

**NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN BIHAR
1919—1922**

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN BIHAR: 1919-22" submitted by Mr. Shyam Narayan Singh in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University. This is his own work.

We recommend this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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New Delhi.

Shyam Narayan Singh
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INTRODUCTION

The role of Bihar in the Indian national movement has been highly significant and inspiring. The people of Bihar has harboured the anti-British feelings ever since battles of Plassey and Buxar, which occasionally also got ventilated. But political awakening, in the modern sense of the term, dawned only with the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885.¹ The annual sessions of Indian National Congress aroused considerable interest and were attended by many delegates from Bihar. But with the passage of time, the Indian National Congress could no longer arouse much enthusiasm and interest in Bihar. Some liberal and enlightened leaders of Bihar were conscious of this apathy towards Congress and, therefore, they made earnest efforts to change the situation and it was because of their sincere efforts that the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee was formed in 1908, with its headquarters at Patna and branches in the district.

With the formation of the Bihar Provincial Congress Bihar indeed entered upon a new era as the Indian National Congress could utilise it to propagate its ideals. The Provincial Congress Committee used to organise a Provincial

1. For History of Bihar before 1919, see K.K.Datta, Freedom Movement in Bihar, Vol.1, 1857-1928, Patna, 1957.

Political Conference and which was to play an important role during the course of the Non-Cooperation movement. The Bihar Provincial Conference was unique in two respects. Firstly, its members and delegates were not only Congressmen but also others who without joining Congress were in agreement with the Congressmen of the province on matters of provincial interest. Secondly, it "presented a unique spectacle, in the whole of India, of Muslims and Non-Muslims working shoulder to shoulder in complete harmony with common ideals and inspiration, though the British Government was trying to further communal separatism particularly from 1906.

Another institution of a political nature came to be established in 1906. This was the Bihari Students' Conference, which was to play a significant role in the furtherance of the cause of nationalism. The Bihari Students' Conference also later played an important role during the Non-Cooperation movement.

The first decade of the twentieth century also ushered in revolutionary activities, which were, however, inspired by revolutionaries from Bengal. In 1908, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki threw a bomb at a carriage which they believed was occupied by Kings,

the unpopular judge at Muzaffarpur. Profulla Chaki shot himself dead while Khudiram Bose was tried and hanged. This in fact heralded the era of revolutionary terrorism in Bihar.

Deoghar in Santhal Parganas became one of the Centres of the revolutionary terrorists in Bihar as Rajnarain Basu, the grandfather of Aurobindo Ghosh and Barindra Ghosh had settled in this place. Barindra Ghosh received his early education at Deoghar and was a member of a society there, called the Golden League, which sought to work for Swadeshi and boycott. Ranchi also became one of the centres of revolutionary terrorists in Bihar. Here they worked under the guidance of Ganesh Chandra Ghosh, a famous revolutionary of his time in Bihar. In 1913 Sachindra Nath Sanyal started a branch of Amusilan Samaj at Patna, which he had formed at Banaras in 1908. He got recruits from the college student here. One of its important members was Bankim Chandra Mitra, who had joined the Bihar National Congress in 1912.

These revolutionary terrorists, however, did not make much headway and their influence remained confined to a few pockets. Their activities, however, continued

in some way or other till non-cooperation was launched.²

As mentioned earlier, with the formation of the Provincial Congress Committee, Bihar began to play an active role in the spread of Indian nationalism. In 1912, when Bihar had been made a separate province, the session of the Indian National Congress was held at Bankipore in Patna. Mr. Mazharul Haque was the Chairman of the reception Committee and Sachidanand Sinha was its General Secretary. In 1914, these two leaders were elected on a deputation which was to be sent to England and which also included eminent contemporary leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhupendra Nath Basu, M.A. Jinnah and others.

During the period of Home Rule movement Bihar again came to the forefront. In December 1916, a Home Rule League was started at Bankipore and, Mazharul Haque became its president. The Home Rule movement had its reverberations in other parts of Bihar also. Thus, in Muzaffarpur, Janakdhari Prasad in association with the local Bar and businessmen, started a Home Rule League.

Saran also became, during this period, an important centre of Home Rulers. When Annie Besant visited Patna in February 1918 she was accorded a very warm reception there.

2. Fortnightly Report, for second half June, 1918, Home Pol. Deposit; August 1918, F.No.31.

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Thus during the War-years, 1914-18, a new political situation was maturing, wherein people seemed to be determined to fight back if their demands were not listened to. The economic situation arising after war only, reinforced the people's determination to fight.

The situation in the agrarian sector of the economy was dismal in many respects. During 1918-19, there was a failure of crops all over India. During 1918, south-eastern monsoon failed in several parts of India. Owing to short and irregular monsoon of 1918 there was a severe failure of the autumn and winter crops in Bihar and in consequence the prices of all the necessities of life of the common man rose high.³ The price of rice, the principal crop, rose steadily from 8½ seers to 5 seers a rupee in July 1918. The failure of crops was unprecedentedly severe and widespread and yet it was not found necessary by the Government to initiate famine operations over any large area or on an extensive scale. Famine was declared only in three districts.⁴

3. Fortnightly Report for First half Feb 1918,
Home Pol. Deposit, March 1918, F.No.40

4. Bihar and Orissa administrative report, 1918-19;
pp- , K.K.Datta (ed), Comprehensive History
of Bihar, vol.III, Part I; p-514.

The price of other commodities such as Kerosine oil, cloth and salt also rose phenomenally high.⁵ In 1920-21 the prices throughout the province were higher by 60 per-cent compared to those of 1914. This naturally generated a great deal of distress amongst the common masses.⁶

The miseries of the people of some areas got increased by the outbreak of a virulent form of influenza. In 1919 the most affected area by this epidemic was Chotanagpur where it had reached the remotest villages.⁷

In this general climate of discontent, the soldiers who returned from their triumphs in Africa, Asia and Europe, imparted some of their confidence and their knowledge of the wide world to the rural areas.

The working class was dissatisfied because of unemployment and high prices. The educated class were also dissatisfied as they faced unemployment. Their dissatisfaction was heightened as they were denied equality of opportunity with Europeans especially in army.

The intelligentsia got alienated from the British as they realised that British could not fulfill their promises.

5. Ibid.

6. Fortnightly Report; Home Pol. Deposit; Dec.1918; F.No.22

7. Ibid; Also in Home Pol. Deposit of Dec.1918; F.No.23

During the War the allied nations had promised a new era of democracy and national self-determination to all the people of world. But, after the War was over, they showed little willingness to end the colonial system.

The Russian revolution also contributed to the raising of the morale and self-confidence of people. It brought home to them the message that the peasants and workers could carry out a revolution against their domestic tyrant, the people of the subject nation need not despair.

Finally, the Montagu Chelmsford reforms of 1919 fully exposed the British pretensions. Again, issues like Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwallabagh massacre convinced the people of India that only self-government could alleviate their miseries.

Thus, a wide spectrum of society was in a mood of discontent, brought on by a variety of reasons, which made them receptive and amenable to the new ideas of mass resistance against colonial rule.

III

Against this background the present work seeks to study the national movement in Bihar from 1919-22. The entire study has been divided into three chapters namely, Politics of Bihar (1919-20); Non-cooperation Movement in Bihar (1920-21); and Non-Cooperation and its Aftermath (1922).

The first chapter attempts to study the political scenario in Bihar before the launching of the movement in September 1920. As such it covers the period from the beginning of 1919 to August 1920 and analyses the political ramifications of the anti-Rowlatt Bills agitation, the Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy and the Khilafat movement, and their role in building up the pressure which was reflected in the mass upsurge during the Non-Cooperation movement.

The second chapter covers the period from September 1920 till December 1921 during which the Non-Cooperation movement passed through different phases culminating in the annual session at Ahmedabad in December 1921.

In third chapter, I discuss the last stage of the movement, the repression launched by the government, the withdrawal of the movement in February and its aftermath.

In the conclusion, I first summarize the main features of the Non-Cooperation movement in Bihar, and discuss its various phases, its ups and downs, as well as the nature and its social base, ideology and leadership. I conclude with a brief discussion of some of the historiographical approaches towards the study of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

CHAPTER I
POLITICS OF BIHAR
(1919-1920)

The post-war period in India witnessed a significant advance in the Indian national movement. The curtain was put down on the old era and a beginning was made for a new one that is, the Gandhian era of national struggle, when the movement was brought to the doors of the common masses. The change which occurred in the mobilisation pattern and articulation of demand for Swaraj during this ^{period} was result of a great upheaval which was occasioned by numerous factors, which have already been discussed.¹ The Indian bourgeoisie, which had made enormous profits during the war, became dissatisfied with the alien regime. They were denied the political and economic privileges essential to safeguard their industrial and commercial interests.² The common masses were dissatisfied because of their increased miseries resulting from rise in prices of necessary commodities during and after the War.³ Demobilized soldiers were also dissatisfied⁴

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1. These aspects have been discussed in the introduction of this dissertation.
 2. S.Choudhary, Growth of Nationalism in India (1919-1929), Vol.2; New Delhi 1973; p-1
 3. The fortnightly reports of the Government of Bihar and Orissa for this period detail the manifold rise in prices and consequent miseries and disaffection of people.
 4. S.Choudhary, op.cit., p.2

as they faced unemployment. These soldiers, their awareness having been enhanced by the greater exposure to the world outside their villages, made the general masses aware of their economic and other disabilities. There was unemployment among the educated lower middle classes⁵ and resentment at being denied equality of opportunity with the European, especially with regard to commission in the army. The workers in the factories were dissatisfied with their miserable conditions as prices had increased for more than wages and resorted to strikes in many parts of India.⁶ The peasants were equally dissatisfied. Their complaints against the landlords in Bihar were reaching the Home Rule League and Swami Vidyanand who was active in north Bihar.⁷ The Muslims were also unhappy at the fate of Turkey and the Khalifa.⁸

Under these circumstances people desired reforms in the system of government for improving their lots.

5. Ibid.

6. R.P. Dutt, India Today, Calcutta, 1979.

7. J.M. Brown, Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915-1922, London, 1972, p.287. Swami Vidyanand, before he became a mendicant, belonged to a lower middle class family in Saran district and was associated with and influenced by Gandhiji. Also S. Henningham, Peasant Movement in Colonial India: North Bihar 1917-1922, Canberra, 1982, p.74

8. Fortnightly Report for Second half May, 1919, Home Pol. Deposit, July 1919, F.No.49.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, which were offered in 1919, might have satisfied India a decade earlier but appeared to be inadequate now. People were sore with the imperialists because they had been denied in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms what they were promised during the War years - the right of self-determination. There were, however, a section of people led by the Moderates like S.N.Banerjea and Srinivas Sastry, which was eager to implement the Reforms for what they were worth. But before they could be implemented there appeared the Rowlatt Report. Whatever illusions were left about British good faith was torn to shreds by the introduction of the Rowlatt Bill.

ROWLATT SATYAGRAHA IN BIHAR

The Rowlatt Report met with the general disapproval of the Indian public opinion including both the Moderates and the Tilakites.⁹ It was believed that the enactment of the bills would mean the curtailment of freedom of even those who were in no way associated with the terrorist movement. Moreover, the special laws bestowed enormous power upon the government to arrest and keep suspected persons imprisoned without trial.

9. S. Choudhary, op.cit., p.2

At the 1918 session of the Congress at Delhi, "strong protests were made against the Rowlatt Report...The whole meeting was a triumph for the ultra Left Wing."¹⁰

In such a climate of public opinion, the Rowlatt bills were enacted into laws. Gandhi and his followers denounced them as unjust and subversive of all the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of the individual. They ignored the advice of leaders like Srinivas Sastry and others and launched the Satyagraha movement for the purpose of disobeying the Rowlatt Acts.¹¹ While this movement was spreading, there occurred the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre in which hundreds of people were killed. This proved to be the proverbial last straw. Condemning the atrocities, Kisan Samachar, an organ of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, forecast that the prestige of Britain would be shortly "washed away in the strong current of the blood of the oppressed."¹²

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10. India in the years 1917 and 1918 (Calcutta: Govt. of India, 1919), p.66, quoted by S.Choudhary, op.cit., p.2.
11. For further details, see Young India (1919-22), A collection of writings by Gandhiji, Madras, 1922, pp.63-68.
12. K.K.Datta, History of Freedom Movement in Bihar, op.cit., Part I Appendix, pp.573-74.

The Amritsar incident acted as a spur to the growth of national consciousness in India. Never before had such strong anti-British feelings been aroused as on this occasion. Never before had the long pent-up discontent of the intelligentsia begun to express itself in organisation of anti-alien demonstrations as now.¹³

Bihar had hitherto not been very active in the struggle for freedom, had no established political tradition and not many Biharis had been attending the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress.¹⁴ But this time it could not remain a silent and passive spectator. In the period 1919-22 it swung powerfully into all-India politics. Therefore, when Gandhi called upon his countrymen to oppose the Rowlatt Bills and formed Satyagraha Sabha in February 1919, Bihar gave a prompt and enthusiastic response.¹⁵

The first phase of the agitation against Rowlatt Bills lasted from February to early April. It was characterised by deliberations and preparations. This

13. K.K.Dutta, Freedom Movement in Bihar, Appendix XVI, pp.573-74.

14. Only 19 delegates from Bihar and Orissa attended the special session in Bombay (Sept.1918) and 40 in the regular session of Delhi Congress (Dec. 1918), Indian National Congress Reports, 1914-18.

15. M.K.Gandhi, An Autobiography, Ahmedabad, 1940, p.279.

phase of agitation started in Bihar towards the end of February.¹⁶ In March protest meetings were held at various places, namely Patna, Gaya, Munger, Muzaffarpur, Chapra and Bhagalpur.¹⁷

Mazharul Haque, a lawyer politician of Bihar, opposed the Rowlatt Bills in the Imperial Legislative Council on the following grounds: (a) no case had been made out for their introduction; (b) they were the negation of all law; (c) they were dangerously inexpedient; (d) they were entirely inopportune; (e) no urgency had been shown for them.¹⁸

The Searchlight strongly denounced the Rowlatt Bills and began to play an important role in shaping public opinion. "The 'Searchlight' continues to", "execrate the Rowlatt Bills and to laud the Satyagraha movement..."¹⁹

Despite the vehement opposition of the Indians, both inside and outside the Imperial legislature, the main bill was passed as the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act in March 1919. Upon this Gandhi reacted by

16. K.K.Datta, op.cit., p.292.

17. B&O. Police Abstract of Intelligence 1919. The non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa. op.cit.

18. Imperial Legislative Council Proceedings, April 1918-March 1919, vol.LVII, p.536.

19. Fortnightly Report for first half May, 1919 Home Pol Deposit, July 1919, F.No.48

asking his countrymen to observe a general hartal with fast and prayer on 30 March 1919. The date was later shifted to 6 April. But Delhi observed it on 30 March itself and the police firing at the procession near the Delhi Railway Station resulted in five deaths and a score of casualties.²⁰ With this began the second phase of the Rowlatt agitation.

Gandhi was sure that Bihar would be one of the four major provinces to respond favourably to this call.²¹ But the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee (henceforth BPCC) was still hesitant over the question of passive resistance²² and so the matter had been postponed to be decided at BPCC meeting at Darbhanga later. The decision to participate in the hartal the 6th April, "the day of humiliation and prayer", was taken at a meeting held at Patna city on 4th April, 1919, which was attended by prominent leaders like Rajendra Prasad, Mazhrul Haque and Rai Bahadur Purnendu Narain Sinha and in which Hasan Imam took a leading part. This meeting

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20. D.W. Ferrell, 'Rowlatt Satyagraha in Delhi', R. Kumar (ed), Essays on Gandhian Politics, Oxford, 1971, p-192. Also in Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography, p.42.
21. Gandhi, An Autobiography, Ahmedabad, 1958, p.281.
22. Fortnightly Report for first half May, 1919. Home Pol. Deposit, July 1919, F.No.48.

was presided over by Mazharul Haque who laid emphasis on the need of Hindu-Muslim unity.²³

On 5th April another meeting was held at the residence of Mazharul Haque to settle the programme for 6th April. It was attended by many prominent persons²⁴ and Rai Bahadur Purnendu Narayan Sinha was its president. The proceedings began with the singing of a national song. Rajendra Prasad requested all to be orderly in the next day's procession. Many others locally prominent leaders also addressed the gathering.²⁵

On 6th April a huge procession of all classes of people passed round the Patna Bazaar. ~~Hasan~~ Imam who had a great personal influence in Bihar, led this procession²⁶ in a perfectly orderly manner. On his personal guarantee to maintain ^{order} in the gathering, the police was "kept

23. The Searchlight, April 6, 1919.

24. The following prominent persons were present:

1. Hasan Imam
2. Mazharul Haque
3. Sachchidanand Sinha
4. C.B.Sahai
5. Khan Bahadur Nawab Sarfaraz Hussain Khan
6. Sami
7. Rai Bahadur Purnendu Narayan Sinha
8. Rajendra Prasad
9. Nirsu Narayan Singh
10. Ganesh Datta Singh
11. Shambhu Saran Verma

25. The Searchlight, April 10, 1919.

26. The Searchlight, April 10, 1919.

out of evidence as much as possible".²⁷ The processionists assembled in the evening in the Qila Maidan, Patna city, and a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Hasan Imam. The others who spoke at the meeting were Rajendra Prasad, Mazharul Haque, C.B.Sahai and Rai Bahadur Purnendu Narain Sinha. Practically all the students of Patna were present and participated in the other activities of the day. There was dissatisfaction among the Sikhs in Patna city and Gurcharan Singh, a Sikh pleader, actively associated with the Satyagraha movement. A number of policemen and office assistants "did take part in the Humiliation Day Celebration".²⁸ One more noticeable feature was the unprecedented fraternization between the Hindus and the Muslims.²⁹

At Patna, "there was a complete hartal - not a shop was opened and not a vehicle was plying in the whole town from noon till evening. Such was the spontaneous response to Gandhi's call."³⁰ In the villages the response was no less splendid and spontaneous. It was not only shop-keepers who observed the hartal. Agriculturists too did not work

27. The Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements of Bihar and Orissa, etc., Bihar Government, Patna, 1925, p.2

28. K.K.Datta, Freedom Movement in Bihar, op.cit., p.294

29. Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa, op.cit. p.2

30. Rajendra Prasad, Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar, Patna, 1949, p.37

in their fields and plough, cattle and draught bullocks were given a holiday.³¹

Demonstrations were organised and hartals were observed in many other towns of Bihar on 6th April, namely Muzaffarpur, Chapra, Champaran, Munger, Jharia and Katras.³² In Champaran, Gorakh Prasad, Raj Kumar Shukla and others who had been closely associated with the Satyagraha in 1917, once again became active. The Satyagraha day on the 6th April was observed in a peaceful manner. It was reported to the local government by one of their officers on 13th April 1919: "It is perfectly true that the Satyagraha observance of 6th April was a thoroughly well arranged and orderly affair..."³³

Regarding the hartal of 6th April the fortnightly report said: "great majority of shop-keepers in Patna who closed their shops did so because they were persuaded or terrified into doing so. Generally speaking the less educated classes have no clear idea as to why they were asked to fast and close their shops and many absurd rumours gained ignorance is to be found in the fact that certain

31. Ibid.

32. The Searchlight, April 10, 1919

33. K.K.Datta, op.cit., p.294.

villagers when asked as to why they fasted, replied that "Rowlatt Saheb ke hukum hai".³⁴

On April 11, 1919 a meeting of citizens of Patna was held at Patna. Here Hasan Imam explained to the gathering the Satyagraha vow of Mahatma Gandhi and himself took this vow publicly - belying the local government's expectations.³⁵ Mazharul Haque, Rajendra Prasad and some other leaders had already taken the Satyagraha pledge. Already a registration centre for the Satyagrahis had been opened at Rajendra Prasad's residence at Patna.

As mentioned earlier the Government of Bihar had expected that some moderate leaders of the province would not associate themselves with Gandhi and the Satyagraha movement. But after the opening of the Satyagraha Centre at Rajendra Prasad's residence and Hasan Imam publicly taking the pledge of Satyagraha, it became clear that the local Government was wrong in its assessment. The public feeling were roused more by subsequent events like deportation of Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, the police firings at Delhi, the protest meeting and subsequent

34. Fortnightly Report for first half May, 1919. Home Pol. Deposit, July 1919, F.No.48.

35. The Searchlight; April 13, 1919.

brutal assault of unarmed masses at Jallianwallabagh (Amritsar) and Gandhi's arrest while he was on his way to Delhi.³⁶ These incidents produced tremendous excitement among the people of Bihar. The Searchlight, a nationalist newspaper from Bihar, started giving more prominence to the various aspects of the Satyagraha movement hereafter. But the excitement among the masses was shortlived as by the end of April the Rowlatt Satyagraha itself died out.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AFTER ROWLATT SATYAGRAHA

But the intelligentsia and other political leaders were far from happy over existing state of affairs. They were very sore over the Government's brutal policy in Punjab and elsewhere. On 23rd May, 1919 the lawyers had a meeting wherein they deliberated^l over the political condition of the country. They expressed their shock over inhuman measures of Government in Punjab and also expressed their^{dis}approval of Government decision prohibiting lawyers from other parts from going to Lahore to defend the accused persons before the special tribunals.³⁷

36. Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on April 11 while at Kosi on his way to Delhi. At Kosi he was served with a notice prohibiting him from entering Delhi. When he defied this order he was taken to police custody, The Searchlight, April 13, 1919.

37. Fortnightly Report for second half June 1919, Home Pol. Deposit, August 1919; F.No.51.



Bihar Provincial Association also met on 25th May 1919 at Patna. It condemned the inhuman measures of Government in Punjab and expressed its horror at what was happening in Punjab.³⁸

By May 1919, However, leaders could not sustain the interest of the masses. Political inactivity was so pronounced that when Mahatma Gandhi invited some workers from Bihar Hasan Imam did not respond. Rajendra Prasad lamented that nothing substantial was being done in this province for the progress of Satyagraha.³⁹ Again a tone of helplessness was conveyed by Rajendra Prasad in his letter to Sundarlal of Allahabad wherein he expressed his disgust over the existing political scenario by saying that nothing particular was being done in Bihar.⁴⁰ Again when Mahatma Gandhi asked Rajendra Prasad in June 1919 to suggest the names of sincere Satyagrahis from Bihar Rajendra Prasad replied that except himself very few people of Patna would do what Gandhi wanted.⁴¹ The Government reports for this period also testify to the same kind of

38. Ibid.

39. J.C.Jha, 'The Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement in Bihar' in History of Indian National Congress in Bihar (1885-1985), K.P.Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1985, p.194.

40. Fortnightly Report for first half Apr., 1919, Home Pol. Deposit, July 1919, F.No.46

41. Fortnightly Report for first half, April 1919, Home Pol. Deposit, July 1919, F.No.46



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political atmosphere, where not much enthusiasm and political activity prevailed.⁴²

Though the political activities had reached a low level Mahatma Gandhi had not lost his faith in the spirit of struggle of his countrymen. On June 15, 1919 he issued his instructions to the Satyagrahis in terms of the resolutions passed by the Committee of the Satyagraha Sabha. According to this, those best fitted for offering civil disobedience, the most free from anger, untruth and ill - cult or hatred, should first offer civil disobedience.⁴³ He also asked the nation to preserve "perfect peace and equanimity at the time of, after and during my incarceration". He also enjoined upon people not to hold demonstrations of any kind or 'hartal' of mass meetings. He further advised wide distribution of some literature like Thoreau's Civil Disobedience, his own Hind Swaraj and Defence of Socrates and Tolstoy's letters to Russian Liberals and Ruskin's 'Unto the Last'.⁴⁴ He also advised an intensive

42. Ibid.

43. Govt. of India, Home Pol. B., File 1920, no.373
Also the Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, vol.xv,
no.375.

44. Khilafat and non-cooperation Movement in Bihar,
op.cit., p.193.

and extensive propaganda of Swadeshi and Hindu Muslim unity.

But all these had little impart on the masses as not much enthusiasm was displayed. This was testified by the Government report for the month of July, 1919. It observed: "All Reports received confirm the impression that the local political leaders have not lost all faith in the Satyagraha movement and the possibility of successful revival of the movement in this province seems infinitesimal".⁴⁵ It further noted that "little interest was displayed outside a limited circle".⁴⁶ Among the masses there was lack of interest and apathy towards political activities.⁴⁷

This was the kind of political scenario obtaining in Bihar where leaders were disheartened and masses apathetic towards political issues once the Rowlatt Satyagraha was over in April, 1919. Amidst such a condition reactionary elements of Bihar also tried to raise their voice in support of the Government. One such section, Bihar Landholders Association, in May 1919, held meetings at Patna and Bhagalpur and condemned the Satyagraha movement and urged the people to loyally cooperate with the British Government. Very interestingly its meeting at Patna was presided over by the Maharaja

45. Fortnightly Report for second half August, 1919, Home Pol. Deposit, August 1919, F.No.54.

46. Ibid., F.No.44

47. Ibid.

of Darbhanga.⁴⁸ Further, another section of the reactionaries, whom the Government considered "representative Indian gentlemen", opined that "they have been misled regarding the scope of the Rowlett Legislation".⁴⁹ But these reactionary elements could not make much headway and their influence over the people of Bihar remained negligible.

The local Government also did not view the political situation with much seriousness. In the fortnightly report of July 1919, it observed thus: "The situation as regards Satyagraha movement is decidedly easier, and as things stand at present any resumption of passive resistance seems improbable".⁵⁰ As regards the attitude of local leaders the report said that they were "inclined to the view that in taking up the movement they made a mistake".⁵¹ "Mr. Hasan Imam", the report further added, "has told his Honour (the governor of Bihar and Orissa) that they have no intention of resorting to disobedience of civil laws as contemplated by Gandhi".⁵² The report also claimed that this change had been possible because of stern measures taken in Punjab.⁵³

48. Fortnightly Report for first half May, 1919, Home Pol. Deposit, July, 1919, F.No.48

49. Ibid.

50. Fortnightly Report, Home Pol. Deposit, July 1919, F.No.48.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

Amidst such a political scenario, Bihar Provincial Congress and Bihar Provincial Association find to arouse the interest of the masses. On 13th July 1919, Bihar Provincial Committee and Bihar Provincial Association held a joint meeting at Patna and they passed a resolution expressing horror at the sentences passed by the Martial Law commissions. They also demanded immediate recall of the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford.⁵⁴ At the same meeting a decision was taken to invite the Congress to hold its next session in Bihar. There was also a suggestion that Mahatma Gandhi or Sir Shankaran Nair should be invited to preside.⁵⁵

The Bihar Provincial Congress again met at Laheriasarai on 17th & 18th August, 1919. Here Rai Bahadur Dwarkanath, a pleader of Muzaffarpur and a member of the local Legislative Council, was elected President. With several resolutions, one was moved by Sachchidanand Sinha condemning the Punjab atrocities and demanding recall of Lord Chelmsford.⁵⁶ Bhubaneswar Misra, a local pleader who was president of the reception committee declared that "as a result of the War India had been bled almost to the last drop and everything in it had been taken away abroad."⁵⁷ Another speaker,

54. Fortnightly Report for first half August, 1919, Home Pol. Deposit; October 1919, F.No.43.

55. Fortnightly Report for second half Sept. 1919, Home Pol. Deposit, Sept. 1919, F.No.59.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

Munshi Ishwar Saran, repudiated the charge that the Punjab troubles had arisen out of the Satyagraha movement and claimed that the people had revolted having been driven to desperation by Sir Michael O'-Dyer's administration.⁵⁸ A curious feature of this conference was the attendance of a large body of tenants of the Darbhanga Raj whose spokesman addressed the assembly setting forth a series of grievances against the Raj-management.⁵⁹ These, however, did not form part of the proceedings.

KHILAFAT AGITATION IN BIHAR

The nationalist trend among the Muslims of Bihar took the form of the Khilafat agitation.⁶⁰ The politically conscious Muslims were critical of the treatment meted out to the Turkish Empire by Britain and its allies who had partitioned it and taken away thrace from it. This was in violation of the earlier pledge of Britain that Turkey would not be dismembered. Besides, Muslims also felt that the position of the Sultan of Turkey, who was also regard as religious head of the

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Gail Minault, The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilisation in India, Delhi 1982, Preface.

Muslims, should not be undermined. Mahatma Gandhi extending his support to the Khilafat cause wrote to Muhammad Ali⁶¹ that in the proper solution of the Muhammadan question lies the realization of Swarajya.⁶² On 20 March, 1919 the Khilafat Committee, a strictly religious organisation was formed in Bombay with Md. Chotani as Chairman.⁶³ Afterwards the Bombay Khilafat Committee and the Council of the Muslim League decided upon a broad based organisation. Subsequently on 5 July, 1919 Khilafat branches all over India were organised to act as a pressure group for securing the retention of the temporal powers of the Sultan of Turkey as Khalifa and ensuring his continued suzerainty over the Islamic holy places.

The All India Muslim Conference at Lucknow decided on September 21 to observe the All India Khilafat Day on October 17, 1919. Subsequently Khilafat Day was observed in Bihar as in other parts of India on 17 October 1919. Although Bihar was known for the most vociferous Pan-Islamists not all the districts observed it. Even though sincere efforts were made at Bhagalpur, Munger and Darbhanga and business

61. Maulana M. Ali the brother of Shaukat Ali was a great Khilafat and Congress leader. They were called Ali brothers.

62. Minault, op.cit., p.68.

63. Ibid., p.73.

almost came to a halt in Patna, many businessmen refused to participate in the movement.⁶⁴

Gandhi appealed to the people to stage the hartal peacefully and urged the Hindus not to lag behind their Muslim Brethern. He enjoined that factory workers were not to be pressurised to stop work nor those who were engaged in the Public Health Department. "We consider the Khilafat question", he said, "as a sacred trust which must not be betrayed."⁶⁵

Thus if the Satyagraha movement originated among other things in the oppression in the Punjab⁶⁶ the Khilafat agitation was a strong device to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity for fighting the foreign rule and indeed it created a Muslim constituency within the content of Indian nationalism.⁶⁷

BOYCOTT OF PEACE CELEBRATIONS

In November 1919 the British Government decided to observe peace-celebrations throughout India and the Government of Bihar and Orissa started making preparations for the same. This was a chance to the people, to show their disapproval of the Government policies. Therefore people of Bihar as in other parts

64. The Searchlight, Oct.23, 1919.

65. Ibid.

66. Fortnightly report, for second half Oct.1919, Home Pol. Deposit, Nov.1919, F.No.14.

67. Gail Minault, op.cit., Preface.

of the country decided to abstain from these celebrations. On 30 November Bihar Provincial Congress decided not to take part in these celebrations.⁶⁸

On the same day Rajendra Prasad announced at a largely attended public meeting at Patna that any participation in the peace celebrations was impossible.⁶⁹ Subsequently leaflets and posters asking people to boycott were issued. The boycott of peace-celebrations was successful and in almost all the important places people abstained from taking part into it. Anti-peace-celebration was, however, most successful at Ranchi and this was because of "the extra ordinary influence acquired by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad during his internment there."⁷⁰

In March 1920, the political scenario in Bihar became surcharged by the Khilafat agitation, which got going due to anti-Turkist agitation which had started in England⁷¹ and the advance of the Allies on the 16th of March for the military occupation of constantinople. On March 19, Gandhi announced his intention to lead the non-cooperation movement in case the Khilafat sentiments of the Muslims were ignored.⁷² Again on 22 March

68. Fortnightly Report for second half Nov., 1920, F.No.5

69. The Searchlight, December 4, 1919.

70. The non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements in Bihar and Orissa etc, p.5.

71. Ibid.

72. India in 1920, a report prepared for presentation to Parliament in accordance with the requirement of Sec. 26 of the Govt. of India Act 1919, pp.38-43. Cited in J.C. Jha, op.cit., p.197.

he announced at Meerut that if Turkish settlement was not satisfactory both the Hindus and the Muslims should resign all civil offices and all jobs in the army and police renounce all titles and honorary distinctions and refuse to pay taxes and all other government dues.⁷³

A "National week" was observed from 6th to 13th April under instructions from Mahatma Gandhi as a protest against the Punjab wrongs and for collection of funds for the Jallianwalla Bagh memorial fund. Mazharul Haque, K.B. Datta, Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan, Mr. Sain did much to organize this week at Patna.

Leaders of Khilafat movement in Bihar, Mazharul Haque, Dr. Mahmud and Sami invited Maulana Shaukat Ali to Bihar. Meetings were organised at Patna on 24th and 25th April 1920 in which Maulana Shaukat Ali exhorted the assembled people to be ready to make whatever sacrifices would be required to solve the Khilafat question for which they were fighting under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It was pointed out by him that boycott of Government services and non-cooperation with the government may be necessary under certain eventualities.⁷⁴ Shaukat Ali visited both

73. Fortnightly Report, Home Pol. Deposit April 1920.

74. Ibid., p.6.

Munger and Gaya. He addressed a meeting at Munger on the 27th April at which "inflammatory speeches were delivered strongly advocating non-cooperation with government and the renunciation of titles."⁷⁵

In his speech he declared that if there was no place in Europe for an Asiatic power, there was none in Asia for a European power. He further declared that if Khilafat question is not satisfactorily settled it meant slavery for Muhammadans for about 200 years.⁷⁶

At Gaya he was indisposed and could not attend the meeting or speak. At the Gaya meeting Krishna Prakash Sen announced that he had returned to the collector his certificate of honour, granted to him in recognition of his services in recruiting during the war.⁷⁷ Moreover, he also announced himself as a candidate for election to the reformed Council.⁷⁸

However, during the month of June 1920 there was almost a complete lull in the Khilafat movement. Some attempts to revive interest in the movement on the occasion of Id festival distinctly fell flat.⁷⁹

75. Fortnightly Report for second half May, 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, July 1920, F.No.95, p.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Fortnightly Report, for second half July, 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, July 1920, F.No.106.

In the Commissioner's opinion it was recognised by "all who think about the matter at all" that the Khilafat agitation is political; and the Muhammadans of India have little or no concern with Turkey.⁸⁰ Some sections among Muhammadans also had started believing that the Hindus were taking charge of the movement and that it was improper for Mohammadans to work under the leadership of Gandhi or any other Hindu.⁸¹

However, the attempts to push the movement on, went apace. On the occasion of the 'Id' festival at Patna printed leaflets and posters received from the central Khilafat Committee of Bombay describing the obligations of Muhammadans to the Khilafat and appealing for funds were freely distributed.⁸² Of the local leaders, Dr. Ghulam Imam of Patna city took a lead and at two or three different places in the province he delivered speeches advocating non-cooperation and condemned the peace terms.⁸³

However, the lull in the agitation continued. This was reflected in the meeting of the provincial Khilafat committee held on 20th May 1920. In this a letter from Shaukat Ali, was discussed wherein he

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

had asked for a genuine expression of opinion on three points: (1) Whether a non-cooperation movement was likely to receive support in the province, (2) Whether it was possible to galvanise the masses of the province into activity, and (3) Whether persons of "high position and reputation had shown any symptoms of joining in the struggle".⁸⁴ The reply which was agreed upon in this meeting was that: (a) attempts hitherto made to influence the title-holders had not been very successful but utmost endeavours would be made to secure success. (b) that a great amount of discontent was not noticeable, but the masses were still insufficiently educated and had shown no signs of interest in either political or religious principles^s involved in the Khilafat question. (c) that the leading politicians were hesitating and the landed classes had quite clearly shown that their heart was not in the game.⁸⁵

At the same meeting a decision was taken to send emissaries to the districts of Patna, Bhagalpur, Tirhut and Chotanagpur division to educate and interest the masses in Khilafat question and to collect funds.⁸⁶

84. Fortnightly Report for first half July, 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, July 1920, F.No.105.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

The Khilafat leaders also carried forward the work of persuading the title holders to renounce the titles. However, this did not meet with remarkable success. A few sympathisers who had hitherto associated themselves with Khilafat movement withdrew themselves from the movement when asked to surrender their titles.⁸⁷

Fortnightly report of August 1920 noted for the month of July a mood of despondency among Khilafat leaders of Bihar. Reportedly the Provincial Khilafat Committee wrote to the Central Khilafat Committee, Bombay that they could make no headway unless they were assisted by some well-known political Muhammadan leaders.⁸⁸

The Bihar Provincial Khilafat Committee was thus gripped with a sense of despondency. Fortnightly report of August 1920 noted thus: "The Provincial Khilafat Committee have apparently realised the helplessness of the non-cooperation movement in this province..."⁸⁹

87. Ibid.

88. Fortnightly Report, for first half August 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, Aug. 1920, F.No.111

89. Fortnightly Report, for second half Aug. 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, Aug. 1920, F.No.112

The Provincial Khilafat Committee, as a result of this decided upon pushing the Hijarat programme under instruction from the Central Committee of Bombay. Subsequently, a temporary Hijarat committee was formed and Dr. Ghulam Imam was the moving spirit behind it.⁹⁰

When Khilafat Day was observed on 1 August 1920 it was a mixed success and it was "almost a failure in the view of the government of Bihar and Orissa".⁹¹ In most of the places, namely, Patna, Arrah, Chapra, Munger, Bhagalpur, Ranchi, Gaya, Palamau, Hazaribagh and Daltonganj, the hartal was successfully organised. The hartal was however most successful in Daltonganj, Arrah and Munger. In ten other districts, however, there was no demonstrations at all while in two districts - Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga - meetings were held but there was no hartal.

On 18th August 1920 a meeting was held at Patna. There three resignations of titles and honorary offices were announced. Nurul Hasan resigned his membership of the Provincial Legislative Council; Shah Badr-ud-din of Phulwari resigned the title of Shams-ul-ulama; and Shah Suleman of Phulwari resigned his honorary magistracy.⁹²

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

BPC APPROVES THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-COOPERATION

Meantime the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee in a meeting on 31st July 1920 had approved the principle of non-cooperation. The resolutions which it passed were as follows:

- (1) "That Committee approves of the principles of non-cooperation as the only effective means in the present circumstances of the country for securing the redress of national wrongs and of Khilafat question."
- (2) "That a Committee be appointed to report on the programme of non-cooperation as enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi with particular reference to the condition of the province: ^{Mr. Maque, Mr. Hasan Imam, Babu Ganesh Dutta Singh, Babu Rajendra Prasad} ^{Babu Ganesh Dutta Singh, Babu Rajendra Prasad} ^{by the 8th} August and meeting of this committee will be held on the 10th".
- (3) "That the Committee deliberately ~~is~~ of the opinion that the Punjab disturbances were not the result of the Satyagraha movement and is of opinion that in view of the circumstances in which the Rowlatt Act was passed, the Satyagraha movement was perfectly legitimate and this committee is further of the opinion that the responsibility

for the Punjab disturbances lies with men who arrested Mahatma Gandhi and deported the Punjab leaders, and this committee has full confidence in Mahatma Gandhi.⁹³ Haque, Hasan Imam and Rajendra Prasad were not present at this meeting. The resolution was "strongly opposed by a large number of the senior members," however it was passed when these disgusted members had withdrawn from the meeting.⁹⁴

Bihar Provincial Congress Committee again met on 28th and 29th August, 1920 under the Presidentship of Rajendra Prasad at Bhagalpur, which was possibly much more significant - Rajendra Prasad put forth a "strong plea for non-cooperation".⁹⁵ An important aspect of this conference was that among its delegates a large number had come from villages. The resolution in favour of non-cooperation was passed inspite of the opposition of a number of "leading members". It was passed by the votes of the delegates from the Kisan Sabhas.⁹⁶ The resolution which it passed

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar, p.40.

96. Fortnightly Report, for first half Sept., 1920. Home Pol. Deposit, Sept. 1920, F.No.70.

is as follows:

"(a) Resolved that this conference approves of the movement of non-cooperation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi as a perfectly constitutional and effective weapon in the hands of the people."

In another resolution it decided to form a committee to give practicable scheme to give effect to the principle of non-cooperation.⁹⁷

The conference passed no less than seventeen other resolutions many of whom e.g. the resolution urging the government to take immediate measures to relieve distress caused by the high prices of food stuffs, were not directly connected with non-cooperation. Presumably for this reason these resolutions were moved and carried before the resolution on non-cooperation was brought forward.⁹⁸

Thus by August 1920 the stage had been fully set for a massive movement in which all sections of society ~~were~~ to be involved. Indeed, the situation was not an easy one for the government as only a spark was needed to make the tinder-box explode. This spark was soon provided by Gandhi in August 1920 when he announced his intention to lead the non-cooperations movement.

97. K.K. Datta, Freedom Movement in Bihar, p.302.

98. Fortnightly Report, for first half Sept. 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, Sept.1920, F.No.70.

CHAPTER II

NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT IN BIHAR: 1920-21

By August 1920 the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and the Bihar Provincial Conference had both adopted resolutions in favour of non-cooperation. The Khilafat Committee had also adopted a similar resolution on non-cooperation.¹ The stage had thus been fully set by August 1920 when the two agitations - the agitation against Rowlatt Act and Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat movement could merge into a single movement of non-cooperation.²

In September 1920 the special session of the Indian National Congress was held under the president-ship of Lala Lajpat Rai in Calcutta to consider the issue of non-cooperation. A large number of delegates (over three hundred from Bihar) attended this special session of the Indian National Congress.³ This Congress was attended by all the prominent leaders: Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Annie Besant,

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1. J.C. Jha, "The Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement in Bihar", History of Indian National Congress in Bihar, p.197.
 2. J.M. Brown, Gandhi's Rise to Power, p.216.
 3. K.K.Datta, History of Freedom Movement in Bihar, p.303.

C. Vijayaraghavachari, Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu C.R. Das being some of them. Lokmanya Tilak had already died on the 1st August 1920. As Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "the deep void left by his death weighed heavily upon everybody present at Calcutta. Everybody felt the absence of his counsels in that hour of crisis in the nation's history".⁴

In this special session of the Congress the momentous resolution on non-cooperation was moved by Mahatma Gandhi which was carried by 1885 votes against 873, about 180 of delegates from Bihar voting for it.⁵ The resolution took note of Punjab and Khilafat wrongs urged the people "to adopt the progressive, non violent, non-cooperation...until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established".⁶

4. AICC Papers, File No.6/1920-36

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

To make a beginning, the Congress advised:

- "(a) surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;
- (b) refusal to attend Government levels, Durbars and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour;
- (c) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and in place of such schools and colleges, establishment of national schools and colleges in the various provinces;
- (d) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants, and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid, for the settlement of private disputes;
- (e) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;

- (f) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils and refusal on the part of voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election;
- (g) boycott of foreign goods."

In pursuance of this resolution the leaders of Bihar promptly responded and to implement the items contained in the non-coöperation resolution, they started various activities at various levels. Even before the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Nagpur in December 1920, Maulana Abdul Qadir Azad Sobhani of Kanpur had halted at Arrah on his way back from Calcutta and delivered speeches advocating non-cooperation, and made a touching appeal to the audience to work for it.⁷ There were soon announcements in the local newspapers that persons like Mazharul Haque, Rajendra Prasad, Gorakh Prasad of Motihari, Brajkishore Prasad and Dharanidhar of Darbhanga, Muhammad Shafi of Muzaffarpur and some others had withdrawn their candidature for the forth-

7. The Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements in Bihar & Orissa, p.11

coming council elections. It was a measure aimed "to obey the mandate of the Congress resolution."⁸

On 5th October 1920 the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee met in Patna and appointed a sub-committee consisting of Mazaharul Haque, Rajendra Prasad, Brajkishore Prasad of Darbhanga and Muhammad Shafi of Muzaffarpur to give effect to the Congress instructions about non-cooperation. Sachchidananda Sinha, who had presided over this meeting, now resigned from the Provincial Congress Committee as he was not in agreement with the changed policy of the Congress.⁹

There were changes in the executive of the Provincial Khilafat Committee also. A Semi resigned from its secretaryship and Hakim Abdul Hai of Bankipore succeeded him with Abdul Bari and Dr. Ghulam Imam as Joint Secretaries and Hassan Arzer of Phulwari and Mahmud Sher of Patna city as Asstt. Secretary.¹⁰

8. A letter by Maulana Azad, The Searchlight, Sept.19, 1920.

9. Non-cooperation and Khilafat movement in Bihar and Orissa. p.12

10. Ibid.

Many mass meetings were organised at different places which was addressed by provincial Khilafat leaders, viz., Mazharul Haque, Dr. Ghulam Imam, Hasan Arzu Abdul Bari. They delivered highly inspiring speeches.¹¹

People of Bihar, meanwhile, whole heartedly started implementing these programmes contained in the Congress resolution on non-cooperation. Students began to leave their schools and colleges. Mention may be made of the two students namely, Saiyid Mahmud Sher of Patna Law College and Abdul Bari Muhammad Saqi of Bihar National College.¹² Abdul Bari later on proved to be one of the fire brands in Bihar politics.¹³ By the end of the year (1920) several students had left their respective institutions. To accommodate these students several national schools and colleges were started by local leaders. Foundation of a national school was laid during Mahatma Gandhi's visit in Bihar in December 1920. Another national school was started at Nawada in the Gaya district and yet another one was set up at Bankipore at Patna, Prof. Kripalani performing its opening ceremony.¹⁴

11. Ibid., pp.14-15.

12. Ibid., p.11

13. Ibid., p.12

14. Ibid., pp.19-20

Those students of Patna who left their respective institutions were admitted into the Sadaquat Ashram in Patna under the charge of Mazharul Haque.¹⁵

In November 1920 several students met Dip Narayan Singh (who was acclaimed as Zaghul Pasha of India) to know his views on non-cooperation. Dip Narayan Singh advised them to adopt non-cooperation if they were prepared to accept the subsequent sacrifices but not otherwise.¹⁶

During his tour of Bihar in December 1920, Mahatma Gandhi met students in special gathering. In his programme of triple boycott - boycott of foreign goods, boycott of law courts, and boycott of government controlled colleges and schools - he now laid the greatest emphasis on the last one.¹⁷

In middle of November 1920, anti-liquor movement began to gather momentum with its beginning in the district of Shahabad. At a public meeting held on 13th November the local leaders laid emphasis on the need of abstinence from drink. Soon the campaign

15. Young India, Dec.20, 1920.

16. Fortnightly Report, for second half Nov. 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, Jan. 1921, F.No.33

17. Young India, Sept. 29, 1920.

spread in other parts of the province also and by January 1921, "it was in full swing in most districts throughout the province."¹⁸

In September 1920, meanwhile, several candidates had withdrawn their nominations from the elections which was being held under Montague-Chelmsford reforms.¹⁹ Contesting elections and entering councils, Rajendra Prasad said, was an act of cowardice, since every member took an oath "faithfully to discharge the duty" of a legislator and, therefore, no conscious person should stand for elections to wreck the Constitution, and it was better to wreck the Constitution from outside.²⁰ He further added that it was useful to concentrate on the constructive programme of the Congress to prepare the country for the Civil Disobedience.²¹

Rajendra Prasad, however, appreciated the success of the Congressmen in Bhagalpur and some other places in the municipal elections.²²

18. The non-cooperation and Khilafat movements in Bihar and Orissa, p.17

19. For example, Rajendra Prasad (North Champaran), Gorakh Prasad (South Champaran).

20. J.C. Jha, op.cit., p.205.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

Swami Bidyanand, a peasant-leader of north Bihar, "who had previously confined himself to the topics especially affecting the raiyats of Bihar plunged in politics"²³, by this time and emerged as an advocate of non-cooperation. He denounced the policies of the government in a public meeting at Bhagalpur.²⁴

Abdul Sobhani of Kanpur asked the people of Arrah in two meetings to participate in the non-cooperation movement. In the same place Ghulam Imam, on 17 September, denounced the government for the betrayal of the Muslim interests.

Mazharul Haque wrote to a Patha daily²⁵ that the non-cooperation programme had been adopted not only by the Congress but also by the Khilafat conference and the Muslim League and therefore every candidate for the election to the councils should withdraw.

In October and November 1920 non-cooperation meetings were held in Gaya, Daltonganj, Hilsa and Khusmpur, Barh, Arrah, Bakhtiarapur and Dumraon. In

23. Fortnightly Report, for first half Sept. 1920, Home Political Deposit, Sept. 1920, F.No.70

24. Ibid.

25. The Searchlight, September 19, 1920.

a meeting of the Swaraj Sabha under Wazir Hussain at Jamo Bazar in the Saran district there were 3,000 people.²⁶ Some leaders spoke on Swadeshi and others on the Panchayats and non-cooperation movement.²⁷ At Siwan Mazharul Haque's speech impressed a B.H.U., student so much so that he gave up his studies and became a non-cooperator.²⁸

During these few months, since the inception of non-cooperation movement, Bihar gave ample evidence of her fearless courage to the new programme for national struggle. Yet, Gandhi's visit in early December 1920 acted as a catalytic in arousing more support and enthusiasm amongst people. The visit, in the words of Rajendra Prasad, stirred the minds of people.²⁹

— — Mahatma Gandhi accompanied by Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Mazharul Haque toured the province, making speeches and exhorting people to adopt non-cooperation.³⁰ Mazharul Haque also spoke on many places. Subscriptions were

26. Nagendra Prasad, Indian National Movement with special reference to the districts of Old Saran, p.27.

27. The Searchlight, Nov.17, 1920.

28. Ibid., Nov.24, 1920.

29. Rajendra Pd, Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar, p.42.

30. Fortnightly Report, for first half April, 1919. Home Pol. Deposit, July 1919, F.No.46.

collected at all the meetings addressed by Mahatma Gandhi and in all Rs.7,000. was collected in cash. The women gave away their ornaments including pearls and diamond bangles and rings.³¹

The result of Mahatma Gandhi's tour to Bhagalpur was "the inauguration in that district and in the Santhal Parganas of the anti-liquor campaign."³² At Muzaffarpur Mahatma Gandhi addressed a big gathering in the Tilak Maidan.

Mahatma Gandhi was decisively in favour of the establishment of a national college in Bihar. The local leaders were, at first somewhat, hesitating in this regard due to uncertainty of funds for its maintenance as the "senior leaders had all parted company on the question of non-cooperation."³³ But Mahatma Gandhi gave them the much needed impetus by also placing at their disposal for this purpose seven or eight thousand rupees collected by him in Bihar.³⁴ Bihar National College was subsequently started on 5th January 1921.

31. Young India, Dec.20,1920.

32. Non-cooperation & Khilafat, op.cit., p.18.

33. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar, p.43.

34. Ibid.

It was again due to the influence of tour of Gandhi in December 1920 that in the beginning of 1921 some national schools were started and existing schools were nationalised by repudiation of affiliation to university and refusal to accept grants-in-aid from government.³⁵

The students of Bihar, indeed, played a significant role in the non-cooperation movement in Bihar. It is, therefore, imperative to discuss here about Bihar Students Conference, which was founded in 1906 and functioned as very important institutions till 1920-21. It was the first organisation of its kind in whole of India. At first it kept itself away from politics but its workers actively associated themselves with Mahatma Gandhi during his Bihar's visit and many of the leaders of Bihar received their early training in this organisation. At its 15th session at Daltonganj it adopted a resolution in favour of non-cooperation: "In view of the extraordinary political development in the country and in deference to the decisions arrived at by the Indian National Congress...(it) calls upon

35. Ibid.

students of Bihar and Orissa, of and above sixteen years of age, to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from government aided or controlled institutions and appeals to the guardians of those below sixteen to withdraw their wards from the same.³⁶

The local government was appalled at the rapid increase of the non-cooperation movement. It warned that if things continued like that even after Gandhi's departure the Seditious Meetings Act would be extended to certain areas.³⁷ The fortnightly Report for January 1921 noted thus "There is a vigorous campaign by the advocates of non-cooperation whose special attention has been directed to the colleges and schools, where they have been successful in influencing for the moment a large number of boys and youths and considerable unrest has been displayed in educational institutions in Patna, Tirhut and Bhagalpur districts and especially in Patna itself".³⁸ In the last fortnight of December

36. Ibid.

37. Govt. of Bihar & Orissa, Pol. Spl., File No.144 of 1920.

38. Fortnightly Report for second half November 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, Jan.1921, F.No.33.

1920 some 70 students sent applications for the withdrawal of their names from government education institutions.

By the end of 1920, thus, the movement had acquired considerable momentum.³⁹ In Patna, Tirhut, Bhagalpur Divisions it had definitely acquired firm foothold. Yet, its influence in rural areas was not very strong.⁴⁰ Similarly among Mohammadans the feeling on Khilafat question had undoubtedly become strong. Even loyal Mohammadans had started harbouring the feeling that the British Government had betrayed the Muslims.⁴¹

Apart from the boycott of schools and colleges, success attended the Non-cooperation movement in November 1920 in dissuading the voters from taking part in the election under 1919 Reforms. Only 27.3% of the Hindu voters and 12.1% of the Muslim electorates went to the polls in the towns, whereas in the rural areas

39. Fortnightly Report, for first half December, 1920. Home Pol. Deposit, Feb. 1921. F.No.35.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

41.8% of Hindus and 28.3% Muslims voted. In the Tirhut division only 13% voted but in Chota Nagpur the percentage was high.⁴²

Such was the rapid progress of non-cooperation movement in Bihar before Nagpur Session of the Congress met in December 1920. Here the Congress ratified the non-cooperation resolution of Calcutta "...in order that the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs may be redressed and Swarajya established within one year, this Congress urges upon all public bodies, whether affiliated to the Congress or otherwise, to devote their exclusive attention to the promotion of non-violence and non-cooperation with the government".⁴³

A good number of delegates from Bihar attended the Nagpur session of the Congress. They returned home imbued with a new sense which found expression in varied activities consistent with the changed programme and principles adopted there. Volunteers began to be recruited in different parts.⁴⁴ Temperance and anti-liquor campaigns were pushed on, the gospel of Swadeshi

42. Fortnightly Report, for first half October, 1919. Home Pol. Deposit, Nov. 1919, F.No.14.

43. AICC Papers, F.No.15/1920-36.

44. The non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements in Bihar & Orissa, p.26.

was preached among the masses with great zeal, and vigorous efforts were made for the formation of local panchayats and Seva Samitis. These apart attempts to foster non-cooperation in various other ways were also made. These included attempts to induce the servants of Europeans to strike for higher wages, encouragement to resort to arbitration courts.⁴⁵ Some novel techniques were also applied by local leaders. Travellers were asked to refrain from purchasing railway tickets. People were asked to register their documents with local panchayats instead of government registration offices.⁴⁶ Non-cooperators also made attempts to stir up disaffection amongst daffadars and chaukidars.⁴⁷

To carry out Nagpur Congress resolution effectively Bihar Provincial Congress Committee chalked out a set of rules and programmes, which had approval of Mahatma Gandhi: "The Provincial Congress Committee will in future control propaganda in the Mufassil District Committee will act on receipt of instructions from the Provincial Congress Committee, who will be

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

advised by a sub-committee to be called the organising committee". The members who were put on the organising committee were Mazharul Haque (Patna), Deep Narayan Singh (Bhagalpur), Brajkishore Prasad (Darbhanga), Rajendra Prasad (Patna), Dharanidhar, (Darbhanga), Md Shafi (Muzaffarpur), K.P.S. Sinha (Gaya), Abdul Bari (Patna) and Ram Binod Singh (Patna).

The organising committee, in consultation with Mahatma Gandhi appointed some leaders to implement the movement in their respective areas:

Gorakh Pd - Champaran

Brajkishore Prasad - Darbhanga

K.P.S. Sinha - Gaya

Gajadhar Pd - Bhagalpur

Bajrang Saha - Hazaribagh

Md. Shafi - Muzaffarpur

Zakaria Hashmi - Saran

Md. Zubair - Munger

The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee also framed rules, in consultation with Mahatma Gandhi for the guidance of the district committee and district organization.

The following general instructions were issued to workers:

1. The principal object was to discipline and instruct the raiyat community and this must be carefully borne in mind.

2. All acts or words tending to excite violence must be studiously avoided.
3. Attention must be given more to the work of organisation than to the delivering of speeches.
4. When speeches were necessary, only principles should be discussed and personalities avoided.
5. Facts that could not be verified must not be stated and violent or exaggerated language must not be employed.
6. Civil Disobedience did not form part of the present programme of non-cooperation. All lawful orders of Government authorities, therefore, must be obeyed.
7. Picketing, social boycott and any form of pressure, outside of moral persuasion, are repugnant to the spirit of non-violence and must be strictly avoided.
8. The activities of the workers must be confined to the organisation of Sabhas and Panchayats which would be instructed to work out the following programme:

- a) To decide all compoundable criminal cases.
- b) To provide primary education to the children of the village.
- c) To look after the sanitation of the village.
- d) To discourage the use of intoxicants.
- e) To spread Swadeshi.
- f) To raise a national fund.
- g) To organise bands of local volunteers to help the Sabhas in their work.

9. Efforts should be made to strengthen Hindu Muslim unity and all cases of friction between the ~~two~~ communities must be removed.⁴⁸

To nationalise the education in Bihar National Council of Education for Bihar was formed which comprised among others Mazharul Haque, Deep Narayan Singh, Md. Shafi, Brajkishore Prasad, Krishna Prakash Sen Sinha.⁴⁹ Rajendra Prasad was appointed principal of the National College at Patna.

New programmes and policies adopted at Nagpur session of the Congress was not welcome to all. There were leaders who disliked the new programme and found themselves misfit in new set up. Mention has already been made early as how leaders like Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha and others, professing moderate views, had

48. AICC papers, F.No.2/1921

49. Ibid.

parted company from the Congress. By February 1921 this breach had taken an organisational form, the moderates forming 'Bihar Provincial League' in Patna, under the auspices of Mr. Hasan Imam, a former veteran leader of Bihar Provincial Congress.⁵⁰ This body believed in constitutional struggle⁵¹ and was subsequently to confine its struggle within the legislature. The government of Bihar, in fact, welcomed the formation of this body, which was to provide "a means whereby a number of persons hitherto inclined to extreme views in political but nonetheless definitely opposed to Non-cooperation" were to find a voice.⁵²

These stirrings kept spreading throughout the first half of 1921. By the month of April the movement had spread in all the major divisions of Bihar and had then started penetrating the farflung and remote area - even in tribal areas of Chotanagpur.

By the month of April 1921 the Bhagalpur district had become a strong centre of non-cooperation movement.

50. Fortnightly Report, for second half January, 1921, Home Pol. Deposit, Apl. 1921. File No. 42.

51. Fortnightly Report, for second half May, 1921, Home Pol. Deposit, June 1921, F.No. 63.

52. Fortnightly Report for second half January, 1921 Home Pol. Deposit, Apl 1921, File No. 42.

Here Deep Narayan Singh toured and organised meetings throughout the district. The Commissioner of Bhagalpur noted with alarm this situation.⁵³ The movement spread to Purnea also which had so far been unaffected by it. Here the campaign was started by Rajendra Prasad who addressed meetings on 13th and 14th March.⁵⁴ The magnitude of the movement can be realised by the fact that the ferry farmers and pound keepers in Kisanganj subdivision boycotted the annual settlements under the influence of the movement. Further, when the Governor visited Bhagalpur, his visit was boycotted by the people at both the place and a hartal was observed - shops and bazars being totally shut.⁵⁵ Aborigines, who had hitherto, by and large, been unaffected, also began to join non cooperation. Since the beginning of the year non cooperators were making efforts to appeal to them.⁵⁶ The principal agitators working amongst aborigines were Ghulab Tiwari (formerly a Typist in Ranchi district Board office on

53. Fortnightly Report for first half February, 1921.
Home Pol. Deposit, April 1921, F.No.43.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

Rs.40 a month), Usmano, who was head in Anjuman Islamia Madrssa and a protege of Maheskalan Azad, Ram Chandra Prasad. Swami Biswanand, a famous labour leader of the time occasionally visited Ranchi and the coal-field areas and delivered inspiring speeches.⁵⁷ They organised meetings and delivered speeches making appeals to the sentiments of the aboriginals. They worded their speeches in such a way that no legal measure could be taken against them.⁵⁸ On 1st February, e.g., Ram Tahal Brahmachari addressed a meeting at Ranchi and declared that the Kols were the past rulers of Chotanagpur. On 12th February at Kuru, the Centre of Tan-Bhagal movement, a meeting was held and attended by 8,000 persons mostly aboriginals. The principal speakers were Ram Tahal Brahmachari and Ram Chandra Prasad. The latter pointed out that the Indians were 33 crores of people and urged them to shed their blood for their country. The letter, speaking in local dialect, told the audience that they were the original rajas and had become coolies and if they followed his advice and

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

gave up drink and, using foreign food, they would become rajas again.⁵⁹ By giving up European food, you will keep 90 ~~crores~~ crores of rupees in the country, and then you people at once will become rajas, and when all this happens the government will come to its end.⁶⁰

In the early months of 1921 Non-cooperation movement made rapid advance in Shah^abad district. A meeting was held at Piru and a Panchayat for the trial of civil and criminal cases was started. Panchayats were also started in several other villages.⁶¹ A Swaraj Sabha was formed in Bikramganj. Teachers and students of schools had begun taking interest in the movement. Some lawyers also left their practices.⁶² Non-cooperation meetings were held at several places. On the 13th February 1921, Swami Shivananda Brahmachari of the Brahmacharya Ashram, Benaras, addressed a meeting in P.S. Durgauti in which he advised the audience to

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. K.K.Datta, Freedom Movement in Bihar, pp.329-30.

62. Ibid.

join the non-cooperation movement and to start panchayats.⁶³ Rajendra Prasad addressed two meetings at Arrah and Bhabhua on 17th and 27th February, 1921 respectively. Swami Shahajanand Saraswati also addressed meetings in Arrah district and dwelt upon the virtues of noncooperation movement. By the months of February and March 1921 the non-cooperation movement had "reached the phase of intensive organisation". A police officer visiting Koath in the end of March "found the non-cooperation movement there very strong", as he writes in his own report.⁶⁴

Munger also witnessed considerable political activity under the leadership of Maulana Md. Zubair. People here observed complete hartal on the occasion of the visit of Lord Sinha, the Governor of Bihar and Orissa.⁶⁵

A meeting was held on 19th February in Lohardaga.⁶⁶ On the 16th March there was almost a complete hartal at Ranchi⁶⁷ to protest against settlement of

63. Ibid.

64. Detailed discussion appears in K.K.Datta's Freedom Movement in Bihar, p.331.

65. Fortnightly Report, for first half February, 1921. Home Pol. Deposit, Apl. 1921, F.No.43.

66. Letter from D.C. of Ranchi to Commissioner of Chotanagpur, dated Feb.24, 1921.

67. From same to same, dated 19th March, 1921.

Excise shops to some Kalals and Sundis. There was complete hartal in Purulia also on the day of excise settlement.⁶⁸ The Tana Bhagats attended the meetings organised by non-cooperation workers, and their leaders were "in touch with the non-cooperation leaders".⁶⁹ The Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi had informed the Commissioner of Chotanagpur on the 9th March 1929: "The Tana Bhagats movement continues to give trouble and there is ample evidence that the efforts of agitators to associate it with non-cooperation has given the movement new life."⁷⁰

In early March Rajendra Prasad began his tour of places like Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Daltonganj and Ranchi. Mazhaul⁴ Haque addressed a meeting in Jharia in a stirring language⁷¹. Rajendra Prasad and Swami Biswanand delivered speech on 21st March at Ranchi, and very soon, earnest efforts were made by

68. Quoted in K.K.Datta, op.cit., p.338.

69. Letter from Commissioner, Chotanagpur Division to the Chief Secretary, B&O, Govt., dated 15th April 1921.

70. K.K.Datta, op.cit., p.338.

71. Police reports quoted in K.K. Datta's Freedom Movement, p.338.

some to organise the movement in the Khunti sub-division⁷², Pt. Motilal Nehru paid a hurried visit to the coal-field areas on the 26th March 1921 and addressed meetings at Dhanbad, Jharia and Chatra.⁷³

At Saran Rajendra Prasad and Mazharul Haque took personal interest in establishments of Panchayats. Panchayats were established in a large number of villages in other districts as well. These districts were Saran, Muzaffarpur, Champaran, Darbhanga, Patna, Gaya, Shahabad, Bhagalpur, Hazaribagh, Ranchi and Palamau.⁷⁴ In a statement in March 1921, Rajendra Prasad claimed that the number of Panchayats would be several thousands.⁷⁵ Cases were tried in Panchayat courts. At some places people in their zone even resorted to social boycott to enforce their decisions.⁷⁶

At Jamshedpur the movement received tremendous thrust from the awakening among the industrial workers there. A spate of public meetings were organised here.

72. Letter from the Commissioner, Chotanagpur Division, to the Chief Secretary B&O, Govt., dated 15th Apl 1921.

73. The non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement, op.cit., p.33.

74. Ibid., p.66.

75. The Searchlight, March 16, 1921.

76. Rajendra Prasad, Autobiography, p.135.

Between 5th and 9th February, 1921 four meetings were held.⁷⁷ These were important in another respect also. On one occasion the meeting was presided over by S.K. Bhat, a clerk in the Sales Depot and also a member of the Executive of the Jamshedpur Labour Association.⁷⁸ On another occasion the meeting was presided over by Abdul Gani, a mistry of the Blast Furnaces Department and also a member of the Jamshedpur Labour Association.⁷⁹ Speakers exhorted the audience to follow the items of non-cooperation and to strive for Swaraj making personal sacrifices, even at the cost of life if necessary.⁸⁰ Again on 8th March, 1921 a mass meeting was organised (Jamshedpur). Speakers dwelt on non-cooperation and emphasised the need of boycotting goods and adopting swadeshi and giving up drinks. They also referred to the last years's labour strike (from 24th February to 20th March 1920) when on the 15th March between 8 and 9 A.M., many were "shot like dogs and beasts."⁸¹ Further a resolution was unanimously passed to stop work from 8 to 9 A.M. on the 15th March so that men would engage in silent prayer besides their respective jobs⁸²

77. K.K.Datta, Freedom Movement, p.339.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid., p.340.

81. Diary of a Sergeant of Jamshedpur, March 8, 1921, cited in K.K.Datta, op. cit., p.341.

82. Report from D.C.Chaibasa to the Commissioner of Chotanagpur Division, dated 14th March, 1921.

subsequently on 15th March a powerful hartal was observed and management of Tata Works followed the policy of non-interference.⁸³

At Chaibasa non-cooperation volunteers came from outside (March 1921). As a result of their meetings and activities for liquor shops not a single bid was obtained.⁸⁴

Santhal Parganas also came under the influence of the movement. The students of the Jamtara H.E. School boycotted it on the 31st January 1921.⁸⁵ The students of this school also passed a resolution demanding a national school there. Excise sales were very much affected throughout the district.⁸⁶ On 26th February a public meeting, addressed by Danshananda, a non-cooperation leader, was organised, in which Santhal (not less than 20) also attended. Danshananda exhorted the Santhalis to give up drinking.⁸⁷

83. K.K.Datta, Freedom Movement in Bihar, p.342.

84. Letter from D.C. to Commissioner, Chotanagpur Division, 16th/17th March, 1921.

85. Letter from SDO, Jamtara to the DC, Santhal Parganas, dated 22nd Feb. 1922.

86. Letter from SDO Deogarh to D.C. Santhal Parganas, dated 2 Feb. 1921.

87. Letter from Jamtara to the DC, Santhal Parganas, dated 2nd March 1921.

GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE

The local government viewed the situation with serious concern and took all possible measures to counter it. The Government of India had issued a communique in November 1920 stating that the Government "had not instituted criminal proceedings as the leaders of the non-cooperation movement had advocated abstention from violence and that they had instructed local Governments to take action against those persons only who in furtherance of the movement had gone beyond the limits originally set by its organisers and had by speech or writing incited the public to violence or had attempted to tamper with the loyalty of the army or the police."⁸⁸

But within a few months the government began to follow a policy of severe repression, Bihar being subjected to it on an intensive scale. On 31st January 1921 the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bihar and Orissa, Mr. G.Rainy, issued a circular to all the Magistrates and Collectors. It stated that the attitude of the government of Bihar and Orissa had been misinterpreted as implying either a reluctance

88. K.K.Datta, Freedom Movement in Bihar, p.344.

to deal with the movement due to the fear or else indifference to the dangers which such a movement must carry with it. It further added that the Government viewed the movement with utter disapproval as tending to lawlessness and ultimately to anarchy and that they will not hesitate to employ all lawful and reasonable means to combat it. The circular asked every officer to realise this point of view.⁸⁹ It further asked the Govt. officers to combat the movement by propaganda and enlisting active support of all who were loyal to the existing system of Government and especially landed classes. It further stated that Government officers must refrain from lending the smallest support or sympathy to the movement and do everything to combat the agitation.⁹⁰

This circular was immediately followed by another circular from Mr. Rainy, which stated the specific measures which were to be adopted vis-a-vis the non-cooperation movement.⁹¹ This circular, apart from

89. Ibid., p.345

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid., pp.347-49

suggesting various preventive and punitive measures against the non-cooperators, also came with some novel suggestions. It stated that where lawlessness should take the form of hat looting, the leading Zamindars of the district should be invited to organize their own peons and servants in defence of their markets and property.⁹² The circular further stated that peons and servants of the Zamindars might be enrolled as special constables. It further stated: "the extent to which action may be necessary...with naturally vary according to the circumstances of each districts and it is not possible therefore for the Government to do more than indicates the general outlines of measures which they would approve".⁹³

After this circular the Government officers began to follow a policy of repression on a large scale in different ways. Rajendra Prasad was served with a notice on the 17th February for his non-compliance with District Magistrate's order prohibiting him from entering Arrah under Criminal Penal Code 144. The S.D.O. of Bhabua asked men "not to hold any public

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

meeting not only on public roads or public parks but also in private places." Darbhanga and Champaran also witness^{ed} ruthless repression. SDO of Sitamarhi served a notice under Criminal Penal Code 144 on Brahmachari Ramacharya, who had addressed a public meeting, forbidding him to make any speech whatever to any gathering in any part of Sitamarhi sub-division during one month from the day of the order.⁹⁴ He also order restricting despatch of any telegram which was "objectionable".⁹⁵

On 8 February, 1921 there was to be a meeting at village Khanwaghat in Sitamarhi sub-division. However the organisers were served with a notice under Criminal Penal Code 144 forbidding them to address the meeting withⁱⁿ ten miles for a period of 14 days.⁹⁶ A notice was served under Section 107 Criminal Penal Code on Jaynandan Jha, a school teacher at Hajipur to show cause why he should not execute a bond of Rs.2,000 with two sureties of Rs.1,000 each to maintain peace for one year, on the allegations that he had exhorted

94. The Searchlight, Feb.20,1921.

95. The Searchlight, March 20, 1921.

96. The Searchlight, July 11, 1921.

the audience in a meeting to refuse to pay chaukidari tax. Satyanand Bharati was served with a similar notice. Similarly Ram Binode Singh and Maulana Md. Shafi were prevented from making speeches within the jurisdiction of the Hajpur Subdivision. The SDO of Hajpur Mr. Homi also tried to utilise the chaukidari union Presidents and the chaukidars to combat the Non-cooperation movement.⁹⁷

On 10th February, when a meeting was to be addressed by Maulvi Md. Shafi, Secretary, District Congress Committee, Muzaffarpur and some others, the SDO served a notice forbidding speakers to make any speech to any gathering of ten or more persons in any place during the next two months.⁹⁸ Notice was also served on one congress worker Jadunandan Mishra, who had cited the famous poem "phirangiya" before a gathering of 5000-6000 people in the Khilafat Maidan of Sitamarhi.⁹⁹

97. The Searchlight, February, 23, 1921.

98. The Searchlight, February 20, 1921.

99. Phirangiya in Bhojpuri written by Manoranjan Pd. Sinha was printed and distributed throughout the Tirhut Division.

On the occasion of Hardi Mela, a locally important fair, somebody shouted 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai' upon which the local officers took offence against the organiser of the Mela, Hardi Babu, who was an influential zamindar of the area.¹⁰⁰

Many other measures of repression were taken. In February 1921 Mr. S.S.Sibton, Secretary to the Government, Financial department issued a circular whereby Excise department was instructed to bring to the notice of local magistrates all the cases where shops were being picketed...

In another circular Government instructed the Municipalities and District Boards to take action against Non-cooperation movement.¹⁰¹ The circular ran as follows:

"The Chairmen of District Boards and Municipalities are requested to report through the usual channel what measures they have adopted to give effect to the suggestions of Government". Rajendra Prasad denounced this circular in strong terms: "It is of

100. The Searchlight, March 15, 1921.

101. Ibid.

course a preposterous claim to regard elected and nominated non-official members of District. Boards and Municipalities as Government servants and it is beyond the authority of Government to lay down for them any code of conduct in their individual capacity.¹⁰²

Gandhiji in an article in "Repression in Bihar" published in Young India (2nd March 1921) expressed his opinion: "Repression is most rampant in Bihar because the officials have become daring under the cover of an Indian Governor. Lord Sinha has become a shield for official offenders".¹⁰³

Apart from severe repression, the Government resorted to other measures also to counter the movement. All officers from the village chaukidar upwards including rural Registrars were asked to go round and discuss with the people, give speeches and to threaten and intimidate them. The Government also asked some educated people "to compose poems suitable for raiyats, students and lawyers."¹⁰⁴ to keep their allegiance intact. Also a publicity bureau under a senior officer of

102. Ibid.

103. The Searchlight, March 13, 1921.

104. Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa, p.35.

Education service was organised.¹⁰⁵ The Government also activated the missionaries into action so that aboriginals were not affected by non-cooperation movement. By this time Tana Bhagats had become active in the Chota Nagpur region. Fortnightly report noted: "The Tana Bhagat leaders, however, are not amenable to ordinary influence and a recrudescence of that movement is to be apprehended."¹⁰⁶

PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT

Despite the repressive measures of the local government the leaders of the non-cooperation remained undeterred. They tried their utmost to propogate the ideals of non-cooperation. On some occasions they resorted to wild rumours viz. the local leaders of Palamu told the Nunas that British raj was to cease on April 1 and all the officials will leave their posts on this date and so the local inhabitants would distill out their will.¹⁰⁷

105. Ibid.

106. Fortnightly Report for second half April, 1921. Home Pol. Deposit, June 1921, F.No.51.

107. Fortnightly Report for second half April, 1921, Home Pol. Deposit, April, 1921, F.No.51

On 31st March and 1st April, 1921, AICC met ~~at~~ Bezarada and declared the Government's repressive policy to be "totally unwarranted by the situation in the country". It also opined that the country is not yet sufficiently disciplined, organised for immediate ^ktaking _^up of civil disobedience. It also passed a resolution asking people to concentrate on three points:

- 1) bringing the All India Tilak Swaraj Fund to one crore of rupees
- 2) putting on the Congress register one crore of members.
- 3) introducing in the village and cities twenty lakhs of charkhas.

All these were to be completed by 30th June next, respective provinces contributing according to the ratio of its population.¹⁰⁸

Bihar responded to this resolution very promptly. Rajendra Prasad during Satyagraha week (6 to 11 April) appealed to the people to make the aforementioned programme successful. Satyagraha day (6th April) was duly observed at Patna. Rajendra Prasad declared: "The present movement of non-cooperation was more important than Satyagraha. With the latter sought to remove a single act of injustice the former wanted to solve

108. P.C. Bamford, Histories of the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements, p.27

the question of Khilafat and the Punjab and to prevent their revenue and to secure the power.¹⁰⁹

During the Satyagraha week a second hartal was observed in most of ^{the} districts. Attempts were also made to raise funds for Tilak swarajya Fund. At the same time efforts were also made to enrol as many members as possible in the Congress register. As a result of this a sum of rupees seven and half lakhs were collected and large number of people enrolled as Congress members. By ^{the} end of June 1921 a strong congress organisation was built here which "stood the test of time and Government repression".¹¹⁰ Bihar's role in the movement was recognised by Congress by giving her a seat in AICC in July 1921.

By May 1921, the movement had enveloped almost all parts of Bihar and the Government noted it with a serious concern. The growing incidence of meetings, demonstrations and other political activities had resulted into diminished respect for the government and its authority.¹¹² In the first half of May when

109. K.K.Datta, op.cit., p.371.

110. Rajendra Prasad; Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar, p.47

111. Fortnightly Report, for first half, April, 1921. Home Pol. Deposit, June 1921, F.No.13.

two persons were being prosecuted under Sec. 506 of the Indian Penal Code at the time of trial a considerable crowd assembled in the neighbourhood of the trying Magistrate's court. After a sentence of three months rigorous imprisonment had been served the crowd hailed the prisoners and refused to disperse. Eventually the DSP was obliged to escort the prisoners to the jail on foot and a crowd of about 400 persons followed them. The crowd consisted "principally of boys, irresponsible youths and low caste persons".¹¹² A similar incident occurred at Patna. A big mob escorted 4 members of Indian club when they turned to appear in the court. The judge avoided the ugly situation by postponing the date of paying the fine.¹¹³

These apart the respect for the ruling race had also vanished. Several assaults were made on Europeans three of them in Champaran district alone.¹¹⁴ Four more cases of assault on Europeans in Jamshedpur

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid.

was reported.¹¹⁵ These incidences indicate a state of feeling amongst the masses in which anything could have happened.

A surcharged condition like mentioned above existed by now. Though non-violence was the accepted creed of non-cooperation movement, people in their enthusiasm and excitement went beyond the limit of non-violence. At some places in north Bihar and Bhagalpur district there was some departure from it when persons driven by economic distress, caused by scarcity of food, looted hats (village markets).

But "very few of the cases, however, were serious and the outbreak was due rather to the excitement produced by the agitation than to instigation of any responsible leaders, many of whom as far as could be ascertained, were doing their best to prevent such occurrences."¹¹⁶ They were never oblivious of the consequences of the violence.

115. Ibid.

116. The Non-cooperation and Khilafat, op.cit., p.27

BRIEF LULL IN THE MOVEMENT

Any movement cannot remain at a same pitch for all the time. Many months had elapsed since the beginning of the movement in September 1920, but no tangible results had come so far. So a brief period of lull and declining enthusiasm had begun by the beginning of June 1921. According to a Government report even the popularity of Gandhiji had declined. SP of Gaya reported in June 1921 that "Gandhiji Ki Jai is less frequently heard than Bharat Mata Ki Jai."¹¹⁷ The number of meetings in practically all the districts declined. The tone of the leaders also became softer.¹¹⁸ In Bhagalpur, Dip Narayan Singh went out of his way to explain that Europeans and police officers should not be abused and that there should be no interference with the administration of the government.¹¹⁹

The temperance campaign had also slackened now. Gandhiji, when he became aware of this demoralisation, offered to come to Bihar but Rajendra Prasad wired

117. Fortnightly Report for first half of May, 1921: Home Pol. Deposit, June, 1921, F.No.46 and Fortnightly Report for second half of May, 1921: Home Pol. Deposit, June, 1921, F.No.63.

118. Ibid.

119. Ibid.

him that "there was no occasion for him to come, and that his presence was not likely to assist in the collection of funds or enlistment of Congressmen."

This ebb of the movement continued till July. The reports from every quarter contained in the Fortnightly Report suggest a similar tenor from every order.¹²⁰ The leaders had started quarreling amongst themselves, their followers were throughly discontented and the general public had begun to view with dislike even those features of the movement which at first had appealed to them.¹²¹ There were many causes for this - the most important was the Hindu Mohammadan split over the question of cow-killing.¹²² The leaders also lost in popularity and influence owing to the incessant demands for funds for which no adequate result had so far appeared.¹²³ Other causes

120. Fortnightly Report for second half June, 1921.
Home Pol. Deposit, July 1921, F.No.1

121. Ibid.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

which might be mentioned ~~are~~ the claim of the higher castes at the levelling tendency of the movement and His Excellency the Viceroy's interview with Mahatma Gandhi immediately followed by the apology of Ali brothers. For more than one district the story had become that Gandhi was gained by the Viceroy.¹²⁴

However, during this period some items of non-cooperation were still carried on. The temperance campaign was one as such. It made considerable progress in the districts of Gaya, Patna and Shahabad districts. In Gaya Parsis held a meeting at which resolutions were framed that they would no longer force settlement of toddy trees.¹²⁵ In Purnea and some other districts particularly in Bhagalpur district, Government cattle pounds were boycotted.¹²⁶

The non-cooperation had achieved greater success in their attack on the liquor shop than in any other direction, but it proved to be shortlived. Thus the collector of Munger reported in July 1921:

124. Ibid.

125. The non-cooperation & Khilafat Movements in Bihar & Orissa, p.45

126. Ibid., p.47. Also in Fortnightly Report for second half June, 1921, Home Pol. Deposit of July 1921, F.No.1

"Picketing is a thing of past".¹²⁷ Similar reports were sent from Patna and Gaya.¹²⁸ Similarly "the Pamhayats and the Seva Samitis had become unpopular."¹²⁹

MAHATMA GANDHI'S VISIT OF BIHAR AND FURTHER PROGRESS OF MOVEMENT

The movement had, however, not died down. It showed signs of progress by the end of July and definite signs emerged after the visit of Gandhi in Bihar. Gandhiji visited Bihar with a view to promoting the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity on the eve of forthcoming Bakr-id festival. But this visit had another effect also which was to revive and re^en^hthuse the declining interest of masses in the movement. His party included Mohammad Ali and many others. These leaders addressed public meeting in Shahabad, Gaya and Patna and preached Hindu-Muslim unity.¹³⁰

On the 16th August, 1921 a meeting of the AICC was held in Sadaquat Ashram. The members present

127. Fortnightly Report, for second half June, 1921, Home Pol. Deposit, July 1921. F.No.1

128. Ibid.

129. Ibid.

130. Fortnightly Report, Home Deptt. Politics of August 1921, F.No.18 of August, 1921.

were Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Mohammad Ali and Seth Jamna Lal Bajaj. The meeting decided to organise an effective boycott of foreign cloth before the end of September through the agency of volunteers who were to collect foreign cloths by house to house visits. The meeting also decided to spend one-fourth of local Swaraj Fund for the encouragement of hand spinning and distribution of Khaddar.¹³¹

The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee also met towards the end of August and decided to take certain steps to make boycott of foreign cloth effective by 30th September next.¹³² It also issued a circular to the district congress committees warning them that though the time is not ripe, the question of Civil Disobedience has not been abandoned and they should be prepared to introduce civil disobedience as soon as the instructions to do so were received. In the meantime the circular added, they should

131. Ibid.

132. Ibid.

complete the organisation of village and thana committees to revive interest in the movement.¹³³

The leaders in Bihar now concentrated fully on boycott of foreign clothes with special effort being made at Bhagalpur, the principal centre of clothes distribution in the province. Lala Lajpat Rai was invited to this place to provide more momentum to movement. On 28 August 1921 the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee hoped that despite official threats the people would continue the propaganda of Swadeshi and by 30 September they would complete boycott of foreign goods.¹³⁴

Subsequently many cloth merchants signed undertaking to buy and sell no more foreign cloth. The proponents of boycott also argued that the Government in India existed only for trade and if the Manchester trade with India was killed, the present government would automatically disappear.¹³⁵ In Munger and

133. Ibid.

134. The Searchlight, Aug. 31, 1921.

135. Fortnightly Report, Home Deptt. Political, 18 of Sept. 1921.

Bhagalpur many merchants assured Gandhi that they would no more get foreign cloth.¹³⁶ Again in Patna city the weavers and cloth sellers met and assured the Congressmen especially Gandhi that they would not buy foreign raw thread.¹³⁷ At Muzaffarpur lady volunteers, lawyers and the youth in general approached the people with national songs to use Khadi and collected foreign cloth.¹³⁸

Cloth merchants and weavers of Bihar/Sharif also signed a pledge on 29th September 1921 not to purchase foreign cloth.¹³⁹ One hundred cloth merchants signed a pledge at Muzaffarpur to stop orders for foreign cloths for six months and the drivers and the owners of the house carriages decided not to carry foreign clothes.¹⁴⁰ In November the cloth merchants took a similar pledge. They pledged to pay a fine Rs.100 per bale of cloth in case of its breach. In case of not paying fines they agreed that their shops could be boycotted.¹⁴¹

136. Home Pol., File 400 of 1921.

137. Pol. Spl., File 410 of 1921.

138. The Searchlight, Oct.20,1921.

139. The Searchlight, Oct.7, 1921.

140. The Searchlight, Oct.21,1921.

141. The Searchlight, 26 Oct. 1921.

Though the non-cooperation movement was being implemented very vigorously in all parts of Bihar, it was most active in the district of Champaran of Tirhut Division in north Bihar.¹⁴² This area was considered a hot-bed of non-cooperators and the district Magistrate was so much worried that he wanted permission from the government to enforce the seditious meetings Act against the non-cooperators.¹⁴³ At times it became difficult to carry the movement in an orderly fashion and so some amount of violence also took place there. We have an instance of looting and burning of Chanterine factory. On the whole situation had become highly explosive and the government records reveal that the government was highly nervous.¹⁴⁴

The leaders of Bihar Provincial Congress wanted to lift the movement to a higher pitch. The measures adopted so far had yielded no results. The Congress had not yet approved of Civil Disobedience movement.

142. Fortnightly Report, Home Deptt. Political, F.No.18 of Oct.1921.

143. Ibid.

144. Fortnightly Report, Home Political, F.No.18 of Nov.1921.

But the people of Bihar were seriously discussing its introduction in Bihar.¹⁴⁵ A government report suggests that even before AICC approved of civil disobedience it ~~had~~ actually started in Bihar. In two police stations of Purnea district people combined against payment of the chaukidari tax.¹⁴⁶ In another ^{a muhammadan} instance the tenants of [^] zamindar refused to pay rent in some villages but this was said to be due to some difference between the landlord and tenants.¹⁴⁷

The political situation had thus become very volatile in Bihar. Any opposition to the movement was looked down upon by people. It had the impact on moderate politics of Bihar also.¹⁴⁸ Combined with the force of the popular feeling amongst the masses the overtures made by the non-cooperators to the moderates brought them to their side.¹⁴⁹ A government ^e report remarks that "moderates have a good deal ^{of} sympathy

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid.

148. Fortnightly Report, Home Deptt. Political,
F.No. 18 of Jan.1922.

149. Ibid.

with the extremists and feel that if they fail to criticise and denounce the Government they would probably offend their constituents.¹⁵⁰

The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee deliberately avoided any deliberate violent clash with the Government. A resolution of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee on January 12, 1922 ran as follows: "Volunteers are strictly prohibited from saying in a court or a thana that government service is forbidden (by religion), from reading the Fatwa and making any sort of noise there. Volunteers are prohibited from carrying on any sort of picketing work or making noise in the road after having assembled there or crying loudly near a jail."¹⁵¹ This was possibly with a view to denying any opportunity to the government of suppressing the movement.

Meantime the Government arrested (on 14th September) Ali brothers and many others including Shankaracharya. They were arrested because of the resolution of Karachi Khilafat conference which in the opinion of Government which amounted to tampering with

150. Ibid.

151. Ibid.

the loyalty of ~~the soldiers~~. This led to much excitement throughout the country and hundreds of meetings began to be held where Karachi resolution was repeated word by word.¹⁵²

Protest meetings began to be held in Bihar at all important places. On 21st September a cloth boycott meeting was held at Patna city and Dr. Syed Mahmood expressed that the Muhammadans of Bihar shared the sentiments of this resolution and were prepared to join the Ali brothers in prison.¹⁵³

On 30th September Khaddar processions were taken out and meetings were held at Patna, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur and other places. A bonafire of foreign cloth was organised at these places.¹⁵⁴

According to a Government report: "the situation was such as to give cause for considerable disquietude to Government. A vast amount of excellent organisation had been going on for some time, particularly in Bihar, obviously with a purpose. The situation was undoubtedly fraught with dangerous possibilities."¹⁵⁵

152. Gandhi intensified the campaign by deciding to tear off his cloth on 21st Sept. and became 'half naked fakir'.

153. Non-cooperation & Khilafat Movements in Bihar AND Orissa, p.65.

154. Ibid.

155. Ibid., p.66.

In early October 1921, Bihar Provincial conference met in Arrah under Maulvi Md. Shafi as president. It endorsed the Karachi resolution and also passed a resolution to boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales. Many other resolutions were also passed.¹⁵⁶

On 1st November 1921, Ali brothers were sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment. This punishment further fuelled the ongoing Non-cooperation movement. Meeting on 4th November, the AICC authorised "every province, on its own responsibility, to undertake Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes" under certain circumstances, including the full adoption of Swadeshi by each individual or the majority in such area ready for civil disobedience.¹⁵⁷

156. The Searchlight, Oct.7, 1921.

157. Certain pre-conditions were set forth for civil registers viz., must know hand spinning, must have discarded foreign cloth, must be believer in Hindu-Muslim unity, must believe in non-violence and abhorre untouchability.

But only a fortnight later the working committee meeting in Bombay, following violence in that city.¹⁵⁸ postponed the civil disobedience planned for Bardoli.¹⁵⁹ and called for the recruitment of volunteers pledged to non-violence.¹⁶⁰

Bihar National volunteer corps (Bihar Qaumi Sevak Dal) was formed in pursuance of the AICC decision in Bombay. Its members were from amongst the Congress workers to maintain peace in the province.¹⁶¹ Its members also took pledge of non-violence. Its headquarters was established at Muzaffarpur. But on December 19, 1921 the Government of Bihar and Orissa declared the Congress volunteers and the Khilafat volunteers to be unlawful associations.¹⁶²

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158. The violence occurred in the wake of Prince of Wales' visit in that city on 17th November and was marked by excesses, directed against those who had participated in the reception accorded to him.
159. Bardoli was chosen because Mahatma Gandhi wanted to experiment the new programme under his personal guidance here.
160. AICC, which met in Bombay on Nov.23, resolved for this.
161. See Appendix XV in K.K.Datta's Freedom Movement in Bihar.
162. Mazharul Haque by Dr. Qeyamuddin Ahmad and Jata Shankar Jha, p.62.

The Government could not view these developments with ease. It aggravated their anxiety. They, therefore, reacted by making countrywide arrests of prominent leaders such as Desbandhu Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pt. Motilal Nehru and many others. In Bihar also the local leaders were arrested in places like Muzafarpur, Munger, Hazaribagh, Gaya and Chapra. Prominent among the arrested were Jagat Narayan Lal, Krishna P. Sen Sinha, Maulavi Khurshid Husnyan, Janakdhar Prasad, Shah Md. Zubair, Krishna Sinha and many others.¹⁶³ About 150 volunteers were also arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment but their places were soon taken up by new recruits.¹⁶⁴ On 10th December the Congress and volunteers offices at various places were rigorously searched and their registers and records were seized and destroyed.¹⁶⁵

163. Proceedings of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, vol.IV, Jan.-Feb.1922, p.8.

164. Proceedings of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, vol.VI, Jan.-Feb. 1922, p.45.

165. Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements in Bihar & Orissa, p.85.

When the Prince of Wales visited Patna on December 22 and 23, there was a complete hartal at Patna. Every shop in the city was closed and the main thoroughfares were almost empty-no vehicles plying for hire, and no crowds lining on the streets along which the procession passed.

Bihar received appreciation in Young India of December 1921 for its spirit of struggle and patience: "Bihar is a province which has kept most non-violent. It has shown splendid results in most items of non-cooperation. Whereas eighteen months ago the charkha and the use of khadi were unknown to Bihar, its villages today contain thousands of them and thousands of men and women now habitually wear khadi. It contains both amongst its Hindu and Musalmans probably the most selfless workers throughout India who work silently and without bragging. None has uttered a whisper about the sincerity of its leaders. And yet even Bihar has come in for this ruthless interference with peaceful activity.¹⁶⁶

166. Young India, Dec.22, 1921.

Thus towards the close of 1921 Bihar was fully in the mainstream of national struggle.¹⁶⁷ and the local Government found the "general political situation as 'quiet on the surface with a good deal of underground agitation going on' or disquieting under-currents."¹⁶⁸ More important, the masses were now ready to act and were waiting orders from Gandhi.¹⁶⁹

167. People were refusing to believe even in the legitimacy of the British govt. to rule. When Raja Kalika Prasad was prosecuted in Oct. 25, 1921 at Jammi, he remarked in the court room: "As a citizen of free India, I do not recognise the jurisdiction over one of a foreign court. As a non-cooperator. I owe allegiance only to the Congress, the popularly and properly constituted government of this country. Before this court, therefore, I can only appear as a prisoner of war and as such I have no defence to offer." *d*
The Motherland, Nov. 1, 1921.

168. Fortnightly Report, Home Deptt. Political, File No. 18 of February 1922.

169. Ibid.

CHAPTER III

NON-COOPERATION AND ITS AFTERMATH (1922)

The Government of Bihar and Orissa had viewed the movement very seriously and, as discussed in the previous chapter, had launched counter measures, which, however, did not dissuade many people from continuing the movement. The movement still continued vigorously and there was hardly any part of Bihar which remained unaffected. Indeed, it had caught the imagination of the masses. While the movement was thus progressing, the Indian National Congress met in December 1921 at Ahmedabad.

The session of the Congress was held on 27th and 28th December.¹ The resolutions passed here were not new ones but they ratified the resolutions passed at Calcutta and Nagpur. This congress reiterated its fixed determination "to continue the programme of non-violent-non-cooperations with greater vigour than hitherto, in such manner as each province may

1. The Searchlight, Dec.30, 1921.

determine till the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs are redressed and Swarajya is established and the control of the Government of India passes into the hands of the people from that of an irresponsible corporation".² The Ahmedabad Congress also affirmed that "civil disobedience is the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion" and therefore advised people to organise civil disobedience and mass civil disobedience.³

From Bihar a good number of delegates⁴ came to attend the session of the Ahmedabad Congress. Bihar received due importance because from amongst its delegates twenty-two were given a place on the Subjects Committee of the Ahmedabad Congress. A remarkable feature of Bihar was that the Bihari leaders always stood behind Mahatma Gandhi, be it Bardoli decision or any other point. They seem to have implicit faith in the person of Mahatma Gandhi.

2. AICC papers. F.No.3/1921.

3. Ibid.

4. The total number of delegates who visited Ahmedabad Congress was 558.

At Ahmedabad Congress also, Bihar solidly stood behind Mahatma Gandhi, utilising its weightage gained under the new constitution of the Congress.

PROGRESS OF MOVEMENT IN BIHAR AFTER AHMEDABAD CONGRESS

After returning from the Ahmedabad Session of Congress the leaders of Bihar concentrated their energies to the task of implementing the Congress resolution. Accordingly a meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee was held on 5th January 1922 at Patna, to discuss the future plan of action in the light of the Ahmedabad resolutions. Here decision was however taken not to introduce the civil disobedience immediately and emphasis was laid, for the time being of course, to concentrate on recruitment of volunteers.⁵ To streamline the organisation of the movement Bihar Provincial Congress Committee also decided to issue following instructions to the District Congress Committee:⁶

5. The Motherland, Jan 9, 1922.

6. Ibid.

- i) Civil disobedience, both individual or mass, should be undertaken only under authority from Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and
- ii) Certain conditions would have to be fulfilled before civil disobedience could be started viz. in that area Swadeshi should have been fully popularised, people should have faith in non-violence and they should also abhor untouchability.

The Bihar Provincial Congress Committee also chalked out rules and regulations for organisation of volunteers with utmost emphasis on non-violence.⁷

Leaders of Bihar were very particular that movement should not become violent. At Munger, in a public meeting on 5th January the leaders requested the public not to offer any resistance to the attachment of property by the police for the realisation of fines. However, they were also advised not to render any sort of help to the police in carrying out the attached property and not to purchase

7. Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa, p.92

these at auction sales.⁸ It was because of this reason that the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee on 12th January 1922 passed a resolution wherein it strictly prohibited the Congress volunteers and workers from picketing work or saying in a court or a thana that Government service was forbidden (by religion) or reading Fatwa or making any sort of noise there.⁹

But the enthusiasm of the masses knew no bounds and they hardly observed these structures of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee. They continued with picketing as before.¹⁰ In Sitamarhi town large mobs were reported 'to be moving in Mahua Para, Lalganj, Paltipur and other thanas'.¹¹ At Mahua the mob even abused the police at thana. At Majipur a crowd paraded in front of the police station and used *obscene* language against the police.¹² At Raghupur police station in the same district three hundred volunteers appeared and told the Sub-Inspector

8. The Motherland; Jan 16, 1922.

9. Fortnightly Report, Home deposit political of Jan 1922, Feb. No.18 of Jan 1922.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

that on the 11th of January they would plant the Swaraj flag in the compound and take possession of the police station.¹³ Similar incidents were reported to the Superintendent of Police from other police stations also.¹⁴

At Patna on 10th January 1922 when the District Magistrate was holding a revenue sale the local Congress volunteers turned up there and did not allow anyone to enter his court. Subsequently the District Magistrate had to conduct the sale from the verandah and one person came forward. The ~~crowd~~ became infuriated whereupon police escort had to be provided to this person to go home.¹⁵ A similar situation according to the Fortnightly Report of January obtained in Saran and Champaran where situation had become 'explosive'.¹⁶

On the January 12, 1922 a public meeting was held at Patna, presided over by Dr. Warris, wherein resolutions were passed praising those who had been

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

convicted. The resolution ran as follows: "The citizens of Patna, in a public meeting assembled, offer their heartiest congratulations to Maulvi Khurshid Hushain, Babu Jagat Narayan Lal¹⁷ and Krishna Prakash Sen Sinha upon their cheerful acceptance of the sentences of imprisonment by the agents of the bureaucracy and assure them of their resolve to continue their noble work till India is fully liberated."¹⁸

Muzaffarpur district had become the 'storm centre of non-cooperation' activity of Bihar by

17. When Jagat Narain Lal was arrested, his wife took it very proudly. In a letter to him she wrote: "My heart was gladdned... On hearing the happy news of your arrest I deemed myself fortunate and began to eulogise my luck. My only request to the almighty Father is that wherever you be you may remain happy and despite of a thousand miseries you remain firm in your pious resolve... I heartily congratulate you upon this good luck and hope, O patriot, you will gladly accept it." A letter to Babu Jagat Narain Lal from his wife from Gorakhpur, dated 9th December 1921, The Motherland, Jan 12, 1922.

18. Ibid., Jan 12, 1922.

January, 1922.¹⁹ In the Sitamarhi Sub-division alone over 20,000 people were said to have been recruited from other parts of the district.²⁰ Here intensive picketing of liquor shops was also being carried out.²¹ The situation elsewhere in the province was not much different. By February 1922 picketing of liquor shops had assumed massive proportions every where.²²

By February 1922 the movement was getting stronger in new areas also. This especially related to tribal areas of Palamu, which had hitherto been comparatively free from trouble saw the aboriginals coming into the fold of the movement.²³

Around this time agrarian discontent in Purnea got mixed up with the nationalist fervour. It was rumoured that Swaraj was around the corner whereupon

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19. Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements in Bihar and Orissa; p.92. Also Home Deposit Political of Jan 1922, F.No.18 of Jan 1922.
20. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of Jan 1922, F.No.18 of Jan 1922.
21. Ibid, Report of Excise commissioner.
22. Fortnightly Report: Home Departt. Political of Feb.1922, F.No.18 of Feb 1922.
23. Ibid.

in Rupauli Police station the Sub-Inspector and the few policemen were defied by a party in a land dispute which later looted the crops of disputed land with the cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai'. In the Forbesganj police station about three hundred people attacked and demolished a pound at Dhanaha and raised a Congress flag over the ruins.²⁴

On February 5, 1922 when three liquor shop picketeers were being taken away by police and chaukidars to the area police station the latter were attacked by a big mob of a thousand people shouting the usual non-cooperations slogans. The chawkidars fled but the policemen had to release the prisoners after suffering physical injuries.²⁵

The leaders of the non-cooperation movement in Bihar also tried to rally behind them the opinions of the moderate sections on the issues of freedom of speeches and association for political purposes. It may be recalled here that the Government had declared the Congress Volunteers Association illegal.

24. Pol Special File 146, 1922, Confidential Diary, 16 Jan 1922.

25. Ibid., S.P.Purnea, Confidential Diary, 8 Feb 1922.

In their attempts the local leaders were quite successful as the moderates in legislative council moved resolutions asking for the release of all persons convicted under the criminal law amendment Act, and for appointment of an advisory committee to decide on the prosecution of political workers.²⁶ Now the local government also could expect very little practical help from them. ~~Abstention~~ criticism or from voting against the Government was as far as they would go.²⁷ This volte face of the moderates in favour of the movement was, in the view of local Government, because they were afraid of antagonising their constituents by not sympathising with the non-cooperators.²⁸ But possibly the truth was that as the movement caught the imagination of the masses no section dared to oppose it openly. That was possibly why the moderate opinion swung in favour of non-cooperators.

26. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of Jan 1922, F.No.18 of Jan 1922.

27. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of Feb 1922, F.No.18 of Feb.1922.

28. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of Jan 1922, F.No.18 of Jan 1922.

The fortnightly report of February, 1922 described the general political scenario as 'quiet on the surface' with a good deal of underground agitation going on²⁹ The Govt. of Bihar and Orissa also saw 'disquieting undercurrents'³⁰.

The non-cooperation movement was thus being effectively implemented in Bihar as in other part of India. Keeping in mind the successful operation of the movement Gandhi announced on February 1, 1922 that he would start mass civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes unless within seven days the political prisoners were released and the press freed from govt. control. But soon the mood of struggle was transformed into a retreat after the Chauri-Chaura incident and subsequently Gandhi's call of halt to the movement. On 5th February 1922 an angry mob in the village Chauri-Chaura in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh set on fire the thana and burnt alive twenty two policemen. It gave a terrible shock to Mahatma Gandhi, who at once called a halt to the mass civil disobedience movement. The working committee

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

of the Congress met at Bardoli on 12th February, 1922 and suspended the civil disobedience and asked the country to work for the national schools and Charkha. However, voluntary hartals were allowed through peaceful methods by people of tested character.³¹

REPRESSION

The Government of Bihar and Orissa, which had already let loose the state machinery of repression, became more alarmed over recent developments and made up their mind by January 1922 to crush the movement even more ruthlessly. The government geared up its police department in particular and bureaucracy in order to launch offensive counter measure against the Provincial Congress and leaders and volunteers, by raiding congress offices and seizing documents and arresting congress volunteers and terrorizing the villagers, who had recently gained political awareness. January 1922 was possibly the month when all round offensive throughout the province of Bihar was made. The first half of January witnessed the

31. The Searchlight, Feb 15, 1922. Rajendra Prasad sent a message to Patna regarding this.

police in action at Deoghar, Madhur, Rajmahal, Dumka, Purulia, Motihari, Bettiah and Munger.³²

At these places police searched the offices of the congress and seized the documents.

On some occasions police even tried to instigate violence. Thus when a public meeting was being held at Madhurpur in Deoghar on 3 January 1922, the police entered the meeting in plain clothes and forcibly dispersed the meeting without any previous notice. They even 'tried to bring about violence'.³³

On January 22, the police officer of Deoghar Thana ordered the receiver of the Baidyanath temple in the form of a written notice under Section 156, IPC to disperse any public meeting forcibly which concerns non-cooperation or enlistment of volunteers.³⁴ At this very place one Binodenand Jha, a Congress worker was served with a notice under Section 144 IPC.³⁵

32. The Motherland, Jan 19, 1922.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

At Raj Mahal while one Congress worker was served with a notice under 144 IPC, two volunteers were arrested at Sahibganj and given one month's imprisonment. At Dumka the local organiser of the movement was called by S.D.O. and intimidated and detained at Thana. Another congress worker Abdul Gaffar was served with a notice under Section 144 IPC.³⁶ When Rajendra Prasad visited Raj Mahal in May 1922 he noted a complete demoralization amongst people there due to the policy of ruthless suppression. At Motihari the District Magistrate banned any meeting around five miles of Bettiah and Motihari.³⁷ In Munger police not only harassed congress workers but they also recklessly attached, the properties of the relatives of the convicted

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36. Ibid.

37. The Motherland: May 26, 1922.

volunteers for the realization of fines.³⁸ At chatra (Purulia Distt. January 10) the secretary-incharge of the congress committee, Pt. Durga Dutt Pathak was arrested and sentenced to six months, rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.30. At Simara Thana in the same Distt. five men were arrested by police.³⁹ Similar coercive measures were being followed elsewhere also.⁴⁰

Arrested Congress workers and volunteers were put to a mock trial and awarded punishment in the form of imprisonment and fines or both. In case of non-payment of fines their properties were attached ruthlessly. One interesting aspects of these trials was that congress

38. Numerous examples of this nature can be cited. On the night of January 11, 1922 at Munger Police entered the house of grandfather of a volunteer who was in jail carried away two mounds of rice for realising a fine of Rs.10. In another case Thalís, Lotas and Cooking utensils belonging to the brother of a volunteer were taken away by the police. In another case a Charpoy and goat were attacked, while in a difference case police went to the house of a volunteer and not finding anything worth attaching there, they attached the cattle of his brother. There were many more instances of similar Police's high-handedness. The Motherland, Jan.19, 1922.

39. The Motherland, Jan 19, 1922.

40. Ibid, Jan 16, 1922.

workers and volunteers refused to make any statement in their defence.⁴¹

Grass-root workers apart, the prominent leaders of province were also not spared. Babu Jagat Narayan Lal and Maulvi Khurshid Hussain were charged in January itself under criminal law Amendment act 1908 with taking part in the management of unlawful associations, namely volunteer Associations.⁴² Again K.P. Sen Sinha was also charged under the same section and sub-section with promoting a meeting of such associations.⁴³

At Munger, Shah Md. Zobair, President, Distt. Congress Committee⁴⁴ and a barrister with enormous practice was sent to jail for his being a full time non-cooperator. He was convicted along with S.K.Sinha

41. Ibid.

42. Congress volunteers Association had been banned by a notification dated 10th Dec. 1921.

43. The Motherland, Jan.16, 1922.

44. The Motherland, Jan.16, 1922.

and other leaders of Munger under criminal Law Amendment Act. They were sentenced with one year's simple imprisonment.⁴⁵

Sitamarhi, in Motiharidistt. was considered a strong place of non-cooperators so the local govt. declared it a disturbed area under the police act and imposed for six months an additional police force, the cost of which amounted to nearly Rs.25,000 and which was to be recovered from the local inhabitants.⁴⁶ The govt. justified its measure of posting additional police by saying that the masses of the area had come under the influence of non-cooperators. The masses, it further added, were exhorted not to pay taxes. The other causes, it cited, were that warrants of the Chaukidari taxes were being resisted,

45. While they were being sent to jail a large mob appeared and gave them a hearty send off. Some went upto Jamalpur where also the local people had come in large numbers to show respect to the leaders. A national song composed by Babu Baldev Pd. Sinha assuring them on behalf of the district that the workers and the public of Munger would remain firm in their duty till death. The Motherland, Jan 16, 1922.

46. Ibid. Jan 16, 1922

under-trial prisoners grossly insulted the trying Magistrates and some undertrial prisoners were preaching in subordination in-side the jail. The govt. also threatened that the measure could be extended to other police stations also if it fails to prove sufficient.⁴⁷

The Motherland, in its editorial, on 16th Jan, 1922 reacted: "The Govt. of Bihar and Orissa could reasonably claim credit for originality and novelty in the suppression of non-cooperation... Local Govt,will always create a precedent rather than follow one. Look for example at their decision to impose punitive police at Sitamarhi. The Govt. do not allege that the people have already resorted to a 'no-tax' campaign. They are nervous that they might. Hence this additional police".⁴⁸

It appears, as the movement grew in force and extent, likewise grew the Govt's repressive measures in the province.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

By February 1922 officials of the local govt. were quite baffled as they faced an unprece, dented situation, never witnessed before in Bihar. The D.M. Muzaffarpur wrote to I.G. Police, on 6-7 February 1922; "In the past, establishment has been able to meet the requirements of the distt. because of its great prestige and the prestige of the govt. behind it. At the present moment as the result of organised agitation against the police and against the govt, the prestige has temporarily greatly diminished.... The strengthening of the armed guard is unavoidably necessary.⁴⁹

In February 1922 the commissioner of Tirhut under the influence of Chauri-Chaura incident, which occured close to the border of his Division, and anticipating an early introduction of civil disobedience on the model of the expected Bardoli experiment, pointed out that the present police force was not sufficient to protect the division.⁵⁰

49. Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa, p.95.

50. Fortnightly-Report, Home Departt. Political of February 1922, F.No.18 of Feb 1922.

CHAURI-CHAURA AND AFTERMATH

The unfortunate incident of Chauri-Chaura marked the beginning of the end of the non-cooperation movement. This incident convinced Mahatma Gandhi that the nationalist workers had not yet properly understood nor learnt the practice of non-violence without which civil disobedience could not be a success. He also perhaps believed that the British would be able to crush easily a violent movement, as people had not yet built up enough strength and stamina to resist Government repression. So his call for the halt to the movement.

After the Bardoli resolution to suspend the movement, Gandhi began his five days fasting from 12th February for 'the crime of Chauri-Chaura'. Later he wrote in young India of 16th February: 'God has been abundantly kind to me, he had warned me.....that there is not as yet in India that non-violent and truthful atmosphere which alone can justify mass civil disobedience, which can be at all described as civil which means gentle, truthful, humble knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.'⁵¹

51. Young India, Feb 16, 1922.

Gandhiji further added: "If we learn the full lesson of the tragedy, we can turn the curse into a blessing. By becoming truthful and non-violent, both in spirit and deed, and by making the Swadeshi, that is the Khaddar programme, complete we can establish full swaraj and redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs without a single person having to offer civil disobedience".⁵²

The decision taken at Bardoli stunned the country and produced mixed reactions among the nationalists. While those who had implicit faith in Gandhi, welcomed the Bardoli decision, others including prominent leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Motilal Nehru questioned the very rationale of the decision to take a retreat. Subhas Chandra Bose commented: "To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling point was nothing short of a national calamity. The principal lieutenants of the Mahatma Desbandhu Das, Pt. Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai, who were all in

52. Ibid.

prison shared the popular resentment. I was with the Desbandhu at the time and I could see that he was beside himself with anger and sorrow at way Mahatma Gandhi was repeatedly bungling.⁵³ Later in their note to the AICC which met in Delhi to consider Bardoli decision, Lala Lajpat Rai and Motilal Nehru remarked: "The decision is greatly harmful to the country. It will not only demoralise the people but also mean a set back to the prestige of the nation".⁵⁴

On 24th February 1922 AICC met at Delhi to consider the Congress working Committee's decision at Bardoli to suspend the movement. The AICC endorsed the decision of working committee but added that individual civil disobedience and picketing of foreign cloth shops as well as liquor shops could be undertaken with previous permission of the respective

53. Madan Copal (compiled and edited), *Life and Times of Subhash Chandra Bose as told in his own words*, Vikash Publishing House, 1978, p.116.

54. Rajendra Prasad; *Autobiography*, p.163. There were letters to the same containing similar arguments from other leaders also, *Ibid.*p.165

provincial congress committees.⁵⁵ At this AICC meet the delegates of Bihar had solidly stood with Mahatma Gandhi. After this non-cooperation movement was virtually to come to an end.⁵⁶

GANDHI'S ARREST AND ITS REPERCUSSION IN BIHAR

The last act of the drama was till to be enacted. Taking full advantage of the situation the Government of India decided to strike hard. On 10th March 1922 it arrested Gandhi and charged him with spreading disaffection against the Government. Gandhi was tried on 18th March and sentenced to six years imprisonment.⁵⁷ The trial was made historic by the statement that Gandhi made before the court. Pleading guilty to the prosecutions charge, he invited the court award him "the highest penalty than can be inflicted upon me for what in the law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen".⁵⁸

55. The Searchlight, March 1, 1922.

56. The Searchlight, Feb.26, 1922.

57. The Searchlight, March 21, 1922.

58. The Searchlight, March 21, 1922.

The news of Gandhi's arrest reached Patna in the afternoon of 11th March, 1922. People felt deeply grieved but they received it with extreme calm. However, protest meetings were held at different places in Patna, Gaya, Champaran, Munger and Bhagalpur distts. and hartal was observed at Dhanbad on the 14th March. The meeting at Patna was in 'ineffectual' one.⁵⁹ At this time non-cooperators seemed to be divided as to whether they should confine themselves strictly to the constructive programme or whether, as the more violent desired, they should undertake picketing both of liquor shops and cloth shops on a more extensive scale.⁶⁰ But most of the non-cooperators wanted to concentrate on the constructive programme decided at Bardoli. In a meeting on 28th March at Patna, Gandhi was described "as an embodiment of our nation's aspiration and sacrifice for the invaluable service to the country".⁶¹

59. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of March 1922, F.No.18 of March, 1922.

60. Ibid.

61. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. of Pol, April, 1922, F.No.18 of Apl., 1922.

With the suspension of civil disobedience, non-cooperation activities did not die altogether. They still continued in Santhal Parganas distt. of the Bhagalpur division with the intensive picketing of liquor shops. Many liquor vendors, who had renewed their licenses were subjected to social boycotts. Some non-cooperators also told the aboriginals that with the advent of 'the Gandhi Raj' they would get free drink.⁶²

In Purnea distt. the non-cooperators boycotted the Gurkhas employed by the Eastern Bengal state Railway and the rice mills.⁶³

As pointed out earlier the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi in March 1922, did not produce any mass scale upheaval or disturbance in Bihar as was the apprehension of Govt. of India⁶⁴, But the Chauri-Chaura incident and arrest of Gandhi and continued high handed repressive measures of the local govt. did certainly affect the tempo of the movement. Gradually

62. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Pol. of March 1922, F.No.18 of March, 1922

63. Ibid.

64. Reading Papers

the movement started losing its force, though it did not die altogether as mentioned earlier, and by April, 1922 the pol. situation had become generally quiet throughout the province.⁶⁵ Bhagalpur, Tirhut, Patna and Chotanagpur, which were storm-centres of the movement were reported to be quite quiet. In Bhagalpur the non-cooperators who resorted to picketing were sentenced to substantial terms of imprisonment.⁶⁶ In Tirhut Govt. started the work of recovering the cost of additional police and of the sum required for the compensation to the Chauterva factory in the Champaran distt. Government noted that people who were now paying, blamed the non-cooperators. In the month of May 1922 the Commissioner of excise reported the situation to be almost normal through out the province.⁶⁷

The mood of public was one of despondency through out the province so that when B.P.C.C. visited Bhagalpur on 9th July, 1922 it could arouse not much enthusiasm.⁶⁸ Even demonstrations in the

65. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Pol. of May 1922, F.No.18 of May 1922.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of July 1922, F.No.18 of July 1922.

form of welcome to released prisoners were not very successful.⁶⁹ Congress leaders even faced the problem in raising subscription for the Congress receptionfund at Gaya. When the Governor of Bihar visited Tirhut, attempts were made to organise a hartal which was not successful except in Muzaffarpur where on the day of his arrival the shops in the main market were closed.⁷⁰ When Rajendra Prasad toured the aboriginal parts of Santhal Parganas he obtained a poor hearing.⁷¹ He found the local people almost benumbed under governmental suppression and he even had to spend a night on the railway platform.⁷²

On 26th July, 1922 Mazharul Haque was prosecuted on a charge of defamation for publishing in his paper 'The Motherland' a statement to the effect that I.G. Prison Sir Hormmusji Banatwala. Who was undoubtedly a strong advocate of repressive measures,⁷³ had

69. Ibid.

70. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of Aug. 1922, F.No.18 of Aug., 1922.

71. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of Sept. 1922, F.No.18 of September, 1922.

72. R. Prasad, Autobiography.

73. Fortnightly Report, Home Departt. Political of Aug. 1922, F.No.18 of August 1922.



"deliberately outraged the feeling of Muhammadans prisoners and insulted Islam"⁷⁴. The D.M. of Patna sentenced him to a fine of Rs.1000 or in default three months simple imprisonment.⁷⁵ He courted imprisonment instead of paying the fine. The incident gave an impetus to the declining movement by becoming the subject matter of discussion. A large crowd had gathered outside the court house.

At this time Tara Bhatags⁷⁶ in Bero police station decided not to pay chowkidari tax. In 1921 also similar situation had arisen and it could be collected only with the help of police.⁷⁷ Two meetings were held at Jamashedpur at which grievances of the employees of Messrs. Tata were ventilated. In another case 300 employees of Messrs Jessop, contractors of Messrs Tata went on strike for increase of wages.⁷⁸

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Tara Bhatags were the oroons in Chotanagpur. They came under the influence of Vaishnavism and later this movement merged with non-cooperation movement in 1921.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

Amidst such a mood of masses characterised by despondency and demoralizations. Civil disobedience enquiry committee,⁷⁹ which AICC decided to appoint to look into the situation of the country, and which included Pt. Motilal Nehru, V.J.Patel, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari, visited Bihar in August 1922. "They were given a good reception, streets were decorated and attendance at their meetings was large."⁸⁰ During their two days stay at Patna the members of the committee addressed four meetings attended by large audience. They emphasized on the constructive works and the Swadeshi. The committee also took evidence of some local leaders and mainly of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee which submitted a memorandum.⁸¹

79. The committee as a whole considered civil disobedience impracticable at theand half of the members including Motilal Nehru, Hakim Ajmal Khan and V.J.Patel were in favour of entering the councils. Home Depatt. Political of Sept.1922, F.No.18 of Sept.1922.

80. Non-cooperations and Khilafat Movement in Bihar, p.112. also Fortnightly Report, Home Depatt. Political of Sept.1922, F.No.18 of Sept.1922.

81. K.K.Datta; Opcit, Appendix xviii.

Though the civil disobedience inquiry committee tried to maintain strict secrecy in its proceedings yet the local government could get access to it. According to the government information B.P.C.C. was divided with regard to entering the councils, the majority being opposed to it. B.P.C.C also possibly suggested that labour unions be utilised for political work.⁸² There was also suggestion that those lawyers who could not support themselves and their families should be allowed to resume their practices.⁸³ There was also an admission that the present constructive programme did not appeal to the masses and that more attractive features must be found.

A country evidence was gathered by the Khilafat enquiry committee. The most important witness Muhammad Sajjad-Amir-e-Shariat, urged mass civil

82. This might have been possibly inspired by Swami Biswanand who had been Rajendra Prasad at Chopra shortly before the civil disobedience enquiry committee visited Bihar.

83. Fortnightly Report, Home Depatt. Political of Sept., 1922, F.No.18 of Sept. 1922.

disobedience and the wholesale boycott of foreign goods, and Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga delegates who supported him declared that their districts were ready for mass civil disobedience.⁸⁴

This difference in perception was possibly because of a growing split between the Khilafat and 'Hindu Congress parties'. The commissioner of Patna reported that Khilafat and Congress committees were splitting up into small groups which worked independently.⁸⁵ Further in his opinion a feeling was growing in strength that Hindu-Muslim unity is not genuine and that the two could not go hand in hand.

In September 1922 Turkish Victory over Greeks and allies was celebrated by mohammadans in Bihar on 8th September special prayers were offered in most mosques for the continued success of the Turkish forces.⁸⁶ This heightening of Mohammadan's feeling

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

86. Fortnightly Report, Home Depatt. Political of Sept.1922, F.No.18 of Sept.1922.

was however not conducive to promote Hindu-Muslim unity. The breach between the two communities became open at Bihar Sharif.⁸⁷ Bitterness of feeling was not confined to either side. At a meeting held at Patna to raise subscription for the congress reception fund one speaker wished to know what steps congress committee were taking to protect the Hindus from insults and humiliation at the hands of Moh^ammadans. Who had forcibly realised subscriptions from the Hindus for the Muharram.⁸⁸ On the occasion of Muharram untowards incidents were reported from two or three places. At Bhagalpur two Akharas of the two communities came to blows.⁸⁹

At Arrah a Muhammadan speaker remarked that their neighbours (i.e. the Hindus) did not appear happy at the Turkish victories rather they were disappointed at seeking the Khilafat question in process of solution whereas they were getting nothing.⁹⁰

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Fortnightly Report, Home Deptt. Political of Oct.1922, F.No.18 of Oct.,1922.

At Muzaffarpur the 'Hindu agitators' considered the fuss over Kamal Pasha's victories overdone, and did not favour the ideas of a public meeting in celebration thereof. On the other hand the Khilafat workers took no part in the procession organised by the Congress committee in honour of Gandhi's birthday.⁹¹

In August 1922, when Swami Satyadeva,⁹² an agitator and well known in upper provinces of India, visited Bihar he got a very warm response. He visited Bihar at the invitation of a non-cooperator at Patna, He delivered speeches at Patna, Gaya, Muz. affarpur which attracted very popular interest.⁹³ Dwelling on the unsatisfactory political situation from the point of view of non-cooperators he described it to the fact that Indians attached more importance to leaders than to principles and hence the collapse of the movement after the arrest of Gandhi.⁹⁴

91. Ibid.

92. Swami Satyadeva had been previously expelled from Bihar and Orissa in 1918.

93. The audience at first were only 1000 but gradually rose to 5000-6000 subsequently.

94. Fortnightly Report, Home Deptt. Political of September 1922, F.No.18 of Sept.1922.

By November 1922, the leaders of Bihar, who-soever were outside jail, had busied themselves with the preparations for the ensuing congress session at Gaya. Little was being done in the arena of political agitation. Masses were also gradually losing interest so much so that attempts by local leaders to arouse them after Gaya Congress fell flat and none of the meetings held required special notice by the Government.⁹¹

95. Fortnightly Report, Home Deptt. Political of January 1923, F.No.25 of January 1923.

CONCLUSION

I

The non-cooperation movement marked an important phase in the growth of Indian nationalism. It provided the people an occasion to express their disillusionment with and defiance of the colonial regime. Hereafter the national movement was lifted to a higher level of struggle in which masses prominently took part. Indian nationalism could no more now remain confined to the intelligentsia and the educated sections as in the previous phases of the national struggle. It now reached the door of the masses, illiterate and poor, who had hitherto remained largely non-politicised. "The non-cooperation movement", in the words of Rajendra Prasad, "shifted politics from drawing rooms of the educated and businessmen to the huts in the countryside to the tillers of the soil".¹ And the credit for this must

1. Rajendra Prasad, Autobiography, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1957.

go to Mahatma Gandhi, who enkindled the spirit of sacrifice, selfless service and non-violent resistance.

Bihar, which was not so prominent politically during the early phases of the national movement, now played an admirable role at this juncture of the national movement. It swung powerfully in to all India politics over the issues of the Rowlatt Act, Punjab Wrongs and Khilafat wrongs to the Indian Muslims. These were the three issues around which the politics of Bihar during 1919-22 revolved and around which masses surged ahead into the mainstream of national struggle.

Rowlatt Satyagraha took place in April 1919 and aroused considerable upsurge among the people of Bihar. This was amply demonstrated in the hartal which was observed on 6th April, 1919. The leaders who took a leading part in this Satyagraha were Rajendra Prasad and Mazhaul Haque. Hasan Imam, a prominent and moderate leader of Bihar, however, did not show much interest in the agitation.

After the Rowlatt Satyagraha the people of Bihar started losing interest in political questions.

This was a cause of anxiety for the leaders of Bihar who tried to sustain the interest of the people by holding meetings etc. which, however, bore little fruit. Then came the question of Khilafat wrongs done to Indian Muslims, which acted as a catalyst in arousing the people once again, both Muslims and non-Muslims. In November 1919 when the Government started peace celebrations to mark the end of the first World War, the people of Bihar showed their disapproval of the Government's policy by dissociating themselves from the celebrations.

The period after November 1919 till March 1920 was one of not very intensive political activity. However, from March 1920 onwards, the political scenario became surcharged when Gandhi announced his intention to launch a non-cooperation movement in case the Khilafat sentiments of the Muslims were ignored.

By August 1920 the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and the Bihar Provincial Conference had both adopted the resolution in favour of non-cooperation. The Khilafat Committee had also adopted a similar resolution. Therefore, when the special session of the Congress adopted the resolution on

non-cooperation and asked the people to implement it, Bihar readily plunged into its execution.

From September 1920 the non-cooperation movement began in earnest. Very soon it caught the imagination of masses and spread even to far and distant places like aboriginal areas of the Santhal Paragnas. Though the movement spread in all parts of Bihar, it was, however, by middle of 1921, very strong in Patna, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, Munger and Sitamarhi. During this period people resolutely devoted implementing the programmes of non-cooperation which was sanctioned by the Congress. Boycott of government and semi government educational institutions, law courts, elections to the reformed councils and surrender of titles were some of items which were attended by considerable success. Also many national schools were started during this period. The resignation from titles and official honours was indeed a unique phenomenon during this period. However, there were many persons who did not wish to resign as they enjoyed numerous privileges under the Raj. Such a class comprised of big Zamindars and landlords and

few others. Nevertheless, the resignations lowered the sanctity of the awards offered to Indians by the British Government.

The direct participation of the masses in the movement also led to the formation of Panchayats and arbitration~~s~~ courts, temperance societies and of groups of men and women who enforced the boycott of foreign cloth.

The movement witnessed a brief lull during June-July 1921. However, it soon picked up momentum and at renewed pace the items of non-cooperation began to be implemented. However, the most popular items during this period were the temperance campaign and boycott of foreign cloths. As a result of boycott of foreign cloth the idea of swadeshi became very popular and a sizable population of Bihar became khadi minded.

As the movement gained in strength the local government became anxious to suppress it. The government repression started soon after the launching of the movement but it became severe towards the end of 1921, when the government declared the

Congress Volunteers Association illegal and started searching Congress offices, making large scale arrests and launching prosecutions. Thus, by January-February 1922, many provincial and local leaders were behind the bars or facing prosecution. The Government had given wide ranging powers to the district officials to suppress the movement. Grass root workers were also harassed by arrests and detentions and subsequent prosecutions.

A sense of demoralisation was obvious because when Gandhi was arrested in March 1922, there was no upheaval at all in Bihar in any part.

After the unfortunate incident of Chauri-Chaura the movement was withdrawn by Mahatma Gandhi. Though many prominent leaders like Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai assailed this decision of Gandhi the leaders of Bihar firmly stood by him. The non-cooperation activities however did not die out altogether, and, for example, the temperance campaign continued even after March 1922. But there was decidedly no intensive political activity which could cause anxiety to

the Government. People seemed to ^{be} in a state of demoralisation after the withdrawal.

One unfortunate consequence, which ~~it~~ followed after the withdrawal of the movement, was resurgence of communal hiatus between Muslims and non-Muslims. Indeed, in some places they looked upon each other with suspicion and distrust. The former sense of unity, which had characterised the phase of non-cooperation, was not to be found during the period after March 1922.

The non-cooperation movement was, however, not without long term political effects, Its failure to achieve its declared aim of Swaraj was not a proof of its having failed to have a long-term effect. A consistent struggle against the Raj had begun. The gains of this movement were the general awakening of the masses to their political rights and privileges, the loss of faith in the existing system of government, the inculcation of hope and belief that it would only be through their

efforts that the country could hope to be *free* and lastly, reinforcement of faith in the aims, objects and functioning of the Congress.

The social base of the movement, as far Bihar was concerned, included different categories of society namely, Peasants, workers, lawyers, intelligentsia, students, shopkeepers and even women. The participation of women in the movement was a new phenomenon, in Bihar. The women in urban areas came to attend the non-cooperation meetings and generously ~~donated~~ for Congress fund, in some instances jewellery was also given by them. It appears, therefore, that the movement acquired a multi-class social base in Bihar. These categories of society were moved by anti-colonial sentiments, which had permeated deep into their minds. They had also discarded their earlier apathy towards national issues.

The message and ideals of non-cooperation were propagated through various ways. The leaders regularly toured the province, organised meetings and delivered speeches explaining the ideals of non-cooperation movement to the public. The Congress volunteers took up

the propaganda work by door to door campaigning for boycott of foreign cloth and adoption of Charkha. The mobilisation work was also done by ~~the~~ *enrolment* of members and collection of funds.

The leadership of the non-cooperation movement in Bihar came mainly from the educated middle class ~~consisting~~ of lawyers, teachers etc. In some cases they also came from the well-to-do sections in the rural areas, such as the small landlords and large-holding peasants.

II

In the light of the foregoing discussion it would be now worthwhile to examine some contentious points regarding the national movement in general and non-cooperation movements in particular made by two schools of history writing, mainly the imperialist and the Marxist.

The imperialist school of historiography tends to see the colonialism simply as foreign rule and India as a backward traditional society. It also denies

the basic contradictions between the interests of Indian people and the interests of British colonialism. And they explain the nationalist movement as the outcome of the Western educated elites desire to "reinforce their ritual and traditional authority" which they were finding increasingly difficult to assert in old ways.²

Thus C.J.Baker, a representative of this school of historiography, explains the turbulence during 1921-22 by reference to the changes in the political and administrative system of the Raj, which prompted the politicians to seek a base among the masses. However, it does not seem to be true because, though the reforms of 1919 widened the electorate yet it covered only about three per cent of the population, *leaving* the poor masses outside its scope. The social base of the non-cooperation movement was much wider than the electorate envisaged in the Montague-Chelmsford reforms. It would be thus incorrect to say that the

2. C.J.Baker, The politics of South India 1920-37, New Delhi, 1976.

constitutional reforms were the impetus for the non-cooperation movement. It was in fact the disillusionment with constitutional reform that contributed greatly to the success of the movement.

J.M. Brown,³ another historian of the same school, opines that different groups joined Gandhi purely in terms of their pursuit of influence and place, concern for their vested interests as members of India, Western educated professionals elite or simply for political power. These elite groups, in her words, joined the non-cooperation movement because they were faced with a acute threat to their public positions. However, when we look into the national movement in Bihar, it seems that this characterisation is not true. Rajendra Prasad, Mazharul Haque and Hasan Imam and some other leaders did not act as leaders of their castes or elite groups and there is no evidence of their using their position to gain positions for themselves or the members of their groups.

3. Judith M. Brown, Gandhi's rise to power: Indian politics, 1915-22, London 1972, p.25,290 & 339.

On the other hand, they sacrificed their careers, their property and their wealth for the sake of the movement and urged others to do the same.

This view also denies the legitimacy of the national movement and has no understanding of the Central contradiction. This also denies any intelligent or active role to the mass of workers, peasants, lower middle classes and women in the anti-imperialist struggle. They are treated as having no perception of their needs and interests.

As regards the withdrawal of the movement by Mahatma Gandhi in February 1919 Brown opines that the three bases on which Gandhi had built his power at Nagpur (namely politicised elements, the Muslims and the establish politicians) had collapsed. This is, however, not an explanation for the withdrawal but at best its result. For according to her own evidence, it were ^{precisely} these classes that were pushing for the continuance of the movement and not its withdrawal.

R.P.Dutt⁴ representing the Marxist school of historiography, characterises the Congress as representing the bourgeoisie and other propertied classes such as landlords. As regards Bardoli decision to withdraw the non-cooperation movement R.P.Dutt opines that Gandhi withdrew the movement because he was unhappy and alarmed because of "the news of the growth of unrest among the peasantry". He also points an insurrectionary situation throughout the country in February 1922 and concludes that the movement had come to its "final trial of strength". R.P.Dutt thus makes two points: namely, the Congress represented the propertied classes; and Gandhi withdrew the movement to protect the interests of the landlords.

As far as the first point, i.e. Congress representing the propertied sections is concerned, it does not stand a closer examination of the evidence that we have in case of Bihar. As discussed earlier various classes took part in the national

⁴R.P. Dutt, India Today, Calcutta, 1979.

movement, which gives it a character of multi-class movement. Further the outlook of the leaders, who were in forefront of the movement, was capitalist because they believed that this was the genuine path for Indian development, and not because they were political representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie.

Regarding the contention that Gandhi withdrew the movement to protect the interests of the landlords, it should be remembered that R.P. Dutt derived this conclusion from ^{the} Bardoli resolution of the Congress wherein peasants were advised not to withhold the rents of zamindars. Our evidences in case of Bihar does not show any existence or accentuation of anti-landlord antagonism or outbreak of no-rent struggles. The violence which was breaking here and there was not diverted towards the Zamindars at all but towards the symbols of government authority.

Why then did Mahatma Gandhi withdraw the movement in February 1922? To try and get an answer it would be worthwhile if we turn towards the views of contemporary leaders who took part in the movement. According to Jawaharlal Nehru,⁵ "As a matter of fact the suspension

5. Jawaharlal Nehru, Autobiography, pp.85-86.

of civil resistance in February 1922 was certainly not done ^{due} to Chauri-Chaura incident... That was only the last straw". He further writes that the movement at the time of withdrawal "was going to pieces" inspite of its apparent power and the widespread enthusiasm. In his own words: "all organisations and discipline was disappearing; almost all our good men were in prison, and the masses had so far received little training...agent provocateurs came to the front and even controlled some local congress and Khilafat organisations". "There is little doubt" he writes further, "that if the movement had continued there would have been growing violence in many places. This would have been crushed by government in a bloody manner and a reign of terror would have thoroughly demoralised the people". This was the reason, according to Jawaharlal Nehru, which worked in Mahatma Gandhi's mind.

Rajendra Prasad⁶ another prominent leader of non-cooperation, who played a remarkable role in

6. Rajendra Prasad, Autobiography, New Delhi, 1957.

Bihar during the non-cooperation movement strikes a similar note. To put it in his own words: "The government waited for an opportunity to scotch the agitation. One act of violence was all that it wanted so that it might strike with all the force it could command but that was exactly what the Congress wanted to avoid."

Therefore, it seems plausible to explain the withdrawal of the movement in February, 1922 in terms of Gandhi's anxiety to save the people from ruthless suppression by the government and consequent demoralization of the Congress workers. It does not seem true that the movement collapsed because 'three pillars' as Brown makes us believe, had collapsed by February 1922. Nor does it seem true that the movement was withdrawn because the positions of the landlords was threatened by the peasantry.

APPENDIX-IPrices in India, 1913-1923

1913	143	1919	276
1914	147	1920	281
1915	152	1921	236
1916	184	1922	232
1917	196	1923	215
1918	225		
1873 = 100			

Source: Statistical Abstract for British India
1917-18 to 1926-27, p.628, table No.297.
Cited in Judith M.Brown, p.125

APPENDIX-II

Number of proceedings and prosecutions instituted for various offences arising out of the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement from November 1921 to March 1922

Province	Number of prosecution	No. of conviction	Remarks
N.W.F.P.	3 9	3 4	4 cases pending
Bombay	60 104	56 96	1 case withdrawn 1 case pending
Central Province	34 78	19 58	
Delhi	127 87	126 57	25 cases withdrawn 3 Acquitted
Madras	391 679	275 508	
Bengal	6555 6001	4573 4624	
U.P.	1059 1059	1030 1132	
Bihar & Orissa	227 343	293 427	
Assam	499 1062	475 848	
Punjab	175 1000	98 737	

Source: Home Department Political branch File No.28, Part I of 1921.

APPENDIX-III

Number of prosecutions and proceedings instituted for seditious utterances and other offence arising out of the Khilafat agitation and the Non-cooperation Movement

Province	Period from Jan '21 upto	No. of prosecution instituted	No. of cases decided	No. of persons sentenced to rigorous imprisonment	No. of persons given simple imprisonment	Remarks
Bengal	31 May '22	9170	2701	5987	1985	7 Apologised 433 Acquitted
United Province	10 Jun '22	2235	1950	1615	758	20 Absconding
Punjab	30 Jun '22	2145	1907	1236	480	18 withdrawn 2 Acquitted
Bihar & Orissa	15 Jun '22	672	585	683	396	
Central Province	30 Jun '22	337	250	190	20	16 Acquitted
Assam	15 Jun '22	1035	908	804	290	48 withdrawn
N.W.F.P.	30 Aug '22	79	75	12	19	
Madras		784	694	533	349	
Bombay	30 Jun '22	1424	1316	600	182	2 Apologised 72 Acquitted
Delhi	30 Jun '22	218	187	122	63	2 Acquitted
Coorg	15 July '22	5	4	10		1 case failed for want of evidence

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