-8.

now revert to normal times....Sorry to write such rubbish and so long.¹

Rao's final months in Nagpur were a strange anticlimax to his career as Home Member and Acting Governor. In February 1937 the first elections to the new Legislative Assembly of the Central Provinces and Berar took place. At these elections the Congress won an overwhelming victory over its opponents, among whom was Raghavendra Rao. As the national leadership of the Congress at first refused to allow its members to take office under the new constitution, on 28 March 1937 Sir Hyde Gowan invited Rao to form a ministry.² Rao agreed to do so, although he had the support of a small minority in the Assembly, and within a few days had assumed office as Premier.³ Rao's Premiership lasted for three months - 'an awful three months' he later described it - in which he was 'painted in the press and on the platform as public enemy number 1' for assuming office without a mandate from the electorate.⁴ Despite

¹ NML, Rao MS, C.C. Desai (?) to E.R. Rao, 12 September 1936. Sir Charles Chitham was Inspector General of Police.
³ Rao's supporters numbered 25. His ministers were B.G. Khaparde and S.W.A. Rizvi.
this criticism, Rao hung on until 14 July 1937. On that date a ministry formed by members of the Indian National Congress took office, after receiving permission to do so from the national executive of that organisation. Before this event, however, Rao slipped away from Nagpur, to the plaudits of some Indian and British officials, but unnoticed either by Gowan or by the general public, who were rejoicing at the prospects of rule by the Congress. But for some at least, neither the Governor's slight nor the prospect of a popular government could remove the work of 'one whose word was law for nearly ten years'. With Butler's help, Rao had anchored political power in the Central Provinces firmly in the Hindi region; brought political stability to an unstable province; and secured the passage of significant legislation. In addition, Butler and Rao had convinced the British civilians of the province that Indians were able to rule themselves.

The following letter written by a British civilian to Rao on the occasion of his departure from Nagpur provides clear evidence of this:

3 Ibid.
That we shall miss you terribly goes without saying; but I don't know if you realise the admiration, respect and affection with which the services regard you. I know that the senior men in all services have realised that they could count on you, not only for justice and fair dealing, but for real understanding of their point of view. What is more, we knew that in you, the province has a real statesman, a man with a vision, imagination and foresight, such as is rare in any country anywhere....It is not the entry of Congress into office that dismays most of us, but the loss of your guidance and control. The services have trusted and do trust you, and they do not give their trust easily.¹

Despite the achievements of Raghavendra Rao, between 1927-34 the leaders of the Indian National Congress re-established their leadership over the nationalist movement in the Central Provinces and Berar. They did so through two campaigns of civil disobedience against the government and though a movement to remove the stigma of untouchability from the Depressed community. The campaigns of civil disobedience rested for support on a wide range of social groups in town and country and involved far greater numbers of people than the movement of non-cooperation in 1921. They thus offered a far more serious challenge to the government's ability to maintain law and order than the agitation ten years beforehand. Following these campaigns, nationalist leaders in the Central Provinces and Berar followed Gandhi in attempting to ameliorate the conditions of the Depressed community. In so doing, they established their claim to the political leadership of that section of the population. Next, as the defenders of nationalist honour among all classes of people, the leaders of the Congress turned their attention to the elections for the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934. At these elections, the Congress candidates soundly defeated the responsive cooperators, thus indicating that they had re-established the nationalist
leadership of the province which they lost to the latter in 1926.

I

In 1930 the Indian National Congress launched a campaign of civil disobedience against the Government of India. It did so because the British government refused to accept the constitution for India drawn up by the Congress and other Indian political parties in 1928. The Indian National Congress sounded its first note of agitation against the government in the same year. In December 1928, Congressmen at the annual session of their organisation held in Calcutta warned the government that they would launch a campaign of non violent non-cooperation against it if the British government refused to accept the constitution. Furthermore, the Congressmen decided to prepare for this campaign during 1929 by implementing the various items of the constructive programme. Despite this warning, however, the British government showed no signs of accepting the constitution, and in December 1929 Congressmen gathered expectantly for the annual session of their organisation at Lahore. At that session Jawarhalal Nehru, the son of Motilal Nehru and President of the Congress for the ensuing year, sounded the note of war against the government. In his presidential speech, Nehru declared that

I feel that the step the Congress took some years ago to permit Congressmen to enter the councils was an inevitable step, and I am not prepared to say that some good has not resulted from it. But we have exhausted that good, and there is no
middle course left today between boycott and full cooperation....Our workers are limited in number and we can have no mass movement unless they concentrate on it and turn their backs to the palatial council chambers of our legislatures.... The boycott....will release energy and divert attention to the real struggle which must take the shape of non-payment of taxes.1

Nehru's speech was a fitting prelude to the main resolution of the session, which was moved by Gandhi. The resolution stated that, because the British government had refused to grant self-government and Dominion status to India, Congressmen would thereafter give their 'exclusive attention to the attainment of complete independence for India'.2 To achieve this goal the resolution requested Congressmen to leave the councils, and, with other members of the organisation, to implement the constructive programme. The resolution also authorised the All-India Congress Committee 'whenever it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes'.3

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

1 Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1929, p.295.
2 Ibid., p.300.
3 Ibid., p.300.
(this) small, well-disciplined regiment of Congressmen... was a standing menace to the peaceful existence of any ministry in our province.... Throughout the members conducted themselves as soldiers, simply obeying their all-India leaders, and not asking the reason why.¹

But the councillors aside, the activities of the Congress in general were at a low ebb. In the Marathi region, the Congress was unpopular with the voters, and appeared disinterested in retaining the sympathies of the lower classes of the population.² In addition, there were disturbing signs of inefficiency in the Provincial Congress Committees of Nagpur and Berar.³ Again, although relative harmony prevailed in the Congress organisation in Nagpur, where Abhyanker had come to power, in Berar two factions were engaged in a struggle for leadership.⁴ These factions were, on the one hand,

¹ Hitavada, 16 January 1930, p.1; see pp.184; 200-1.

² Mishra, op. cit., p.362; NAI, Home Poll, F-32, 1927, FR, First Half of April 1927, p.1; ibid., Second Half of April 1937, p.1; Hitavada, 5 June 1927, pp.9, 11. In 1927 Awari, the populist leader, began a Satyagraha by organising armed processions in defiance of the Arms Act, but Abhyanker and other Congress leaders refused to support the Satyagraha. In June 1927 the government imprisoned Awari lest the movement get out of control.

³ Hitavada, 31 October 1929, p.2.

⁴ Hitavada, 5 December 1926, p.5; 23 December 1926, p.5; 6 November 1927, p.5; 18 October 1928, p.3; 8 November 1928, pp.1, 7; NML, AICC, G-57, 1928, M.V. Abhyanker, S.P. Ranka to Secretary Indian National Congress, 18 November 1927; NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 47, B.S. Moonje to Mr Kelkar, 11 October 1928; Letter Pad 48, Press Statement, 6 November 1928; Assorted Letters, J. Nehru to H.K. Joshi, 20 November 1928.
a group of orthodox Congressmen led by P.B. Gole, a Brahman pleader and member of the Legislative Council; and on the other hand, a group of Responsivists, led by Aney, who held office in Congress organisations.  The struggle between the two factions prevented the Congress from engaging in purposeful activity.

Inefficiency and factional conflict were also prominent features of the Congress organisation in the Hindi region. The factional conflict resulted from Ravi Shankar Shukla's attempt to return to power in the Congress following his defection to the Independent Congress 'party' in 1926 and his defeat at the elections in the same year. In attempting to return to power in the Congress, Shukla met with the determined opposition of Seth Govind Das and D.P. Mishra. The conflict between the leaders and the lack of any active challenge to the government took its toll of the Congress organisation in the Hindi region. According to one observer

Of late...for want of a suitable dynamic programme of mass movement, the fountain head of energy and power of the congress organisations became stagnant, with the result that signs of

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1 NML, AICC, G-19, 1929-30, P.B. Gole to General Secretary AICC, 22 July 1929; NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary 30 December 1929. Aney, who was President of the Berar PCC, opposed the resolution on complete independence and civil disobedience at Lahore in 1929.

2 Hitavada, 20 February 1927, p.10; 17 March 1927, p.7; 24 April 1927, p.7; 5 May 1927, p.8; 22 December 1927, p.5; 5 February 1928, p.
disintegration and disorganisation in the rank and file of the congress organisation began to be visible even to the man in the street.¹

During 1929 this picture changed dramatically as Congress leaders in the Central Provinces, with the possible exception of Berar, prepared for an attack on the government. In the division of Nagpur the leaders of the Congress set out with determination to win popular support for constructive work and civil disobedience, and appear to have succeeded in their task. In doing so, the leaders divided into two groups — one taking the message of civil disobedience mostly to the educated middle classes, and the other to the commercial and lower classes of the towns.

The leaders mostly concerned with preparing the educated middle classes for civil disobedience were Abhyanker and his foremost lieutenant, Narayan Bhaskar Khare, a medical practitioner of Nagpur. Khare was born of Brahman parents in 1884 at Nere in the district of Kolaba in the province of Bombay. He received his secondary and college education in Jabalpur, and graduated from the Lahore Medical College in 1907. After a short spell in government service, Khare qualified as a Doctor of Medicine, and in 1916 set up private practice in Nagpur. There he came under the influence of Moonje and Abhyanker and entered politics as a member of the Rashtriya Mandal. Like many other nationalists in Nagpur, Khare took part in the movement of non-cooperation under protest, and in 1923 revolted against Gandhi to become a

¹ *Hitavada*, 31 October 1929, p.2.
Dr N.B. Khare
Nagpur.  

The Gandhian populists prepared other sections of the population for civil disobedience. Prominent among the leaders of the populists were Jamnalal Bajaj and his fellow Marwari, Seth Poonamchand Ranka, who in 1929 was Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. Bajaj and Ranka both had strong connections with the merchant community in the division of Nagpur and in 1929 both tried to interest members of that community in the spinning and wearing of khadi and in the boycott of foreign cloth.  

Ranka, too, went among the people of the city, 'visiting different parts...daily for one and half hours, collecting foreign clothes and exhorting people to take khadi'.  

Bajaj and Ranka also played a

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1 Hitavada, 12 September 1929, p.5; 13 October 1929, p.8; 20 October 1929, pp.3, 13; 7 November 1929, p.10. The total number of members of the Congress in the division of Nagpur in December 1929 was 11,651-5065 more than the quota fixed by AICC. Prominent members of the PCC included Abhyanker as President, Bajaj as Treasurer, Ranka as Secretary, and Dharmadikari as Joint Secretary; and as members N.B. Khare, Bhagwandin, N.R. Deshmukh, N.M. Ghatwai, Seth Khusulchand, A.R. Tijare, M.P. Damle, B. Pingarkar, A.N. Udhoji, G. Sharma, M. Joglekar, R.V. Dangare, T. Lodhi, S.R. Palsule and R.R. Pathak. The Presidents of the four District Congress Committees were G.S. Thekar (Nagpur), N.Y. Deotale (Chanda), N.R. Deshmukh (Wardha), and D.A. Tankhiwale (Bhandara). Dr Khare was President of the Nagpur Congress Committee.

2 Hitavada, 14 March 1929, p.3; 21 April 1929, p.5; 16 May, 1929, p.11; 27 June 1929, p.2. Bajaj also persuaded a number of local bodies to encourage khadi. See Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1929, p.273.

3 Hitavada, 23 May 1929, p.2.
leading part in arousing support for two other aspects of the constructive programme, namely, the prohibition of liquor and the drive against untouchability. Of the two, Ranka seems to have been more prominent in the campaign against liquor, preaching in those 'parts of the city where there are liquor shops'.\footnote{Hitavada, 18 July 1929, p.2.} It was Bajaj, however, who dominated the campaign against untouchability. During 1929 Bajaj toured extensively in the division of Nagpur where he

\makebox[\textwidth]{collected information, discussed the problem ..., met municipal members, trustees, owners of temples (and) wells, and exhorted sympathisers to throw open temples, wells and schools.}\footnote{Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1929, p.276. Bajaj threw open his own Shri Laxmi Narayan temple to untouchables in Wardha in July 1928.}

Bajaj and Ranka achieved only limited results in their drive against liquor and untouchability.\footnote{So far as the liquor campaign was concerned, Ranka reported that ten meetings and six demonstrations were held, and 1000 pledges taken. Bajaj secured the opening of wells in Wardha, Tumsar and Gondia, and the opening of one temple in Tumsar.} Despite this, with Abhyanker, Khare, and their many helpers they took the message of the Congress to wide sections of the community, and awakened anew their interest in the Indian National Congress.

In the Hindi region, the leaders of the Congress prepared for action against the government by repairing the ravages caused by inefficiency and factionalism.
The constructive programme seems to have aroused little enthusiasm in the region during 1929, and, where Congressmen were active in this regard, they mostly attempted to popularise khadi and launch the boycott of foreign cloth in the towns. There was a great deal of activity on other fronts, however. In mid-1929, D.P. Mishra 'took over' the Provincial Congress Committee, and devoted himself with 'untiring zeal' to 'reorganising the almost tottering Congress committees in the province (and)...to infusing a new life into the movement'.

Congress leaders in the Hindi region also achieved a notable success in enrolling members of the Congress, far exceeding the quotas set by the All-India Congress Committee. Jabalpur and Raipur recorded the highest number of enrolments, but the figures were also high in rural areas, as the following report from Durg demonstrates:

As per (the) resolution of the Working Committee...the minimum number of congress members that were required to be enrolled in this district by the end of August 1929 was 190. There are three tahsils in this district, namely Drug,

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1 Hitavada, 14 February 1929, p.3; 23 March 1929, p.5; 16 May 1929, p.13; 26 May 1929, p.2. Bajaj persuaded the owners of a number of temples in Jabalpur to open them to the Depressed community. See Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1929, p.279. He also persuaded certain local bodies in the Hindi region to encourage the use of khadi. See ibid., p.273.

2 Hitavada, 31 October 1929, p.2; 26 December 1929, p.5.

3 Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1929, p.265. The AICC set a quota of 20,505 members, but the Hindi leaders enrolled some 28,827 members.
Bemetara and Sanjari Balod... By the end of August, 5888 congress members have been enrolled in this district, and in Drug, Bemetara and Sanjari Balod tahsils 121, 109 and 170 villages respectively have been represented. Thus this district has been able to furnish about three times its quota. 1

In addition, Govind Das temporarily stilled the conflict between himself and Shukla by accepting the Presidentship of the Provincial Congress Committee in December 1929. As a result, it was not surprising that Congressmen in the Hindi region approached the year of civil disobedience with confident expectation. 2

The unity and vigour evident among Congressmen in the Central Provinces were all but absent in Berar. There the Responsivists led by Aney controlled the Provincial Congress Committee and many of its subsidiary organisations, and as they did not subscribe to Gandhi's political philosophy, refused to participate in the constructive programme. 3 Consequently, the only areas where nationalists implemented that programme were areas where orthodox Congressmen dominated the Congress organisation. Such an area was the district of Akola, the home of Gole and his Marwari colleague, Brijlal Biyani. Under the leadership of these two men, Akola became the scene of a successful campaign to popularise

1 Hitavada, 18 August 1929, p.9; 3 October 1929, p.11.
2 Ibid., 26 December 1929, p.5.
3 Ibid., 10 February 1927, p.5; NML, AICC, G-19, 1929-30, N.R. Bamangaonkar to General Secretary AICC, 24 July 1929.
khadi and to boycott foreign cloth. In addition, Bajaj persuaded the owners of temples in Akola and Ellichpur, in the district of Amravati, to open the buildings to members of the Depressed community. Other than this, however, little activity took place in Berar in preparation for civil disobedience. A report issued by the Indian National Congress on the situation in Berar substantiated this. Commenting on the enrolment of Congressmen in Berar, the Report of the All-India Congress Committee for 1929 complained that although they claimed to have fulfilled their quotas, (they) have sent no detailed figures. The inspection report(s) of Berar...show that the work done there is not satisfactory.

In 1930, after a year of intensive preparation, the Indian National Congress launched a campaign of civil disobedience against the Government of India. Neither the British government nor the Government of India satisfactorily answered the demand by the Congress for self-government for India. Consequently, in January 1930 the leaders of the Congress appointed Gandhi dictator of the organisation and authorised him and 'others holding non-violence as an article of faith to

1 Hitavada, 19 May 1929, p.11; 29 September 1929, p.11.
2 Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1929, pp.277, 279. The temples opened were the Maruti temple in Akola and the large Datta Durbar temple at Ellichpur.
3 Ibid., p.266. Berar's quota of members to be enrolled in 1929 was 7688.
start civil disobedience as and when they decide'. Gandhi decided to begin the campaign by breaking the Salt Law, and on 5 March 1930 he began a long march from Sabarmati, in Gujarat, to the sea coast for that purpose. On his arrival at the coast Gandhi broke the Salt Law by preparing salt. Within a few days he had committed other acts of civil disobedience, and as a result the Government of India ordered his arrest and imprisoned him at Yeravda, near Poona. When the All-India Congress Committee heard the news of Gandhi's arrest, it called on Congressmen all over the country to throw themselves into movements of boycott and disobedience to the laws of the land. And when the government promulgated ordinances to suppress these movements, the Committee ordered Congressmen to prepare for a campaign to persuade agriculturalists to withhold their land revenue.

In the Central Provinces and Berar, as in other parts of India, large numbers of people responded to the All-India Congress Committee's call to arms. In so doing they severely challenged the government's ability to maintain law and order. There were three campaigns of civil disobedience in the Central Provinces and Berar in 1930 - in the division of Nagpur, in Berar, and in the Hindi region. In each area alike, an agricultural and trade depression assisted in preparing a suitable ground for agitation against the government. In the Marathi region, low prices and a reduced demand for

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1 Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1930, p.26.
cotton adversely affected agriculturists and urban or rural workers who depended for their livelihood on the cotton industry. In the Hindi region poor harvests created famine conditions in the countryside, while a sharp decline in agricultural prices affected the purchasing power of tenants and malguzars alike.¹

In 1930, the leaders of civil disobedience in the division of Nagpur provided an effective challenge to the government and at the same time re-established the Congress as the leading political party in the area. They did so by mounting successive waves of agitation against the government and by drawing large numbers of people from all classes of society into the campaign. There were five waves of agitation. The first was a preliminary phase, between January and March 1930, when the leaders of the Congress contacted many different groups of people with a view to drawing them into the agitation. The leaders used various means to arouse the enthusiasm of the people for the projected attack on the government. Among these were the withdrawal of Congressmen from the legislature in Nagpur; the celebration of Independence Day on 26 January 1930; and the organisation of processions, meetings and conferences.²


These activities aroused the interest of widely differing sections of the population and paved the way for the launching of civil disobedience.¹ On 4 March 1930 the Provincial Congress Committee appointed a committee to find out places where civil disobedience was possible in the province and to make all necessary arrangements to carry it on in consultation with the working committee.²

By 16 March the necessary arrangements were complete. In Nagpur the Provincial Congress Committee had given way to a War Council, and that body had despatched Ranka and the populists to the countryside to enrol volunteers and preach the message of non-violent revolt against the government.³

Many different groups of people in the division of Nagpur participated in the second phase of civil disobedience - the agitation proper. The agitation began in early April when the War Council called on people to prepare salt in defiance of the Salt Law. There was an immediate response to this call. On 9 April 1930, the first satyagrahis, drawn from all walks of life, left Nagpur for Dahihanda in the district of Akola where they

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¹ MPS, P & M, 302/CDM, 1930, p. 3; The Central Provinces and Berar: Administration Report for 1929-1930 (Nagpur, 1931), p.1; Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1930, p.27. Those affected by the activities of the Congress were the councillors, students, railway workers, and 'the less responsible elements of the population'.

² Ibid., p.28.

³ Hitavada, 20 March 1930, pp.1, 7; 13 April 1930, p.7. The members of the War Council were M.V. Abhyanker, J. Bajaj, N.B. Khare, N.R. Deshmukh, Bhagwandin and Poonamchand Ranka.
were to prepare salt. Four days later, Abhyanker himself inaugurated the salt agitation in Nagpur by auctioning one tola of salt from Akola in Berar...for Rs 225...In obedience to the mandate of the Congress Committee, some merchants closed their businesses and participated in the demonstration....(There was) a mammoth gathering in the town hall grounds,...(and) a procession of congress volunteers went around the principal streets of Nagpur with National flags in the evening.... Then Abhyanker did the salt auction, (but)... before doing so, he made a passionate appeal to all to follow the banner of Mahatma Gandhi.

A week later, Abhyanker, Ranka and the populists set off to launch the campaign of civil disobedience in the rural areas. There, Abhyanker shed his role of 'landlord' for that of a 'professional breaker of laws', and, with all his ability to command an instant response, sparked off a round of rural agitation similar to that taking place in Nagpur. The 'mass awakening in the province', however, did not unduly disturb the government. It resolved to maintain 'control with the minimum interference', and met the new situation merely by

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1 Hitavada, 10 April 1930, p.9. The satyagrahis were V.G. Sahasrabudhey, a member of the Nagpur Municipal Committee; Ranade, a first year student; Bagre, a municipal employee; and Dokh and Waghmale of the Tilak Vidyalaya.

2 Ibid., 17 April 1930, p.9.

3 Ibid., 13 April 1930, p.7; 17 April 1930, p.13; 20 April 1930, p.10; 24 April 1930, p.7; 27 April 1930, p.10.

giving additional powers to the police and by promulgating, though not implementing, a press ordinance.¹

To draw the government more fully into the fray, Congressmen in the division of Nagpur launched a further round of agitation in urban and rural areas. This constituted the third phase of the campaign of civil disobedience. During this phase the nationalists hurled every available weapon into the attack, disrupting the rule of law and making heavy inroads into the provincial revenues. The major reason behind the nationalists' success was their ability to inflame many people from different social groups against the government, and so to organise the first truly mass agitation in the division of Nagpur.* This phase of civil disobedience, which lasted for four months, began on 9 May 1930. On that day Abhyanker again led the attack on the government by reading passages from a proscribed book to a huge gathering in Nagpur. As the Hitavada reported:

Before the meeting, a procession of volunteers with many others in attendance passed through the town hall grounds where it formed itself into a huge mass meeting....(There were) shouts of Mahatma Gandhi ki jai and national slogans ....The meeting commenced with prayers at 8.30 ....Abhyanker (was) given a great ovation....


* Mass agitation in this thesis refers to agitation drawing in large numbers of people from different strata of society, and occurring on a sufficiently widespread scale to constitute a serious threat to law and order.
(He) read from Bharat Me Angrezi Raj....These passages were later repeated amidst great excitement by the whole audience....Abhyanker challenged the government to arrest him (and) ...appealed to the audience to join the fight without respect of creed, caste or colour.1

Following this demonstration, Congressmen took the agitation out into the countryside.2

As the government still refrained from joining the combat, the Congress leaders intensified their campaign against it. During May they launched bitter attacks on the government at meetings throughout the division. This verbal onslaught appears to have achieved its objective, for on 15 May 1930 the government reported that

the tone of speeches in the Marathi districts has changed for the worse. There has been increasing vehemence in the abuse of government servants, especially the police; and an appeal to government servants to be disloyal to their duty is now a marked feature of these harangues. This tendency is causing some anxiety to the government.3

As a result, the government decided to seize the leaders of the agitation, hoping that, deprived of their inspiration, it would wither and die. Accordingly, on

1 Hitavada, 11 May 1930, p.9. Bharat Me Angrezi Raj means 'English Rule in India'.
2 Ibid., 18 May 1930, p.9.
29 May 1930 the police arrested Abhyanker at Amravati. But before the arrest took place, the War Council issued a call to the people to boycott British cloth and other goods. This call met with a ready and widespread response. Merchants in Nagpur agreed not to indent these commodities; lawyers in Wardha 'changed their head gear (and were) found spinning in the bar'; students and others picketed the shops of merchants who refused to observe the boycott; educated ladies marched through Nagpur 'wearing white khadi (and)...singing national songs; and small boys of the city collected and burnt foreign caps'. On 29 June 1930 the War Council unleashed a further attack on the government by urging people to boycott liquor. In response volunteers picketed liquor warehouses and shops in the division, and in Nagpur held meetings 'at the premises of different liquor shops to arouse the conscience of people against the evils of drink'. Then, just as the students were returning to their schools and colleges at the end of the summer vacation, the nationalists decided to disrupt the educational system. In early July the government reported that

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1 NAI, Second Half of May 1930, p.1; MPS, P & M, 272/CDM, 1930, Proceedings of a Meeting Held in the Honourable Revenue Member's Bungalow on 23 November 1930.
3 Ibid., 1 June 1930, p.7; 26 June 1930, p.15; 3 July 1930, p.7; 10 July 1930, p.2.
4 Ibid., 3 July 1930, p.8; 10 July 1930, p.7.
The Government colleges had reopened...after the vacation, and congress at once started a policy of making appeals to the students. Discipline quickly became at a discount, and hartal followed hartal on any pretext, and students absented themselves from the studies at will. Schoolboys also broke all discipline and roamed the streets insulting the police. One party entered Hislop college...and after breaking a number of windows, hoisted the congress flag.

Two other attacks on the government occurring at the same time as the disturbances in the schools and colleges compelled the authorities to bare their teeth. One of these attacks was launched by the Congress, and the other by the Responsive Cooperation party. As for the attack by the Congress, on 12 July 1930 the War Council decided to begin intensive agitation in the rural areas of the division. As a beginning, the Council launched a Forest Satyagraha in Arvi taluq in the district of Wardha on 1 August 1930. Long before that date, however, nationalists had seriously weakened the government's position in Arvi. According to the District Superintendent of Police in Wardha, by 20 July

the idea...(was) fairly generally accepted in the Arvi tahsil that government...(had) really ceased to exist....The Circle Inspector of Arvi found that persons collecting money for the Congress purposes had now merely to enter a village and demand a subscription in order to have their demands met immediately....About 12000 palm trees have been cut so far in the

2 Ibid., 20 July 1930, p.2.
district and the present position is that the volunteers merely go and direct villagers to cut the trees and their orders are complied with.¹

Meanwhile, the Responsivists had already begun their Forest Satyagraha at Pusad. To prevent the situation from getting out of hand, the government swung into action. Early in July it extended the Prevention of Intimidation Ordinance to Nagpur and enforced it vigorously to combat the hold which the Congress had obtained against the liquor trade.² Next, to remove those responsible for the many-sided attack against it, the government proceeded to 'round up...Congress leaders in the south of the province'. Among the Congressmen caught in the round-up were Dr Khare, who had replaced Abhyanker as President of the War Council, and Ranka, who was also a member of the Council.³ In addition, on 4 August the government closed down the Government and Engineering and Medical Colleges in Nagpur.⁴ Then,

as it was no longer possible for government to retain in its own hands the direction of all prosecutions,...(it delegated) responsibility for dealing with the movement in their divisions...to all commissioners, who from this time forward directed the conduct of operations.⁵

¹ MPS, P & M, 272/CDM, 1930> Proceedings of a Meeting held at Nagpur at the Honourable the Home Member's Bungalow on 20 July 1930.
² MPS, P & M, 302/CDM, 1930, pp.6, 8.
³ Ibid., p.8.
⁴ Ibid., p.8.
⁵ Ibid., p.13.
So far from quietening the situation, however, these measures formed a prelude for a further round of agitation in urban and rural areas, much of it accompanied by violence. This round of agitation, which occurred between August and September 1930, constituted the fourth phase in the campaign of civil disobedience in the division of Nagpur. A major feature of this phase of the agitation were the Forest Satyagrahas launched in the districts of Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara. Thousands of people participated in these Satyagrahas, and in many places violence attended the agitation.\(^1\) A typical incident occurred in Chanda on 24 August 1930, when

25 youths, who had cut and stolen trees from Government forests in obedience to the order of Congress, were arrested in Chanda. The small police party carrying out the arrest was almost overwhelmed by the mob. Stones were freely thrown and many officers, including the Circle Inspector, were hit.\(^2\)

A proclivity to violence was also evident in the anti-liquor campaign which spread through the towns of the division of Nagpur during the fourth phase of civil disobedience. This violence was due to the use of pickets who were not trained in the spirit of non-violence, as were many of those who had long since been

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2. Ibid., p.398.
arrested and imprisoned. Violence also threatened when the War Council organised a demonstration in Nagpur on 8 August in defiance of an order by the District Magistrate. In addition, during August many students in the division of Nagpur exhibited a 'total lack of discipline', and the government was compelled to close eight high schools. But despite this restlessness, by the end of August 1930, the main campaign of civil disobedience in the division was over. The leading Congressmen were in jail; the anti-liquor campaign continued but on a much reduced scale; and the Forest Satyagrahas were well under control. Accordingly the government decided to administer a death blow to the dying campaign. On 28 August 1930 it declared the War Council of Nagpur an unlawful association.

The methods used by the government to control civil disobedience in the division of Nagpur proved extremely effective. From September 1930 onwards, the agitation gradually subsided until a truce was declared between the Government of India and the Indian National Congress in February 1931. This period of declining agitation constituted the fifth phase of the movement. During this phase, nationalists mostly continued the forms of

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1 Hitavada, 14 August 1930, p.1.
3 Ibid., p.25.
4 Hitavada, 4 September 1930, p.12.
agitation used in the earlier phases of civil disobedience, but due to lack of leadership and manpower these agitations offered little challenge to the government. There was one major exception to this, namely, the boycott of the elections to the provincial legislature on 10 November 1930. This boycott was astonishingly successful in urban and rural electorates alike.\footnote{As for Nagpur, according to the \textit{Hitavada}, the 10 November was a day of victory for the congress as over ten thousand congress voters out of a total of eleven thousand and odd did not go within a furlong of any polling station....Some were genuine Congressmen, some professing platonic sympathy with the Congress (;) some did not take any interest in the...candidates....Some did not like to cause annoyance to the woman picketers, while many did not like to be hooted out and booed by the vigilant crowds that kept on waiting all the time in front of every polling...booth.\footnote{Hitavada, 13 November 1930, p.1.}\textsuperscript{1}} As for Nagpur, according to the \textit{Hitavada}, the 10 November

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

\footnote{See MPS, P & M, 302/CDM, 1930, pp.11-12. In one rural and one urban electorate in the district of Nagpur less than 3 per cent and 7 per cent of voters exercised the franchise respectively.}
a truce. The first move towards the truce came from the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald. MacDonald desired the Congress to participate in the Round Table Conferences in London. Accordingly, on 19 January 1931 he declared that under the new constitution for India the British government would transfer all powers except those of finance and defence to Indian ministers. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, followed this gesture a week later by releasing Gandhi and 19 members of the Working Committee from jail. The Viceroy's act paved the way for discussions between himself and Gandhi during February 1931. As a result of these discussions, Gandhi agreed to suspend civil disobedience. The Viceroy, for his part, agreed to withdraw the ordinances promulgated in 1930; release from jail those prisoners who were convicted of civil disobedience; and permit picketing within the limits imposed by the ordinary law. During March 1931 the Working Committee of the Congress ratified the agreement and the campaign of civil disobedience came to an end.

The campaign of civil disobedience in Berar was similar to the campaign in the division of Nagpur in that it threatened the government's ability to maintain law

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and order. Also like the campaign in Nagpur, the movement in Berar restored the Congress to a dominant position in the political life of the region. The broad outline of the campaign in Berar was similar to that in the division of Nagpur. In both regions there was a preparatory phase, followed by a Salt Satyagraha; next, a period of intensive agitation in town and country; and finally a phase during which the level of agitation declined and the situation returned to normal.

The preparatory phase of civil disobedience was seen to best effect in the Congress stronghold of Akola. There the dominant figures were P.B. Gole and Brijlal Biyani. In January 1930 the two leaders resigned from the provincial legislature, and through public meetings and the celebration of Independence Day prepared the people of the district for 'the coming fight'. The preparatory phase also witnessed a change in the composition of some Congress Committees in Berar. The Responsivists, who were strongly entrenched in the Provincial and some District Congress Committees, declined to support the proposed campaign of civil disobedience. Accordingly, as the moves to launch the campaign gathered strength, they resigned their seats on these Committees leaving orthodox Congressmen in

2 See NML, AICC, G-136 (KW 1), 1930, T.S. Bapat, Secretary District Congress Committee Yeotmal to Secretary Working Committee, 29 January 1930.
'possession of the field'. The way was thus open for the introduction of civil disobedience in Berar. Consequently, on 16 March 1930 the Provincial Congress Committee formed itself into a War Council and resolved to 'organise Berar for satyagraha'.

The fruits of this decision were evident in the Salt Satyagraha which began on 12 April 1930. The Satyagraha lasted until the end of April and comprised the second phase of the campaign in Berar. The agitation was concentrated mostly in the towns and rural areas of Amravati and Akola. Volunteers prepared the salt from a saline well at Dahihanda, a village in Akola, and then distributed it for sale in towns throughout the Marathi region. During April nationalist leaders also moved about persuading people in the towns and villages to support the agitation, and urging that by 'disobeying the salt laws, they would be nearer to independence'. 'Crowds of people from (the)...villages' and towns heard this message, and many of these volunteered to assist in the agitation. In the towns, too, ladies prepared salt

4 Hitavada, 17 April 1930, p.6.
5 Ibid., 17 April 1930, pp.6, 10; 20 April 1930, p.9; 24 April 1930, p.7.
in public, merchants organised hartals to coincide with the agitation, and 'an appreciable number of people...signed the satyagraha pledge'.

To avert the loss of their own political leadership, the Responsivists also participated in the Salt Satyagraha. In April 1930 Aney joined the War Council and 'offered himself for satyagraha at the earliest opportunity'.

In doing so, however, he was careful to explain that this did not mean any change of opinion on my part on the fundamental points which unfortunately compelled us to sever our connections with the old Swaraj party and form ourselves into a new group styled as the Responsive Cooperation party.

With the same qualification other prominent Responsivists followed Aney's lead, and on 19 April 1930 at a meeting in Amravati declared that the 'civil disobedience campaign started by Mahatma Gandhi is quite legitimate and has (our)...full support'. Accordingly Responsivists joined Congressmen in breaking the Salt Law in the district of Amravati, and were among the bands of Congress volunteers that left Amravati to go to Dahihanda to prepare salt.

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1 Hitavada, 17 April 1930, pp.6, 10; 24 April 1930, p.7.
2 Ibid., 13 April 1930, p.7.
4 Hitavada, 24 April 1930, p.9.
5 Ibid., 20 April 1930, p.10; 24 April 1930; 1 May 1930, p.7.
As the government was unwilling to repress the Salt Satyagraha, Congressmen in Berar followed the example of their colleagues in the Central Provinces by launching a more intensive round of agitation. This lasted from May until September 1930 and constituted the third phase of civil disobedience in Berar. Large numbers of people from widely differing groups in the towns and rural areas participated in this phase of agitation and in doing so effectively challenged the rule of law in Berar. This agitation thus formed what may be described as the first truly 'mass' agitation ever launched in the territory. The agitation between May and September was concentrated in two areas. One consisted of the districts of Akola and Buldhana where orthodox Congressmen predominated; and the other of the districts of Amravati and Yeotmal where Responsivists predominated. Orthodox Congressmen opened the campaign in Akola on 10 May 1930 by reading proscribed literature.1 During the ensuing week, Biyani, accompanied by Mrs Durgatai Joshi, a leading nationalist from Akola, toured the district to whip up large scale opposition to the government. The tour was completely successful. According to one observer

the large assemblage of over ten thousand that gathers at these meetings over which the workers like Brijlal Biyani and Mrs Joshi speak is really a sight to see as to how this movement is now permeating the masses....The organizers know that unless there is a mass agitation and mass awakening government would not yield to even reasonable demands of the educated few.2

1 Hitavada, 15 May 1930, p.2.
2 Ibid.
During May 1930 Akola was also the scene of an intensive campaign against the liquor trade. Prominent among those who picketed liquor shops in Akola were the ladies of the town, assisted by pleaders, merchants and volunteers from 'other responsible quarters'. The ladies also 'delivered lectures and sang songs on the evils of drink at the ale houses'.

At the same time agitation began to intensify in Amravati and Yeotmal. In Amravati town Wamanrao Joshi and Abhyanker both delivered 'bad speeches which made no pretence to conceal their appeal to violence'. The government immediately swooped on the two leaders and put them in jail. Despite their arrest, however, the situation in Amravati worsened. During June the merchants of the town organised a boycott of foreign cloth, and Congressmen held a number of demonstrations. The government immediately arrested the leaders responsible for these demonstrations, and the centre of agitation swung away from Amravati to the Responsivist stronghold of Yeotmal, where Aney and his followers inaugurated the Forest Satyagraha on 10 July. But Aney, too, was a marked man. Members of the government believed that

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1 Hitavada, 25 May 1930, p.15.
4 See pp.210-2.
he was more dangerous than Biyani because he was preaching in the rural areas chiefly on the subject of the breach of forest laws. In view of Mr Aney's well known influence, this was bound in time to have a bad effect. It was the general opinion, however reluctant, that there was no alternative but to proceed against him.¹

Accordingly, on 13 July 1930 the police arrested Aney, and on succeeding days, the leaders who replaced him. As a result, the seat of agitation shifted once more to Amravati and west Berar.

The decline of the Responsivist Satyagraha in Yeotmal enabled Congressmen to regain the political initiative which they had temporarily lost to Aney and his supporters. Congressmen in Berar had had some misgivings about the decision of the Responsivists to participate in civil disobedience.² To re-assert their own leadership of the campaign, therefore, they decided to launch a rival Congress Forest Satyagraha at Wadali in Amravati on 17 July 1930. The Satyagraha was an immediate success, and quickly spread to other villages in the district, accompanied by violence and 'outbursts of...destruction of government forests'.³ At the same time serious unrest broke out among the students of the

¹ MPS, P & M, 272/CDM, 1930, Proceedings of a Meeting held at the Honourable the Home Member's Bungalow on 30 May 1930, pp.14-15.
² See NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 2, 10 July 1930; NAI, Home Poll, 18/VII, 1930, FR, First Half of July 1930, p.25 (?).
King Edward College in Amravati. During July and August 1930, Congressmen also launched Forest Satyagrahas and urban agitations in the districts of Akola and Buldhana. The Satyagrahas, in particular, provided an effective challenge to the government. During August observers reported that 'people of all castes and creeds and status (were)...vied with one another to break the forest laws', and that 'thousands...(were) ready to go to jail'.¹ The urban agitations were also effective, as the following description of the scene in one of the principal towns of Buldhana during July demonstrates:

In Khamgaon, the incident of the national flag in the government high school worked up...public enthusiasm....In close succession came the civil disobedience of forest laws, and public meetings in Khamgaon attracted thousands....Hartals were often spontaneously observed by Hindus and Muslims. Khadi came to adorn the most fashionable....Against this background, Dr Parasnis decided to break the forest laws.²

The government, however, took effective measures to crush these activities and by October the agitation in Amravati, Akola and Buldhana had contracted to the urban areas, and had declined considerably in intensity.³

² Hitavada, 3 August 1930, p.5. Dr M.N. Parasnis was a medical practitioner and a prominent Congressman in Khamgaon.
The shift of agitation to the towns marked the beginning of the fourth phase of civil disobedience in Berar. This phase lasted from October 1930 to February 1931. The campaign of civil disobedience during this period consisted of vigorous agitations in Akola and Amravati which demonstrated the return of the Congress to a dominant place in the political life of Berar. These agitations were aimed at prominent supporters of the Responsivist cause. The first of these was a campaign of abuse against Tambe for agreeing to represent the provincial government at the first Round Table Conference in London.\(^1\) The second agitation consisted of a boycott of the elections to the provincial legislature in November. While the agitation against Tambe did not prevent him leaving Berar on 2 October 1930 'by a night train to Bombay enroute to England', the boycott of the elections was most successful, one of its foremost victims being Ramrao Deshmukh, the former Minister for Agriculture.\(^2\) Following the boycott of the elections, Congressmen organised a boycott of the excise auctions which, like the elections, also took place in November. In Amravati, ladies threw themselves enthusiastically into the boycott. As the government

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1 NAI, Khaparde MS, Diary, 2 October 1930; 4 October 1930.
2 Ibid., 2 October 1930; ibid., 11 November 1930; NAI, Home Poll, 18/X, 1930, FR, Second Half of October 1930, p.1; Home Poll, 18/XII, 1930, FR, First Half of November 1930, p.1. The latter document relates that 'there was picketing at Headquarter towns in Berar...50-60 per cent of Muslims in Berar voted; but not more than 20 per cent of the rest of the electorate'.
The Congress arranged to picket the auctions on the first day... by women; and it was found necessary to arrest... Mrs Joshi... and a number of other women picketers who flung themselves prostrate in front of motor vehicles conveying bidders to the auctions.¹

Such arrests ultimately had their effect, however, and the anti-liquor agitation subsided, to be followed by meetings at which Congressmen advocated a boycott of British goods and the non-payment of taxes.² But with the signing of the truce between Gandhi and the Viceroy, all activity ceased and the campaign of civil disobedience came to an end.

The campaign of civil disobedience in the Hindi region followed a similar course to the campaign in the Marathi region, with the addition of a rural phase during the latter part of 1930. As in the Marathi region, Hindi leaders made use of a preparatory phase between January and March 1930 to arouse popular support for the impending attack on the government. The first phase opened on 17 January 1930, when the Hindi Congressmen absented themselves from the Council Chamber in Nagpur.³

¹ NAI, Home Poll, 18/XII, 1930, FR, First Half of November 1930, p.1. In Amravati, the boycott secured a decline of 49 per cent in the revenue under country liquor compared with the previous year.
³ NML, AICC, G-125(ii) 1930, D.P. Mishra to President, Indian National Congress, 1 March 1930.
Nine days later, on 26 January 1930, those who had vacated their seats in the Council and others took the message of agitation to people all over the Hindi region. On that day — Independence Day —

in far away villages and hilly areas in the forest regions of Bilaspur and Mandla,...not to speak of the more accessible parts of the...(region), groups of men, women and children gathered in an open place in the early hours of the morning, hoisted the tricolour flag, sang the national song and listened to the Message of Independence.¹

In February, to spread that message even more widely through the Hindi region, Govind Das and Mishra founded a Hindi daily, the Lokmat, in Jabalpur, and the former set off on a whirlwind tour of the region.² District Congress leaders supplemented these activities by holding tahlil conferences, or by using the educational staff of the District Councils to spread the message of civil disobedience.³ The activation of the Hindi region reached a climax on 30 March 1930 when the Provincial

¹ Mishra, op. cit., p.379; NML, AICC, G-136 (KW-1), 1930, D.P. Mishra to Secretary AICC, 29 January 1930. For the Message of Independence referred to, see Mishra, op. cit., pp.379-81.
² Hitavada, 16 January 1930, p.3; 26 January 1930, pp.9, 11; 2 February 1930, p.7; 6 February 1930, p.11; 13 February 1930, p.11.
³ Ibid., 23 February 1930, p.11; MPS, LSG, 1-94, 1930, Dissolution and Suspension of the District Council Betul, G.C. Turner, Commissioner Narmada Division to Chairman District Council Betul, 29 March 1930; Report on the State and Progress of Education in the Central Provinces and Berar for 1930 (Nagpur, 1931), p.44.
Congress Committee met in Jabalpur to constitute the first Hindi War Council, and to authorise it to 'formulate a scheme of civil disobedience and organise an effective campaign in the province'.

Almost immediately, the War Council splashed the message of civil disobedience across the Hindi districts by organising a Salt Satyagraha in the towns and villages of the region. This Satyagraha formed the second phase of civil disobedience, and during its course attracted the attention of 'thousands of eager spectators'. The centre of the Satyagraha was Jabalpur, and there on 6 April 1930 a huge procession...organised...(and) led by Seth Govind Das and D.P. Mishra...wended its way to the historic Samadhi of the warrior-queen Rani Durgavati, about thirteen miles from the city. There the assembled multitude took a solemn vow to carry the struggle for independence to a successful conclusion. Batches of volunteers went forth and symbolically broke the salt law....Sihora, Katni, Mandla and Damoh witnessed the same spectacle. In hundreds of villages the ritual was performed with solemnity.

On 15 April 1930 the agitation took place in Raipur where it coincided with the opening of the Political Conference of the Hindi region.

2 Ibid., 13 April 1930, p.7.
3 Mishra, op. cit., p.385.
At this Conference the leaders of the Congress decided to step up the tempo of agitation in the Hindi region in view of the government's refusal to suppress the Salt Satyagraha.\footnote{Hitavada, 20 April 1920, p.9.} This decision marked the beginning of the third phase of civil disobedience in the Hindi region. There were other reasons why the nationalists who attended the Conference were inspired to new heights of opposition to the government. On 14 April 1930 the British authorities arrested Jawarhalal Nehru in Allahabad as he was about to leave for Raipur. Shukla, who was President of the Conference declared that the arrest of...Nehru had suddenly transformed the political conference into a war conference'.\footnote{Ibid., 20 April 1930, p.9; 24 April 1930, p.5.} At the Conference, too, Hindi leaders revived the ancient name of the Hindi region - Mahakoshal. In so doing, they aroused in those who heard the name a 'host of sacred memories, legends and stories', and spurred them to restore the region to freedom and glory.\footnote{Ibid., 20 April 1930, p.1; 24 April 1930, p.5.} As a result, the leaders of the Conference decided to supplement the salt agitation with the reading of proscribed literature, a Forest Satyagraha, and other forms of civil disobedience.\footnote{Ibid., 24 April 1930, p.8.} This decision taken, the spotlight shifted back to Jabalpur, where, on 20 April 1930 all prominent Hindi leaders gathered to launch the intensive phase of civil disobedience:
From Raipur came Ravi Shankar Shukla, from Drug came G.S. Gupta; from Khandwa came Makhanlal Chaturvedi; from Seoni came D.K. Mehta. Khandekar came from Saugor, and Agnihotri from Mandla to tell that the whole province was behind the people of Jubbulpore in their resolve to fight the battle of freedom to the finish.... With Seth Govind Das (and) D.P. Mishra was V. Bhargava pleader, P. Jain a merchant, L. Kalve a cultivator, (who all)...read passages from a proscribed book.¹

This meeting marked the beginning of a series of agitations in the northern Hindi districts during April and May. The government, however, replied by arresting Govind Das, Shukla and others, and the movement there died away to reappear in a more intense form in Chhattisgarh.²

The swing of nationalist agitation to Chhattisgarh marked the beginning of the fourth phase of civil disobedience in Mahakoshal. This phase of the campaign, which took place between May and June 1930, was distinguished from those that preceded it in that, although it began in the towns, during its course it also penetrated deep into the countryside and was often

¹ Hitavada, 27 April 1930, p.5.
² The government arrested Govind Das, Mishra, Shukla, Chaturvedi and V.D. Bhargava on 29 April 1930; and all except the latter were awarded sentences of two 'years' rigorous imprisonment. Bhargava received a sentence of one year. For the agitations see Mishra, op. cit., p.406; Hitavada, 24 April 1930, p.9; 1 May 1930, p.7; 4 May 1930, pp.7, 10; 8 May 1930, p.9; 11 May 1930, p.7; 15 May 1930, p.1; 25 May 1930, p.13; 29 May 1930, p.9; 15 June 1930, p.9.
accompanied by violence. Again, this round of agitation
drew for support on distinct social groups in contrast
with the general support by townsfolk that had marked
the previous phases of civil disobedience.

Of all the agitations launched in Chhattisgarh
between May and June 1930, perhaps the most successful
was the boycott of foreign cloth. It was certainly so
in Raipur, the main centre of nationalist agitation in
the division. There the merchants refused to sell
foreign cloth, the ladies announced their readiness to
spin, and 'almost all the labouring classes and artisans
...decided to boycott foreign cloth'.

In addition, volunteers picketed the shops of those merchants who
refused to support the boycott. Volunteers also
boycotted liquor shops in Raipur and other towns in
Chhattisgarh. And in Raipur the campaign of civil
disobedience in Mahakoshal showed its first proclivity
to violence. The government ascribed this new development
to the increasingly violent tone of political speeches
in the division. On 9 June 1930, for instance, the
government reported that

Government servants are openly attacked and the
police especially abused and threatened.
Speaking at Raipur on 29 May, Purushottam Das
urged his audience to buy arms and ammunition,
and on 2 June said it would be easy to kill off
the handful of British in the country....There
have been instances in Raipur city itself of

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1 Hitavada, 25 May 1930, p.15; 1 June 1930, p.9;
8 June 1930, p.2.
2 Ibid., 1 June 1930, p.9.
deliberate hampering of investigations. In Raipur, with the crowds which move in the streets day and night...becoming troublesome, police are insulted on every possible occasion, and European passers-by are jeered and shouted at. There are frequent demonstrations in the vicinity of the police lines.¹

According to the government, the activities of the District Council considerably aggravated the situation in Raipur. This estimation was correct. The Council played a vital part in the campaign of civil disobedience, urging people in urban areas to participate in agitation, and through its teachers, spreading the message of civil disobedience to the rural areas.² By June 1930 the government considered the Council too great a danger to law and order in Raipur to go unchecked, and it decided to take immediate action.³ Accordingly, on 12 June the government dissolved the District Council of Raipur, and ten days later rounded up four of Shukla's lieutenants in Raipur. These measures achieved the desired effect, and by July a 'definite lull' descended on Raipur and

¹ NAI, Home Poll, 253/30, 1930, The Civil Disobedience Movement in the Central Provinces, Extract from the Central Provinces Summary for the week ending 9 June 1930, Raipur district, p.4.
³ For agitation in Durg, see Hitavada, 26 June 1930, p.15; and in Bilaspur, ibid., p.9.
the division of Chhattisgarh.¹

During this lull, agitation similar to that in Chhattisgarh flared up in the northern districts of Mahakoshal. In the towns the agitation was sharp but brief.² The police pounced on suspected ringleaders, and by early August the situation in Jabalpur, the centre of the movement, was 'much quieter than it (had) ...been for some months'.³ As the situation in Jabalpur and other northern towns quietened down, however, disturbances broke out in rural areas adjacent to the towns. Between June and July 1930 villagers and aboriginals in several districts raided government forests, invaded forest auctions and interfered with irrigation facilities. But once again the government swiftly suppressed the agitation, and in so doing brought the fourth phase of civil disobedience in Mahakoshal to


The forest agitation of July 1930, however, was not a passing phenomenon. In reality, it was the prelude to a massive wave of forest disturbances that swept across Mahakoshal between August and November 1930 to form the fifth phase of civil disobedience in the region. These disturbances were so extensive in nature and involved such huge numbers of people that they offered the government its most severe challenge of the entire campaign of civil disobedience in the Central Provinces and Berar during 1930. Those involved in the campaign included villagers and members of the aboriginal tribes of Gonds and Korkus. In assessing the causes of the Satyagraha, the government had this to say:

The appeal of forest satyagraha...was irresistible. These...people have always looked upon the restrictions imposed by forest conservation as an unjustifiable encroachment on their natural rights, and were an easy prey to propaganda which told them that forest laws were unjust and made only to be broken. Further, in its search for recruits, the Congress had recourse to the lowest classes of the population, ex convicts, the riff raff of the bazaars in the towns and the like....(The) dangers of the situation were obvious.2


2 MPS, P & M, 302/CDM, 1930, p.13. See also MPS, Forest, 1-42, 1931, Correspondence Relating to Forest Grievances.
Apprehending the dangers of the situation, however, was one matter; dealing with them was another. The government tried to halt the campaign in its early stages by arresting its leaders - D.K. Mehta, G.S. Gupta, and Seth Dipchand Gothi, a leading nationalist from Betul. But the Satyagrahas only proliferated, springing up on a large scale and with great rapidity in Betul, Durg, Seoni, Chhindwara, Mandla, Raipur and Nimar. In many districts, too, the agitation was accompanied by serious violence, as in Betul on 19 September 1930. The police had arrested some forest Satyagrahis in the district and were bringing them to Bordehi. As they halted at village Kundara

about 400 persons came armed with lathis and... seized the enquiry papers, which they tore up on the spot. The District Superintendent of Police and the Divisional Forest Officer immediately proceeded to the spot with a party of police and made 11 arrests. Returning to Jambara Railway Station they were overtaken by a party of about 400 villagers who intended to rescue the arrested men. They, however, dispersed as soon as the Police made as if to charge. A hour later, about 700 villagers all armed with lathis came to the station with the same object and hurled stones at the police party.

1 Hitavada, 21 August 1930, p.3; A Compilation of Important Political Trials in the Central Provinces and Berar, op. cit., p.2.


The government responded with equal force, and by 30 September 1930 the situation had quietened considerably. During October, the incidence of agitation decreased still further, and by November had ceased altogether.¹

Following the Forest Satyagrahas agitation again broke out in the urban areas of Mahakoshal, but came to a halt with the truce between Gandhi and the viceroy in 1931. This period of urban agitation from October 1930 to February 1931 constituted the final phase of civil disobedience in Mahakoshal. In the towns merchants observed a boycott of foreign cloth; a 'batch of young workers, most of them without what is called a liberal education', conducted an anti-liquor campaign; and a host of volunteers organised a successful boycott of the elections to the legislature during November.²

Two district Councils - those of Raipur and Betul - also contributed to the attack on the government during the last phase of civil disobedience. In October 1930 the government dissolved both Councils for fomenting civil disobedience, and ordered them to elect fresh office-bearers. The Councils obeyed this order, but

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¹ Hitavada, 14 September 1930, p.5, 2 October 1930, p.10; Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1930, p.435.
signified their opposition to the government by electing men who were still serving sentences in jail for offences committed during civil disobedience. As a result, in November 1930 the government pronounced the Councils 'incompetent' and suspended them - that of Betul for two, and Raipur for three, years - to prevent them causing any further trouble.\footnote{MPS, LSG, 1-94, 1930, Dissolution and Suspension of the District Council Betul, Resolution no.7340-73/1050-DVII, Nagpur, 11 November 1930, p.27; MPS, LSG, 1-95, 1930, Dissolution of the District Council Raipur, Resolution no.7340-A/1014-DVIII, Nagpur, 11 November 1930, pp.153-5.} Following these suspensions, the campaign of civil disobedience in Mahakoshal gradually came to a halt, and with the signing of the truce between Gandhi and the Viceroy, ceased altogether.\footnote{See Hitavada, 13 November 1930, p.6; 21 December 1930, p.9; 15 February 1931, p.13.}

The achievements of civil disobedience in the Central Provinces and Berar in 1930 were many. First, although the campaigns occurred in three separate arenas, namely, the division of Nagpur, Berar and Mahakoshal, they were more alike than the movements of non-cooperation in the three areas during 1921-2. This similarity gave the campaigns of 1930 greater cohesion and hence made them a more effective challenge to the government. The campaigns of 1930 also challenged the government's ability to maintain law and order to a much greater extent than the non-cooperation movement in 1921. They did so by drawing
into sustained agitation large numbers of people from all sections of society - rural and urban. Among these were members of the urban middle classes, the merchant community, the educated ladies of the towns, students, the urban lower classes, villagers, and members of the aboriginal tribes.

The campaigns of civil disobedience were also more effective than those of non-cooperation in that they aroused a far greater degree of opposition to the government in rural areas. This was partly because the campaigns of 1930 were built on the foundations laid in 1921; and partly also because the Congress was far better organised for rural agitation in 1930 than in 1921. Whatever the reason, the results of the rural movements in 1930 were not in doubt. Those movements unleashed a train of "turbulent lawlessness" in the countryside,¹ and their latent effects undermined the respect for authority on which British rule in the province rested. In the government's view:

Of many districts it can be said truthfully that apart from those who were actually involved in offences, there was an appreciably larger section of the public which gave up the traditional attitude of friendliness and hospitality to the police and adopted one of sullen hostility instead.²

The campaigns of civil disobedience in 1930 seriously jeopardised the rule of law in the Central Provinces and

¹ Hitavada, 25 September 1930, p.8.
Berar. The extent to which they did so was reflected in the changing responses of the government to civil disobedience. At first the authorities tried to control the agitation by a policy of non interference. As the level of agitation increased, however, the government arrested and imprisoned the ringleaders of the movement. This, too, proved ineffective, and the government was compelled to promulgate ordinances; arrest volunteers in large numbers; impose fines 'proportionate to the status and income' of those arrested; dissolve local bodies; impose punitive police in nine districts; and resort to firing, lathi charges and whipping - justifying the latter as the only suitable punishment for illiterate hill-folk.¹

Congress leaders made two major gains in their campaigns of agitation in 1930. First, they dislocated the finances of the province at a time of economic recession, thus compelling the government to suspend many nation-building activities and to institute a programme of retrenchment in the government

services. Secondly, through their campaigns, the leaders of the Congress re-established themselves as the leaders of the people, displacing the responsive cooperators who had assumed that role from them in 1926.

II

Scarcely a year after Gandhi and the Viceroy had agreed on a truce, the Indian National Congress was once more at war with the Government of India. At first the Congress and the government made strenuous efforts to observe the terms of the truce, but during 1931 each side accused the other of breaking those terms. Furthermore, despite Gandhi's participation in the second Round Table Conference in London, the delegates did not reach any agreement on the thorny question of communal representation. As a result, relations between the

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1 Hitavada, 25 September 1930, p.8; The Central Provinces and Berar, Report on the Administration of the Province for the Year 1929-30 (Nagpur, 1931), pp.15, 22; MPS, P & M, 302/CDM, 1930, pp.23-4; Report on the Excise Revenue of the Central Provinces and Berar for 1930 (Nagpur, 1931), p.1; Report on the Forest Administration of the Central Provinces and Berar for the Year ending 1931 (Nagpur, 1932), p.18. The government estimated the total damage to forests during 1930 at Rs 7,00,000. The civil disobedience movement also affected the revenue from timber and grazing leases, the loss here being in the region of Rs 8,85,564. The government was also compelled to spend an extra Rs 2,00,000 in the Police Department, and Rs 1,00,000 in the Jail Department. In addition, it had to face the staggering loss of Rs 30,00,000 in excise revenue. During the first nine months of 1930, consumption of liquor decreased by 27 per cent on the previous year.
nationalists and the government worsened. By December 1931 they had deteriorated to such an extent that Congressmen in the United Provinces had launched a no-tax campaign in the rural areas of the province. Early in 1932 the Government of India replied by arresting Gandhi, Nehru and other national leaders and by promulgating ordinances, more far reaching in their scope than any it had issued hitherto.

In the Central Provinces and Berar, the period of the truce was at first more smooth in the Marathi region than in Mahakoshal. But by the end of 1931 Congressmen in both regions were equally prepared for a second campaign of civil disobedience against the provincial government. In March 1931 the Government of the Central Provinces heartily welcomed the truce. Speaking in the Council on 6 March, the Finance Member, Sir Arthur Nelson, declared that

I need hardly say, sir, both for myself and my colleagues, and I am authorised to add on behalf of His Excellency the Governor, and I feel sure, I may add also on behalf of all the officials of the Government, how greatly pleased we are at the prospect now held out of a return to normal conditions.¹

To assist this return, on the same day the government ordered the release of most of those imprisoned for civil disobedience during 1930.² Until August 1931,

¹ CPLC, vol.1, 6 March 1931, p.764.
² MPS, P & M, Confidential, 48/CDM, 1931, H.C. Gowan, Chief Secretary to all District Commissioners, Central Provinces and Berar, no.154-1, 6 March 1931.
nationalists in the Marathi region responded to these gestures with activities which, while they sustained the spirit of popular opposition to British rule, did not contravene the terms of Gandhi's agreement with the Viceroy. However, as relations between the national leaders of the Congress and the Government of India deteriorated, Congressmen in the Marathi region stepped up the enrolment of volunteers and held meetings and conferences at which speakers anticipated a 'coming fight' with the government. Abhyanker, in particular, reflected the resurgence of nationalist sentiment in the Marathi region. On 20 October 1931 he declared in a meeting at Nagpur that

all the Indian delegates to the Round Table Conference were humbugs except Gandhi: and spoke of the necessity of organising new volunteers for the renewed struggle, ending with a prayer that he might meet his death on the battlefield fighting for the freedom of India.

1 For the division of Nagpur see Hitavada, 3 May 1931, p.2; 14 June 1931, p.10; 18 June 1931, p.8; 9 July 1931, p.5; 13 August 1931, p.5. For Berar, see ibid., 5 April 1931, p.9; 30 April 1931, p.7; 24 May 1931, p.7; 4 June 1931, p.5.

In keeping with the general decline in relations between the national leaders of the Congress and the Government of India, Congressmen in the Marathi region also prepared to launch a no-tax campaign against the government in the countryside.\textsuperscript{1} Then, following the arrest of Nehru and Gandhi, Abhyanker and Wamanrao Joshi dissolved the Provincial Congress Committees in Nagpur and Berar, respectively, and replaced them with War Councils.\textsuperscript{2}

During the truce in Mahakoshal, nationalists adopted a more militant attitude to the government than they did in the Marathi region. After their release from jail in March 1931, Hindi leaders made strong speeches against the government probably because they suspected that it was not fully implementing the terms of the truce.\textsuperscript{3} Rao intervened to pacify the situation,\textsuperscript{4} but the speeches continued, witness Butler's reference to the Sagar Political Conference of June 1931 in a

\textsuperscript{1} Hitavada, 15 November 1931, p.10; 29 November 1931, p.6; 6 December 1931, p.7; 10 December 1931, p.4.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 7 January 1931, pp.6, 8. The Nagpur War Council consisted of M.V. Abhyanker (President), Ranka (Secretary), Bhangwandin (Treasurer), Dharmadikari, Dangre and others. Wamanrao Joshi was President, and Brijlal Biyani was Secretary, of the Berar War Council.


\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., A Note by E.R. Rao on Politics in Jabalpur, 17 April 1931; ibid., an undated Note on Seth Govind Das.
letter to Rao:

The speeches of third day at Saugor were bad, and the meeting carried a resolution not to cooperate at the Round Table Conference. Also Govind Das's familiar (D.P. Mishra) made a rude attack on the D(istrict) C(ommissioner) Jubbulpore. The Seth also went all out over no rent.¹

Furthermore, the Conference at Sagar endorsed candidates for the forthcoming local government elections with a view to 'utilise local bodies for organising the future fight'.² At the same time Hindi Congressmen launched boycotts of foreign cloth and liquor in the towns, and prepared to institute a no-rent campaign in the countryside.³ This campaign had not begun, however, before Nehru was arrested and the Hindi Provincial Congress Committee had dissolved itself into a War Council under the leadership of Govind Das.⁴

The second campaign of civil disobedience in the Central Provinces and Berar offered little real challenge to the government compared with the agitation in 1930. This was largely due to the prompt and effective action

¹ NML, Sir M. Butler to E.R. Rao, 18 June 1931.
² Extract from the List of Political and Quasi-Political Societies in Central Provinces and Berar (n.d.), p.8.
⁴ Hitavada, 10 January 1931, p.9.
taken by the government. It was also due to a marked unwillingness on the part of the urban and rural populations to throw themselves into the agitation to the same extent as they had done in 1930. As a result, the income of the government suffered little and law and order remained intact. However, as in 1930, the Congress led the agitation, and thus once again made good its claim to espouse the interests of the people.

The provincial government dealt severely with the attempts to launch a second campaign of civil disobedience and quickly brought the movement under control. As for the division of Nagpur, early in January 1932 the

1 NAI, Home Poll, 18/1, 1932, FR, First Half of January 1932, p.2.
3 For the sake of clarity, the 'division of Nagpur' continues to refer to the four Marathi districts of Nagpur, Wardha, Bhandara and Chanda. These four districts comprised the Nagpur province of the Indian National Congress. In 1931, however, the government reorganised the divisions of the Central Provinces and Berar to effect economies in government spending. It abolished the division of Narmada, and amalgamated the districts of Sagar and Damoh; Narsimhapur and Hoshangabad; and Chhindwara and Seoni. The government placed the first two districts in the new division of Jabalpur, which then comprised the districts of Jabalpur, Mandla, Nimar, together with the enlarged districts of Sagar and Hoshangabad. To the districts of Nagpur, Wardha and Chanda, the government added the district of Betul and the enlarged district of Chhindwara. These districts then constituted the division of Nagpur. In addition the government added Bhandara and Balaghat to the districts of Raipur, Bilaspur and Durg, and so formed the new division of Chhattisgarh. The division of Berar remained unchanged.
government outlawed the War Council, arrested Abhyanker and Ranka, and applied an Ordinance to prevent molestation and boycotting in the district of Nagpur. In addition, to deter other leaders from stirring up the people, the courts imposed severe sentences and fines on Abhyanker and Ranka. Next, on 13 January 1932 Butler issued a public statement on the government's attitude towards the new campaign of civil disobedience, stating that

during the last civil disobedience movement, government took a lenient view of the picketing...and interfered only when it became forcible or was such a nuisance that the public cried out for intervention.... That policy failed and this time we have decided to take all measures necessary to secure the right of all members of the public to pursue their lawful avocations without interference to their liberty....We have the will and the power to protect you.

Butler was true to his word. Within a month the government had applied the ordinance against picketing to the districts of Wardha, Chanda and Bhandara, and under this ordinance arrested large numbers of volunteers. As for other measures to nip nationalist

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1 NAI, Home Poll, 18/1, 1932, FR, First Half of January 1932, p.1.
2 Both men received three years rigorous imprisonment. The government also fined Abhyanker Rs 10,000 and auctioned his car. It later reduced the fine to Rs 2,500.
3 Hitavada, 14 January 1932, p.7.
activity in the bud, during January 1932 the authorities seized the property and funds of institutions in Nagpur which housed or trained agitators. They also prevented assembly and prohibited newspapers from publishing any matter relating to the campaign of civil disobedience. These measures were all extraordinarily effective, and the only agitations that survived them were the boycotts organised by the merchant community. After an initial period of hesitation, the merchants of Nagpur, Chanda and Wardha swung behind the Congress to boycott, first foreign cloth, and later, foreign sugar and household articles in common use. However, so heavy was the barrage which the government unleashed against the nationalists, that by August 1932 these agitations, too, were almost at an end.

The campaign of civil disobedience in Berar during 1932 was more aggressive than the campaign in the

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1 Hitavada, 14 January 1932, p.5; 17 January 1932, p.7; Mishra, op. cit., p.404.
2 Ibid., p.404; Hitavada, 21 January 1932, p.5; NAI, Home Poll, 18/1, 1932, FR, Second Half of January 1932, p.1; Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1932, p.25.
4 See Hitavada, 4 August 1932, p.5; 11 August 1932, p.5; 21 August 1932, p.1. In mid-August, the government released Abhyanker on grounds of ill-health.
division of Nagpur. During January the government arrested prominent leaders and promulgated ordinances to suppress the agitation as it had done in the division of Nagpur.\(^1\) Despite this, however, the campaign persisted longer in Berar than in that division and offered a correspondingly greater challenge to the government. This was due to two factors. First, Wamanrao Joshi avoided arrest by making 'studiously moderate' speeches,\(^2\) and thus made his leadership available to Congressmen throughout the course of the agitation in Berar. Secondly, the nationalist leaders in Berar seem to have had the use of a more constant supply of volunteers than their counterparts in Nagpur. This was particularly the case in Akola, where, with the assistance of merchants and volunteers, a succession of boycotts occurred until June.\(^3\) Similar agitations, though on a smaller scale, also took place in Buldhana and Amravati. By July, however, as a result of firm action by the government, the movement everywhere had


\(^2\) Ibid., p. 1.

\(^3\) *Hitavada*, 6 March 1932, p. 9; 7 April 1932, p. 9; 20 March 1932, p. 10; 24 March 1932, p. 8; 21 April 1930, p. 8; 1 May 1932, p. 4.
Civil Disobedience in Mahakoshal, like that in the division of Nagpur, also occurred on a very limited scale. The main centres of the agitation were the towns of Jabalpur, Khandwa, and Sagar in the north, and Raipur and Durg in the east. In the latter stages of the campaign Betul also became important owing to a recurrence there of Forest Satyagraha. In dealing with these agitations, the government adopted a policy similar to the one it had employed in the Marathi region. It first arrested important leaders like Govind Das, Mishra and Shukla, and then promulgated ordinances to enable it to arrest volunteers on a large scale. The government also suppressed by ordinances the printing of hostile news items, and prohibited meetings and conferences scheduled to be held in Jabalpur and Sagar. As a result, the desultory agitation quickly subsided, and the government withdrew ordinances and allowed

2 A Compilation of Important Political Trials in the Central Provinces and Berar, op. cit., p.11; Hitavada, 10 January 1932, p.1; 14 January 1932, p.1; 28 January 1932, p.5; 25 February 1932, p.8; 15 May 1932, p.4; 26 May 1932, p.5.
3 Ibid., 7 February 1932, p.10; 18 February 1932, p.8; 21 February 1932, p.9; 10 April 1932, p.5; 2 June 1932, pp.5, 6; 30 June 1932, p.5; 31 July 1932, p.9.
conferences to be held, where it was confident that these would not disturb law and order.¹

III

Between 1932 and 1933 agitation against the government diminished perceptibly, and Congressmen turned their attention towards a movement to uplift the Depressed community. In so doing they strengthened their claim to espouse the interests of the common people. This movement had the additional advantage of swinging political interest away from civil disobedience towards constructive work, and, as it proved in time, towards the legislature. The author of the campaign to uplift the Depressed community was Gandhi. He began the campaign in 1932, following the publication of the Communal Award, a document prescribing separate electorates for Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs and the Depressed community under the proposed constitution for India. Gandhi considered the award of separate electorates to the Depressed community as immoral, and on 20 September 1932 he began a fast to compel the British government to abandon the scheme. Gandhi achieved his immediate objective, and at the same time set in train a nationwide movement that weakened the bastion of untouchability. This movement confirmed the claim by the Congress that it espoused the interests of the Depressed community in addition to those of other

In 1932 Congressmen in the Central Provinces and Berar leapt into prominence as the champions of the Depressed community. They did so in the wake of Gandhi's symbolic fast, which triggered off a movement to remove the stigma of untouchability from the Depressed community in the province. Swept along by this movement, Congress and other leaders opened wells and temples to the Depressed community, or Harijans as Gandhi named them, and according to observers, 'great cordiality and cooperation (was) visible throughout'. ¹ Nowhere was this 'cordiality and cooperation' between Congressmen and Harijans more in evidence than in Nagpur. The Hitavada described the scene in the city on 20 September 1932 - the day on which Gandhi began his fast:

The 20 September was observed as Gandhi day.... (There was) unprecedented support from the Nagpur public.... Colleges and schools were for the most part deserted and municipal offices closed.... Hindu shops observed a hartal,... and many Hindus fasted.... Dr Khare declared four temples open to the depressed castes. ... (There was) a procession with a portrait of Gandhi in the evening with both touchables and untouchables... ending in a mammoth meeting with Dr Khare in the chair. ²

Similar scenes to the one in Nagpur occurred all over the province.

During 1933 Gandhi skilfully blended his political

¹ Hitavada, 18 September 1932, p.7; 22 September 1932, p.5; 25 September 1932, p.7; 2 October 1932, p.5.
² Ibid., 22 September 1932, p.5.
activities with his work on behalf of the Harijan community. In this way he inspired further efforts to remove untouchability, and at the same time lessened the possibility that the Congress would renew its campaign of civil disobedience against the government.

On three occasions during 1933 Gandhi focussed the attention of the Indian public on the Harijan community. In May and August he undertook further symbolic fasts on behalf of the Harijans; and in September he announced that he would begin a nationwide tour to collect funds for the uplift of that community.

Gandhi's activities in 1933 benefited the Harijans and increased the popularity of the Congress in the Central Provinces and Berar. His two fasts and the Harijan tour coincided with a marked decline in the level of agitation, which in some parts of the province had lingered on into 1933. No corresponding decline, however, occurred in the prestige of the Congress, for by identifying with the Harijan movement, the Congress leaders engaged in purposeful activity and at the same time maintained public interest in their organisation.

The event which aroused the greatest interest amongst people in the Central Provinces and Berar was undoubtedly Gandhi's Harijan tour of the province in November 1933. During this tour Congressmen identified themselves with the uplift of Harijans. But more significantly, as the associates of Gandhi they moved to the centre of a crowded and emotion-charged campaign. In so doing they won tremendous prestige for the Congress. The prestige of the Congress in the Central Provinces and Berar was never higher than on 8 November 1933, the day
on which Gandhi arrived in Nagpur on the first stage of the Harijan tour. As the Hitavada saw it, it was a day of 'warm and enthusiastic welcomes', a day of 'gifts, official meetings, and car processions...with surging crowds in holiday mood'. At the centre of it all was the diminutive Mahatma, wreathed in flowers, and by his side his host, Dr Khare.1 It was the same story in the towns and villages of Chanda and Wardha, and then in Berar, where Bajaj and Wamanrao Joshi, respectively, were Gandhi's hosts.2 Following his tour of Berar, Gandhi crossed into Mahakoshal, where further honours awaited him and his associates. Gandhi's visit to Raipur, where he stayed with Ravi Shankar Shukla, was one of the highlights of the tour in Mahakoshal.

According to the Hitavada

Gandhi's visit and the opening of the swadeshi exhibition created great enthusiasm throughout the district. People came from long distances on foot to have Mahatma's darshan....Raipur was illuminated and presented a gala appearance at the time of Gandhi's arrival....Huge crowds are visiting the exhibition which is the first of its kind in Raipur....(There) was a monster gathering of about 50000 people.3

Gandhi's visit kindled a similar enthusiasm in the northern Hindi districts, where, according to one

1 Hitavada, 9 November 1933, p.5.
2 Ibid., 12 November 1933, p.7; 16 November 1933, p.7; 19 November 1933, p.7; 23 November 1933, p.8.
3 For Gandhi's tour in Chhattisgarh see ibid., 26 November 1933, p.7; 30 November 1933, p.3; 3 December 1933, p.9.
observer, his presence created 'a wonderful atmosphere, enabling us to breathe full and free air, and feel that we belong to the same motherland'.

Although the Harijan tour undoubtedly raised the prestige of the Congress in the Central Provinces and Berar, it was not without its critics. Some observers pointed out that the tour had not removed 'tradition and conservatism'. Others claimed that 'here and there (we find) preparations for some sort of show of Harijan work, when in fact nothing is being done'. Others again were unhappy at the speed with which Gandhi toured the province, and at his reiterated complaints concerning the inadequacy of the donations. Reports that Gandhi would only visit towns where Congress leaders could guarantee him a certain sum of money only added to the dissatisfaction. But these criticisms could not detract from the excitement of Gandhi's tour. Nor could they undermine the prestige of the Congress as the sponsor of that tour.

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1 For the tour in the northern districts see Hitavada, 10 December 1933, p.4; 17 December 1933, p.9.
2 Ibid., 10 December 1933, p.4.
3 Ibid., 16 November 1933, p.10.
4 NAI, Home Poll, 3/23, 1933, The Harijan Tour, DO, 328/403-A/1 from N.J. Roughton to Hallett, 4 December 1933; Home Poll, 18/14, 1933, FR, First Half of December 1933, p.1. Gandhi received Rs 73,925 for his Harijan fund in the Central Provinces and Berar.
5 Hitavada, 30 November 1933, p.1.
IV

Congress leaders in the Central Provinces and Berar turned from the Harijan campaign in 1934 to contest the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly. Between 1933-4 nationalists throughout India urged the Congress to permit its members to return to the legislatures. As a result, in April 1934 Gandhi suspended civil disobedience and during May submitted a resolution to the All-India Congress Committee seeking approval for Congressmen to enter the legislatures. The Committee accepted the resolution. Soon afterwards, Gandhi resigned from the Congress to improve the lot of India's rural population, and Congressmen prepared to contest the elections for the Central Legislative Assembly to be held in November.

In the Central Provinces, the campaigns of civil disobedience and the Harijan movement placed the Congress in a strong position to win the elections for the Central Legislative Assembly. The position in Berar was slightly different. In 1934 Aney decided to contest the elections on behalf of the Congress Nationalist 'party', a Responsivist body which he had formed in association with Pandit Malaviya. Although the popularity of the Congress had grown enormously in Berar since 1930, the leaders of the organisation decided not to oppose Aney. They did so possibly out of respect for his long association with the nationalist cause in Berar, and possibly because he had identified himself closely with the Indian National Congress during the second campaign of civil disobedience.
No such harmony marked the contest for the Central Legislative Assembly either in the division of Nagpur or in Mahakoshal. In both areas, the period leading up to the actual campaign was characterised by bitter factional struggles between members of the Congress party. In the division of Nagpur a struggle for power once again ensued between the non-Marathi non-Brahman group led by Poonamchand Ranka and Awari and the Marathi and predominantly Brahman group led by Abhyanker and Dr Khare. The struggle between these two groups had a slight ideological twist to it, in that the non-Brahman populists held that it was they, and not the Brahman leaders, who best represented Gandhi and the Congress in the division of Nagpur.¹

Conflict between the two groups flared up on several fronts in 1934. The first difference of opinion between them concerned the elections to the Congress organisations to be held in the division of Nagpur in that year. In August 1934 the Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee led by Awari refused to accept the right of the Provincial Congress Committee to supervise and frame the rules for these elections as directed by the All-India Congress Committee.¹

¹ This conflict had a long history, and so far as Awari and Abhyanker were concerned, went back to 1927, when the latter refused to recognise his Arms Satyagraha. A conflict between the two again broke out in 1931, when Awari captured the Nagar Congress Committee. These differences were also evident at the time of Gandhi's visit to Nagpur on the Harijan tour. See Hitavada, 28 May 1931, p.5; NAI, Home Poll, 18/V, 1931, FR, Second Half of May 1931, p.1; Home Poll, 18/IX, 1931, FR, Second Half of September 1933, p.1; Home Poll, 3-23, 1933, Harijan Tour, pp.17-18.
Committee. Attempts to reconcile Awari with Abhyanker, who was President of the Provincial Congress Committee, failed, and Abhyanker took the dispute to the All-India Congress Committee. That body awarded a decision in Abhyanker's favour. The two groups also differed on the question of whether Congressmen should return to the legislatures. The populists, whose sympathies lay mainly with the merchants and with the uneducated lower classes of the city, were opposed to council entry. Abhyanker and Dr Khare, by contrast, favoured council entry, although Abhyanker believed that the Congress would be well advised to wait until the introduction of the reformed constitution before committing itself to that policy. The Working Committee, however, settled the dispute by nominating Abhyanker to contest the Assembly for the division of Nagpur, and Ranka agreed to support him during the election campaign.

The Congress chose Abhyanker on the grounds that it needed a strong candidate to oppose Dr Moonje, who was contesting Nagpur for the Congress Nationalist 'party'.

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1 NML, AICC, 756, 1934, R. Dangre, secretary Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee, to Secretary Provincial Congress Committee, 26 August 1934; ibid., M.V. Abhyanker to J. Daulatram, General Secretary, All-India Congress Committee, 27/8 August 1934; AICC, G-49, 1934, R. Dangre to Secretary All-India Congress Committee, 1 September 1934; ibid., V. Patel, 21 September 1934.

2 See ibid., P-10, 1936, N.B. Khare to J. Nehru, 7 December 1936.

3 Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1934, p.293.

4 Hitavada, 29 October 1934, p.2.
Until Moonje filed his nomination papers, however, it appeared as if Dr Khare would contest the seat for the Congress. Unlike Abhyanker, Khare believed that Congress should make an immediate return to the councils, and at the end of May 1934 'well informed quarters' in Nagpur stated that he was to represent the Congress in the elections for the Assembly. The Congress actually approved Khare's nomination, but when Moonje nominated for the seat, it gave the nomination to Abhyanker. As Khare related:

The Congress high command did not like my candidature because they thought I would not be strong enough a candidate against the redoubtable Dr Moonje. The high command, therefore, called both Abhyanker and myself to Wardha to ask Abhyanker to cancel it (i.e. Khare's nomination) and to stand himself in my place against Dr Moonje. Abhyanker, who was a diabetic and whose health was shattered in jail in the second satyagraha movement of 1932, pleaded his inability to accept the advice of the high command on the grounds of ill health. The high command however was adamant and virtually ordered Abhyanker to carry out their behest and stand as a candidate on behalf of Congress....Abhyanker who was a great disciplinarian agreed to carry out this order in spite of the fact that he himself personally was against the council entry programme at that time.

The Congress fielded Abhyanker - its strongest

1  Hitavada, 20 May 1934, p.1.

2  N.B. Khare, History of Central Provinces and Berar from 1919-1939, p.6. This is a typed note given to the writer in Nagpur in 1967. It will be cited hereafter as Khare, Note.
candidate - against Moonje, because there was a distinct possibility that Moonje might win the elections. In 1934 Moonje campaigned on his record of work for the Hindu Community since 1930. Besides attending the Round Table Conferences in London, in India Moonje had struggled ceaselessly to achieve an Indian constitution to his liking. Since 1930 he had vehemently opposed the demands made by Muslims in northern India, and strongly condemned the policies which Gandhi had adopted towards members of that community. In 1934, he declared on this point that Hindus have no faith, either in his idealism...his philosophy or his programme....We Hindus have been ruined in every way by his doctrines of non-violence, no swaraj without Hindu-Moslem unity and his blank cheques for bringing about Hindu Moslem unity.  

As a result, Moonje insisted that Hindus had to be weaned away from Gandhi, and be fired with the 'intense ambition of making India a Hindu India as Afghanistan is Muslim'. Between 1930-34 Dr Moonje devoted himself to achieving that objective. During this period he toured extensively in India speaking at meetings organised by the Hindu Mahasabha. On each occasion he encouraged his fellow Hindus to unite and strengthen their community, and in so doing protect themselves and

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1 For Moonje's work at the Conferences in London, see pp.231-2.
2 NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 6, 27 January 1934; ibid., Diary 7, 31 March 1934.
3 Ibid., Diary 2, 19 November 1929; Diary 4, 24 October 1931.
the unity of India. To achieve the goals of Hindu unity and strength, Moonje continued to assist the work of the Rashtriya Swaryam Sewak Sangh. He also encouraged Hindus to join akhadas, and in the Central Provinces and Berar he founded an association to popularise rifle shooting.

In addition between 1930-4 Moonje began moves to found a military school for boys in Maharashtra. As he declared in 1931:

I wish to make Maharashtra the centre of the military regeneration of the Hindus of India. The whole Hindu community of India still looks up to Maharashtra to take the lead....Besides the past history of Maharashtra, the thing that...appeals to them...in their search for protection against Muslim aggression is the example set by the late Lokamanya Tilak....The flag of Shree Shivajee must be held up and it cannot be better done under present circumstances than by establishing a military school and a centre of military training and education.

In championing Hindu interests, Dr Moonje came into headlong conflict with the Indian National Congress. During 1934 Moonje did his best to avoid such a conflict,
and in April proposed that all 'Hindus should combine and be united in the Swaraj party'. Such a combination, however, proved impossible. Following the publication of the Communal Award, the supporters of the Mahasabha and the former Responsivists condemned the Award's provision for communal electorates and statutory majorities for Muslims in Bengal and the Punjab. The Congress, by contrast, took a neutral line on the document, and this was the policy it placed before the electors in 1934. Moonje and Aney could not subscribe to this policy, and consequently they formed the Congress Nationalist 'party' to contest the elections on the basis of opposition to the Communal Award. And it was on this issue that Moonje entered the lists against Abhyanker in 1934.

The electoral contest between Abhyanker and Moonje in 1934 resulted in a convincing win for the Congress. The contest was a fierce one, representing as it did the climax of some ten years of bitter political rivalry between the two men. It was fierce, too, because each man had a strong political record. However, from the beginning of the election campaign, the advantage lay with Abhyanker rather than with Moonje. There were various reasons for this. Some commentators claimed that Abhyanker had a 'hold over the electorate', that was 'due to a feeling among the public that his sacrifices for the

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1 NLI, Letter Pad 73, B.S. Moonje to Mr Chatterji, 8 April 1934.
2 Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1934, p.289.
3 Ibid., p.28.
country require special recognition. 1 Other commentators said that Abhyanker had an advantage over Moonje because the public at large was with the Congress, moved as it was by the consideration that the Congress has not had a chance of contesting the elections after 1927...and that it should be given whole hearted support when it has reverted to constitutional methods.2

Participation by the Congress in nationalist agitation and the Harijan movement undoubtedly gave Abhyanker a further advantage over Moonje. Abhyanker had at his command the entire organisation of the Congress in the division of Nagpur - an organisation still fresh from the challenge of agitation against the government. He also had the assistance of a veritable army of volunteers, many of whom were well known to the public through their participation in the civil disobedience movement.3 Furthermore, Abhyanker was supported by most of the prominent Congressmen in Nagpur - Khare, Ranka and others - and he thus secured the support of all those who regarded these men as their leaders. They included groups as diverse as the middle classes, the Parsis, the Christians, the non-Brahman community, the merchants, and Harijans and the working class people of the city. 4

Abhyanker had several other advantages over Dr Moonje,

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1 Hitavada, 15 November 1934, p.1.
2 Ibid., 25 November 1934, p.8.
3 Ibid.
4 See ibid., 11 October 1934, p.5; 4 November 1934, p.7; 15 November 1934, pp.6, 7.
besides these. The Press of the division of Nagpur was reported to be 'solidly behind the Congress.'\(^1\) Again, Abhyanker and Khare both expressed ambivalent opinions on the Communal Award, thus making it difficult for Dr Moonje to make political capital out of the official views of the Congress on the Award.\(^2\) On the eve of the elections, too, the Congress published a pamphlet relating to the personal life of Dr Moonje. This pamphlet lost Dr Moonje a great deal of support before the elections.\(^3\)

All these factors told against Moonje, and although he put up a stout fight against Abhyanker to make the contest in Nagpur 'one of the keenest and most exciting... in the history of the province', Abhyanker emerged the victor.\(^4\) Abhyanker's victory vindicated the nationalist views of the Congress and made a fitting climax to his own political career until that point. It also made it improbable that Dr Moonje would ever confront the electorate in Nagpur again.

The period leading up to the elections in Mahakoshal was also marked by an intense conflict between two

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\(^1\) Hitavada, 15 November 1934, p.7.


\(^3\) Ibid., 15 November 1934, p.7.

\(^4\) Ibid., p.6. According to Abhyanker, op. cit., p.474, Abhyanker 'won the election against Moonje with a thumping majority - 4547 as opposed to 2116 votes'.

factions within the Congress. These factions were led by Govind Das and Mishra from Jabalpur, and by Shukla from Raipur. There were no ideological issues involved in this conflict; it arose from the desire of each group to control the Congress organisation in Mahakoshal. While the conflict occurred at many levels, it was seen to best effect in the elections for the Provincial and subsidiary Congress Committees in Mahakoshal held in 1934. As control of the subsidiary Congress Committees meant control over the Provincial Congress Committee, each faction tried to establish its supremacy over the subsidiary Committees. From this struggle for supremacy, Shukla emerged victorious, and in September 1934 he and his supporters secured control over the Provincial Congress Committee and many of the Committees in the fourteen districts of the region. In addition, Shukla himself replaced Govind Das as President of the Provincial Congress Committee.¹

But this was only one aspect of Shukla's conflict with Mishra and Govind Das. Additional trouble arose when Shukla shifted the office of the Provincial Congress Committee to Raipur and tried to enhance his control over the organisation by increasing the number of

¹ See Hitavada, 20 September 1934, p.8; NML, Files of the Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee (cited hereafter as MPCC), 1931-4, 5, G. Da Silva to President AICC, 22 September 1934, p.2; NML, AICC, P-9, 1934, Secretary MPCC to Secretary AICC, 28 September 1934; Hitavada, 24 January 1935, p.9.
representatives on the Committee from Chhattisgarh. This drew strong protests from Mishra and Govind Das, and Shukla was compelled to abandon the scheme. During 1934, Govind Das and Shukla also clashed over the question of whether Congressmen should return to the legislatures. Early in 1934, Shukla, who had always advocated that nationalists should work in the councils, affirmed his support for that course of action. In April, at a press conference in Raipur, Shukla asserted boldly that

> our history of the last few years, teaches us that not only should we capture the legislative councils but all the local bodies and associations through which a strong government tightens its grips upon us. They must be made to own allegiance to the Congress which should be supreme in all national affairs....There is no room for no changers.

Govind Das was not as ardent an advocate of council entry as Shukla, and he refused to accept the latter's point of view until the All-India Congress Committee had decided the issue.

When the All-India Congress Committee did announce its decision, the two factions led by Shukla and Mishra again disagreed as to who should comprise the delegation from Mahakoshal to the Congress Parliamentary Board, which had been formed to supervise the Congress electoral

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1 NML, AICC, P-9, 1934, Secretary MPCC to Secretary AICC, 28 September 1934; ibid., D.K. Mehta, et.al. to President Indian National Congress, n.d., 1934.
2 Hitavada, 19 April 1934, p.6.
3 Ibid., 20 May 1934, p.9.
campaign. In August 1934, Shukla and one of his supporters, G.S. Gupta of Durg, secured two of the three places in the delegation.\(^1\) This made it highly probable that the Congress Parliamentary Board would nominate men favourable to Shukla to contest the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly in Mahakoshal. Later in August 1934 Govind Das and Mishra tried to counter Shukla's growing power in the region by resigning from the Congress.\(^2\) This move was remarkably successful, for during September the Congress Parliamentary Board nominated both men to stand for the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly.\(^3\) At this point, however, the provincial government intervened in the conflict and disqualified Mishra from standing for election.\(^4\) The Government's action caused further manoeuvres between the two factions,

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\(^1\) Hitavada, 2 August 1934. The third member of the delegation was D.P. Mishra.

\(^2\) Ibid., 9 August 1934, p.1.

\(^3\) Ibid., 13 September 1934, p.1; 20 September 1934, p.10.

\(^4\) Ibid., 21 October 1934, p.3. The provincial government and the Government of India refused to accept Mishra's nomination for election to the Central Legislative Assembly on the grounds that he had been imprisoned during the campaigns of civil disobedience. The governments, however, did not invoke that reason for rejecting the nominations of Govind Das, Sheodass Daga or Gupta, all of whom had served terms of imprisonment since 1930 for their nationalist activities. The reason for Mishra's disqualification from contesting the elections to the Assembly was more probably to be found in his quarrel with the government for control of the Jabalpur Municipal Committee. See Mishra op. cit., pp.419-20.
and when the final nominations were made in October, Shukla's group secured two candidates and Mishra's group one.¹ Once the three candidates were chosen, the Congressmen of Mahakoshal united to secure their election to the legislature.²

At the ensuing elections, the three candidates were returned in triumph to the Assembly. From the beginning of the electoral campaign, it was evident that the Congress candidates would be returned 'in an overwhelming majority'.³ It was evident because they possessed qualifications that their opponents could not match—qualifications they had gained in leading the movements of civil disobedience and in spending long terms in jail for opposing the government.⁴ Further, the Congress candidates and their helpers mounted a campaign that outshone their opponents' campaigns at every point.

Congress leaders pursued several measures in particular that led their party to victory. Govind Das and Shukla made long election tours through the rural areas.⁵ In the towns Congress leaders issued manifestos, or held 'Congress weeks' to publicise the many

¹ Shukla's supporters comprised G.S. Gupta and Seth Sheodass Daga, a banker from Raipur. The other candidate was Seth Govind Das.
² Hitavada, 24 October 1934, p.5.
³ Ibid., 23 October 1934, p.5.
⁴ One of those opposing the Congress was Dr Hari Singh Gour.
⁵ Ibid., p.5; 24 October 1934, p.5.
achievements of the Congress in Mahakoshal. All those who worked for the Harijans, too, appealed to the Harijan voters to support the Congress. All these measures were immensely successful and the three Congress candidates won their seats. As one nationalist commented later:

With a truly martyr's record of suffering... the Congress came out successful(ly) in the elections on the crest of immense popularity. Everywhere the nominees of the Congress swept the polls.

The night of suffering was over; and the day of the Congress was at hand.

1 Hitavada, 11 November 1934, p.7.
2 Ibid., 4 November 1934, p.15.
4 Mishra, op. cit., p.419.
In 1938 Hindi politicians led by Ravi Shankar Shukla formed a ministry in the Central Provinces and Berar. In so doing they completed the transfer of power from the Marathi region to Mahakoshal begun by Raghavendra Rao. The setting for this final shift of power was the Legislative Assembly established in the province under the reformed constitution of 1935. In 1936 the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress gave its approval to Congressmen to contest the first elections to the new Assembly, which were to be held in February 1937. Congressmen immediately launched an energetic electoral campaign covering the whole province, and secured their return in overwhelming numbers to the new legislature. Then, after receiving approval from the Working Committee, Congress leaders in the Assembly formed a ministry under the leadership of Dr Khare of Nagpur. This ministry, however, was dominated by representatives of the Marathi region.

The formation of the Khare ministry was the prelude to a series of constitutional crises which were only resolved when the leaders of Mahakoshal assumed control of the government. These crises had their origin in a complex set of factors. Foremost among these was the fact that between 1927 and 1937 Raghavendra Rao had
transferred the reins of government from the Marathi to the Hindi region. Yet in 1937, with the formation of the Khare ministry, control of the government again reverted to the Marathi region. A more immediate cause of the crises was that, although the Marathi region dominated the cabinet, members from Mahakoshal enjoyed a majority in the Congress parliamentary party from which the cabinet was drawn. Again, between 1937-38 serious agricultural, industrial and communal disturbances occurred in the province, and these placed a severe strain on the members of Dr Khare's ministry, most of whom had not had any previous experience of office. Moreover, serious conflicts developed between the members of the cabinet, usually following the lines of linguistic division between them.

These conflicts reached a climax in July 1938 when Dr Khare resigned his Premiership and formed a second cabinet which excluded his Hindi colleagues. To restore political stability to the ministry, the Working Committee compelled Dr Khare to resign as Premier and gave its approval to a ministry led by Ravi Shankar Shukla. This ministry remained in office for fifteen months, despite serious unrest throughout the province and particularly in the Marathi region. Then, with Congress ministries in the other provinces of British India, Shukla and his ministers resigned from office following the declaration of War between Great Britain and Germany in 1939.
In 1936 the Indian National Congress gave permission to its members to contest the elections to the legislatures established under the new constitution of 1935. Before this grant of permission, Congressmen had been deeply divided in their attitude to the reformed constitution. One group of Congressmen led by Jawaharlal Nehru believed that the Congress should concern itself, not with the constitution, but with improving the condition of the masses of India and drawing them into the nationalist movement. Another group of Congressmen led by Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad, two prominent members of the Working Committee from Gujarat and Bihar respectively, held that Congressmen should contest the elections and enter the new legislatures. A resolution passed at the annual session of the Congress at Faizpur in 1936 resolved the conflict between the two groups. This resolution stressed the need of nationalists to associate the masses with the Congress; and at the same time directed Congressmen to contest the elections to the new councils in 1937.

Congressmen in the Central Provinces and Berar obeyed this mandate, and won a majority of seats in the new Legislative Assembly. An important factor in this victory was undoubtedly the Congress party's opposition to the government during the campaigns of civil disobedience. In addition, the claim by the Congress party that it alone was able to represent the interests of all people in the province must have won it considerable electoral support. The Congress party's victory at the elections in 1937 was also closely
related to the emergence of strong leaders who provided a focus for the aspirations of the people in each part of the province.

These leaders emerged after severe struggles for power that, in some cases, were resolved only a short time before the elections. The resolution of these conflicts then enabled all factions within the Congress to present a united front to the electors. One struggle for power that was resolved just before the elections occurred in the division of Nagpur. Abhyanker, a veteran of many campaigns, died in January 1935, and Dr Khare succeeded him as leader of the Congress party in the division.¹ Ranka, Awari and the non-Brahmans, however, refused to accept Dr Khare as leader and for several years subjected him to constant attack. This attack was seen to best effect in the conflict between the Provincial Congress Committee and the Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee - the former led by Khare, and the latter by Ranka and Awari. By April the conflict between the two Committees had become so severe that Dr Khare took the dispute to the All-India Congress Committee, complaining that Ranka, Awari and others were 'persistently and consistently defying the organisation of the Indian National Congress...and flouting the Provincial Congress Committee.²

¹ Khare, Note, op. cit., p. 7. During January 1935, Khare was also elected to the Central Legislative Assembly in place of Abhyanker.
² NML, AICC, P-10, 1934, N.B. Khare to R. Prasad, 16 April 1935.
The two factions were also divided on the question of council entry. Like many professional men in the Congress party, Dr Khare supported the view that Congressmen should contest the elections and enter the Legislative Assembly.\(^1\) The populists, however, sided with Nehru and urged that the Congress should arouse the masses and pursue an aggressive line against the government.\(^2\) Ranka, in particular, was strongly opposed to work in the legislature, and when asked later by Dr Khare

if he would like to stand for election to the legislative assembly, he told (him)...that he did not want to go to the Legislative Assembly because he was an orthodox non-cooperator and that he had no faith in council entry.\(^3\)

During 1935 the two factions formed separate groups, each of which claimed to represent the Congress in the division of Nagpur. Each group held separate demonstrations and meetings, and each indulged in physical violence against the other for purposes of attack or defence.\(^4\) In November 1935 the Hitavada recorded one such display of violence:

Rajendra Prasad in an address in the south is reported to have descanted at length on the

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1 Hitavada, 18 April 1935, p.5.
3 NML, AICC, P-10, 1936, N.B. Khare to J. Nehru, 9 December 1936.
congress creed of non violence....But we wish to draw his attention to the way in which his followers are giving effect to the creed in Nagpur. Throwing chairs at each other and knocking each other in the jaw have become recognised methods in the local political schedule and we would ask Rajendra Prasad to induce his warriors to shed some of their war paint and set a personal example in non violence.¹

The conflict between Ranka and Khare continued into 1936, and, though both tried to mend the breach, it was not until April of that year that the two men 'joined their hands' at the instance of Jawarhalal Nehru and the struggle between them temporarily came to an end.²

During the early part of the election campaign, differences between Khare and Ranka again came to the surface and threatened to prevent the Congress party from presenting a united front to the electors. As the elections drew near, Ranka seems to have changed his views on the utility of entering the Assembly and tried to secure Congress endorsement for the seat of Nagpur.³ In doing so he again came into conflict with Dr Khare, who also sought, and eventually won, the Congress nomination for that seat. Khare did so because the

¹ Hitavada, 1 November 1935, p.1.
² Ibid., 29 April 1936, p.5; NML, AICC, G-49, 1934, Pandit Sunderlal to Rajendra Prasad, 29 January 1936. Pandit Sunderlal tried to mediate between the two factions in January 1936, and found both Khare and Ranka 'agreeable to a compromise'.
Provincial Congress Committee urged that his services were 'absolutely indispensable in this province';\(^1\) and because the Congress required a strong candidate to oppose Dr L.V. Paranjpe who was contesting Nagpur for the Congress Nationalist 'party'. The Hitavada believed that Ranka would not show up well against Dr Paranjpe, and on 6 January 1937 stated the grounds for this belief:

Dr Paranjpe (is) the redoubtable leader of many Hindu processions and the emotional orator of a hundred meetings at the Town Hall. Congressmen are perturbed at the candidature of Dr Paranjpe, for apart from being a Hindu Sabha man he has a record for work which cannot be ignored. ...It is reported that some of the fabulously rich bankers of the city are behind Dr Paranjpe who will also get the support of the Moonje group ...Dr Khare will have to fight for every inch of his ground...for Dr Paranjpe will be on the battlefield with his vast hordes of Hindu Mahasabha men from the city.\(^2\)

Non-Brahman Congressmen led by Bajaj and Ranka also clashed with Dr Khare and the Provincial Congress Committee on a number of other issues connected with the elections. On 31 October 1936 the Provincial Congress Committee empowered Dr Khare to select the candidates to represent the Congress in the constituencies of the division of Nagpur.\(^3\) In selecting the candidate for the

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\(^1\) Hitavada, 4 November 1936, p.5.

\(^2\) Ibid., 6 January 1937, p.6; 10 January 1937, p.6.

\(^3\) Ibid., 4 November 1936, p.5. The Provincial Congress Committees of Nagpur, Berar and Mahakoshal also gave Dr Khare the responsibility to select candidates for the whole province. In discharging this responsibility, Khare selected some 75 candidates.
seat of Katol-Saoner, Dr Khare chose a Brahman lawyer, P.D. Harkare, in preference to B. Chandak, a strong Marwari contender for the nomination. Bajaj and supporters of Ranka condemned Khare for attempting to 'establish Peshwai or Brahman raj by selecting Brahmin Congressmen in large numbers', and took their complaints to the Central Parliamentary Board of the Indian National Congress. That body subsequently reversed Dr Khare's decision and substituted the Marwari for the Brahman nominee.¹

The non-Brahmans also read the signs of a Brahman plot in Dr Khare's attempt to contest the elections in coalition with the Congress Nationalist 'party'. That 'party' had the support of many Brahmans including Dr Moonje, and had come into existence to secure the rejection of the Communal Award. Thus, to effect a coalition between that 'party' and the Congress (which took a neutral line on the Award), Dr Khare supported the views of the Congress Nationalist 'party' on the document. He then had to convince the members of that 'party' of the sincerity of his stance. This was not a difficult matter, for as he himself said on 15 September 1936,

As far as I am personally concerned, I may tell you that through my recent electoral tour in the province, I have condemned the Communal Award

and the policy of government behind it in unequivocal terms and on every occasion...If this is not agitation against the Communal Award I don't know what is.¹

Dr Khare's stance on the Award facilitated a coalition between the Congress and the Congress Nationalist 'party' in the division of Nagpur. During November 1936, the two parties agreed that 'so far as the Assembly elections are concerned, there is no difference...between the congress candidates and those of the Congress Nationalist party'.² The Congress Parliamentary Board again intervened, however, and refused to acknowledge the agreement.³ As a result Dr Paranjpe led the Congress Nationalists against the Congress during the closing stages of the election campaign, and contested the seat of Nagpur against Dr Khare as he had originally planned to do.⁴ But by this time, the non-Brahman populists had come over 'to the official side' and were supporting Dr Khare in the election campaign.⁵

¹ Hitavada, 25 September 1936, p.3. This is an extract from a letter written by Dr Khare to G.A. Ogale, editor of the Maharashtra, and a prominent member of the Congress Nationalist 'party' in Nagpur.

² Ibid., 1 November 1936, p 16; NML, AICC, P-10, 1936, N.B. Khare to V.J. Patel, 14 November 1936.

³ Hitavada, 25 December 1936, p.3; 6 January 1937, p.3; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 8, 30 December 1936.

⁴ Hitavada, 6 January 1937, pp.3, 6; 10 January 1937, p.6.

⁵ Ibid., p.8.
A dramatic reunion also took place between rival factions in the Congress party of Berar, and enabled that organisation to present a united front to the electors. The factions were those in evidence during 1934, namely, the group of orthodox Congressmen led by Biyani and Gole, and the group of Responsivists led by Aney and R.M. Deshmukh. A fierce struggle for control of the Congress organisation in Berar preceded the reunion of the factions. In 1933 the Responsivists of Maharashtra replaced the almost defunct Responsive Cooperation party with a new party known as the Democratic Swaraj party. The party advertised itself as a 'thoroughly nationalist, non-communal, radical group', pledged to win 'political power for the people in a free India' by responsive cooperation.¹ In Berar, many former Responsivists became members of the new party, and, to the annoyance of the orthodox Congressmen, retained office in the organisations of the Congress.²

As a result, between 1935-6 the orthodox Congressmen led by Biyani made a determined attempt to purge the Democratic Swarajists from the Congress party of Berar. The purge took the form of moves to 'exterminate the old Responsivist element from the (Provincial Congress) Committee', and to transfer the 'strings of power' from

¹ Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1933, pp.16, 253-9; Hitavada, 26 October 1933, p.7; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 7, 6 April 1934; ibid., 9 May 1934; ibid., 10 May 1934; ibid., 12 May 1934; ibid., 13 May 1934.

² Ramrao Deshmukh played a prominent part in setting up the new party.
the old Responsivist centres of Amravati and Yeotmal to the town of Akola. These moves were extremely successful. By January 1936 Biyani had established the main office of the Provincial Congress Committee in Akola, and had 'firmly rooted himself in the Berar Congress without a rival'.

The need to protect the interests of Berar, however, eventually compelled Biyani to form a coalition with his rivals in the Democratic Swaraj party before the elections to the Legislative Assembly. Supporters of the coalition urged that the members from Berar must speak with one voice in the Assembly to compensate in some measure for the region's lack of representation therein. One of the first to do so was the Congress leader, P.B. Gole, who, in an address to a gathering of Congressmen in Berar in April 1935, said:

I see no necessity of running a separate and rival association when the congress itself has thrown its weight in parliamentary activities ....I hope that the democrats will cooperate with the congress in the coming council elections by preserving a solid national front against the dummies of government job hunters.

1 Hitavada, 17 January 1936, p.3.
2 Ibid., 17 January 1936, pp.3, 5; ibid., 19 January 1936, p.1. The political commentator of the Hitavada reported that after Biyani's drive against the Responsivists, the 'only man who is inclined towards them is Veer Wamanrao Joshi...but his disciplinary nature and his adherence to the Congress under any circumstances are bound to render him of no use to the Responsivists'.
3 Ibid., 28 April 1935, p.2.
The leaders of the Democratic Swaraj party, among them Aney and Ramrao Deshmukh, welcomed Gole's gesture, accompanied as it was by his recognition of the need to 'safeguard the interests of Berar under the new constitution'. Aney was also keen to take advantage of Gole's offer as he had been soundly defeated in the elections to the Provincial Congress Committee in January 1936 - a defeat which the Hitavada interpreted as a sign that the congress writ cannot be defied in Berar at the present time....The defeat of Aney is a pointer to the results of the coming elections to the legislative council....The congress holds all four aces in the political game and it looks as if anybody who opposes it will go to the wall.

Aney had an additional reason for responding favourably to the overtures from Gole in that between 1935-6 the non-Brahmans of Berar made a serious, though unsuccessful, attempt to ally themselves with the Congress party. Aney undoubtedly realised that, were these moves successful, they could bring about the defeat of his party at the elections and its extinction as a political force in Berar. Accordingly, at a meeting of the Yeotmal District Association in April

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1 Hitavada, 28 April 1935, p.2.
1936 Aney responded warmly to Gole's gesture by declaring that 'all parties in Berar must join for the protection of Berar's interests, which are opposed to the interests of the Central Provinces'.

Aney's statement opened some seven months of negotiations between Congressmen and Democratic Swarajists on the subject of a coalition. The two parties finally reached an understanding on 6 November 1936. The main terms of this understanding were that both parties would support a common list of candidates at the elections, and that, if elected to the Assembly, both parties would safeguard the rights and interests of the people of Berar in general and will in particular insist at least for the continuation of the Sim formula till some other settlement agreeable to both Central Provinces and Berar members is settled. They will (also) vote for the rejection of the Communal Award inside the Assembly, and outside they will agitate for its rejection along with the new Government of India Act.

And on this common platform, the two parties approached the elections, despite rumbles of disapproval from the Congress Parliamentary Board.

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1 Hitavada, 10 May 1936, p.9.
2 See ibid., 4 November 1936, p.5.
3 Ibid., 8 November 1936, p.9.
4 NML, AICC, P-9(i), 1936, B. Biyani to J. Nehru, 6 December 1936.
In Mahakoshal, Ravi Shankar Shukla emerged as the dominant leader of the Congress after months of bitter conflict with D.P. Mishra, who had the assistance of Seth Govind Das. The conflict, however, did not merely represent a struggle for power in Mahakoshal. On Shukla's side there were strong rumours that it also formed a prelude to his possible election as Premier of the united Central Provinces and Berar. Whether or not these rumours were based on fact, from 1934 onwards Shukla sought to strengthen his control over the Congress organisation in Mahakoshal. Mishra and Govind Das strongly resisted such moves. In 1934, when it became clear to the two leaders that Shukla would secure control of the Provincial Congress Committee, they 'took care to create a solid block' within that body to prevent Shukla from bending it completely to his will.1 At the same time Mishra and Govind Das began a systematic propaganda against Shukla, alleging that he was mixed up with Raghavendra Rao and if power were left in his hands he would betray the congress to the Home Member for personal ends(;) ...that Shukla wanted to become prime minister under the new constitution(;)...that he is trying to remove the seat of power of Congress to the southern districts from Jabalpur for parochial reasons.2

1 Hitavada, 24 January 1935, p.9.
2 NML, AICC, P-9, 1936, Syed Ahmad, Vice-President District Congress Committee (DCC) Hoshangabad, to the President Indian National Congress, 11 June 1936.
Shukla countered the activities of his opponents from Jabalpur with a series of skilful moves designed to strengthen his leadership over the Congress party in Mahakoshal. Between 1935-6 he toured the region, addressing meetings and conferences of various groups. Moreover, in 1935 and again in 1936 he outmanoeuvred his opponents and secured re-election as the President of the Provincial Congress Committee. Shukla's re-election to that position in 1935 clearly demonstrated his firm grip on the Mahakoshal. His opponent on that occasion was D.K. Mehta, the nominee of Mishra and Govind Das. According to the Hitavada,

Mehta allowed himself to become a scapegoat and oppose Shukla... The result was a foregone conclusion. Shukla has got support from almost all the districts of the province except Jubbulpore, Rewa (and) Seoni. Mehta got only five votes from the rest of the province.... The defeat of Mehta is really the defeat of Seth Govind Das and D.P. Mishra.

With the Presidentship in his grasp, Shukla sought to place his control of the Committee and its executive beyond challenge. In March 1935 he again attempted to

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2 NML, AICC, P-9, 1936, Syed Ahmed, President DCC Hoshangabad to President Indian National Congress, 11 June 1936.

amend the Congress constitution to give Chhattisgarh greater representation on the Provincial Congress Committee. The Committee, however, refused to accept his amendments.\footnote{Hitavada, 4 April 1935, p.9; 7 August 1935, p.8; 18 August 1935, p.5; 4 September 1935, p.8; NML, AICC, P-9, 1934, L.S. Chowhan to President Indian National Congress, 4 September 1935. Shukla wanted to amend the constitution of the Congress in Mahakoshal by giving the Indian States of Chhattisgarh representation on the Provincial Congress Committee.}

As the bulk of opposition to Shukla's amendments came from the northern districts, Shukla retaliated by disqualifying thousands of Congress members from that area on the grounds that their membership of the Congress was 'irregular'.\footnote{Hitavada, 3 November 1935, p.8; 6 November 1935, p.1; 8 November 1935, p.8; 10 November 1935, p.5; 15 November 1935, p.7. Shukla disqualified nearly 6,000 of the 10,000 preliminary members enrolled by the Jabalpur District Congress Committee. He also reduced the strength of the Congress Committee from 70 to 45.}

Congressmen from Jabalpur immediately complained to the All-India Congress Committee that

having failed to get a constitution to his liking, (Shukla)...is now trying to reject the primary members of District Congress Committees which he thinks are opposed to him. In this he sees his only hope to retain his power.\footnote{NML, AICC, P-9, 1934, L.S. Chowhan to President Indian National Congress, 4 September 1935.}

The All-India Congress Committee subsequently vindicated Shukla by accepting many of the disqualifications, and
thus strengthened his position in Mahakoshal.\(^1\) Shukla made a determined bid to strengthen his position still further in January 1936 when he appointed his own executive or Working Committee.\(^2\) This, too, drew a storm of protest from Govind Das and others, but Shukla answered his critics firmly, declaring that the

restoration of peace and harmony in the province was the whole object with which I compromised.... No president can work with a majority of members who can form a combination at any time to oppose him. He must have colleagues who can put up team work and not quarrel among themselves. Notwithstanding I included Govind Das as a member of the Working Committee, and took Mishra as one of my secretaries and promised to coopt D.K. Mehta....(But) our Jubbulpore friends never intended a real compromise.\(^3\)

In spite of protests, Shukla's Working Committee continued in office. Shukla assumed further powers in May 1936 when he won control over the Parliamentary Board set up to select candidates to contest the elections in Mahakoshal on behalf of the Congress.\(^4\)

To strengthen his position Shukla also vigorously

\(^1\) Hitavada, 27 November 1935, p.12.

\(^2\) Ibid., 5 February 1936, p.7; NML, MPCC, 1934-1936, 7, R.S. Shukla to President Indian National Congress, 15 March 1936.

\(^3\) Ibid.

attacked his chief rival for power in the Mahakoshal - D.P. Mishra. Shukla believed that Mishra was responsible for the opposition to his plans to amend the Congress Constitution, and as a result, he struck hard at the base of Mishra's power in Jabalpur. In 1935 Shukla worked to prevent Mishra's election to the Municipal Committee of Jabalpur, and in 1936 he strove to prevent Mishra and his supporters from dominating the Congress Committees of the town and district. Both these moves failed, however, as Mishra was elected President of the Municipal Committee in 1936, and his followers were returned in strength to the various Congress organisations in Jabalpur.

In his attack on Mishra, Shukla received the unsolicited assistance of the provincial government, and, in particular, of Raghavendra Rao. Between 1934-6 the government prevented Mishra from assuming the Presidentship of the Municipal Committee of Jabalpur, although he had been elected to that post. In so doing the government indirectly aided Shukla, for, while engaging Mishra in a never-ending battle of tactics, it left Shukla free to pursue the quest of leadership in

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1 NML, MPCC, 1934-6, 7, R.S. Shukla to President, Indian National Congress, 15 March 1936.
2 NML, AICC, P-9, 1934, L.S. Chowhan to President, Indian National Congress, 4 September 1935; ibid., L.S. Bhatt, Secretary DCC Jabalpur, to ___?, March(?) 1936.
Mahakoshal.\textsuperscript{1}

Shukla and Mishra continued their struggle for power right up to the eve of the elections. At first the need for unity in the approaching elections appears to have drawn the two leaders together. In August 1936 the Hitavada reported that

all sections amongst the Congressmen of the Mahakoshal composed their differences and decided to put up a joint consolidated action in the coming elections....The Raipur and Jubbulpore groups shook hands and unanimously agreed to work out a parliamentary programme.

The truce did not last, however, and the remaining months of 1936 witnessed a renewal of the bitter struggle between Shukla and Mishra. An important aspect of this struggle related to the selection of candidates for constituencies in Jabalpur and Bilaspur by the provincial Parliamentary Board.\textsuperscript{2} Shukla was President of the Board,

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\textsuperscript{2}
Ibid., 30 August 1936, p.8.

\textsuperscript{3}
The Board's failure to decide on the candidates for these constituencies until November-December 1936 provided clear evidence of tension. See Hitavada, 1 November 1936, p.10; 13 November 1936, p.13; Mishra, op. cit., p.425.
and in each case that body made decisions in his favour. In Jabalpur the Board endorsed known opponents of Mishra for the urban and women's constituencies, and nominated Mishra to contest a rural constituency in the district.¹

Shukla also scored a victory over Mishra and Govind Das in the choice of a candidate to represent Bilaspur tahsil - the constituency of Raghavendra Rao. Mishra and Govind Das demanded that the Congress field a strong candidate against Rao because they believed that, in leaving the Congress in 1926, he had betrayed the nationalist cause.² Mishra also held Rao responsible for the government's bid to prevent him from becoming President of the Jabalpur Municipality.³ In addition both Govind Das and Mishra suspected that Shukla and Rao were in league to further their political ambitions in the province.⁴ In selecting a candidate to oppose Rao, however, the Mahakoshal Parliamentary Board chose a candidate who was suitable to Shukla rather than to

¹ Hitavada, 20 November 1936, p.9. The Board nominated N.P. Mishra, 'a new Congressman', for the seat of Jabalpur Urban; and Shrimati Chowhan, a leading nationalist, for the Jabalpur women's constituency. D.P. Mishra received endorsement for Jabalpur-Pathan Rural. See also NAI, Home Poll, 18/11, 1936, FR, First Half of November 1936, p.27.
² NML, AICC, 78-A, 1926, Seth Govind Das to Motilal Nehru, 21 October 1926.
Mishra and Govind Das. The Hitavada described the Board's nominee as having a 'shaky record as a Congressman' and one who did not possess sufficient financial resources to match the campaign launched by Rao.¹ As a result it was likely that Rao would have no difficulty in winning the seat. And in view of the close relationship between Rao and Shukla, there seems little doubt that Shukla approved the nomination for that reason.

On the eve of the elections, Shukla scored further triumphs that placed his leadership of Mahakoshal beyond any doubt. The first of these triumphs occurred in November 1936, when the All-India Parliamentary Board rejected Makhanlal Chaturvedi's nomination for the seat of Hoshangabad. As Chaturvedi was a political associate of Mishra and Govind Das, those two leaders resigned from the Congress in protest and suspended their electoral activities.² Shukla, by contrast, continued to win public acclaim. In November 1936 he was elected President of the District Council of Raipur for the fifth time in succession, and in the same month played host to Jawarhalal Nehru who was paying an election visit to Chhattisgarh.³ The government

¹ Hitavada, 13 December 1936, p.7; 27 January 1937, p.1. The candidate chosen was Kunj Biharilal Agnihotri.
² See ibid., 27 November 1936, p.6; 18 December 1936, p.8; 22 December 1936, pp.1, 8; 24 December 1936, p.8.
³ Ibid., 27 November 1936, p.6.
Jawaharlal's visit has served to advertise the Congress, particularly in areas like Raipur district where the tour was stagemanaged by Ravishanker Shukla and his associates. The direct effect of Jawaharlal's speeches has been almost negligible on the bulk of the people, but has stimulated the election fever of the Hindu intelligentsia.¹

Other gains made by Shukla in the period immediately before the elections included his appointment as the 'sole representative of the Mahakoshal Parliamentary Committee' to the Central Parliamentary Board. As such, Shukla became the final arbiter of the Congress nominations in all constituencies in Mahakoshal.²

Hopelessly outmanoeuvred, Govind Das and Mishra finally joined forces with Shukla to make a united appeal to the electorate on behalf of the Congress. They did so at the instance of Jawaharlal Nehru who visited Jabalpur early in January 1937 to reconcile the warring factions. Nehru succeeded admirably in his task, as one observer recorded:

(Nehru had) a rousing reception in the city...
(and) due to his persuasions petty misunderstandings among the Mahakoshal leaders were amicably composed. Govind Das, Chaturvedi and D.P. Mishra publicly announced their whole

² Hitavada, 27 December 1936, p.4.
hearted cooperation with congress, and Mishra agreed to contest the assembly elections from the Jubbulpore rural electorate.¹

With the struggles for power in all parts of the province resolved, the Congress leaders in the Central Provinces and Berar won a brilliant success at the elections to the Legislative Assembly in February 1937. There were many factors responsible for this success. Alone among the parties contesting the elections, the Congress possessed a 'first class electoral machinery' and the services of a vast army of 'sincere voluntary workers'. Among the latter were village officials, the teachers of rural schools, students, and men and women volunteers, many of whom had participated in agitation against the government.² The Congress also scored successes by fielding candidates who belonged to the same community as the majority of voters in particular electorates, and by convincing the people that, if elected, it would introduce 'a new order of things'. This claim was instantly successful, as one observer noted:

We found everywhere a marked enthusiasm for the congress. The electorate is of opinion that congress will accept office....Everywhere we find that the masses will vote for any party which promises them release from abject poverty and misery. The congress has been

¹ Hitavada, 3 January 1937, p.1.
promising the masses on a large scale a new order of things and naturally the scales have been weighted in its favour.¹

The Congress leaders also used Mahatma Gandhi's name with telling effect during the election campaign. This was particularly evident in rural areas, where many folk did not understand what the Congress stood for. However, they had heard of Gandhi, and when confronted by prints of Gandhi's photograph at the polling booths, or large captions urging them to 'vote for Gandhiji's candidate', they cast their vote in favour of the Congress.² The electorate's support of Gandhi was especially evident in far-flung Chhattisgarh, where one observer reported that the name of the Mahatma has wrought a miracle.... Old women and men, the blind, the deaf and maimed trudged miles and miles of the barren countryside to vote for the Congress candidate.³

The Congress also had an advantage over other parties in that, besides enjoying the support of the vast majority of Hindu voters, it also received appreciable support from the Depressed classes and, to a lesser

¹ Hitavada, 10 February 1937, pp.6, 7; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 9, 12 February 1937. In Nagpur-Umrer Rural where the majority of voters were Kunbis, the Congress sponsored a Kunbi candidate, Bajrang Thekedar.

² Hitavada, 14 February 1937, p.1; 17 February 1937, p.6; Mishra, op. cit., p.426.

³ Hitavada, 14 February 1937, p.1.
The zeal and determination of Congress campaigners in all parts of the province was another important factor in their success. Nowhere were these qualities more conspicuous than in Nagpur, where Khare flung himself into a contest in which the reputation of the Congress was at stake. Zeal and determination also marked the campaign of the Congress in Berar, where the recent agreement between Congressmen and the Democratic Swarajists made each party confident of success and spurred them on to certain victory. The following description of the campaign in Yeotmal in January 1937 reflects something of the spirit with which nationalists in Berar approached the elections:

In Yeotmal district the cry 'vote for the congress' is in full swing....Public workers


in this district are all ranged on the side of the Congress keeping aside private and other differences of opinion.

M.S. Aney is touring in every nook and corner of the district...(and) those who are opposing the congressmen are feeling nervous about the election prospects.¹

In Mahakoshal, too, Congressmen threw themselves with zeal into the electoral fray, exhibiting perhaps their highest enthusiasm in the contest against Rao in Bilaspur tahsil.²

Although the Congress lost that particular seat, the enormous advantages it enjoyed over its opponents carried it to victory and secured for it 70 out of the 112 seats in the Legislative Assembly.³ Further, the results achieved by the Congress in different types of constituencies fully justified its claim to be representative of the people as a whole. The Congress candidates secured the nine urban seats; 49 of the 56 rural seats; 5 of the 20 seats reserved for Harijans; two of the three landholding seats; two of the four

¹ Hitavada, 27 January 1937, p.11.
³ The Congress polled 62.5 per cent of the votes in the Central Provinces and Berar. This result was exceeded only in Madras and Bihar, where the Congress polled 74 per cent and 65 per cent of the votes respectively.
seats reserved for labour and commercial interests; and the three women's constituencies.¹ These results were a magnificent climax to the efforts of the Congress during the previous sixteen years to wrest the initiative from the British rulers of the Central Provinces and Berar. Thus, it was not surprising that many people regarded the results as a mandate for the Congress to form the first truly Indian government in the province under the new constitution.²

II

Five months elapsed before Congressmen formed a ministry in the Central Provinces and Berar. This delay was the result of a protracted dispute within the Congress Working Committee as to whether Congressmen should take office under the new constitution or not. The dispute involved two main groups - one led by Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel, who argued that Congressmen should take office; and another led by Jawarhalal Nehru, who believed that the main task of the Congress was to

¹ Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1937, p.168. Compared with the 70 seats won by the Congress, the Independents led by Rao won 17; the non-Brahmans 3; the Hindu Sabha 1; the Independent Labour 'party' 2; Nationalists 2; Nationalist Raja 'party' 1; Ambedkar 'party' 1; Muslim Parliamentary Board (Rauf Shah group) 8; Muslim League (Shareef group) 5; European 1; Anglo-Indian 1.

² Hitavada, 24 February 1937, p.3; 26 February 1937, p.1; 5 March 1937, pp. 1, 12. A majority of the newly elected Congress members favoured the acceptance of office.
destroy the new constitution. By March 1937 the dispute between the two groups had assumed serious proportions. In that month Gandhi saved the situation by focussing the attention of the nation on the special powers entrusted to the provincial Governors under the new constitution. These powers concerned the role of the Governor during possible disagreements with the popular ministries. During March Gandhi persuaded the Working Committee to agree that

ministerships (could)...only be accepted if the leader of the Congress party in the Assembly of the province is satisfied and is able to declare publicly that he has sufficient assurance from the Governor that special powers should not be used so long as the ministry acts within the constitution.¹

The British authorities made various responses to this ultimatum, none of which the Congress considered satisfactory, and consequently a deadlock ensued. However, both Gandhi and the Government of India were under pressure to solve the deadlock - Gandhi, from the overwhelming number of Congressmen who supported the acceptance of office; and the Government of India, from its own members who desired to set the reforms in motion as quickly as possible. As a result Gandhi softened his demands, and the Viceroy responded on 21 June 1937 by asserting that

(the) documents made it clear beyond any possibility of question that under Provincial Autonomy, in all matters falling within the ministerial field...the Governor will

¹ Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1937, p.237.
ordinarily be guided in the exercise of his powers by the advice of his ministers and that those ministers will be responsible not to Parliament but to the provincial legislature.... (There is) no vestige of foundation for the assertion...that the Governor is entitled...to intervene at random in the administration of the province.¹

Although this assurance was less complete than the one originally demanded by the Working Committee, on 8 July 1937 the Committee decided to allow Congressmen to accept office. Accordingly, within a week, Dr Khare, the leader of the Congress Assembly party, had assumed office as Premier of the Central Provinces and Berar assisted by a cabinet of six other ministers. Three of these, namely Ravi Shankar Shukla, D.P. Mishra and D.K. Mehta were from Mahakoshal; and three - R.M Deshmukh, P.B. Gole and M.Y. Shareef were from the Marathi region.²

During the cabinet's first months in office, it gave every promise of justifying the enthusiasm that greeted its formation. For several months after the cabinet was sworn in at Government House on 14 July 1937, large crowds mobbed and feted the ministers at receptions in Nagpur or in their places of residence. And after these celebrations were over, the ministers went out on tour

¹ Indian Annual Register, no. 1, 1937, p. 268.
² Dr Khare was Minister for Home Affairs, with responsibility for the Appointments, General Administration, Jail, and Police Departments; R.S. Shukla was Minister for Education; D.P. Mishra, Minister for Local Self Government; R.M. Deshmukh, Minister for Public Works; M.Y. Shareef, Minister for Law; D.K. Mehta, Minister for Finance; and P.B. Gole, Minister for Revenue.
to greet the people. These tours created 'unprecedented scenes of activity and enthusiasm'.

A wave of public acclamation also greeted the ministers on 30 July 1937 - the day of the inauguration of the first session of the Legislative Assembly of the Central Provinces and Berar. Large numbers of people from town and country thronged the streets from Dr Khare's bungalow in Dhantoli to the Assembly building, while others crowded into the once forbidden members' room or packed the galleries to suffocation. For those outside, it was a sight never to be forgotten when the procession of Congress members of the Legislative Assembly, clad in white khadi and Gandhi caps, moved out of Dr Khare's bungalow into the Wardha road, preceded by bands and flags. For, as one witness averred,

the procession of (the) congress members to parliament was a demonstration to the public that congress raj has been established.... (and) Dr Khare in pyjama was the centre of a semi-religious ceremony.

And as the procession moved, the crowd, estimated at 20,000, moved too, accompanying it on its way up the hill, below the grim fort on Sitabuldi and on to the Assembly hall. There another crowd welcomed the

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2 Ibid., 1 August 1927, pp.6, 7; Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1937, p.253.
3 Hitavada, 1 August 1937, p.7.
procession and its attendants, and the members passed inside to be sworn in and take their places on the Government benches.¹

One of the ministry's first acts was to remove certain restrictions which it believed hampered the freedom of the people. For this, too, it won popular acclaim. Dr Khare figured prominently in the removal of these restrictions. Between July and August 1937 he refunded the press securities of various newspapers, and ordered the release of political prisoners and those imprisoned for complicity in the communal riots in Nagpur in 1927.² The Premier also rescinded the orders banning certain books and films, and directed the members of the Criminal Investigation Department 'not to go to meetings with tables and chairs, but to take as far as possible only mental notes'.³ In addition, Gole, the Minister for Revenue, ordered the stay until the following harvest of all coercive processes employed in the collection of land revenue.⁴ Mishra, too, as

¹ There were hostile demonstrations from the galleries when the former interim ministers, Raghavendra Rao, B.G. Khaparde, and S.W.A. Rizwi took the oaths. Dr Khare appealed to the galleries to maintain order, but the shouting continued. The President then warned that he would clear the galleries, and thereafter quietness prevailed.

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³ Hitavada, 11 August 1937, p.4; 25 August 1937, p.3.

Minister for Local Self Government foreshadowed a similar relaxation of restrictions in August 1937 when he promised 'full freedom to local bodies'.

Besides these immediately popular activities, the ministers also undertook work of a long term nature, whose effects were not readily apparent to their supporters. Of this order was Dr Khare's attempt to initiate a reform of jails in the Central Provinces and Berar during August 1937. At the same time, Shukla as Minister for Education began moves to establish a system of mass education throughout the province. Mishra also set his hand to reform, giving his attention to a 'radical reorganisation of local bodies in the province, including a scheme for village panchayats'.

Again, in the Department of Commerce and Industry, Mehta worked to foster the growth of indigenous industries; and in the Forest Department investigated the possibility of reforming the rules relating to the use of government forests.

While all ministers received popular acclaim during their first months in office, the adulation accorded to

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5. Ibid., pp.289-90.
Shukla outstripped that given to any of his colleagues. By 1938 Shukla had won the respect of many people in the province for his nationalist zeal and capacity for hard work. He had won notice, too, for his 'dignity of deportment and unfailing courtesy of conduct and expression', - qualities remarkable in a politician who was skilled in the manipulation of power. The people's esteem for Shukla was clearly evident as he moved about Mahakoshal during the latter part of 1937, eliciting public opinion on the scheme of compulsory primary education which he desired to implement. Besides discussing the scheme with the leading men in the towns and larger villages of the region, Shukla identified closely with the common people wherever he went. He always travelled in third class railway carriages, and in the places on his itinerary he gave interviews, participated in processions with the National Flag, and addressed huge public gatherings. In doing so, Shukla generated a degree of popular enthusiasm which, according to one observer, was equalled only when Nehru visited the region shortly before the elections. Something of the warmth and admiration with which the people greeted Shukla is reflected in the following description of his visit to Sagar in August 1937:

1 Hitavada, 16 April 1939, p.7.
2 Ibid., 22 August 1937, p.11; 25 August 1937, p.5; 1 September 1937, p.6; 3 September 1937, p.8.
3 Ibid.
Pandit R.S. Shukla
Never before in the history of Saugor has such enthusiasm been shown, in which government officials, congressmen, the elite of the town and masses thus cooperated and accorded a common reception, as was evinced this day under the congress flag....The minister granted interviews to officials, non officials and the general public and mixed with them. (At a) huge public meeting, (Shukla)...told people that they had to keep up their culture, language and religion against all odds....(He then) left Saugor for Hoshangabad...travelling in the popular Gandhi class.1

It was thus not surprising, that, as a result of his tour, Shukla appeared to many as 'a tribune of the people who was capable of redressing all wrongs'.

III

Although the ministry made a promising start, within a year it divided along linguistic lines and the reins of government passed from Dr Khare and the Marathi region to Shukla and Mahakoshal. Restlessness and tension among different sections of the population formed the background to the collapse of Dr Khare's ministry. Between July and December 1937 considerable tension developed between Hindus and Muslims in the province. This tension exploded in a series of disturbances which affected many areas, but were particularly severe in Akola, Nagpur and

1 Hitavada, 25 August 1937, p.5.
2 Ibid., 3 September 1937, p.8.
Jabalpur. 1 In dealing with the disturbances Dr Khare appealed for calm and promised to hold an enquiry into the riots in Jabalpur. 2 In addition, in December 1937 the cabinet issued a Memorandum to all District Commissioners on the measures they were to take to prevent communal disturbances. The Memorandum closed with the following words:

It appears that there is an impression in the public mind that government may not deal firmly with communal activities which transgress the law. There is no justification whatever for this impression....Rest assured that you will be supported in any measures you may deem it necessary to take to keep or restore the peace, provided they are within the law. 3

These measures, however, proved ineffective in stilling the tide of communal tension. During the first half of 1938 a series of disturbances, greater in intensity than those of 1937, swept the province, before declining

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2 See CPBLA, vol.2, pp.269-88. Dr Khare gave this promise in response to a resolution moved in the Assembly by N.P. Mishra, the member for Jabalpur City.

3 MPS, GAD, Confidential, 7, 1937, Action to be Taken to Prevent Communal Strife, Memorandum to all District Commissioners, Central Provinces and Berar, no.624/370-A/Confidential, 20 December 1937, p.2.
towards the end of the year.¹

The cabinet, too, was hard pressed to deal with unrest among the peasants of the province. During 1937-8 the peasants, goaded by poor seasons and low prices for agricultural products, mounted a campaign for the abolition of rural indebtedness, the reduction of land revenue, and the exemption from revenue for those peasants with an income below a certain level.² This campaign assumed a serious note when the peasants withheld their land revenue and refused to cooperate with government officials, and when they led a march of protest on the Assembly in Nagpur on 13 December 1937.³ Dr Khare, however, managed to calm the excited marchers. Addressing the kisans outside the Assembly,


² Hitavada, 24 October 1937, p. 4; 2 December 1937, p. 10; NAI, Home Poll, 18-11, 1937, FR, First Half of November 1937, p. 1; ibid., 18-11, 1937, FR, Second Half of November 1937, p. 1. The peasants articulated these demands through the provincial branch of the All-India Kisan Sabha, an organisation formed by socialist Congressmen in 1936 to promote the welfare of peasants.

Dr Khare dwelt on the limitations under which the ministers were working and their desire to implement their promises to the electorate. The speech had a visible effect on the men and those who came to frighten the ministry with red banner and sickle cheered the premier and the unanimous opinion was that Dr Khare had won the round.1

But it was only the first round, for during 1938 rural unrest intensified, and the payments of land revenue to the government declined markedly.2 This compelled the government to take action and during February 1938 it granted relief from the payment of revenue in districts where crops were worst affected by the vagaries of climate.3 The situation, however, continued to be critical for the remainder of the year.4

Dr Khare's ministry also had to face considerable unrest on the industrial front. The unrest was particularly evident among textile workers in Nagpur, who complained that wage cuts, introduced in 1933 in

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1 Hitavada, 15 December 1937, p.6.  
2 NAI, Home Poll, 18-2, 1938, FR, First Half of February 1938, p.4.  
3 Ibid., Times of India, 4 March 1938, p.12. During February 1938, the government passed orders remitting by 12½ per cent rents and revenues of all small holders in the province.  
response to the economic depression, were still in operation four years later.\textsuperscript{1} To persuade the mill owners and the government to restore these cuts, the mill workers threatened to go on strike. In January and February 1938 the ministers discussed the situation with the workers' representatives and assured them that 'whatever is possible and within our means, we are ready to provide'.\textsuperscript{2} However, as no practical reforms eventuated, the workers persisted in their threat to strike. During March, therefore, the cabinet appointed a Textile Committee to examine the mill workers' complaints. The Committee examined these complaints, and having done so, drew up a Report, which included a recommendation that the employers reduce the wage cut by 60 per cent.\textsuperscript{3} For some months, however, the government took no action to implement the recommendation, and only did so when workers threatened to stage a province-wide strike.\textsuperscript{4}

Dr Khare and his ministers also had to contend with constant opposition from the members of the Congress Parliamentary party. One instance of opposition from

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Hitavada, 24 November 1937, p.12.}
\footnote{Maharashtra, 20 February 1938, p.8.}
\footnote{Bombay Chronicle, 12 March 1938, p.7; ibid., 8 June 1938, p.16; Maharashtra, 8 May 1938, p.10; ibid., 15 June 1938, p.8. The Chairman of the Textile Enquiry Committee was N.J. Roughton, Financial Commissioner, Central Provinces.}
\footnote{Ibid., 19 June 1938, p.4; 26 June 1938, p.4; 3 July 1938, p.5.}
\end{footnotes}
this quarter occurred during the framing of the budget for 1937-8. When drawing up the budget in September 1937, Mehta, the Finance Minister, and his colleagues did not reduce rents and revenues as they had promised to do during the election campaign. According to the Times of India this was not an oversight:

A study of the actual state of affairs in the province and of the condition of the exchequer made (the ministers)...realise that it was neither possible nor necessary immediately to carry out the extravagant promises to the electorate....With a budget that was barely balanced and prohibition swallowing up a not inconsiderable proportion of the revenue, they could not light heartedly sacrifice lakhs of land revenue.¹

The rank and file members of the Parliamentary party, however, did not see the situation in that light, and they demanded that the ministers hold to their promise. A stormy party meeting took place in September, during which the ministers threatened to resign. But when the 'members asserted themselves', the ministers submitted and agreed to incorporate the promised reduction in the budget.² The ministers also failed to implement a second promise, namely, to reduce the enhanced land revenue in Akola and Buldhana. And, as with the reduction of land revenue, they only gave way on the

¹ Times of India, 15 September 1937, p.10.
² Hitavada, 12 September 1937, pp.1, 5; CPBLA, 13 September 1937, p.211.
issue when members from Berar threatened to revolt against them.¹

Dissensions within the cabinet itself, however, posed the most serious threat to the stability of the government. These dissensions were rooted in a complex set of factors. Foremost among these was the manner in which Dr Khare attained the Premiership. He did not do so on the basis of a clear majority in his favour at successive meetings of the Parliamentary party, but owing to the failure of members from Mahakoshal and Berar to agree on a common candidate from either of the two regions. Dr Khare thus continually came to the fore as a compromise candidate, and in this way became Leader of the Congress Parliamentary party and in turn Premier of the Central Provinces and Berar.

As a compromise candidate, Dr Khare continually displaced his strongest rival for the Premiership, Ravi Shankar Shukla. Shukla had strong claims for that position, in that by 1937 he had emerged as the leader of the Congress in Mahakoshal. So far as the Premiership was concerned, this was a significant achievement, for in 1937 the region contained substantially more than half the population of the province. It also returned the largest number of members to the Assembly, and

supplied a majority of members to the Congress Parliamentary party. Yet despite this, Shukla was not elected Premier.

His failure to attain that position was due in large measure to his longstanding rival in Mahakoshal, D.P. Mishra, and to the preference of the Berar Congressmen for a Marathi Premier. Shukla's first elimination in favour of Dr Khare occurred on 19 July 1936 at a meeting of the Committee to coordinate the Congress election campaigns in all parts of the Province. At the meeting, Mishra, assisted by Mehta, prevented Shukla from being elected President of the Committee, and the post went by default to Dr Khare. Shukla suffered a much more serious reverse on 28 February 1937 when he lost the Leadership of the Congress Parliamentary party to Dr Khare. He did so because Dr Khare was the only candidate acceptable to Congressmen from Mahakoshal and Berar. This was evident from an account of the meeting which took place in Dr Khare's bungalow in Nagpur:

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At the 1941 Census, the Mahakoshal region had a population of 9,792,890; the population of the Marathi region numbered 7,020,694. Excluding the Muslim and special constituencies Mahakoshal had 49 members in the Assembly, and the Marathi region 38. The addition of the Factory Labour and Northern Landholders' seats gave Mahakoshal 51 members; and the addition of the Central Provinces Commerce seat, and the two seats representing Commercial and landed interests in Berar gave the Marathi region 41. The Congress party secured 43 of the 51 seats in Mahakoshal; and 27 of the 41 seats in the Marathi region. This figure rose to 28 seats when Shareef joined the Congress.

2

Hitavada, 22 July 1936, p.5.
Shukla's name was suggested first. But this was too much for the Jubbulpore group to swallow. Then the name of D.P. Mishra. Berar not to be beaten down by Mahakoshal suggested R.M. Deshmukh. To win over D.K. Mehta to their side the Chhattisgarh (members) suggested his name. Then came the all atoning name of Dr Khare. Ramrao Deshmukh withdrew... and asked Mehta if he really aspired for leadership. What could he say? He withdrew.... So did Shukla and Mishra.... So Dr Khare was elected leader... of the Central Provinces Assembly party.  

Opposition from Mishra and the Berar members also caused Shukla to lose the Premiership of the province to Dr Khare. The elections for this post were held on 24 March 1937. During the canvassing which preceded the elections, Shukla secured an early lead over other contenders by winning the support of Biyani and the members from Berar. Before the vote was taken, however, Wamanrao Joshi intervened to see that 'the election of Dr Khare was not upset'. To do so he withdrew the promised support of the Berar members from Shukla and gave it to Dr Khare instead. Mishra, too, agreed to support Dr Khare rather than permit his old rival,

2 Hitavada, 26 March 1937, p.12. The price Shukla paid for the support of the Berar members was that 'the Congress ministers should respect the Sim formula'; to include Gole in the ministry; and to give the presidency of the Assembly to a Berar Congressman.  
3 Ibid.
Shukla, to gain the Premiership. As a result of these manoeuvres Shukla realised that the combined vote of the Marathi members and the Hindi supporters of Mishra was sufficient to give Dr Khare a majority. He thus declined to contest the election, and as a result Dr Khare was elected Premier.

Certain aspects of the formation of Dr Khare's cabinet also contributed to its instability. One of the more dangerous of these aspects concerned the fact that, although the Hindi members were in a majority in the Parliamentary party, the cabinet had a Marathi Premier and four ministers from the Marathi region as opposed to only three ministers from Mahakoshal. The circumstances under which D.P. Mishra became a minister also contributed to the instability of the cabinet. When Khare first informed Sir Hyde Gowan of his intention to include Mishra in his cabinet, Gowan advised him against it on the grounds that the government had preferred certain charges of a personal nature against Mishra. However, when Dr Khare indicated that he was unwilling to follow this advice, the Governor agreed to admit Mishra and the charges against him were dropped.

1 Hitavada, 26 March 1937, p.12.
3 Recorded during discussions with Dr Khare in Nagpur in 1967. See also Hitavada, 7 July 1937, pp.1, 8, 10; 9 July 1937, p.10; 11 July 1937, p.14; NML, AICC, P-13, 1937-8, D.P. Mishra to J. Nehru, 5 July 1937; ibid., Seth Govind Das to J. Nehru, 10 July 1937. See Appendix A, no.3.
It was highly likely that Khare was under strong pressure to include Mishra in the cabinet, not merely because he was a prominent Hindi Congressman, but as the man largely responsible for his own election as Premier.\(^1\) Moreover, during June, rumours circulating in Nagpur told of a possible reconciliation between Shukla and Mishra.\(^2\) It was not improbable that Dr Khare included Mishra in the cabinet as a means of staving off this reconciliation. For were the two leaders to unite, Dr Khare would lose his majority in the Parliamentary party.

IV

No less than four recurrent crises engulfed the ministry of Dr Khare between 1937 and 1938. These crises all concerned the question as to whether the Marathi region or Mahakoshal was to control the Government of the Central Provinces and Berar. The question was finally resolved in favour of Mahakoshal, for in 1938 the Working Committee compelled Dr Khare to surrender the Premiership of the province to Ravi Shankar Shukla. This act completed the transfer of political power in the province from the Marathi to the Hindi region begun by Raghavendra Rao.

The first crisis in Dr Khare's ministry took the form of a dispute between the ministers from Berar and

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1. *Hitavada*, 4 October 1939, p.5.

those from Mahakoshal over the allocation of the revenues of Berar. The dispute flared up in August 1937 as the ministers were preparing the annual budget. Ramrao Deshmukh, the Minister for Public Works, who had been elected on the policy of support for the Sim Formula, apparently desired to ensure a substantial allotment of the Berar revenues to projects in Berar under the terms of that Formula. Shukla, however, and a majority of the Congress Assembly members from the Central Provinces, held the view that the Sim Formula 'had lapsed with the coming in of the new constitution'.

The persistent adherence of the two ministers to their respective points of view led to an angry scene at a cabinet meeting in August 1937. As Deshmukh records:

Hot words were exchanged at a cabinet meeting held for the formulation of the budget, and ...Ravi Shanker Shukla literally threw away my note prepared for discussion and clarification in respect of the application of the Sim Formula. On this I...resigned and handed over my resignation to Dr Khare.

Although Dr Khare reconciled the two men, Shukla had his way and the government abandoned the Sim Formula.

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1 See Appendix A, no. 4.
2 From a written statement sent to the writer by Shri R.M. Deshmukh, d. 15/16 January 1968, p. 3. (This statement will be cited hereafter as Deshmukh).
3 Ibid., p. 3.
4 CPBLA, 11 September 1937, pp. 168-71. In 1937-8, Berar received Rs. 36.55 lakhs of divisible expenditure which amounted to 31.7 per cent of her quota under the Sim Formula.
This led to further dissension in the cabinet. As a result, the ministers referred the issue to the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee, a body appointed to handle disputes arising from the working of the various Congress ministries. The Sub-Committee however failed to reach a solution, and in April 1938 handed the problem over to Patel. Patel, in turn, passed it to Aney, but by the time Aney began his investigations, the cabinet was on the verge of collapse and the dispute over revenues gave place to matters of greater moment.

The ministers from Mahakoshal followed up their victory on the Sim Formula by moving to the offensive in a second crisis involving the Minister for Law, M.Y. Shareef. From this crisis, however, the Premier and the Marathi region emerged triumphant. The crisis began in February 1938 when Shareef, in his capacity as Minister for Law, released from jail a Muslim prisoner, Syed Zafer Husain, long before his prison sentence had

1 Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1938, p.314; Bombay Chronicle, 5 April 1938, p.1; NML, AICC, PL-23, 1938, Central Provinces and Berar Financial Issue, Report of the Sub-Committee, 3 April 1938.

2 Ibid., J.B. Kripalani to V.J. Patei, 9 April 1938.

3 NML, MPCC, 1921-37, 1, M.S. Aney to D.P. Mishra, 6 June 1937; Bombay Chronicle, 24 June 1938, p.7; NAI, Reforms, 82/38-G, 1938, Financial Settlement between the Central Provinces and Berar, Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar to Lord Brabourne, 8 July 1938. The Governor (then Sir Francis Wylie) expressed the doubt 'whether any award can be made by a merely human agency which would satisfy both Maharashtra and Mahakoshal, but we shall see'.

expired. Husain, a former Inspector of Schools in Berar, had been imprisoned several years beforehand on charges of a personal nature committed while he was a government servant. In releasing Husain, Shareef did not inform Dr Khare or his colleagues of his action, with the result that they did not hear of the release until March 1938. By that time it was too late for them to take defensive action, for the Hindu Sabha was leading a fierce campaign in the Marathi region for the removal of Shareef from the ministry.

In any case, the cabinet found it difficult to take united action on Shareef. Deshmukh was generally sympathetic to the views of the Hindu Sabha, and in all probability found it difficult to oppose the stand it adopted on Shareef. Again, none of the Marathi ministers could ride rough-shod over the public outcry

1 NAI, Khare MS, 108, iii, Notes and Orders of 1 February 1938 issued by the Central Provinces and Berar Government, Judicial Department, Regarding the Petition of Mercy from Syed Zafir Hussain, Register No.283-XIV, Note by M.Y. Shareef, 6 February 1938.

2 See NML, Rao MS, A.V. Thakkar to N.B. Khare, 28 February 1936.

3 Times of India, 16 March 1938, p.8; Bombay Chronicle, 29 March 1938, p.12.

4 Maharashtra, 16 March 1938, p.9; 23 March 1938, p.8; 27 March 1938, p.2. The leader of this campaign was Dr Moonje's former lieutenant, Dr L.V. Paranjpe.

5 See Hitavada, 25 June 1933, p.3; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 9, 12 December 1937.
against Shareef in the Marathi region. Divisions within the Parliamentary party also prevented the cabinet from taking united action on Shareef. As a result the government found itself in a dilemma, as was clearly evident from the following report of a meeting of the Parliamentary party in March 1938:

(Shareef's case) came up before a meeting of the ministerialist party...when the members gave free expression to their strong dissaproval of the action of government....The premier was placed in a very awkward position....He could not say he supported Shareef; nor could he let down a colleague....It is reported that there was a walk out and that eventually the party passed a vote of no confidence in Shareef....(There are) threats of the situation getting out of hand.¹

To prevent this from happening, the Hindi ministers urged that the government take firm action to support Shareef. Accordingly, the cabinet drafted a report for Patel, as the member of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee with responsibility for the Central Provinces and Berar. In this report, the ministers explained that the passing of a mercy order did not require the consent of the full cabinet, and they thus urged the Working Committee to show leniency towards Shareef.² The Hindi ministers also led the cabinet in speaking out boldly in Shareef's

¹ Times of India, 16 March 1938, p.8.
defence at huge public gatherings held in Nagpur.\(^1\) And it was once again the Hindi ministers who were responsible for winning a vote of confidence for Shareef from the members of the Parliamentary party.\(^2\)

The Hindi ministers, however, were unable to forestall Shareef's resignation from the cabinet. For his resignation, they blamed Dr Khare. The Hindi ministers' main contention was that the Premier was not as convinced as they were of the need for firmness in dealing with the public outburst against Shareef. They considered, too, that Dr Khare was unduly sensitive to the criticism directed at the minister by people in the Marathi region.\(^3\) The Hindi ministers also discovered that

Dr Khare made enquiries of the District Commissioner of Wardha against minister Shareef and made a report to Sardar Patel about the latter which was subsequently denied by the District Commissioner.\(^4\)

In addition, they could not have been unaware that Dr Khare had been equivocal as to whether Shareef's action in releasing Husain was a 'fit case for the

\(^1\) See Bombay Chronicle, 29 March 1938, p.12; 31 March 1938, p.10; 21 April 1938, p.10.
\(^2\) See Khare, op. cit., p.27; Times of India, 28 March 1937, p.9.
\(^3\) Hitavada, 24 December 1939, p.4. This extract concerns D.K. Mehta's criticism of Dr Khare's part in the 'Shareef affair'.
\(^4\) The Central Provinces Ministerial Crisis (Allahabad, 1937?), p.5. (This will be cited hereafter as Ministerial Crisis).
exercise of clemency under the powers conferred by the law. The views of the Hindi ministers, however, carried little weight with Patel, who, conscious as he was of divisions within the cabinet and the Parliamentary party on the issue, refused the request for leniency and referred Shareef's case to a noted lawyer. The lawyer ultimately found Shareef guilty of a miscarriage of justice, and on 21 May 1938 he resigned from the cabinet.

While many people in the Marathi region, including Dr Khare, accepted this verdict, the Hindi ministers

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1 Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1938, p.255. These were Dr Khare's words to a deputation which waited on him on 24 March 1938.
2 Ibid., pp.22, 315, 325; Bombay Chronicle, 13 April 1938, p.1; NAI, Khare MS, xxii, H. Bomford, Acting Governor, Central Provinces and Berar to N.B. Khare, 21 May 1938. Shareef's resignation was accepted by Mr Hugh Bomford, ICS, who became Acting Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar on 3 March 1938. The day before, Sir Hyde Gowan who had already resigned with effect from 27 May 1938, left the province for England. The Times of India (3 March 1928, p.11), said that Gowan had 'not been keeping good health. A stage was reached when his medical advisers considered that his departure would be in the interests of his health....The departure from Nagpur was marked by an air of quietness'. One observer recorded before his departure from Nagpur: 'I met him two months back and was sad to notice that he was a tired and worn-out man. Thirty-five years of work in the province had told on him, and he longed to be back in England'. See Appreciations of the Administration of His Excellency Sir Hyde Clarendon Gowan, BA (Oxon.), LLD (Nagpur), KCSI, CIE, VD, ICS, J.P., Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar 1933-1938 (Nagpur, 1938), p.49. Gowan died in London on 1 April 1938. The lawyer who reviewed Shareef's case was Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherjee.
did not. They held the Premier responsible for what they described as 'this unfortunate culmination'. Moreover, they demonstrated their opposition to Dr Khare and the judgement alike by calling a meeting at Pachmarhi in support of Shareef on 24 May 1938. Those present at the meeting recorded their 'deep sorrow' at Shareef's resignation and urged the Working Committee to review his case. The Hindi ministers subsequently placed this request before the Working Committee, but it was rejected.

Defeated as they were in the Shareef case, the Hindi ministers led by Mishra provoked the next ministerial crisis by refusing to work with Dr Khare. They did so in protest against the alleged inability of the Premier to lead either the cabinet or the province. In making this protest, the Hindi ministers at first secured the support of Gole, but he later dissociated himself from their move. In May 1938 the Hindi ministers under Mishra's leadership drew up a list of grievances against Dr Khare in support of their contention that he was unfit to continue as Premier.

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1 Hitavada, 24 December 1939, p.4; Bombay Chronicle, 13 April 1938, p.1.
2 Ibid., 26 May 1938, p.1.
3 Maharashtra, 1 June 1938, p.4; 5 June 1938, p.8.
4 Ministerial Crisis, p.7. Dr Khare himself persuaded Gole to dissociate himself from the protest being made by the Hindi ministers against him.
5 Ibid., pp.4-5.
Their main grievance concerned his handling of the communal riots which took place in Jabalpur in October 1937 and March 1938. After the riots in October 1937 Khare and Mishra clashed on the action to be taken by the government. Dr Khare ordered the police to investigate the cause of the riots and to launch prosecutions against the guilty party. Mishra, however, demanded that Khare cancel the orders, for according to one member of the cabinet

As an aftermath of these riots, police investigations traced certain friends and supporters of Mr Mishra to have been involved. They were interrogated during investigations and Mr Mishra claimed that they were harassed and molested by the police. He considered it a point of his prestige and honour that his friends and supporters should receive such a treatment. His desire was that all investigation in which his friends might be found, rightly or wrongly, involved should stop at once, otherwise his entire position as a politician in Jabalpur would be completely undermined.

Mishra further charged that, in agreeing to order a police investigation and to launch prosecutions, Dr Khare was placing greater reliance on the advice of his departmental officials than on that of his colleagues in the cabinet.

1 Ministerial Crisis, pp.5-6; Times of India, 13 May 1938, p.14.
2 Hitavada, 31 October 1937, p.7.
3 Deshmukh, p.8.
4 Ministerial Crisis, p.6; Maharashtra, 22 June 1938, p.4.
When Dr Khare proceeded with the prosecution of those responsible for the Jabalpur riots, however, Mishra demanded that he surrender the portfolio of Police. During January 1938 Dr Khare went to Jabalpur to hold an enquiry based on the evidence supplied by the police. As a result of this enquiry, a number of people were sentenced and imprisoned.¹ Mishra thereupon intensified his attack on Dr Khare, claiming that he was 'playing into the hands of the bureaucracy'.² To remedy the situation, Mishra demanded that Dr Khare should surrender control over the Police ministry.³

A recurrence of communal unrest in Jabalpur in March 1938 led directly to moves by Mishra and his colleagues to compel Dr Khare to give up the Police portfolio. After the riots, Mishra alleged that Dr Khare had not taken adequate measures to prevent their recurrence.⁴ Mishra's colleagues - Shukla, Mehta and Gole - apparently supported this allegation, and together the four men launched a move to compel Dr Khare to surrender the Police portfolio and to enable them to control the communal situation to their own satisfaction. The four ministers claimed that Dr Khare was weak and incompetent, and they prepared a list of charges to

¹ Maharashtra, 19 January 1938, p.2. See also NAI, Home Poll, 18-8, 1938, FR, Second Half of August 1938, p.3.
² Deshmukh, pp.8-9; Ministerial Crisis, p.6.
³ Deshmukh, pp.8-9. Deshmukh says that Mishra wanted the Police portfolio to go to Shukla.
⁴ Ministerial Crisis, pp.4-5.
substantiate this claim. Then, on 8 May 1938 they forwarded the charges to Dr Khare and at the same time announced their resignations from the cabinet.

The Hindi ministers, however, lacked adequate support within the Congress Parliamentary party to press their charges and they were compelled to come to an understanding with Dr Khare. Many Hindi members were out of sympathy with the ministers' attack on Dr Khare. Again, when Gole disassociated himself from their revolt, the Hindi ministers lost all chance of winning any support from Berar. As a result, there was little that they could do but inform Dr Khare on 9 May 1938 that they were 'not serious on the question of the break up of the ministry'.

1 Ministerial Crisis. The charges made by Mishra, Mehta, Shukla and Gole were as follows: Dr Khare's 'handling of the Home department was characterised by weakness. In the matter of economy and other questions, he gave into the department against the advice of his colleagues. After the two Jabalpur visits, he did not handle the police department firmly in spite of the insistence of his colleagues. In several other cases mentioned in the letter he has been subservient to the secretariat. On the basis of a rumour against Gole, on the sale of manganese ore, he ordered the District Magistrate of Nagpur to enquire into the allegations against him. He made enquiries of the District Commissioner Wardha against minister Shareef and made a report to Sardar Patel about the latter which was subsequently denied by the District Commissioner'.

2 Ibid., p.5; Maharashtra, 12 June 1938, p.4.

3 Ibid., 15 May 1938, p.4. The leaders of the opposition to Mishra in the Congress Assembly party were T.P.L. Singh of Raipur and K.R. Khandekar of Sagar.

4 Khare, op. cit., p.5.
Dr Khare was also in a mood to compromise, for his own position was far from secure. Accordingly, when he met the Hindi ministers at Pachmarhi on 9 May, he agreed that the crisis in the cabinet be referred to Vallabhbhai Patel. Having reached a measure of accord, the members of the cabinet then travelled to Bombay, where they held discussions with Patel that temporarily sealed the truce between them. As the Bombay Chronicle noted:

As a result of conversations between Patel, Jawarhalal Nehru and the ministers from the Central Provinces, ... an amicable settlement was arrived at on 12th evening. As a result of conversations, the ministers are understood to have agreed mutually to adjust their differences and carry on their work smoothly. They will therefore withdraw their resignations.

In May 1938 the Hindi ministers made a further move to displace Dr Khare, but this also failed due to their lack of support within the Parliamentary party. Following the agreement of 12 May 1938, the Hindi ministers requested Patel to place their grievances against Dr Khare before the Working Committee. Patel did this, but the Committee declared that it had no jurisdiction in the matter, and that the problem could

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1 Khare, p.5. According to Dr Khare's opponents, 'an understanding was arrived at on 9 May that Dr Khare would continue as Premier, but he would give up his portfolios and confine himself to coordinating the work of his ministers'. See Ministerial Crisis, p.8.


3 Khare, op. cit., pp.5-6. Dr Khare says that this request was made without his knowledge.
only be solved by referring it to the Parliamentary party itself. Accordingly the Committee directed Dr Khare to convene a meeting of the party at Pachmarhi on 24 May 1938 and requested Patel to preside over the meeting.\(^1\) The Hindi ministers spent the time before the meeting canvassing for support in any show of strength with Dr Khare, but they were frustrated in their efforts by the formation of a block of 44 members of the Parliamentary party drawn from all parts of the province. The leader of this group was K.R. Khandekar, a well known opponent of Mishra in the Mahakoshal Congress.\(^2\) On 24 May 1938, the day on which the Parliamentary party was to meet, Khandekar's group dropped a bombshell by presenting the ministers with two alternatives - that they should either come to an agreement or resign.\(^3\) The ultimatum had the desired effect. On 25 May 1938 the ministers announced that they had

\(^1\) Ministerial Crisis, pp.8-9; Bombay Chronicle, 16 May 1938, p.1; 17 May 1938, p.1.
\(^2\) Khare, op. cit., p.6; Times of India, 19 May 1938, p.9; 25 May 1938, p.11; 24 May 1938, p.11; Maharashtra, 22 May 1938, p.2; 29 May 1938, p.4; 1 June 1938, p.8; 5 June 1938, p.4; Bombay Chronicle, 23 May 1938, p.1;
Owing to the activities of Khandekar, the Hindi ministers were unable to win any appreciable support. Only 21 of the 43 Hindi members of the Congress Assembly party attended the Mahakoshal Political Conference at Katni on 22 May 1938, and they 'refused to be drawn into any discussion' on the crisis.
\(^3\) Bombay Chronicle, 25 May 1938, p.1; Ministerial Crisis, p.9.
discussed all the...differences amongst ourselves, some of them being temperamental, some due to differences of outlook and others involving questions of procedure regarding the internal working of the ministry. We are happy to report that we have been able to amicably settle all our differences and have agreed to work in a spirit of comradeship.¹

This assurance rested on an agreement between the ministers that Dr Khare would surrender his portfolios and remain as Premier and coordinating minister. The other members of the cabinet also agreed to surrender their portfolios so that a general reshuffle of Departments could take place. The ministers further agreed to complete the reshuffle by 1 July 1938, and that in the event of disagreements the Presidents of the three Provincial Congress Committees would act as arbitrators.²

The ministers, however, were unable to implement the Pachmarhi agreement and a fourth crisis ensued from which the Marathi region emerged temporarily in control of the government.³ The Hindi ministers and the Premier

¹ Bombay Chronicle, 26 May 1938, p.1. See also ibid., 25 May 1938, p.1; Ministerial Crisis, pp.10-11.
² Ibid., p.9; Maharashtra, 14 September 1938, p.4; Khare, op. cit., p.8. Dr Khare agreed to surrender his portfolios on one condition: 'In agreeing to surrender the portfolios and throwing them into the common pool, I...definitely stated at Pachmarhi that I would not take any step that will cause humiliation to me as Prime Minister'.
³ See Appendix A, no.5.
failed to keep the agreement because each doubted the bona fides of the other.¹ More importantly, however, Dr Khare and D.P. Mishra disagreed as to who should hold the Police portfolio after the portfolios were reshuffled. The Hindi ministers, and Mishra in particular, were convinced that Dr Khare was unfit to administer the Police Department, and they demanded that the Department be placed in their hands. They believed that this would enable them to rule the restive province more firmly and with greater independence from the officials than they considered Dr Khare had done.² Dr Khare, for his part, refused to hand the portfolio over to the Hindi ministers because he considered it an adjunct to the office of coordinating minister and a weapon for possible use against the Hindi ministers, particularly Mishra.³ He agreed, however, to transfer it to a Marathi minister, Ramrao Deshmukh, but according to Deshmukh, this was unacceptable to Mishra:

¹ See Khare, op. cit., pp.2, 8, Appendix B, pp.ii-iii; Ministerial Crisis, pp.11-12; Maharashtra, 5 June 1938, p.4; Bombay Chronicle, 13 June 1938, p.9; 14 June 1938, p.10. These references relate to the persistent rumours of a crisis in the ministry; to Gole's resignation from the cabinet on 10 June 1938; and to Dr Khare's confidential Police enquiries against his colleagues.

² See ibid., 31 May 1938, p.7; Maharashtra, 5 June 1938, p.4; 17 July 1938, p.4. These excerpts reveal that the Hindi ministers were still anxious to control the Police Department.

³ See ibid., 24 July 1938, p.2; Khare, op. cit., Appendix A, p.i.
During the period of the wrangle that ensued, Dr M.S. Aney, who was then an all-India leader of the Responsivist party intervened, and since I was standing at the half way house and treated as such by both wings, it was offered as a solution that I should hold the police department if that would offer a solution and resolve the crisis. Personally I heartily abhorred the idea; but yielded if that could avert the crisis. This idea was put to Dr Khare, who appeared agreeable to it, if that solved the crisis, but Shri D.P. Mishra interposed by an excuse that even if he (i.e. Mishra) were agreeable, his friend...Ravi Shanker Shukla would not accept it....When Mr Mishra, as the most effective and dominant member of the combine had rejected it, it was scarcely any use putting it to...Pandit Shukla. So the matter remained dropped there. ¹

The problem of re-allocating the Police portfolio bedevilled all subsequent attempts to solve the differences between the ministers. On 29 June 1938 Dr Khare relinquished his portfolios in the presence of Mehta and Gole, but the act had little effect as Mishra and Shukla were not present at the meeting, and presumably still refused to allow Deshmukh to hold the contentious portfolio. ² As a result, the deadline of 1 July 1938, enumerated in the Pachmarhi agreement, elapsed, and the Presidents of the three Provincial Congress Committees intervened in the dispute as agreed on 24 May. On 8 July 1938 they directed Dr Khare to

¹ Deshmukh, p.9; Khare, op. cit., p.8.
² Bombay Chronicle, 30 June 1938, p.7; Khare, op. cit., Appendix A, p.i.
relinquish his portfolios and act as coordinating Premier. In response Dr Khare summoned meetings of the cabinet between 11-14 July 1938 at which 'everybody formally relinquished his portfolios, thus making them available for fresh redistribution'.

The ministers' surrender of their portfolios was the prelude to a division of the cabinet along linguistic lines. Despite the fact that all ministers relinquished their portfolios, they were still unable to agree as to who was to administer the Police Department. Dr Khare, aware that Mishra had refused to allow Deshmukh to administer the Department, proposed that he retain the Department to enable the orders he might have to give as coordinating Premier to be carried out 'willingly and smoothly'. The Marathi ministers supported this request. The Hindi ministers, however, rejected it as Dr Khare had instituted enquiries against each of them through the Police Department, and had also raised the question of the case against Mishra, which the government had first instituted against him in July 1937. In fact,

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1 Leader, 13 July 1938, p.11; Maharashtra, 17 July 1938, p.4.
2 Khare, op. cit., Appendix A, p.i.
3 Ibid., Appendix B (i), p.iii, R.M. Deshmukh to N.B. Khare, 13 July 1938; Times of India, 18 July 1938, p.5; Ministerial Crisis, p.12.
5 Maharashtra, 24 July 1938, p.2; Ministerial Crisis, pp.11-12.
Dr Khare's request to retain the Police portfolio so annoyed the Hindi ministers that they walked out of the cabinet meetings in protest, and Mishra resigned from the ministry. On 13 July 1938, Gole and Deshmukh also resigned from the ministry on the grounds that any agreement over redistribution of the portfolios was then impossible. Two days later Dr Khare informed Patel of the impasse and placed the matter in his hands. Dr Khare told Patel that

We tried to come to an understanding about redistribution after all the portfolios were pooled, but I regret very much to report that we could not come to any agreement owing to marked differences in our respective outlook.... I have no alternative under the circumstances, except to place the matter of redistribution of portfolios in your hands.

Within a week, however, Dr Khare had formed a government which excluded the leaders of Mahakoshal and in which the Marathi region held the reins of power. In dealing with the cabinet crisis, Dr Khare had to choose between two courses of action. He could either refer the dispute to the Working Committee, or deal with the situation himself. Dr Khare's opponents believed that he chose both alternatives at once. They stated that the

1 Times of India, 18 July 1938, p.5; Bombay Chronicle, 20 July 1938, p.13.
3 Khare, op. cit., Appendix A, p.i, N.B. Khare to V.J. Patel, 15 July 1938
day before he placed the crisis in the hands of Patel, he made contact with Thakur Piare Lal Singh (the leader of a group of Assembly members from Mahakoshal who opposed Mishra and Shukla), presumably to win his support if the cabinet were re-formed.¹ Again, Dr Khare's opponents claimed that at the cabinet meetings between 11-14 July, the Premier told his colleagues that 'he would resign and...call upon the other ministers to do so'.² Yet, at the same time, Dr Khare placed the crisis before Patel, apparently content to await the decision of the Working Committee, which was to meet at Wardha on 23 July. Events from 15 July onwards, however, compelled Dr Khare to solve the cabinet crisis himself rather than leave it to the Working Committee. Three events occurring in close sequence influenced him to take this action. On 16 July 1938 he received a letter from a prominent member of the Working Committee informing him that the Committee might discontinue its ministry in the Central Provinces and Berar, if the dispute remained unsolved.

To Dr Khare

The fear of this province being declared a non-Congress province began to haunt me. I realised that the activities of the three ministers were leading us to the brink of a precipice....(Thus) I decided to see that the Congress existed in

¹ Ministerial crisis, p.13. The reference merely states that Dr Khare got into telephonic communication with Thakur Piare Lal Singh of Raipur.

² Ibid., pp.12-13. Dr Khare later denied that 'the course I adopted on 18 July had...entered my contemplation on 15 when I sent the letter to Patel'. See Khare, op. cit., p.5.
the government, and that it did not perish. It was intolerable to me that the labours of a lifetime should be wasted in this way.¹

The same day, Dr Khare received another letter from Congress members of the Assembly requesting him to call a meeting of the Parliamentary party. This letter must have also raised fears in Dr Khare's mind about the future of the ministry and made the need for action seem even more urgent.² On 17 July, Dr Khare realised that action was imperative. On that day Shukla visited Thakur Piare Lal Singh in Raipur and informed him that 'Dr Khare was sure to resign and that he should support his own premiership'.³

To avert the threats to the ministry and his own Premiership, Dr Khare resigned from office almost immediately and formed a second ministry in which the balance of power lay with his own region. In forming a new cabinet, Dr Khare first made certain that he had the support of a majority of members of the Parliamentary party. When he knew he could count on the Marathi members, the Hindi group led by Khandekar and Piare Lal Singh, and the Harijan Congressmen, Dr Khare set in

¹ Khare, op. cit., pp.11-12.
² NAI, Khare MS, 114, A.N. Udhoji to N.B. Khare, 16 July 1938. Dr Khare received a similar letter from V. Kallappa, the member representing the Hindi Factory Labour constituency.
³ Khare, op. cit., p.9.
motion the resignation of the ministry. On 18 July 1938 Dr Khare requested his ministers to resign. On 19 July he received replies in the affirmative from the Marathi ministers; and in the negative from the Hindi ministers a day later. This came as no surprise to Dr Khare, however, and he refused to allow it to thwart his plan of action. On 20 July 1938 at 10.30 a.m. he submitted the resignation of the entire cabinet to the new Governor, Sir Francis Verner Wylie, who had taken up his post at

1 Khare knew he could count for support on Deshmukh and Gole (See Khare, op. cit., Appendix B (i), p.iii); see ibid., p.10, for Piare Lal Singh. As Dr Khare chose a Harijan minister, it is reasonable to suppose that he did so in return for support from the Harijan Congress members of the Assembly.

2 Ministerial Crisis, p.13; Khare, op. cit., p.12.

3 Ibid., pp.3, 12-13; Maharashtra, 24 July 1938, pp.2, 5; Ministerial Crisis, pp.13-17. Dr Moonje reported that on 19 July 1938 he called on Deshmukh: 'I asked him if his move of resignation is a part of any well-thought concerted manouvre (sic) and if he had any previous consultation with Dr Khare and Aney? He said no....I got disgusted and sent in my resignation. That's all ....About this time Gole turned up. Unlike Ramrao, he appeared concerned and undecided as to whether he has acted rightly or wrongly in resigning'. NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 10, 19 July 1938.
the end of May.¹ Wylie immediately accepted the resignations of the Marathi ministers.² But he deferred taking any action on the Hindi ministers in case the Working Committee were able to persuade Dr Khare and his Marathi colleagues to 'take back their resignations or at least defer pressing them' until after a meeting of the Committee at Wardha on 23 July.³ Dramatic messages from Patel in Wardha and nocturnal visits by leading Congressmen failed to move Dr Khare, however, and the Governor had little alternative but to dismiss his Hindi ministers in the early hours of 21 July 1938.⁴

The letter of dismissal sent by the Governor to the Hindi ministers gave direction to the events of the ensuing 24 hours. In his letter Wylie told the ministers that

¹ Maharashtra, 21 July 1938, supplement. Wylie was a comparatively young man and an outsider to boot. Consequently, his appointment to the Governorship of the Central Provinces and Berar aroused a great deal of resentment among civilians in the province. Wylie's rise to the position of Governor was rather sudden. In 1930 he was Deputy-Secretary of the Foreign Department, Government of India. He then became District Commissioner in Peshawar, and later Prime Minister in Alwar. In mid-1937 he was appointed Resident in Jaipur. Wylie had a reputation for firmness, 'sagacity and sureness of judgement'. See Times of India, 4 January 1938, p.9. Mr Justice Niyogi administered the oath of office to Wylie at Pachmarhi on 27 May 1938.
² NAI, Khare MS, 119, ii, F.V. Wylie to N.B. Khare, 20 July 1938.
³ Maharashtra, 21 July 1938, supplement; Ministerial Crisis, pp.18-20.
⁴ Ibid., pp.17, 20.
The system is that all ministers should give their resignations to the chief minister. Secondly, as long as the provincial legislature is with Dr Khare..., and as it is necessary to have a ministry and you are not in a mood to resign, I have no other alternative but to dissolve your authority as ministers. I am sorry to say that I have come to this conclusion.

Accordingly, on 21 July 1938, Wylie requested Dr Khare to form another ministry. To do so, Dr Khare drew on each of the groups supporting him in the Assembly, and submitted a list of nominees to the Governor. Within hours, the Governor had accepted the nominations and sworn in the new ministry at Government House.

The strength of the ministry undoubtedly lay with the Marathi region. The Premiership, and with it the key Police portfolio, again went to Dr Khare representing the division of Nagpur. Berar gained added strength, for although still represented by Gole and Deshmukh, the latter acquired the important portfolio of Finance, formerly held by D.K. Mehta. The Hindi region, by contrast, was only weakly represented in the new cabinet. Piare Lal Singh became Minister for Education, and Rameshwar Agnibhoj, a Harijan, Minister for Agriculture. The former, however, did not represent the Congress organisation in Mahakoshal, which firmly supported the dismissed Ministers; and the latter was a college student with little experience of administration.

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1 Maharashtra, 24 July 1938, p.2.
2 Indian Annual Register, no.1, 1938, p.xxix.
Within a week of its formation, Dr Khare's new ministry had fallen and Mahakoshal had assumed control of the government with the creation of a ministry by Ravi Shankar Shukla. The Working Committee was directly responsible for the formation of this ministry. After Dr Khare formed his second cabinet, the Working Committee compelled him to stand down as Premier and as Leader of the Congress Parliamentary party. The Committee took this course of action because it believed that the only hope for stable government in the bilingual Central Provinces and Berar lay in giving the Premiership to the region which held a majority in the Assembly and the Parliamentary party alike. Following Dr Khare's resignation as Premier and party Leader, Shukla secured the Leadership of the Parliamentary party, and by 29 July 1938 was installed in place of Dr Khare as Premier of the Central Provinces and Berar.

On 22 July 1938 the Working Committee began moves to usher in a ministry dominated by Mahakoshal and thus restore political stability to the Central Provinces and Berar. As a first move, the Committee summoned Dr Khare and his cabinet to Wardha to explain their behaviour. For four hours the Committee led by Patel

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Ministerial Crisis, pp.3-4. The authors of this official Congress publication ask: 'Who is to be blamed if the majority of members of the Central Provinces Legislative Assembly party elected Ravishanker Shukla as leader? The Mahakoshal members outnumber the rest.' See also Khare, op. cit., p.15.
subjected the ministers to a gruelling cross-examination during which they accused Dr Khare of insubordination in forming a ministry without their knowledge or consent.\(^1\) As a consequence of that charge, they demanded that Dr Khare resign the Premiership immediately. This Dr Khare agreed to do.\(^2\) And, although it was then late at night, he drafted the necessary letter to the Governor and telephoned his resignation to the Governor's Secretary in Nagpur.\(^3\) Dr Khare then left for Nagpur, where at 2.25 a.m. he handed his resignation to Wylie at Government House. Soon afterwards returned to Wardha to face further action by the Working Committee.\(^4\)

Between 23-7 July 1938 the Working Committee made their second move to establish a Hindi ministry and so restore political calm to the Central Provinces and Berar. In making this move the Committee compelled Dr Khare to resign permanently from the Leadership of the Congress Parliamentary party. This was no easy task, for Dr Khare was naturally unwilling to terminate his own political career.\(^5\) On 23 July the Committee told

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1 Maharashatra, 24 July 1938, p.4; Khare, op. cit., pp.1, 13-16.
2 Ibid., p.16.
3 Ibid., pp.16-18. See especially the letter from N.B. Khare to Sir F.V. Wylie, 22 July 1938, p.17. Dr Khare's impression was that 'the Sardar dictated and that Rajendra Prasad scribed' the letter of resignation.
4 Maharashatra, 24 July 1938, p.4.
5 See Khare, op. cit., p.22.
Dr Khare that the 'natural consequence of his resignation was that he should resign the leadership of the Assembly party'.  

Dr Khare agreed to resign the Leadership, but he informed the Committee that he intended to stand for re-election on the grounds that he command(ed) the support of the majority of the Congress Assembly party and as such he (could) not be expelled from the party unless the majority in it...definitely indicated their want of support for him.

Having made his position clear, Dr Khare summoned all Congress members of the Assembly to a meeting of the parliamentary party on 27 July to elect a new Leader.

As Dr Khare was still determined to contest the Leadership, the Working Committee felt compelled to take further action against him. On 25 July, two days before the meeting of the Parliamentary party, the Committee again called Dr Khare to Wardha and requested him to make a 'frank statement' admitting his blame in forming a ministry without its consent. Dr Khare did so, but Gandhi subsequently amended Dr Khare's draft and

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1 Ministerial Crisis, p.21.
2 Bombay Chronicle, 23 July 1938, p.1; see also Ministerial Crisis, p.21; Khare, op. cit., p.18. Dr Khare claims that on 23 July 1938, the Working Committee did not object to his re-contesting the Party Leadership.
3 Ministerial Crisis, p.21.
requested him to sign the amended statement. ¹ Dr Khare firmly refused to sign Gandhi's version of the affair, and there were stormy scenes as members of the Working Committee tried to persuade him to do so. ² Dr Khare, however, refused to be browbeaten and returned to Nagpur to consult his friends as to the best course of action. Those whom he consulted were also opposed to his signing the proposed statement, and as a result Dr Khare addressed the following letter to the Working Committee on 26 July:

I am sorry I cannot see my way to accept the draft which I am asked to... I am not prepared to admit that I was guilty of any indiscipline. I am not prepared to admit that the Congress has lost its prestige through my action. The draft contains some baseless insinuations about fitness to hold positions of trust and responsibility in the Congress. I am sorry I cannot endorse them.

I must state in addition that I am fundamentally opposed to the view that... the Ministers should not be primarily responsible

¹ Khare, op. cit., pp.18-23. Dr Khare asserts that Gandhi amended his draft to include the following: 'I admit that I was guilty of indiscipline. I as an old Congressman should have known the value of discipline; ... I think it is my duty to relinquish all positions of trust in the Congress whose cause I have put in jeopardy by my action. I shall be content if I am permitted to serve as a camp-follower;... I shall do everything in my power to retrieve the prestige which the Congress lost through my action;... I hope that all Congressmen will rally round the Working Committee in its endeavour to form a united and stable ministry;... There are rumours of a split between Maharashtra and Mahakoshal. I shall try my best to prevent a group or a split'.

² Ministerial Crisis, p.23; Khare, op. cit., pp.22-3.
to the Prime Minister and further that they should be severally responsible to the High Command. I hold the view that these ideas are a complete negation of democratic government. Similarly I am opposed to the further view that the Working Committee or the Parliamentary Subcommittee should dictate to the Congress Parliamentary Party the choice of its leader. I hold the opinion that the Parliamentary party must be free to choose its own leader....It must also be open to the leader to exercise his independent judgement in selecting his colleagues.1

On receiving this letter, the Working Committee denounced Dr Khare, and banned him from election to any 'office of trust and responsibility' in the Congress organisation.2

The Working Committee's ban on Dr Khare facilitated the election of Shukla as Premier, and the return of Mahakoshal to power in the Central Provinces and Berar. In its resolution debarring Dr Khare from office, the Working Committee congratulated the Hindi ministers for their loyalty to the Congress in refusing to resign at the instance of Dr Khare.3 In so doing, the Committee indirectly suggested to members of the Parliamentary party that Dr Khare's successor could well come from the Mahakoshal.4 A majority of members of the Parliamentary

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1 Khare, op. cit., pp.23-4.
2 Ibid., pp.1, 24; Ministerial Crisis, pp.23-4.
3 Ibid., p.24.
4 See also the Working Committee's injunction to members of the Parliamentary party to 'rally round the Working Committee in its endeavour to form a united and stable ministry'. Khare, op. cit., p.22.
party also held that view. The meeting of the party took place at 9 a.m. on 27 July 1938 in an atmosphere of considerable tension. Members of the party proposed several names for the position of party Leader, but one was disqualified and the others withdrew from the election to leave two candidates in the field - Ramrao Deshmukh and Ravi Shankar Shukla. Shukla easily defeated Deshmukh for the Leadership of the party as most of the members from Mahakoshal (which enjoyed a majority in the party) voted for him. In addition, a small number of Marathi members remained neutral in protest against the ban on Dr Khare, and this further enabled Shukla to win a substantial majority over his rival from Berar.

On 29 July 1938 Ravi Shankar became the Premier of the Central Provinces and Berar. Shortly after Shukla's election as Party Leader, the Governor, Sir Francis Wylie, summoned him to Government House and requested him to form a ministry. On 29 July Shukla submitted a list of ministers to Wylie, and at a meeting at 5.30 p.m. that

1 Ministerial Crisis, op. cit., pp.24-7.
2 Ibid., Maharashtra, 31 July 1938, p.2. Those present at the meeting nominated six men to the Leadership of the party: Jajuji, R.S. Shukla, G.S. Gupta, K.R. Khandekar, D.K. Mehta and R.M. Deshmukh. Jajuji's name was withdrawn as his consent had not been taken; and Gupta, Khandekar and Mehta declined to stand. Of the two remaining candidates Shukla received 47 votes, presumably those of the Hindi members present; and Deshmukh 12 votes. These probably represented the Berar members. 13 members, presumably those from the division of Nagpur, remained neutral.
day Wylie accepted Shukla's nominees. At 7.30 p.m. the Governor administered the oaths to the members of the new cabinet and later issued a Gazette Extraordinary to announce their assumption of office.¹

The composition of the new ministry clearly indicated that control of the government had passed from the Marathi region to Mahakoshal.² The Premiership lay with Mahakoshal and not with the Marathi region, as before. Again, it was Mahakoshal and not the Marathi region that enjoyed a majority in the cabinet. Of the five places in the cabinet, Mahakoshal held three, and the divisions of Nagpur and Berar one each. Finally, Mahakoshal also held the contentious Police portfolio and the portfolio of Law, which had formerly been administered by M.Y. Shareef.

¹ Bombay Chronicle, 30 July 1938, p.7; Maharashtra, 31 July 1938, p.5.
² In the new cabinet R.S. Shukla held the Premiership, besides the Appointments, General Administration, Political and Military, and Police portfolios; D.P. Mishra was Minister for Local Self Government, and in addition to that portfolio, held the Medical, Public Health and Cooperative portfolios; D.K. Mehta was Minister for Finance and Law, holding, besides those portfolios, the Forest, Assembly, Judicial and Jail portfolios; S.V. Gokhale as Minister for Revenue and Education held the Revenue, Settlement and Survey, Land Records, Education and Agriculture portfolios; and C.J. Bharuka, Minister for Industries and Public Works, who, besides those portfolios, held the portfolios of Separate Revenue and Registration.
Throughout Shukla's term as Premier, Marathi politicians ceaselessly tried to undermine Mahakoshal's dominant position in the government. They failed, however, to disturb the new balance of power, and Shukla's ministry held office until November 1939. In that month it resigned at the instance of the Working Committee in protest against India's entry into the War between Britain and Germany.

Between July and October 1938 Dr Khare launched the most formidable of the many attacks on the new ministry as part of a larger campaign against the Working Committee for turning him out of office. The campaign took the form of meetings, demonstrations, and articles in the columns of the Marathi press - all denouncing the ministers and the Working Committee for removing Dr Khare from the Premiership. This offensive took the Marathi region of western India by storm, and aroused much of the latent hostility to the Congress that existed among members of the Brahman community in that region. On 28 September 1938, when the campaign was at its height, the Working Committee tried to draw its sting by requesting Dr Khare to place his grievances

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1 For the campaign see Maharashtra, 31 July 1938, pp.9, 17; 3 August 1938, p.2; 7 August 1938, p.18; 25 September 1938, p.5; Bombay Chronicle, 3 August 1938, p.9; 5 August 1938, p.8; NAI, Home Poll, 18-8, 1938, FR, First Half of August 1938, pp.1-3, 5-6; Home Poll, 18-9, 1938, FR, First Half of September 1938, pp.1-2; NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 10, 5 August 1938; ibid., 7 August 1938; ibid., 17 September 1938.
before the Committee itself. Dr Khare, however, insisted that he would only place them before an independent tribunal. As a result, the Working Committee suspended his membership of the Congress. On 1 October 1938 it passed the following resolution:

The Working Committee disqualifies Dr Khare from being a Congress member for the next two years from today, i.e. till 1 October 1940. This necessarily involves his immediate resignation from all Congress organisations and also from the Central Provinces Legislative Assembly. Accordingly the Working Committee calls upon Dr Khare to resign from the Central Provinces Legislative Assembly.

This ruling drew much of the fire from Khare's attack on the ministry and the Congress during 1938, but in 1939 he returned to the fray with renewed zest. In that year Khare associated himself with the Forward Bloc, a political organisation led by the Bengali nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose, which urged the Congress to use more aggressive methods of expelling the British from India than were permitted by Gandhi and the Working Committee. To Dr Khare, Bose was a symbol of revolt

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1 NML, AICC, PL-26, 1938, J.B. Kripalani to N.B. Khare, 28 September 1938, Indian Annual Register, no. 2, 1938, pp. 276, 279-81.

2 NML, AICC, PL-26, 1938, N.B. Khare to J.B. Kripalani, 29 September 1938. Dr Khare's reply reads as follows: 'Your wire. Having accused WC, I prefer independent impartial tribunal. Since WC is contending party, can't in fairness sit in judgement over me. Please reply Khare'.

3 Ibid., S.C. Bose to N.B. Khare, 3 October 1938.
against the type of control which Gandhi, Patel and the Working Committee exercised over the Congress. He thus supported Bose's Forward Bloc and through it continued his campaign against the Congress and the cabinet in the Marathi region.\(^1\) In 1939 Dr Khare also strongly supported the moves to compel Mishra to answer the charges of a personal nature first made against him in 1937.\(^2\) In addition Khare associated himself with an agitation by agriculturists to persuade the ministry to suspend or remit land revenue to mitigate the difficulties caused by poor harvests.\(^3\)

The ministry weathered all these attempts to undermine its authority. The Forward Bloc collapsed in

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\(^2\) For the moves to re-open the charges against Mishra, see Hitavada, 31 March 1939, p.6; 31 March 1939, p.1; 28 May 1939, p.1; 20 August 1939, p.8.

\(^3\) NAI, Home Poll, 18-3, 1939, FR, Second Half of March 1939, p.1; Home Poll, 18-5, 1939, FR, First Half of May 1939, p.1. Perhaps the most celebrated of the rural agitations with which Dr Khare and his followers were associated was the so-called Umrer Satyagraha of May 1939, when kisans picketed the tahsil office demanding economic relief. See MPS, Jail Department, 5(a)-16, 1939, Classification of the Umrer Satyagraha Prisoners as Political Prisoners, pp.1, 12.
the latter part of 1939 when Bose was removed as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and disqualified from holding any office in the Congress for three years. On the question of the personal charges against Mishra, the Working Committee considered, but decided against, holding an enquiry, and in October 1939 Rajendra Prasad issued a statement exonerating Mishra of all the charges made against him.¹ And in the province itself, the cabinet quietened the agricultural unrest by granting revenue concessions and by stopping coercive processes in the areas badly affected by drought.²

Between 1938-9 the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League expanded their activities in the Marathi region, thus providing a further challenge to the ministry and the Congress. The upsurge of activity by the Mahasabha occurred partly in response to worsening relations between Hindus and Muslims at the national level; and partly also to the disenchantment with the Congress in the

¹ Hitavada, 27 September 1939, p.1; 4 October 1939, pp.5, 9.
² Ibid., 1 February 1939, p.7; 8 February 1939, p.7; NAI, Home Poll, 18-1, FR, Second Half of January 1939, p.1; Home Poll, 18-4, 1939, FR, First Half of April 1939, p.5; Home Poll, 18-5, 1939, FR, Second Half of May 1939, p.6; Home Poll, 18-6, 1939, FR, First Half of June 1939, p.7. In January the government announced suspensions amounting to Rs 14.74 lakhs, of which Rs 8.71 lakhs were in Berar. The government also announced a rebate of 8.¹/₃ per cent of the enhanced land revenue in the seven taluqs of Akola and Buldhana.
Marathi region following Dr Khare's dismissal as Premier. While the leaders of the Mahasabha directed many of their activities against the Muslim League (which was undergoing a similar period of expansion), they also strongly attacked the ministry and the Congress - the former on the grounds that it was favouring the Muslims, and the latter for allegedly encouraging Muslim demands for a separate state in the subcontinent of India. The Muslim League in turn attacked the Mahasabha, but more so the ministry for allegedly propagating Hindu values under cover of its scheme of compulsory primary education. The antagonism between the Mahasabha and the Muslim League and their joint opposition to the ministry were accompanied by growing friction between Hindus and

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1 See Hitavada, 4 January 1939, p.6; 26 March 1939, p.10.
2 For attacks by the Mahasabha on the Muslim League, see Hitavada, December 1939, p.2; NAI, Home Poll, 18-2, 1939, FR, Second Half of February 1939, p.1; Indian Annual Register, no.2, 1939, pp.31-2, 313-5, 320, 325-39. For the Mahasabha's attack on the Congress and the ministry, see Hitavada, 1 January 1939, p.1; 15 February 1939, p.10; 5 July 1939, p.12; NAI, Home Poll, 18-12, 1938, FR, Second Half of December 1938, p.1; Home Poll, 18-11, 1939, FR, Second Half of November 1939, p.3.
Muslims that culminated in a series of communal riots.\(^1\)

The government took strong measures to deal with the situation, but despite this, conditions in the province remained disturbed.\(^2\)

Marathi politicians made a more direct attack on the ministry than was possible under the aegis of the Mahasabha by asserting that Shukla's ministry was detrimental to the interests of the Marathi region.\(^3\) It was openly said for instance, that 'while Maharashtrians had the whip hand under the Khare regime, ... under the present dispensation the Hindis have come out on top'.\(^4\)

It was significant that such complaints largely

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\(^2\) For the measures used see Hitavada, 22 January 1939, p.1; 2 June 1939, p.10; 23 June 1939, p.9; 19 July 1939, p.6; 29 November 1939, p.5. In 1939 the government demanded securities from various newspapers, warned leaders against making dangerous speeches, and gave wide powers to District Magistrates to deal with communal unrest. See also MPS, P & M, Confidential, 126, 1939, Premier's Draft Note, n.d., 1939.

\(^3\) See NML, AICC, P-13, Part I, 1938-39, Thakur Chhedilal to J.B. Kripalani, 8 October 1938.

\(^4\) Hitavada, 19 May 1939, p.4.
originated in Berar, which by 1939 had lost almost every vestige of the influence it had once commanded in the administration of the province. Resentment in Berar at the region's loss of power was clearly evident in the following attack on the government which appeared in the *Hitavada* during April 1939:

Almost the whole of Berar is on the verge of total ruin on account of exploitation of the province by Central Provinces administrators ...(and the) neglect and indifference shown by the present government towards the pitiable conditions in Berar....A former Congress minister in charge of Cooperation told the cooperative workers in Berar (that) the movement in Berar deserved to die....Bank after bank is closing down...(and) even the local bodies in Berar are neglected (as)...the government has not made nominations.

The frustration of the Marathi region and its fear of dominance by Mahakoshal were also evident in the charges made by Marathi spokesmen in 1939 that the protagonists of Hindi were trying to advance their language at the expense of Marathi. ²

During 1939 Marathi members of the Congress Parliamentary party openly opposed the ministry and thus widened the conflict between the Marathi region and Mahakoshal. In party meetings, clashes between ministers

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¹ *Hitavada*, 16 April 1939, p.8. For other complaints of the same type see ibid., 16 August 1939, p.2; 20 August 1939, p.6.

² Ibid., 21 April 1939, p.10; 14 May 1939, 16 July 1939, p.8. These charges related to the abolition of Marathi schools in various districts.
and party members were common, as for instance in January 1939, when Marathi members condemned the government for doing nothing to alleviate agricultural distress in the southern part of the province. In the Assembly, similar clashes occurred during the debate on the budget for 1939-40. The leader of the Marathi revolt against the ministry in that debate was Kedar, who was then a member of the Congress and a firm supporter of Dr Khare. In March 1939, during the budget session, Kedar delivered a withering attack on the ministry that reflected the prevailing mood of frustration in the Marathi region. In his speech on the occasion, Kedar declared that

we on this side of the house who come from the Marathi districts are placed in a very unfortunate position....We are only zeros in the political life of our districts. Our use is to keep the Ministers in office....We have simply to register our votes in the lobby; otherwise nobody cares for us. I have seen the plight of all the members on this side. They do not get a hearing. No Minister cares for them....The unfortunate part is that in the Maharashtra portion of the province it is the raj of Biyanis', Govind Dass' and Jamnalals'.

It was Kedar, again, who led the Marathi Congressmen in their attack on Mishra for his part in the cabinet crisis of 1938, and who urged the Working Committee to

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1 See ibid., 29 January 1939, p.3; 2 August 1939, p.1.
2 CPBLA, 17 March 1939, pp.124-5; see ibid., 114-153. See also ibid., 24 March 1939, pp.468-9; 28 March 1939, pp.668-690; 5 April 1939, pp.1001-15.
investigate the personal charges made against him.\textsuperscript{1} A small section of Hindi members also revolted against the ministry,\textsuperscript{2} but as with the Marathi attack, party discipline prevailed and the ministers completed their period in office in firm control of the party.\textsuperscript{3}

The attack on Mahakoshal by Marathi politicians reached a climax between 1938 and 1939 when the latter demanded that the Hindi and Marathi regions be divided into separate provinces. The leaders of the demand for the linguistic division of the Central Provinces and Berar were Dr Khare for the division of Nagpur, and Ramrao Deshmukh for Berar. At public meetings, in the legislature, and through the columns of the English and Marathi press, these men and their supporters urged the government to create a Marathi province to be called Vidarbha, and they tried to marshal public support for

\begin{itemize}
\item Hitavada, 29 March 1939, p.1; 31 March 1939, p.1; 14 April 1939, p.1; 28 May 1939, p.1; 11 August 1939, p.1; 15 August 1939, p.1; 20 August 1939, p.8.
\item Ibid., 21 April 1939, p.7; 23 April 1939, p.9. The revolt of the Hindi members was led by Thakur Chhedilal. He and his supporters, dubbed the 'faithful nine', condemned the ministry for doing nothing for rural uplift and for using bureaucratic methods to administer the province.
\item The Working Committee expelled T.J. Kedar, V.M. Jakatdar, and V.V. Subhedar from the Congress for three years for their attack on Mishra. In the Assembly, the ministers controlled the party by issuing ordinances showing which amendments were to be allowed; which bills were to be circulated; and which were to be referred to Select Committees. See Hitavada, 6 August 1939, p.1.
\end{itemize}
such a move. During the course of the campaign for the formation of Vidarbha, the statements made by the Marathi leaders revealed only too clearly the frustrations caused by their loss of political power to Mahakoshal. One example of this was the following statement by Dr Khare which appeared during May 1939 in Jyotna, a journal circulating in the province of Bombay:

The need for distribution of provinces on (a) linguistic basis may not be as keenly felt by the Maharashtrians of the Bombay-Poona side as those of people residing in the Nagpur and Berar districts. These parts, though more fertile and richer than the Mahakoshal districts of Central Provinces, are at a disadvantage politically. There are only 8 districts of Nagpur and Berar; whereas the Mahakoshal, having eleven districts, gets the advantage due to their numerical superiority of holding the whip hand in the council and government of the province to such an extent that it has become unbearable for us to continue as we are any longer.

The demand from the Marathi leaders for the division of the two regions received strong support from the ministry


2 NAI, Khare MS, from M.G. Datar, Speeches and Statements of Dr N.B. Khare (Nagpur, 1943), p.57.
and the Congress in Mahakoshal, and 1939 closed with political leaders in all parts of the province in agreement on the issue.\(^1\)

The outbreak of war between Britain and Germany put an end to any immediate move to divide the Central Provinces and Berar along linguistic lines. Following Britain's declaration of war with Germany, the Viceroy declared India a belligerent state.\(^2\) This seriously displeased the Working Committee who demanded that the British government declare its views on the question of self government for India. The government's reply, however, was unacceptable to the Congress, and on 8 September 1939 the Working Committee called on all Congress ministries to resign in protest.

In the Central Provinces and Berar the government delayed its resignation until 10 November 1938. The need to pass important legislation caused this delay. Nevertheless, by 8 November the legislative Assembly had dealt with all government business on the notice paper, and had passed a resolution opposing the participation

\(^1\) See the speech of the Premier on the Resolution re Constitution of the Marathi areas of the Province as a Separate Province, CPBLA, 1 October 1938, pp.777-80.

\(^2\) The Viceroy was Lord Linlithgow, whose term of office lasted from 1936 to 1943.
of India in the War. 1 On the conclusion of the debate on that motion, the Speaker adjourned the House sine die and Shukla tendered the resignation of the cabinet to the Governor. 2 Two days later, the Governor issued a proclamation accepting the cabinet's resignation and acknowledging the 'consideration and assistance' he had enjoyed from its members. In the proclamation, the Governor also announced that he had assumed the administrative and legislative powers formerly held by his ministers, and that he had appointed two senior civilians to 'assist (him)...in the discharge of his functions'. 3

Following the proclamation, the former ministers returned to their homes in various parts of the province

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1 These measures were the Vidya Mandir Bill, 1939; and the Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1939. See CPBLA, 1 November 1939, pp.3-46; 2 November 1939, pp.62-92, 93-107; 3 November 1939, pp.131-58; 4 November 1939, pp.172-216, 216-47; 6 November 1939, pp.264-71, 280-343; 7 November 1939, pp.345-414; 8 November 1939, pp.437-86.

2 Hitavada, 15 November 1939, p.5.

3 Ibid.; MPS, Appointments, 1-64, 1939, Appointment of Advisers to the Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar. The two civilians were Sir G.P. Burton and H.C. Greenfield. Burton was to administer the Departments of Finance, Commerce and Industry, Agriculture, Forests, Local Self Government, Medical, Public Health, Judicial and Law; and Greenfield the Departments of Revenue, Survey and Settlement, Excise and Registration. Burton was formerly Financial Commissioner of the Central Provinces and Berar, and Greenfield, Commissioner of Nagpur(?).
to await further instructions from the Working Committee.¹

In so doing, they initiated a new era in relations between the various nationalist groups in the Central Provinces and Berar and the British government - an era which lies outside the scope of this study.

¹ Hitavada, 15 November 1939, p.8.
CONCLUSION

It is possible to draw many interesting conclusions from a study of politics in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1919 and 1939. One of the more interesting of these conclusions concerns the rise of the Hindi region from political insignificance in 1919 to dominance of the province by 1939. The Hindi region made its rise to dominance at the expense of the Marathi region. In 1919 the Marathi region dominated political life in the Central Provinces and Berar. In that region, moderate politicians enjoyed close ties with the government, and nationalist politicians actively opposed British rule in the province. The Hindi region, by contrast, played a negligible part in provincial politics in 1919. In that region, the nationalist movement was in its infancy; and although a special relationship existed between the Hindi malguzars and the administration, Hindi politicians exercised far less influence on the government than their Marathi counterparts. This was mainly due to their small numbers, and to the remoteness of the Hindi region from the seat of government in Nagpur.

Between 1919 and 1939 the Hindi region ousted the Marathi region from its leading position in the political life of the province. During the period, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the nationalist movement drew new sections of society into politics. So far as the Hindi
region was concerned, these developments led directly to attempts by Hindi politicians to acquire control over the Government of the Central Provinces and Berar. These attempts achieved outstanding success, as was evident from the political careers of E. Raghavendra Rao and Ravi Shankar Shukla.

Marathi politicians did not yield to the growing dominance of the Hindi region without a struggle. Important landmarks in this struggle were Tambe's acceptance of the Home Membership in 1925, and the moves by the leaders of Nagpur and Berar to form ministries between 1925 and 1926. The formation of the Responsive Cooperation party in 1926 constituted another landmark in the struggle by the Marathi region to maintain its primacy in provincial politics. The Responsivist party permitted its members to accept office in the government, and this provided the Marathi politicians with an opportunity to advance the cause of self government and at the same time to defend the interests of the Marathi region. Marathi politicians seized this opportunity eagerly, and formed ministries on three occasions - in 1927, in 1929, and again in 1934. But none of these ministries was able to restore the Marathi region to the position of dominance it had enjoyed in the province before 1919, and none was able to stop the ascent of the Hindi region to a commanding position in the provincial government.

Besides taking office, the Responsivists made other attempts to preserve the leadership of the Marathi region in provincial politics. In 1930 they launched a Forest Satyagraha against the provincial government, but
failed to win any significant electoral support for so doing. Again, between 1930 and 1933 the Responsivists made a determined but unsuccessful bid to separate Berar from the Central Provinces. Next, the Responsivists tried to safeguard Berar's position in the united province that was to come into existence under the constitution of 1935. Again, however, they failed to achieve their objective; and the Central Provinces, and the Hindi region in particular, entered the period of the constitution as the dominant member of the unified province.

The author of the Hindi region's rise to power was Raghavendra Rao. In 1928 he ousted his Marathi colleague, Deshmukh, from the ministry, and formed a second ministry in which the Hindi region held the reigns of power. After a period away from office, Rao again returned to power in 1930 as Home Member - a position he occupied until 1937. Between 1930-37 Rao controlled the legislature and enjoyed the full confidence of the Governor, and as a result was able to entrench the Hindi region firmly in the provincial government. In addition, Rao helped to shape various decisions relating to the new constitution in favour of the Central Provinces and the Hindi region. The dominant position attained by the Hindi region at the hands of Rao was epitomised in his appointment as Acting Governor in 1936, and as Premier of the united Central Provinces and Berar in 1937.

The activities of the Indian National Congress between 1930 and 1937 reinforced the growing dominance of the Hindi region in the Government of the Central
Provinces and Berar. From 1930 to 1933 the Congress sponsored campaigns of civil disobedience and Harijan reform that aroused the political consciousness of vast numbers of people in the Hindi and Marathi regions. In the Hindi region, the extension of political consciousness assisted the return of Hindi Congressmen to the Legislative Assembly in 1937 in large numbers. In the Assembly, these members enjoyed a majority over Marathi members in the Parliamentary party formed by the Indian National Congress to support a possible Congress ministry. As for the Marathi region, the extension of political consciousness between 1930 and 1933 assisted greatly in boosting the political fortunes of the region and in elevating Dr N.B. Khare to the position of Congress leader of that part of the province. And from leadership of the Marathi region, Dr Khare rose by a set of fortuitous circumstances to become the first Congress Premier of the Central Provinces and Berar in 1937.

Dr Khare's election as Premier presented the province with a strange paradox. During the previous ten years, Raghavendra Rao had placed the Hindi region in firm control of the provincial government. Then, in 1937 the government reverted almost overnight to control by the Marathi region. Such control did not reflect the political realities then existing in the province, and could last for only a limited period of time.

The Marathi region, in fact, controlled the government for only one year - from July 1937 to July 1938. During that period the political leaders of the Hindi districts attempted to restore their region to the commanding position it had enjoyed in the provincial
government before 1937. This attempt was evident in the four crises that engulfed the cabinet formed by Dr Khare. During the first crisis, the Hindi ministers abolished the Sim Formula. In the second crisis, the Marathi ministers rebuffed their Hindi colleagues by supporting the resignation of the Law Minister, M.Y. Shareef, from the cabinet. The Hindi ministers caused the third crisis when they attempted to reduce the powers held by the Marathi Premier on the grounds that he had failed to control the communal situation in Jabalpur. A fourth crisis followed, during which Dr Khare resigned his Premiership and formed a new cabinet which did not include the Hindi ministers.

The Hindi ministers stoutly refused to surrender their hold on the government, and to assist them to retain that hold, they sought the assistance of the Working Committee. With a view to establishing a stable ministry in the province, the Working Committee returned the Hindi region to its former dominant position in the government and relegated the Marathi region to a less important position. It did so by compelling Dr Khare to resign as Premier and Leader of the Parliamentary party, and by preventing him from contesting the latter position a second time. These moves led directly to the election of the Hindi leader, Ravi Shankar Shukla, as Premier of the Central Provinces and Berar.

The destructive rivalry between the Hindi and Marathi regions of the Central Provinces and Berar compels the writer to defend the existing division of India into linguistic states. In India at the present time, certain strands of public opinion appear to question the
utility of linguistic states and urge their replacement by administrative units that transcend linguistic boundaries. The opponents of linguistic states condemn these states on the grounds that they quarrel among themselves and—so their opponents believe—weaken the unity of India. The same critics also condemn linguistic states because members of the major linguistic community in certain states demand the ejection from the state on economic grounds of those sections of the population who do not belong to that community. Further, many people condemn linguistic states because the various regions comprising each state rival one another for the allocation of revenues and the development of resources.

In defence of linguistic states, first let it be said that these conditions would obtain, whether or not India was divided along linguistic lines. Most federations or unions of states experience severe disputes between their constituent parts, and between these units and the central government of the union or federation. Further, as these disputes have their basis in economic conflicts, in an under-developed and under-capitalised economy such as India they would continue regardless of the type of administrative unit into which the country was divided. Again, the formation of multi-lingual states would very probably increase the number of movements formed to protect the economic interests of the different linguistic communities residing within those states. Besides these problems, the formation of multi-lingual states would create formidable problems for the educators and those engaged in the work of administration.
Developments in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1919 and 1939 would seem to suggest that, were multi-lingual states to replace the present linguistic states in India, the above problems would not merely persist, but would widen in scope and intensity. In the Central Provinces and Berar, besides the persistent political instability, the two linguistic regions duelled incessantly between 1919 and 1939 to control the government and thus serve their own political and economic interests. To ensure their victory in these duels, the political leaders of the two regions marshalled popular support by invoking the powers of language, culture and history. In doing so, however, they served destructive rather than creative ends, for by 1939 the Hindi and Marathi regions faced each other in bitter hate, each demanding its separation from the other and its incorporation into a separate state. And for a large section of one linguistic community, popular government in the Central Provinces and Berar had broken down, and the Working Committee's call for the ministry's resignation resolved an intolerable situation.

The prospects that conflicts similar to those in the Central Provinces and Berar would occur in any multi-lingual states formed in India are extremely high. Strong linguistic tensions at present exist between the various states of the Indian Union. But so long as these tensions occur between, rather than within, states, they cause relatively little havoc to the internal political life of the individual states. To construct multi-lingual states, however, would, in the opinion of the writer, transfer these linguistic tensions from the
interstate level, where they mostly operate at present, to the intrastate level, where they would assuredly cause no less damage than they did in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1919 and 1939. And this would be damage over and above that caused by the present political instability. Such a situation would without doubt endanger the political and economic life of India to an extent inconceivable at the present moment.

In a somewhat different vein, this thesis clearly shows that Gandhi succeeded in drawing new sections of society into the nationalist movement in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1919 and 1939. In 1919 nationalist activity in the Marathi region was largely confined to the urban middle classes. In the Hindi region, smaller numbers of people from these same classes also supported the nationalist movement. Over the course of the ensuing 20 years, however, Gandhi enabled the nationalist movement in both regions to burst its middle class bounds by involving members of the wealthy trading communities and the lower classes of the towns and countryside in agitation against the government. Gandhi widened the social base of the nationalist movement by forming strong links with the leaders of the above groups, thus creating channels through which he could influence the behaviour of the groups themselves. Gandhi also widened the social base of the nationalist movement by taking agitation out of the local bodies and the legislature and into the streets of the cities and the fields and forests of the countryside.
As we have seen, Gandhi had little difficulty in drawing the people of the Hindi region into nationalist agitation. Gandhi appeared on the scene at a time when the Hindi region was poised on the brink of exciting political changes. Nationalist activity in the region was on the increase, and a number of young men had entered, or were about to enter, public life. Many of these men were eagerly awaiting the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and in particular the opening of the new Legislative Council in Nagpur, as providing them with a wider arena for their political activities.

Gandhi skilfully tapped this fund of political energy before it reached the legislature. He attracted some Hindi leaders to his personality, and others to his ideas. He attracted some, again, because he provided the only avenue of political activity in India at the time. But whatever the reasons for Gandhi's conversion of the Hindi politicians, all alike supported his strong opposition to the continuance of British rule in India. And in the strength of that opposition, they aroused the Hindi region and prepared it for its destiny as a member state of a free and independent India.

This thesis also shows that Gandhi found great difficulty in establishing his leadership over certain parts of India, namely, the Marathi region of the Central Provinces and Berar. Gandhi experienced this difficulty because the Marathi leaders believed that he was trying to usurp the place of Tilak as the nationalist leader of the region. The Marathi politicians also opposed Gandhi because they were confident that Tilak's practical and
aggressive tactics would win self-government for India. They were equally confident that Gandhi's weapons of non-cooperation and passive resistance would fail to achieve that objective. But perhaps the most telling reason why the Marathi nationalists refused to follow Gandhi concerned the appeals which Gandhi made to the pan-Islamic sympathies of the Indian Muslims to arouse their opposition to the government. The Marathi leaders believed that these appeals imperilled the unity of the Indian nation.

As we have seen, however, Gandhi refused to allow the Marathi nationalists to debar him from the Marathi region. He first won the support of an overwhelming majority of nationalists throughout India, so that even those, like the Marathi leaders, who opposed him were unable to voice their opposition. Next, Gandhi threatened to undercut the Marathi leaders by creating new nationalist leaders in the Marathi region and by drawing into nationalist agitation groups who owned the leadership of these men rather than the leadership of the older established nationalists. Gandhi then used the new leaders and their followers to launch agitation against the government in the Marathi region. These moves had the desired effect. The Marathi leaders, faced with the loss of their political leadership and nationalist reputation, threw in their lot with Gandhi but only to show that his movement would not advance the cause of self government for India.

This study also bears witness to the political eclipse of the Marathi nationalists between 1919 and 1939. The eclipse occurred in the first instance because the
Marathi leaders refused to link their political fortunes with those of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. As we have seen, in 1921 the Marathi nationalists took part in non-cooperation despite their opposition to Gandhi. In succeeding years, however, they pressed for the abolition of non-cooperation in favour of agitation in the councils. And after the Congress permitted them to enter the councils, the Marathi leaders led the van of those who desired to accept office in the government. The Congress, however, refused to sanction the acceptance of office, and the Marathi leaders formed the Responsive Cooperation party to facilitate that course of action.

From 1927 onwards the Responsivists undertook a wide range of political activities, but they were unable to win the permanent sympathy of the electorate. These activities included the formation of ministries, and the launching of a campaign of civil disobedience against the government. The Responsivists also led moves to influence the shape of the proposed constitution for India, and associated themselves strongly with the work of organisations such as the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. These activities, however, could not rival those in which Congressmen were engaged at the same time, namely the campaigns of civil disobedience and Harijan reform. Through these campaigns Congressmen captured the imagination of the electorate and swept to victory at the elections to the Legislative Assembly in 1937.

By 1939 the political eclipse of the Marathi leaders in their own region was virtually complete. In 1938 the Working Committee dispossessed Dr Khare of his
Premiership and assisted a Hindi ministry to come to power in Nagpur. In so doing the Committee took the government of the Marathi region out of Marathi hands. Consequently many Marathi leaders withdrew from the Congress and gave their sympathy or outright support to the Hindu Mahasabha. In so doing they further lessened the possibility of their playing an effective part in the political life of the Marathi region.

A study of political developments in the Central Provinces and Berar between 1919 and 1939 clearly demonstrates that people responded in increasing numbers to each of the successive rounds of agitation launched by Gandhi. The first agitation - the Rowlatt Satyagraha - aroused the interest of very few people because the Marathi nationalists opposed the agitation, and because the lower classes had not yet been drawn into the nationalist movement. The people of the Central Provinces and Berar responded much more enthusiastically to Gandhi's call for a movement of non-cooperation in 1921. They did so because Gandhi used representative leaders to win the support of the middle classes, the merchants and the lower classes in the towns and countryside. Support for the agitation was greatest in the towns of the Central Provinces and Berar, and it was there that the agitation provided the government with its most severe challenge. This was affirmed in a note by the Chief Secretary of the province in 1921:

There is no gainsaying the fact that conditions have changed....A few years ago the deliberate disregard of law and order was unknown. Today there is ample evidence to show that it counts for little and that the people are ready to
resort to mob violence....The masses have now learnt their power. It has been clearly proved that we have only been able to restore order by a display of force....I am of opinion that simultaneous trouble at different centres is likely to occur.1

This prognosis proved correct, for between 1930 and 1934 the people of the Central Provinces and Berar responded magnificently to Gandhi's call to launch civil disobedience against the government. Like the campaign of non-cooperation, the campaign of civil disobedience inflamed people in the urban areas against the government. But unlike the campaign of non-cooperation, civil disobedience also drew the population of rural areas into the struggle against the government on a massive scale. With what success can be judged from an official description of the rural scene between 1930 and 1933:

Meanwhile the Congress leaders and other extremists, who meant real business, saw their opportunity and hastened to spread the movement into the villages by appeals to the cupidity and ignorance of the villagers and aboriginal inhabitants of the jungles. A serious situation was created. In the circumstances, Government had no alternative but to accept the challenge or abdicate, and from this moment found itself up against mass action by ignorant dupes, inflamed by every sort of misrepresentation. At the same time, strenuous attempts were made to disturb the morale of the police and to tamper with the loyalty of the troops.2

1 MSN, Police, 1-1, 1922, Increase in the Special Armed Force in the Central Provinces, Note by K.W. Deighton, 26 May 1921.
The progressive enlargement of the scope and intensity of nationalist agitation in the Central Provinces and Berar compelled the government to use increasingly extreme measures to control the situation. In 1919 the government quietly tided over the Rowlatt Satyagraha because so few people participated in the agitation. The government's response to the movement of non-cooperation, however, was much more extreme. To control the agitation, the authorities arrested the major leaders and some of their assistants; suspended the liquor auctions; imposed punitive police on troubled areas; prohibited assembly and on one occasion at least ordered the police to fire and called in the army.

Between 1930 and 1933 the government used even more lethal weapons to quell nationalist agitation. During that period, the authorities imposed ordinances to suppress the agitation. Under these ordinances they arrested all grades of leaders and imposed on them huge fines and lengthy sentences of imprisonment. Under the same ordinances the authorities also arrested volunteers in great numbers; restricted assembly; imposed censorship of the press; confiscated the buildings and funds of nationalist organisations; closed down educational institutions; and to control the rural disturbances restored to arrests, lathi charges, whipping and firing.

Although these latter penalties were imposed by the government of Sir Montagu Butler, that Governor made a more positive contribution to the Central Provinces and Berar than any other Governor between 1919 and 1939. Butler held office from 1925 until 1933, a period which partly coincided with the period of the Montagu-
Chelmsford Reforms. During this period the political life of the province gave evidence of great instability as a result of regional rivalries and the proliferation of 'parties' in the legislature. This instability would assuredly have brought political life in the province to a standstill, had it not been for Sir Montagu Butler. The latter created political stability by associating the important regions with the government - as for instance Berar, in the appointment of Tambe as Home Member in 1925. Butler also created stability by drawing into the government men like Raghavendra Rao, who had 'both the desire for power and the ability to get it'.\footnote{NML, Rao MS, The Honourable E. Raghavendra Rao - A Pen Portrait, by Cover Point.} Again, Butler ensured stability by refusing to form governments that were themselves unstable. By these means, Butler created efficient government in the Central Provinces and Berar at a critical period in its history. By these means, Butler also helped the province to pass from control by British officials to control by an Indian government under the constitution of 1935.
Appendix A

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF LEADING NATIONALISTS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR 1919-1939

I. A Note on Mahakoshal by Seth Govind Das.

The fourteen Hindi speaking districts of the British province of Central Provinces were known as Mahakoshal or Dakshina Koshal for a longer period of ancient Indian history than the ancient names of many other provinces of India. The Ramayana and Sanskrit drama Tatnavali expressly mention it...The name closely shows that this part of India was closely connected with Koshal proper or Uttar Koshal, the present province of Oudh, where Rama ruled in ancient times....Mahakoshal is mentioned in the inscription of Samudra Gupta on the well known pillar in the fort of Allahabad as one of the countries conquered by that famous emperor of the Gupta dynasty in or about 340 A.D. But the fullest account of Mahakoshal available to us is by the famous Chinese pilgrim Hieun Tsang who visited India in the times of the Emperor Harsha in the middle of the seventh century....The limits of the then Mahakoshal coincided with the present Central Provinces Hindi (region)....We know from the pilgrim's itinerary that it must have been bounded by Ujjain on the north, by Maharashstra on the west, by Orissa on the east and by

* NML, AICC, 242, 1931, H. Vyas, secretary MPCC to Secretary AICC, 21 October 1931.
Andhra and Kalinga on the south....It seems that though the boundaries of Mahakoshal were shrinking, yet the name survived in the south of the province in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The thirteenth century witnessed a strange event....While in northern India, the Pathans were busy defending their territories against the invading Moghuls, the Gonds rose to power and, subverting the Rajput supremacy, built up three kingdoms with their headquarters in the districts of Jabalpur, Chhindwara and Betul. Henceforward Mahakoshal became Gondwana....The Gonds gave place to the Marathas who in their turn were ousted by the British. The name Central Provinces was conferred in 1861....(It is) meaningless and the adjective added by Congress has by no means improved it. Hence in 1930 the Provincial Congress Committee after careful consideration decided to go back to the time honoured name of Mahakoshal and (the) Provincial Political conference in the same year enthusiastically adopted it....Motilal Nehru used it when in 1930 he granted permission to the President of its Provincial Congress Committee to start forest satyagraha....The name is a household word by now and the newspapers in the province freely use it.
2. Four Notes by Dr B.S. Moonje


But from your letter I feel - rather I am afraid - that time is fast approaching when perhaps it will be made impossible for the two parts of the province to work in harmony together....I protest strongly against the view...that whatever is done in Nagpur is done in the dark....If we surrender ourselves to the passing sentiments of the people then what is the use of our taking part in the politics of the province?


(At) the Kayande school,...I addressed the students on the philosophy and methods of politics of Lokamanya and Mahatma Gandhi. I based my whole speech on two schools of thought which have been in existence in India from time immemorial....If Mahatmaji could be likened to persons like Shukaracharya, Lokamanya could be likened to...Shree Krishna. Accordingly a boycott of British and not foreign goods and non payment of taxes based on the philosophy of passive resistance was the political weapon of Tilak, so boycott of foreign and not British goods and civil disobedience based on the philosophy of love and non violence are the weapons of Mahatma Gandhi.... Consequently the Mahatma is the only person who could conceive of writing in his ultimatum to Lord Reading that he is not frightened of a Pathan invasion, because
he said he will conquer the Pathans by love. To the Lokamanya it could never occur to speak in this language;... Gandhi is inspired by the utopian aspiration of establishing the kingdom of love over the whole world and therefore does not understand politics and swaraj for India....The Lokamanya is above all a scientific practicalist as the Mahatma is a hopeful idealist....There is not any comparison between the two; both are great in their own ways.

(iii) **Linguistic states** - NLI, Moonje MS, Diary 4, 22 October 1931.

Personally I am opposed to the idea. I do not want that India should be divided into small groups as Europe was....No Maharashtrian has ever agitated for it. The Maharashtra still maintains its imperialistic mind and believes that the whole of India is one and belongs to it. But if all others would like to have their separate provinces, then Maharashtra, too, would like to be brought into one province.

(iv) **The vocation of Maharashtra** - NLI, Moonje MS, Letter Pad 63, B.S. Moonje to Maharain Sahib, c. 9 August 1931.

In fact I wish to make Maharashtra the centre of the military regeneration of the Hindus of India....The whole Hindu community of India still looks up to Maharashtra to take the lead....Besides the past history of Maharashtra, the thing that...appeals to them to look up to the Maharashtra for support in guidance in their search for protection against Muslim aggression is
the example set by the late Lokamanya Tilak which is being followed with such efficiency....by his disciples including my humble self....The flag of Shree Shivajee must be held up and it can not be better done under present circumstances than by establishing a military school and a centre of military training and education.
As soon as I was free, I started hearing all sorts of rumours about efforts being made by my political enemies to implicate me. I did not pay any attention as I thought the whole thing too far fetched to be believed....On 8 June I left for Piparia to attend the provincial political conference....As days passed, rumours thickened that for political reasons I was going to be dragged and that the police were tutoring the girl. I remained still indifferent....On 3 inst. I was called to the city kotwali on the pretext that I could give the police some information. I went....Five other persons were mixed with me. A veiled female was brought and asked to catch the hand of Mishraji of Gopalbagh. The female form hesitatingly raised her finger towards me without a word and did not touch me, although insisted upon by the police. Thus the identification was over....My arrest...may follow any day (and)...will be only too welcome to me as it would give me an opportunity to clear up my character....It would be superfluous to assure you that I am perfectly innocent.

I have not the least doubt that the whole thing has been fabricated with political motives by my political enemies placed high in provincial government....I must tell you that since 1926 I have fought against Raghavendra Rao's dirty politics with the consistency and vehemence which no other political worker has shown in the whole of CP and Berar. He has persecuted me with equal zeal and consistency....In 1926 his hirelings

raised legal objections against my even becoming a voter for the Indian Legislative Assembly....Ultimately I was elected....In 1932 when I was arrested, I was deprived of my clothes and taken naked to Akola jail all the way from Jubbulpore....In 1934 I was almost the only congress candidate...whose disqualification...the Governor General refused to remove. Later on when the question was raised on the floor of the Indian Legislative Assembly the government admitted that this step was taken in accordance with the advice of CP government....Subsequently I was removed from my office of President of Jubbulpore municipality in a most high handed and illegal manner by the provincial government.

As regards the present motives I need not say much. The whole thing is crystal clear. Even some high placed government officials have privately told me what is meant ....I have no right to speak for myself....I have never cared for municipal presidentship or a ministership. I have faith in myself and I have always believed that I am destined for better honours in the service of my motherland than for these ephemeral and insignificant positions....(I) hope truth will triumph.
4. A Note by Shri R.M. Deshmukh on the Berar revenue dispute and the Khare 'crisis'*

Ever since Berar was joined to impoverished C.P. administration in 1904 instead of Bombay administration (with which at least the four Districts of Berar, viz. Amraoti, Yeotmal, Akola and Buldana, had great affinity), Berar was dissatisfied. When (a) legislature under (the) Morely-Minto reforms was granted to these districts, it formed a forum wherein the then distinguished leaders of Berar, viz. Shri M.V. Joshi..., Shri R.N. Mudholker, Shri Y.G. Deshpande and others...kept expressing their dissatisfaction....This was mainly to record their protest against unfair treatment to Berar caused by diversion of the surplus funds from these four districts to the needs of (the) impoverished administration of C.P. A certain modicum of such diversion was not unexpected, because the joining of Berar to C.P. instead of to Bombay was a deliberate step to lend support to (the) crumbling finances of C.P. But when this was carried on to the extent of starving the Berar districts of their primary and essential needs, e.g. roads or grants to educational institutions, the discrimination between these four districts and the rest of the districts of then C.P. became too obvious to tolerate with patience. Please note that this was no Hindi-Marathi dispute. In this matter the four Marathi districts of Wardha, Nagpur, Bhandara and Chanda always sided with Hindi districts of old CP.

* Sent to the writer from Amravati, d. 15/6 January 1968.
This dissatisfaction of Berar was carried over to the period of Montagu-Chelmsford reforms also. The proceedings of the legislature during the period...(from) 1920 onwards will be found replete with disputations. It, however, did not take the shape of Hindi-Marathi dispute. During this period, you will no doubt have observed that a formula of allocation of monies to the two disputants, (viz. Sim Formula) was evolved by 1923 and came to be applied by 1924.

Thereafter the form of disputation changed. Old C.P. always was hostile to the arrangement and was bent upon resisting it at every step and defeating it as far as possible....In fact you will find this formula, which was to allocate certain funds on a 60:40 basis to C.P. and Berar was never fully given effect to. The nearest it came to being effective was when I became a minister in 1927-28 and 1928-29 to 30, when it reached a proportion (speaking from memory) of 63:37 or thereabouts. Every debate during budget sessions will bear ample evidence of this acrimonious disputation.

Not only that but later on this process gave rise to the Berar members asking for a sub-province. A provision for this existed in the then constitution. And debates on resolutions were fairly desperate. One such resolution you will find was moved by me - when I was not in office - I think in 1928-29. The C.P. members by this time were so desperate that they voted the resolution for separation of Berar, and an amendment to that effect moved by me was adopted unanimously by the house.
When in 1937 Dr Khare's ministry came in, this tendency on the part of the old C.P. members assumed an aggressive form and they openly claimed that Sim Formula had lapsed with the coming in of the new constitution. Hot words were exchanged at a cabinet meeting held for formulation of the budget, and intemperate Late Shri Ravi Shanker Shukla literally threw away my note prepared for discussion and clarification in respect of the application of the Sim Formula. On this I...resigned and handed over my resignation to Dr Khare. This matter, however, was amicably settled by Dr Khare making certain concessions and directing Late Pandit Shukla to express regrets for his unbecoming action at the Cabinet meeting. You will please observe that at this stage it was no Hindi-Marathi matter and even Mr Gole had not felt it necessary to join me in resigning.

Even in 1938 when the Dr Khare crisis came on, it was no Hindi-Marathi matter. In fact I negotiated between Dr Khare on one hand and Late Pandit Shukla and Pandit D.P. Mishra on the other hand, with a view to prevent a break up in the ministry. You will be interested to know that the first news of the approaching break up was disclosed to me not by Dr Khare or Gole, but by Shri D.P. Mishra, and when I asked Shri Mishra to give me some time to find a way to tide over the difficulty and not to take precipitate action, he agreed to hold his hands. I thereupon communicated this to Dr Khare, who refused to believe me in the first instance that Mr Mishra might be contemplating such a step and did not actually believe it until Mr Gole, having been
approached by Mr Mishra, later confirmed what I had already told Dr Khare.

On being thus convinced Dr Khare asked me to reduce the whole lot of events during these two or three days to writing. Because in the meanwhile I had had long discussions with prominent Hindi-side members of the party trying to convince them that the break up will not lead to any good either for us individually or to the Congress party, or to the smooth working of the province as a whole. The account of all this Dr Khare desired to have from me as he wished to arm himself with full and authentic facts in order to be able to put his position before the Congress High Command at their meeting to which the C.P. Ministers were all invited.

At this meeting the President of Congress, Late Shri Subash Chandra Bose, took this letter of mine and read it out to all present. It was admitted by members who were in opposition to Dr Khare as being - to say in their own words - as a 'more than fair account of events as they had occurred at Pachmarhi.' So much so, that the High Command thereupon agreed that they had all the basic information about the crisis and asked us to appear the next morning to hear their decision. The decision announced to us by the spokesman of High Command (Late Pandit Jawarhalal Nehru) was that they had decided to refer the matter to the party.

On being asked for comments, I had expressed that this decision was not right and should be revised while there was yet time to do so. Nobody else from amongst the ministers offered any comments at that meeting. On
being asked, I explained that by and large the party was not affected by the virus that had poisoned the relations of ministers who were members of the ministry. This decision is a clean order to go back and infect the friends and members of the ministers with the poison that rankled in the hearts of the six of us, who then were members of the ministry. The party would therefore I said never work happily or smoothly in this province and this evil must be avoided.

Thereupon I was asked by Late Nehru as to what was my solution in the matter. I offered this in reply that all the six ministers should be asked to resign without assigning any blame to any individual, but on the general ground that the High Command had constituted the ministry as a joint responsibility ministry, and since it had failed to achieve that objective, the ministry is asked to resign. This obviously was a face saving device. Further I told the High Command that any other six members from the party should be constituted into a fresh ministry, for which I maintained there was enough talent available in the party and I assured them that the party will support them as effectively as they had done this ministry. Unfortunately this solution was not accepted and after some quick thinking, Late Shri Nehru said that 'there was much in what I said,' but he concluded by saying that 'now we have taken the decision and so it would stand'.

It might interest you to know that this was just a few months in advance of the Congress session at Tripuri at Jabalpore. A crisis was then brewing in the High Command itself and not very long after this Late
Shri Subash Bose defied the High Command and defeated the official Congress candidate who was to preside over the Tripuri Session. Such a conclusion is permissible that High Command were not unmindful of the fact that Shukla and Mishra were more useful in making Tripuri Congress a success which the High Command expected it to be, and therefore the atmosphere at Wardha meeting which decided the fate of Dr Khare's ministry was loaded against him and in favour of Shukla-Mishra. This became open and apparent in the manner in which these proceedings were conducted.

It might help you to see my own part in the correct perspective, if I note at this stage that at this time I had belonged to the party known as Responsivist party. In order to avoid fight at the general elections of 1936, Congress and Responsivists entered into an election compromise, by virtue of which the Responsivists had undertaken to stand at the elections of 1936-37 on Congress tickets and to keep themselves amendable to the Congress party's decision for the purpose of work within the legislature or connected with the legislature. But in no other respects had the Responsivists accepted jurisdiction of Congress party or of the Provincial Congress Committee of Berar. Thus my half-way house position in the party had arisen out of these circumstances. I was variously treated as a Congressman but not a full one, and was on occasions trusted or distrusted by both Hindi as well as Dr Khare's wings of the Marathi members in the party. This will explain to you why I was in a position to speak to both wings with some authority and some effectiveness.
Things took Hindi-Marathi turn when High Command referred the dispute to the party. It was as a canvassing expedient adopted by Hindi districts members and feebly reciprocated by Marathi districts. Obviously it was in the interest of majority (i.e. Hindi districts) to adopt this slogan; after all Marathis were a minority and it was not in their interest to raise a dispute on that basis....

It now remains for me to explain as to the raison d'être for the crisis....The beginnings of the crisis lie deeply rooted in the Hindu-Muslim rioting that had taken place at Jabalpore after the ministry took office. You should realise that Mr D.P. Mishra, a capable colleague, belongs to Jabalpore and was elected also from the city. As an aftermath of these riots, police investigations traced certain friends and supporters of Mr Mishra to have been involved. They were interrogated during investigations and Mr Mishra claimed that they were harassed and molested by the police. He considered it a point of his prestige and his honour that his friends and supporters should receive such a treatment. His desire was that all investigation in which his friends might be found, rightly or wrongly, involved should stop at once, otherwise his entire position as a politician in Jabalpore would be completely undermined. This, Dr Khare who was in charge of Police portfolio could not agree to, as, in his view, that would demoralise the Police administration and sabotage police investigation.

I had, however, suggested that before launching of prosecutions, all the papers of investigations would be sent for and since Government had the power to refuse to
prosecute any person or a case, we may not, at our discretion prosecute Mr Mishra's friends if deemed fit. This did not prove acceptable to Mr Mishra and from that point onwards, Mr Mishra insisted that the police Department must be taken away from Dr Khare and given over to Late Pandit Ravi Shanker Shukla.

During the period of the wrangle that ensued, Dr M.S. Aney who was then an all-India leader of the Responsivist party intervened, and since I was standing at the half way house, and treated as such by both wings, it was offered as a solution that I should hold the Police Department, if that would offer a solution and resolve the crisis. Personally I heartily abhorred the idea, but yielded if that could avert the crisis. This idea was put to Dr Khare, who appeared agreeable to it, if that solved the crisis, but Shri D.P. Mishra interposed by an excuse that even if he were agreeable, his friend, the Late Ravi Shanker Shukla, would not accept it. So far as I remember, Pandit Shukla had not said a thing, nor, I believe the idea had been put to him. When Mr Mishra, as the most effective and dominant partner of the combine had rejected it, it was scarcely any use putting it to Late Pandit Shukla. So the matter remained dropped there.
I was elected Prime minister in C.P. and Berar and formed (a) ministry on 14 July 1937. (The) ministry functioned well or smoothly for a few months. But the bilingualism of this province and Sardar Patel's secret hostility against me had their effect after all and the conspiracy to oust me was hatched at the Haripura Congress held in early 1938. Sardar Patel was an important entity in Congress organisation, and this fact influenced other Congress leaders also against me. My Mahakoshal colleagues who were not very friendly towards each other, seeing the attitude of the congress high command towards me became united and took this opportunity to conspire against me and oust me from office. I was suspicious about the honesty and integrity of some of my colleagues and I was holding an informal enquiry against some of them.

T.J. Kedar, my friend and legal adviser, advised me not to take any hasty action but to consult Mahatma Gandhi in this matter. Accordingly I sent a letter to Mahatma Gandhi... during the summer of 1938 and requested him to grant me an interview so that I may place the relevant facts before him. Mahatma Gandhi promptly replied to my letter and fixed 12 June 1938 as a date for interview. I placed all the facts before him and also showed him some papers. Mahatma Gandhi saw all the papers... with close attention and... expressed profuse sympathy for me. Before leaving him I made a verbal

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5. An Extract from a Note by Dr N.B. Khare*

This note was given to the writer in Nagpur in 1967.
request to grant me another interview in this connection in about a fortnight which Mahatma Gandhi conceded with pleasure. Accordingly I went to see him on 29 June 1938 at Sevagram. During this interview I showed him a letter which I had got intercepted. This created suspicion about D.P. Mishra my colleague in the ministry....Wonder of wonders the Mahatma suddenly became angry at me after seeing this letter and reprimanded me for troubling him every time in such matters, saying that he had no concern with these matters as he was not even a four-anna member of the Congress.

I was amazed at the surprising change in the Mahatma's mental attitude towards me. I was also angry and irritated....I knew that he was the creator and the dictator of the congress working committee and that I came to see him fully conscious of his capacity. I asked him whether he met Sardar Patel between 12 June and 29 June 1938. The Mahatma replied that Sardar Patel was at Sevagram on 21 June 1938. On this I realised the cause of the change of front in the Mahatma. I told (him)...that I was thoroughly disillusioned. Further I told him that in this matter I would now take such action as would be prompted by my inner voice which was as powerful as his.

After some days the situation of the ministry became worse and I decided to end my ministry. I requested all my colleagues to tender their resignations to me. Both my Maharashtrian colleagues...sent their resignations to me; but all the three Mahakoshal colleagues...went to Wardha and met Shri Rajendra Prasad a member of the parliamentary sub-committee and got a
letter from him asking them not to tender their
resignations even when demanded by...me....This will show
who were involved in the conspiracy against me....

I had no desire to continue my association with
some of my colleagues, whom I distrusted; therefore I
had no alternative but to place the resignations of
myself and my two Maharashtrian colleagues before the
Governor. The Governor, Sir Francis Wylie, advised the
Mahakoshal ministers to follow the democratic convention
and tender their resignations to the leader but they
flatly refused. Democratically, therefore, the Governor
had no alternative but to accept the resignations of the
three Maharashtrian ministers and terminate the tenure
of office of the three Mahakoshal ministers. The
Governor had this power under article 51 of the 1935 Act
and there was no question of using his special power....

Under the law, the Governor could not carry on the
administration of the Province without a ministry.
Therefore, he had again to send for me and request me to
assist him in the formation of another ministry because
I was still the leader of the majority party. Accordingly
I formed another ministry under the auspices of the
Congress and under its programme and principle. I did
not do anything wrong by taking the step under the
democratic convention. Yet without any enquiry on which
I insisted, the Congress working committee compelled me
to resign my office. This amounted to virtual dismissal.
Appendix B

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF SOME LEADING POLITICIANS
OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR, 1919-1939

1. Moreshwar Abhyanker 1882-1935

b. Dhanodi Bahadur, Wardha, 1882; educated Dhanodi Bahadur, Neill City High School Nagpur, Morris College; law studies in England 1904-9; Bar-at-law 1909; admitted Nagpur Bar 1909; member Nationalist party of Tilak 1910; member Home Rule League 1916; member Rashtriya Mandal 1916; member Reception Committee Nagpur Congress 1920; participated non-cooperation 1921; resumed legal practice 1923; Swarajist member Nagpur division Central Legislative Assembly 1924-6; founded Tarun Bharat with Dr Khare 1925; recognised President official PCC 1927-8; participated civil disobedience 1930-3; Congress member division of Nagpur Central Legislative Assembly 1934; d. 1935.

2. Madhao Shrihari Aney 1880-1968

b. 1880; educated Morris College; teacher Kashibai High School Amravati 1904-7; admitted Yeotmal Bar 1908; Vice-president Home Rule League, founder-President Yeotmal branch Home Rule League 1916; founded Yeotmal District Association 1916; President Berar PCC 1921-30; member Working Committee 1924-25; Swarajist member Central Legislative Assembly 1924-5; Responsivist member Central Legislative Assembly 1926-9; Vice-president Responsive Cooperation party 1926-37; participated civil disobedience 1930; member Berar All-Parties Committee 1931; member Working Committee 1931-4; President Indian National Congress 1933; General Secretary Congress Nationalist party 1933--; Congress Nationalist member Central Legislative Assembly 1934; member Nagpur University Court from 1935; member Viceroy's Executive Council (Indians overseas) 1941-3; Representative, Government of India in Ceylon 1943-7; member Constituent Assembly 1947-8; Governor Bihar 1948--; member Lok Sabha; d. 1968 (?)
3. **Jamnalal Bajaj 1889-1942**

b. Kashi-ka-bas, Sikar Principality, Jaipur 1889; adopted by Seth Bachraj of Wardha 1894; educated Wardha 1896-1900; stepfather died 1907; met Gandhi 1915; President Reception Committee Nagpur Congress 1920; participated non-cooperation 1921-2; leader Nagpur Flag Satyagraha 1923; Chairman All-India Khaddar Board 1923; Treasurer All-India Spinning Association 1925; President do. 1927-34; member AICC and Working Committee; Secretary Anti-Untouchability Sub-Committee 1929; participated civil disobedience 1930-3; President All-India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan 1937; led Jaipur Satyagraha 1939; d. 11 February 1942.

4. **Brijlal Biyani 1896-**

b. 1896; educated Morris College; participated non-cooperation 1921-2; Congress member CPLC 1927-9; participated civil disobedience 1930-3; President Berar PCC 1931; Congress member Council of State 1934-39; member Constituent Assembly 1947-8. Also founded Berar Chamber of Commerce; member Nagpur University Executive Committee, President All-India Marwari Sammelan, and Vice-President Municipal Committee Akola.

5. **Seth Govind Das 1896-**

b. 1896; educated privately; joined Congress 1920; President Provincial Hindi Sahitya Sammelan 1920; participated non-cooperation 1921-2; Swarajist member, Landholders' constituency, Central Legislative Assembly 1924-5; Swarajist and Congress member Council of State 1925-9; participated civil disobedience 1930-3; Congress member Central Legislative Assembly 1934-9; Chairman Reception Committee Tripuri Congress 1939; President MPCC 1946; member Constituent Assembly 1947-8; President Provincial Hindi Sahitya Sammelan 1947; President All-India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan 1948; Leader Commonwealth Parliamentary Delegation New Zealand 1949; member provisional Parliament India 1950-1; member Lok Sabha 1951; President All-India Marwari Federation 1954; First President MPCC, reorganised Madhya Pradesh 1957.
6. **Punjabrao Shamrao Deshmukh 1896-?**

b. 1896; educated Fergusson College, Poona; Dunlop Research Scholar M.A. (Edinburgh), Ph.D. (Oxon); Bar-at-law 1925; founded Shetkari Sangh 1926; Chairman Amravati District Council 1928-30; member Amravati CPLC 1930-6; Minister PWD and Agriculture 1930-3; Chairman Cooperative Central Bank, Amravati 1934-41; member Nagpur University Court 1935-7; President Shivaji Education Society Amravati from 1937; member Committee of Ministers of the Chamber of Princes 1942-6; President Kurmi Kshatriya Sabha 1944; member Executive Council 1945; member PCC 1947-8; 1950; member Constituent Assembly 1947-8; member Indian delegation FAO conferences, 1948, 1951, 1953; member Executive Committee Congress Parliamentary party 1950-1; member Central Advisory Board of Education 1950; member Lok Sabha 1951; Minister for Agriculture, Government of India 1952-7; Minister Cooperation Government of India 1957-8; President World Agricultural Fair 1959-60. Also F.R.S.A. (London) and Chairman of Cotton Marketing and State Trading Committees.

7. **Ramrao Madhavrao Deshmukh 1892-**

b. 1892; educated Cambridge 1913-6, M.A., LL.B.; Bar-at-law 1917; President All-India Maratha Conference 1917; legal practice Amravati and Nagpur 1918-20; member CPLC 1921-3; member AICC 1921-7; Swarajist member CPLC 1924-5; President Greater Maharashtra Conference 1925; Responsivist member Central Legislative Assembly 1926; Chairman Amravati District Council 1926; Responsivist member CPLC; Minister LSG 1927-8; Minister for Agriculture 1929-30; Witness Joint Parliamentary Commission on Indian Constitutional Reform 1933; Chairman Democratic Swaraj party 1935-5; Adviser Raja of Sandur 1935-6; Congress member CPBLA 1937-9; Minister for Public Works 1937-8; Minister for Finance second Khare ministry 1938; Political Minister Dewas Junior 1939; member Viceroy's National Defence Council with responsibility for C.P. and Berar, 1940-4; Finance Minister Gwalior 1941-4; Indian High Commissioner in South Africa 1945-7; member Indian Delegation
7. Ramrao Madhavrao Deshmukh 1892- (continued)
UNO 1946; Prime Minister Rewa and Adviser Rajpramukh Vindhya Pradesh 1947-8; President United Maharashtra Conference 1948; Director Central Board Reserve Bank 1949-52; member Rajya Sabha 1952.

8. Purshottam Balwant Gole 1886-?
b. 1886; educated Bombay, B.A., LL.B.; admitted Akola Bar 1912; member Home Rule League 1916; participated in non-cooperation 1921-2; Congress member CPLC 1927-9; President Akola Municipal Committee 1928-31; participated civil disobedience 1930-3; Congress member CPBLA; Minister for Revenue 1937-8; Minister for Revenue second Khare ministry 1938. Also Chairman Central Bank Akola, and President Bar Association Akola.

b. 1880; educated Deccan College, Poona, and Bombay, B.A., LL.B.; admitted Amravati Bar; member Home Rule League 1916; Vice-chairman Amravati Municipal Committee; participated non-cooperation 1921; Swarajist member CPLC 1924-5; member Responsive Cooperation party 1926; Responsivist member CPLC 1926-37; Leader Nationalist 'party' CPLC 1928-37; Leader of the Opposition CPLC 1930-4; Minister for Education 1934-6; Minister Government of Central Provinces and Berar 1937; member CPBLA 1937-9; d. 1969.

10. Ganesh Shrikrishna Khaparde 1854-1938
b. Hingoli, Hyderabad 1854; educated Berar, Bombay, B.A., LL.B.; Extra Assistant Commissioner Berar 1885-9; admitted Amravati Bar 1889; Vice-chairman of Amravati Municipal Committee and Chairman of Amravati District Board; attended Madras Congress as a follower of Tilak 1895; Chairman Reception Committee Amravati Congress 1897; member Subjects Committee Banaras Congress 1905; member Tilak's Nationalist party 1907; President Bombay Provincial
10. Ganesh Shrikrishna Khaparde 1854-1938 (continued)

Conference 1916; member Home Rule League 1916; member Imperial Legislative Council; member Congress-Home Rule League delegation to England 1919; member Council of State 1920-9; opposed non-cooperation and civil disobedience; d.1938.

11. Narayan Bhaskar Khare 1882-

b. 1882 at Nere near Panvel, Kolaba district, Bombay; migrated to Jabalpur 1896; educated Hitkarini High School and Government College Jabalpur; Medical College Lahore, M.B., 1903-7; CP Medical Service 1907-16; Lahore Medical College, M.D., 1913; private medical practice Nagpur 1916; member Rashtriya Mandal and Home Rule League 1916; member Reception Committee Nagpur Congress 1920; participated non-cooperation 1921; Swarajist member CPLC 1924-6; Congress member CPLC 1927-9; participated civil disobedience 1930-1; participated Harijan campaign 1933; President Nagpur PCC 1935-8; Congress member Central Legislative Assembly 1934-6; Congress member CPBLA 1937-8; Leader Congress Parliamentary party 1937-8; Premier Central Provinces and Berar 1937-8; suspended as member Indian National Congress 1938; member Viceroy's Executive Council (department Commonwealth Relations) 1943-6; Prime Minister Alwar 1947-8; member Constituent Assembly 1947-8; President All-India Hindu Mahasabha 1949-52; Hindu Mahasabha member Lok Sabha for Gwalior.

12. Durgashanker Kripashankar Mehta 1887-?

b. Hoshangabad 1887; educated Sagar, Government College Jabalpur, B.A.; Allahabad LL.B.; admitted Seoni Bar, then began practice in Jabalpur; participated non-cooperation 1921; President Seoni DCC 1921; President Municipal Committee Seoni 1922-3; participated Nagpur Flag Satyagraha 1923; Congress member CPLC 1927-9 1930-3 participated civil disobedience; Congress member CPBLA 1937-9; Minister for Finance 1937-8, 1938-9; Minister Commerce and Industry, MP Government 1952.
13. Dwarka Prasad Mishra 1901-

b. 1901; educated Raipur, Kanpur, Allahabad and Jabalpur; participated non-cooperation 1921-2; editor Sharda 1922; law studies 1924-6; Congress member Central Legislative Assembly 1927-9; editor Lokmat Jabalpur 1930; participated civil disobedience 1930-3; President Jabalpur Municipal Committee 1932, 1934, 1936; Congress member CPBLA 1937-9; Minister for Local Self Government 1937-8, 1938-9; Editor Sarathi 1941-2; Home Minister Government of Madhya Pradesh 1946; Vice-Chancellor Sagar University 1956; Chief Minister Madhya Pradesh 1963-7.

14. Balkrishna Shivaram Moonje 1872-1949 (?)

b. Bilaspur 1872; educated Bilaspur, Raipur, Hislop College Nagpur; graduated Grant Medical College Bombay 1898; Medical Service Bombay Corporation 1898-9; Medical Officer South Africa (Boer War) 1900-1; Private Practice Nagpur 1901; became a follower of Tilak c.1906; member Tilak's Nationalist party 1907; President Home Rule League Nagpur 1916; member Reception Committee Nagpur Congress 1920; participated non-cooperation 1921; President CP Marathi PCC 1921-7; Swarajist member CPLC 1924-5; Leader CPLC Swaraj party 1924-5; member Responsive Cooperation party 1926; Responsivist member Central Legislative Assembly 1927-30; Working President Hindu Mahasabha 1927-34; Hindu Mahasabha delegate Round Table Conferences and constitutional discussions in London 1930-4; President Maharashtra Provincial Conference 1937; founded Bhonsla Military School Nasik 1937; d. 1949 (?)

15. Poonamchand Ranka 1889-

b. 1889; adopted by Shambhuraji Ranka of Nagpur; merchant, cloth shop Nagpur 1910-20; participated non-cooperation 1921; participated Flag Satyagraha 1923; member Nagpur PCC; participated civil disobedience 1930-3; social work Nagpur.
16. E. Raghavendra Rao 1889-1942

b. 1889; educated Bilaspur, Hislop College; studied law Oxford 1909-14; joined Middle Temple 1914; admitted Bilaspur Bar 1914; first non-official President Bilaspur Municipal Committee 1916-27; Chairman District Council Bilaspur 1917; participated non-cooperation 1921; President CP Hindi PCC 1921-3; Swarajist member CPLC 1924-6; Leader Hindi Swaraj party CPLC 1924-6; founded Independent Congress 'party' 1926; member CPLC 1927-36; Chief Minister CP and Berar 1927-8; 1928-9; Home Member CP and Berar 1930-7; Acting Governor CP and Berar 1936; Premier CP and Berar 1937; Leader of the Opposition CPBLA 1937-9; Adviser Secretary of State London 1939; member Viceroy's Executive Council in charge of Civil Defence 1941; d. New Delhi 15 June 1942.

17. Ravi Shankar Shukla 1887-195?

b. Sagar 1887; educated Raipur, Hislop College Nagpur, Law College Jabalpur, B.A., LL.B.; teacher Hislop College, Hitkarini High School; Head Master Khairagarh High School; tutor to Chiefs of Bastar, Kavardha and Khairagarh 1902-5; admitted Raipur Bar 1909; President Kanya Kabja Sabha Raipur; member Raipur Municipal Committee; leader nationalist movement Chhattisgarh 1915-9; participated non-cooperation 1921; Chairman Raipur District Council 1921-39; Swarajist member CPLC 1924-6; member Independent Congress 'party' 1926; member CP Hindi PCC 1929; participated civil disobedience 1930-3; President Mahakoshal PCC 1934; member CPBLA 1937-9; Minister for Education Khare ministry 1937-8; Premier Central Provinces and Berar 1938-9; participated civil disobedience 1940-2; jailed 1942-5; Chief Minister Madhya Pradesh 1946; founded Nagpur Times 1946; Chancellor Sagar University 1949.

18. Bishnu Datta Shukul ?-1921

b. ? educated Allahabad; Honorary Magistrate; member Local Board Sihora and District Board Jabalpur; Vice-President Sihora Municipal Committee; member CPLC 1915-7; member Imperial Legislative Council 1917-20; Governor Federation of Cooperative Banks
18. Bishnu Datta Shukul 7-1921 (continued)

Central Provinces 1919; participated non-cooperation 1920; d. January 1921.

19. Shripad Balwant Tambe 1875-?

b. 1875; educated Hitkarini High School Jabalpur, Anglo-vernacular High School Amravati, Elphinstone College, Government Law College Bombay, B.A., LL.B.; admitted Amravati Bar; Vice-president Amravati Municipal Committee; President Berar PCC; member CPLC 1917-20; Swarajist member CPLC 1924-5; Leader Berar Swaraj party CPLC 1924-5; President CPLC 1925; Home Member CP and Berar 1925-30; member Round Table Conference London 1930-1; Acting Governor CP and Berar 1930; member Indian Franchise Committee 1932.
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