

INDIAN POLITICS AND
THE ELECTIONS OF 1937

b y

David Denis Taylor

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
to the
University of London
1971



ProQuest Number: 11010433

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 11010433

Published by ProQuest LLC (2018). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

ABSTRACT

The thesis consists of a preliminary examination of the development of Indian politics in the mid-1930s, especially their reaction to the Government of India Act, 1935, and the consequent provincial elections of 1937. The period has recently been opened to research through the availability of official records and private and party papers in India and England. Newspapers and secondary sources have also been used.

Chapter 1 looks at the way in which British policy towards the elections and electoral arrangements was formulated, and at whether there were specific attempts to influence their outcome. Working from an ideal type of a nationalist party as a bourgeois-led consensus movement, chapter 2 analyses the composition of the Indian National Congress and other parties, their relations to other political and social structures, their policies, their relations with each other, and the effect on them of contesting elections. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between Congress and communal groups. The themes of the previous chapter are developed in chapter 3 by focussing on the election campaign as a time when existing problems had to be resolved and new ones were created. Chapter 4 presents the results of a study of the socio-economic and political backgrounds of the successful candidates. This supplements the conclusions reached in the previous two chapters. Chapter 5 attempts to present the election results as fully and as accurately as possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

India is, despite occasional difficulties, a most pleasant and helpful place to carry out academic research. My work has been considerably aided by the assistance of the staff of the several libraries and record offices where I worked, in particular the Nehru Memorial Library and Museum, the National Archives of India, the Indian Council of World Affairs Library, and the Bombay History of the Freedom Movement unit. I wish to thank them, and also their colleagues of the India Office Library and library of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London, especially for producing records which were not finally listed and for obtaining permission to consult them.

I should also like to acknowledge most gratefully the help of my supervisor, Dr. S. R. Mehrotra, who has introduced me to periods of history and politics beyond the 1930s, and the interest and encouragement at various stages of Professor W. H. Morris-Jones, Professor H. R. Tinker, and Dr Hugh Gray.

CONTENTS

| | <u>page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| Abstract | 2 |
| Acknowledgements | 3 |
| Abbreviations | 5 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| 1. The Government and the Elections .. | 13 |
| 2. The Political Parties | 101 |
| I The All-India Situation | |
| II The Provinces | |
| 3. The Election Campaign | 219 |
| 4. The Successful Candidates | 301 |
| 5. The Election Results and the Development | |
| of Indian Politics | 346 |
| Bibliography | 369 |

ABBREVIATIONSA. In Text

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| AICC | All-India Congress Committee |
| CEB | Central Election Board |
| CNP | Congress Nationalist Party |
| C.P. | Central Provinces |
| CPB | Congress Parliamentary Board |
| CPC | Congress Parliamentary Committee |
| CSP | Congress Socialist Party |
| DCC | District Congress Committee |
| DSP | Democratic Swaraj Party |
| ILP | Independent Labour Party |
| MLA | Member of Legislative Assembly |
| NAP | National Agriculturist Party |
| N.W.F.P. | North-West Frontier Province |
| PCC | Provincial Congress Committee |
| U.P. | United Provinces |

B. In Footnotes

| | |
|--------|---|
| AICC | All-India Congress Committee |
| CLAD | Central Legislative Assembly Debates |
| CWC | Congress Working Committee |
| FR | Fortnightly Reports |
| G of I | Government of India |
| GR | Governors' Reports |
| HCR | Hammond Committee Report |
| HPO | Home Political |
| HPU | Home Public |
| IAR | Indian Annual Register |
| INC | Indian National Congress (see bibliography) |
| IO | India Office |
| JP | Jayakar Papers |
| LCR | Lothian Committee Report |
| PR | Provincial Reports |
| RD | Reforms Department |
| RO | Reforms Office |
| S of S | Secretary of State |

INTRODUCTION

The development in India of a pluralist, multi-party system, and the dominance within it of the Indian National Congress, can be regarded either as limiting the possibility of radical social change or as an essential prerequisite of planned economic development. It is at all events in contrast to the experience of most new states in Africa, where single-party systems predominate. The reasons for the contrast are partly specific to the Indian social system and cultural traditions.¹ It is also widely recognized that the historical circumstances of the Indian independence movement played and continue to play an important part in determining the shape of the Indian political system.² This thesis examines the developments of the mid-1930s, particularly the provincial elections of 1937. Although it makes no attempt to relate the political system of the time to that of today, it is based on the belief that the achievement of independence did not mark a complete break with the past and that political leaders in the 1930s had inevitably to be concerned with problems of the distribution of power and prestige as well as with their transfer from alien hands.

¹The basic units of the caste system - the gotra and the jati - are too small, and the larger castes too dispersed and divided to dominate the system completely, except at the local and occasionally the state levels. The combination of hierarchical and segmentary elements in the caste system permit a degree of mobility which is enhanced by the existence of a competitive democracy.

²For example, W.H.Morris-Jones, The Government and Politics of India (2nd ed. 1967), chapter 1, and Rajni Kothari, Politics in India (1970), pp. 77-85.

The study of an election has advantages and disadvantages as a means of understanding political systems. One's attention is inevitably drawn to the manifestations of direct political activity, and the temptation to be misled by the forms of political institutions is particularly strong. The political significance of those who do not have the vote (in India in 1937 some 60% of the adult male population were unenfranchised) is largely ignored. Except on an intuitive basis it is not possible to distinguish temporary from permanent features of the system. On the other hand, an election is a moment when different issues and trends are drawn together, and the actors at the various levels of the system, although their expectations are very different, take part in a single event. Although the functions of elections vary in different systems, the general point remains valid.

What were the functions of the 1937 elections in India? For the government the holding of the elections was a means to legitimize its position and to establish provincial autonomy on a base of popular support. Although successive reforms had been rejected by Congress, there was always the hope that the more moderate elements might be detached and induced to co-operate. Conversely, the elections provided Congress with an opportunity to deny legitimacy to the government and to its Indian opponents in terms that would be generally recognized.

Political organizers, whether or not they wished to participate in the legislative process themselves, were able to use the election campaign as a way to recruit and mobilize mass support. The organizational structure and techniques employed

in the campaign could be used, with slightly different emphases, to reach both the enfranchised and the unenfranchised. Alternatively, bargains could be struck with those who commanded mass support, in which the counters were derived from the elections.

Elections (and the subsequent exercise of power) provided new resources to the political system.¹ As has been said, they could be means of attracting new recruits to the political parties. They could also be used to further traditional rivalries between castes or other sectional groupings. Although factionalism had existed previously within Congress, it appears to have increased as a result of the elections.

The elections made new demands on the existing system of party organization. In the past nationalists had stressed the need for co-operation between disparate groups to achieve a single aim, and Congress during the civil disobedience period had been a 'front' rather than a party. Collaborators with the British had operated largely as individual notables. Neither model could be used unaltered for the 1937 elections. The primary need for Congress was to integrate its disparate parts into a single structure. In so far as there was co-operation with non-Congress groups, it had to be on the basis of a pact or an electoral agreement rather than a simple united front. It was also necessary to achieve a slightly greater degree of ideological consensus, although potentially divisive issues were

¹The pattern of distribution within the system was changed simultaneously so that only some parties benefited.

avoided as much as possible. The organizational structure that had sufficed for the civil disobedience period had to be replaced by one that could not only cope with the increased demands of contesting elections but could also make self-interest as well as self-sacrifice a basis for party unity. Inevitably this meant that there were defections, although these were more than balanced by new recruits.

The elections have to be placed in the context of political developments in the 1930s. Recent independence movements have tended to gather momentum in one continuous process. In India, however, there were short periods of intense excitement separated by longer intervals in which sections of the population - the 'middle classes' - were able to adapt their social and economic life to the colonial environment. Despite nationalist rhetoric, there was a degree of coexistence. High points were reached in the 1920s and from 1937-9. The intervening years, however, had seen a major shift in political power. The British Government had introduced the Government of India Act, 1935,¹ which, as well as laying down plans for an all-India federation which never materialized, also considerably increased the scope of responsible government in the provinces. Partly as a result of this and partly through the continuing operation of other factors, the degree of politicization at various levels rose. Although this was primarily to the advantage of Congress, other political groupings emerged. In more general terms, competition between sections of the elite was sharpened.

¹25 & 26 Geo. 5, c.42.

Three areas of political competition may be defined apart from the struggle with the alien government. First, there was conflict over the fundamental dispositions of the new polity - the nature and the extent of federal authority, political geography, methods of election, etc. - which was an integral part of the process of attaining freedom. Secondly, the actions of the legislatures, although limited by British power, could nevertheless permanently affect social relations. Lastly, control of the nationalist movement immediately prior to independence would be of vital consequence in later political conflicts. This applied equally to those who claimed that nationalism was ideologically neutral and to those who wished to associate it with a specific programme of economic and social reform or with a particular cultural pattern.

This study takes the whole of India as its subject. At the present stage of Indian studies no country-wide survey can hope to be more than introductory and at times superficial. Local studies, however, sometimes neglect the importance of all-India structures and issues which transcend regional differences. The interaction of national and provincial levels of politics is itself worthy of attention.

The first chapter of the thesis outlines the constitutional structure within which electoral politics occurred and the attitudes of the British Government, and their effect on the development of politics in India. In the second chapter the ideology and organization of Congress is analysed and briefer accounts are given of the other political parties of the period and of the situation in each province. Particular attention is paid

to the interrelation of political parties and communal groupings. The remainder of the thesis is concerned with the elections. The third chapter deals with the election campaign, defined to include the process of candidate selection, as a means of recruiting new elements into the party elites and mobilizing mass support, and as a moment at which latent conflicts come to the surface. In the next chapter a study is made of the socio-economic backgrounds and previous political experience of the successful candidates. Finally, an attempt is made to put some order into the very defective statements of the election results, and to assess the effect of the results on the development of Indian politics.

The source material for the study has been drawn principally from the official records of the Government of India and the India Office, the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) papers, and newspapers. These have been supplemented by the private papers of certain Indian leaders and the usual secondary sources. The official records, particularly the regular provincial reports, betray wishful thinking; the AICC papers do not include any detailed minutes of Working Committee meetings. The newspapers fill some of the gaps but many important meetings went unreported and for others only news agency reports were used.

The thesis makes use of terms derived from functional theories of political analysis, for example political system, political structure, environment, role, arena. They have not, however, been used to define conceptual frameworks in any very precise way.¹ In the discussion of party ideology the paired

¹See, for example, F.G.Bailey, Stratagems and Spoils (1969), chapter 1, for definitions of these terms.

terms 'social' and 'economic' frequently occur. The use is not intended to indicate a dichotomy but simply the multi-faceted nature of most ideological issues. 'Party' is defined as any organized associational group with avowedly political aims; the term is not meant to carry any connotations from competitive systems in independent states.

Chapter One

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ELECTIONS

The proposition that a state's political system is affected by its electoral regime is as valid in colonial as in independent countries. In India in the 1930s it was not only the electoral regime but the whole machinery of alien control which provided the structure within and against which parties developed. In considering the influence of British rule an immediate distinction must be drawn between planned manipulation and unconscious conditioning of the system. A second, value-laden, logically difficult, but important distinction exists between measures designed simply to operate the electoral regime and measures intended to load it against the national movement. In a sense, anything which facilitated the working of the 1935 Act was a blow against the independence movement, although many Congressmen went further and claimed that even within the confines of the Act and its consequent regulations there was institutionalized discrimination against their party. In this chapter various aspects of official involvement with the elections are examined. After an account of the official decision-making structure, the processes whereby franchise levels, distribution of seats, and methods of voting were determined, and the detailed administration of the poll, will be analysed.¹

¹For studies of the problem of ensuring that the machinery of election organization does not inhibit democratic development, see W.J.M. Mackenzie, Free Elections (1958), and T.E. Smith, Elections in Developing Countries (1960).

The Decision-Making Structure

The Montagu Declaration of 1917 had marked a major change in the official British attitude towards India, and the Government of India Act, 1919, based on the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, was the first faltering step towards the goal of responsible government.¹ The Act divided executive authority between ministers, who were primarily responsible to the legislatures, and officials. After the appointment of the Simon Commission in 1927, plans began to be drawn up for provincial autonomy, and a federal framework to encompass the princely states. The 1935 Act embodied the results of eight years of conferences, inquiries, and parliamentary debate, as well as the Communal Award of 1932, which had been imposed to break the deadlock that had developed at the Round Table Conferences over the protection of minority rights.

Apart from its official sponsors, the 1935 Act found few active supporters when it was being formulated. In India, it was supposed to protect minority interests, but few politically articulate Indians agreed that this should be done by preserving the authority of the British raj, which could be used for the protection of other interests than those of minorities. In Britain, the Act was a patched-up compromise typical of the National Government era, which gained the whole-hearted support of no one. As Baldwin himself wrote, 'The fulness of time

¹For the significance of the Montagu Declaration, see S.R. Mehrotra, 'The Politics behind the Montagu Declaration of 1917' in C.H. Philips (ed.), Politics and Society in India (1963), pp. 95-6.

means now to India and never to certain die-hards'.¹ By 1940, the federal part of the Act was acknowledged on all sides to have been overtaken by events, and in the majority of provinces the remainder of the Act had also been suspended.

Neither the isolation of the India Office ministers nor the rapid supersession of the Act should, however, obscure the fact that at the time it was expected to provide a permanent framework for the Indian constitution. This was in contrast to its predecessor which had provided for a statutory review after ten years. If by the time the provincial part of the Act was inaugurated on 1 April 1937 rumours of war could be heard, all had been peaceful when the long process of formulation had begun in 1927. From the time of the first Round Table Conference to the long days in committee in the spring of 1935 the problems of India received more attention in England than ever before or after.

Most of the politicians' attention was devoted to the details of the federal structure and to safeguards, which had to be maximized in England and minimized in India. The principle of provincial autonomy as such was not questioned. Officials in India and London, however, had also to consider the minutiae of the elections which determined who was to vote and how. The Simon Commission itself had made recommendations on franchise levels, the distribution of seats, and methods of voting, but they were reconsidered at the Round Table Conferences. The Franchise sub-Committee of the first

¹Quoted in G.M.Young, Stanley Baldwin (1952), p.185.

conference suggested that an expert commission be set up to work within the broad limits it had laid down.¹ In pursuance of this, the Indian Franchise Committee, with Lord Lothian as chairman, was set up after the second conference, and reported in May 1932. The report was primarily concerned with franchise levels but other matters were dealt with in appendices. These latter were again discussed by the Indian Delimitation Committee of 1936, which was chaired by Sir Laurie Hammond. Franchise levels were laid down in a schedule to the 1935 Act; other matters were settled by subsequent orders-in-council and governors' rules.

The Reforms Department of the India Office was chiefly responsible for translating these reports, and subsequent modifications of them, into their final statutory forms.² In this period it was headed by Sir Vernon Dawson, assisted primarily by J.G. (now Sir Gilbert) Laithwaite. Although all important decisions were referred to the Secretary of State (until June 1935 Sir Samuel Hoare, thereafter Lord Zetland), the minister most concerned was R.A. (now Lord) Butler. In addition to interpreting the wishes of the British Government, the department also worked in collaboration with the Reforms Office of the Government of India and with the reforms officers of the various provinces. Orders-in-council and schedules to the Act were actually drafted by the Parliamentary Draftsmen,

¹Proceedings of the Indian Round Table Conference, 12th November, 1930 - 19th January, 1931, Cmd. 3778 (1931) p.386.

²The White Paper of March 1933 (Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform, Cmd. 4268 (1933)) was an intermediate stage.

while governors' rules were prepared for each province by its reforms officer. The administration of the elections was carried out by the provincial reforms officers, under the general guidance of the Government of India Reforms Office.

The ultimate responsibility for each decision was thus clearly defined but it is equally important to analyse the process of policy formation. Sources of policy may be divided into three: - Indian, English, and official. The principal vehicles for Indian opinion that came to the notice of the British Government were the three Round Table Conferences and the various provincial committees set up as counterparts to the official inquiries, first to the Simon Commission and then to the Lothian and Hammond Committees. At the Round Table Conferences Indians were in a majority, but, although they were not subject to official control and were representative of some parts of the population, the interests represented were chosen by the British. Also, the conference table was not a place where plans could be worked out from the beginning, and to a large extent the conferences were overawed by the recommendations of the Simon Commission and by the traditions of the British system of government. This is not to say that more radical points of view were not heard. Gandhi himself attended the second conference, but his vision of himself as a plenipotentiary delegate of India clashed with that of the British, who merely saw him as completing the circle of those who had a right to be heard. At the first conference, radical positions were upheld by men such as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and N.M. Joshi, but their views found little concrete expression

in its results. The provincial counterpart committees and conferences were chosen from the provincial legislatures and other established bodies and organizations. Because Congress had boycotted the provincial elections of 1930, they were mostly representative of the more conservative groups who were prepared to work the 1919 reforms properly. In addition, the committees and local governments put forward separate schemes for the consideration of the official committees, rather than trying to reach a compromise in which Indian opinion would have had a substantial place. Nevertheless, the British Government believed that the Indians it consulted were broadly representative of India as a whole. Coy references were made to 'an important Indian party' which had declined to appear, but little real notice was taken of Congress views in absentia. A typical instance of this can be seen in the report of the Joint Select Committee. Referring to the government's proposals for the franchise, it claimed that they had general support from Indian opinion, largely because they had been approved by the third Round Table Conference.¹ The Central Legislative Assembly, in which Congress and its allies generally formed a majority after the elections of 1934, provided a platform for numerous allegations of government interference, but it appears to have had very little effect on official action.

English opinion may be divided into two, independent and government. The former was itself split. On the one hand were those who supported the cause of Indian self-government and

¹Report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, H.C.5 (I Part I) of 1934, pp. 69-70.

took an active interest in it. Such men as R.W.Sorensen and Morgan Jones were in touch with Indian nationalist leaders and were prominent in asking questions in the House of Commons. On the other side were the 'die-hards' whose contacts were more with retired civil servants and military officers and business interests but who, under Churchill and Lord Rankeillour, were an equally formidable force in Parliament. There were also groups and individuals who had particular causes to promote; for instance, Eleanor Rathbone was anxious to see Indian women fairly treated, and the Proportional Representation Society saw India as another field for its constitutional experiments. Although none of these groups was able to outvote the government, they had minority representation on most official committees, in and out of Parliament, and in addition some could bring personal influence to bear on ministers. The government itself was not a totally independent source of opinion. Its policy, even before its detailed formulation, was, like every government's, tempered by the views of officials. At this stage, it had a secure majority for its view that India could safely be given a large degree of home rule, provided essential British interests were not affected. As well as its parliamentary majority, it had the advantage of being able to appoint the chairmen of committees.¹

¹ Although Lord Lothian was an under-secretary at the India Office when appointed chairman of the Franchise Commission, he cannot be entirely regarded as a government man. His speeches while still chairman, which provoked questions in Parliament, his correspondence with Jawaharlal Nehru (in Nehru, A Bunch of Old Letters (1st British ed. 1960), pp. 128-54), and his later intervention in the office acceptance controversy show him to

Finally, there were the opinions of the Indian Civil Servants, who had for a century controlled the government of India, and considered that they knew best what was practicable, and what was best suited to Indian conditions. They were in fact given every opportunity to express their views. First, they submitted memoranda to the several committees, which covered every aspect of the question under discussion, secondly they were represented on the counterpart committees, and thirdly, once the recommendations had been made, they were consulted at every stage by the India Office during the preparation of the final proposals. Thus, although the Indian officials were civil servants, they had a great deal of influence in the framing of the new Indian constitution. A distinction might possibly be made between the Government of India and the local governments. The local governments' reforms officers were concerned with the actual implementation of the provincial part of the Act, whereas the Government of India could afford to concern itself with the legal and political aspects of questions.

These three sources of opinion met in the two policy-forming bodies, Parliament and the India Office. The position of Parliament is clear. It was the place where the British Government was able to gain approval for broad lines of policy which had earlier emerged as a compromise between moderate Indian and English opinion. The India Office was more concerned with mediating between the politically inspired compromises of Parliament and committees, and the views of the Government of India and local governments. In one sense, the

have been following an independent line. In the 1930s he still represented the traditions of Lionel Curtis and the Round Table: see J.R.M. Butler, Lord Lothian (1960).

India Office was simply an outpost of official opinion within Whitehall, but it was also and much more a place where men who saw themselves as civil servants in the English style rather than as semi-independent rulers, strove to accommodate political and administrative imperatives.¹ Before a final decision was made, all important matters and many which now seem trivial were referred to the India Office and fully discussed. At the same time, provided the broad lines of policy laid down at parliamentary level were observed, officials in India were able to have many aspects of the new reforms adjusted to suit administrative convenience. Uniformity and the development of political consciousness among the masses were low priorities.

The Franchise

Franchise levels can be based on the principle of uniformity, where the whole population is treated as a single unit, or on the principle of interest representation, in which the distribution of seats is as important as the actual franchise qualifications. When members of the legislative councils were first elected in 1892, the interests principle was predominant. According to a government despatch of 26 October 1892, 'each important class shall have the opportunity of making its views known in council by the mouth of some member specially acquainted with them'.² The 1919 Act gave a considerable number of seats

¹ Sir Vernon Dawson had in fact begun his career in the Indian Civil Service and had transferred to the India Office after some years. On many issues, however, he was more bureaucratically minded than his colleagues.

² Quoted in Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, vol. i, Cmd. 3568(1930), p.183.

to large landlords, universities, and commerce and industry, taking corporate bodies as units wherever possible, but the franchise was also given to a part of the general population. As this was done solely on a property basis, however, there remained a large element of interest representation. In particular, the towns were heavily overrepresented.

It was agreed on all sides that the electorate would have to be enlarged for the 1935 reforms. The Simon Commission recommended that 10⁰/o of the total population be enfranchised and the Franchise sub-Committee of the first Round Table Conference suggested that the figure be between 10 and 25⁰/o.¹ No definite proposals were made, however, as to how the new electorate was to be distributed. The Lothian Committee's first action was to make the interests more representative of the overall population, in that it cut down the proportion of seats allocated to landlords, commerce and industry, and universities, and introduced industrial labour as an additional interest. Then, while extending the general franchise, it removed it from a simple property basis by introducing an educational qualification, by manipulating the property qualification so as to give more equal percentages of voters in each community and in urban and rural areas, and by introducing differential qualifications for the Scheduled Castes and women.² The principle of interest representation remained

¹Ibid., vol. ii, Cmd. 3569(1930), pp. 91-2; Proceedings, p.386. The Franchise sub-Committee also laid down very general guidelines for the Lothian Committee to follow: ibid., pp. 386-7.

²Report of the Indian Franchise Committee 1932, Cmd. 4086(1932),

but the Lothian Committee moved away from merely recognizing the socially and economically dominant to trying to include a representative of everyone in the country down to the poorest landless labourer.

Although the Lothian Committee decided against its immediate introduction, considerable attention was given at this time to the possibilities of some form of adult franchise. Gandhi and Congress were, of course, in favour of universal franchise;¹ but while Nehru and the other young radicals wanted direct universal franchise, Gandhi himself recognized the administrative problems involved and was prepared to accept either universal franchise on application by the voter or a system of indirect election.² This latter, by itself, was unacceptable to most shades of Indian opinion (although the Bengal Provincial Franchise Committee suggested it also), but considerable interest was shown in a combination of direct and indirect election. In the form proposed at the first Round Table Conference, all non-enfranchised adults were to choose voters at the rate of 1 per 20.³ The

(LCR). The Scheduled Castes had previously been called the Untouchable or Backward Castes; the new term was first used in the 1935 Act to describe those castes for whom special constitutional provisions were made. The great majority of them were landless labourers or village menials.

¹As were other nationalist leaders: All Parties Conference, Report of the Committee Appointed by the Conference to Determine the Principles of the Constitution for India (1928). A group, led by Dr. Ambedkar and N.M. Joshi, pressed for it at the first Round Table Conference: Proceedings, p.386.

²RD 2274/2277, Reforms Despatch No. 13 of 1932, and D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, vol. iii (1952), p.149.

³Proceedings, loc.cit.

matter was also investigated by the Joint Select Committee.¹ The Lothian Committee, however, rejected both direct and indirect schemes for universal franchise. Although Ceylon, under the Donoughmore Constitution, already had universal franchise on application, a direct scheme was rejected because of the administrative difficulties involved, the high degree of illiteracy, and the absence of a proper parliamentary system.² Despite its superficial attractions, the indirect scheme was rejected for broadly similar reasons. In particular, the possibility of faction disputes worried the committee.³ Thus, although it spent a great deal of time analysing the various forms of universal franchise, the Lothian Committee came back in the end to the Round Table recommendation that between 10 and 25% of the total population be enfranchised. This in turn reflected the Simon Commission proposal of 10%, which was based on what official opinion thought was administratively practicable. It could be argued that the supposed absence of a party structure in fact concealed a fear that a wide franchise would favour Congress.⁴ Although the Lothian Committee certainly recognized that it would lead to the end of the old style of notable-dominated politics, no one foresaw the 1937

¹ Report, pp. 71-2.

² LCR, pp. 17-20.

³ Ibid., p.22.

⁴ When discussing the party system, the Lothian Committee stated that there was a great deal of activity at election times, but very little in between. Congress was dismissed as being mainly interested in gaining independence rather than in 'normal' issues: ibid., p.20.

results.¹ Moderates as well as extremists might have benefited from the extension of the franchise to the majority of the tenants and cultivators.

The Lothian Committee thus preferred the way of caution to that of radical experiment. Indeed, no one would have been more surprised than Nehru if direct universal franchise had been recommended. It remains to be seen how closely the committee's proposals for the actual franchise coincided with the known views of local governments, whose opinions had fixed the base figure of 10⁰%. This can be ascertained first from the schemes initially put forward by local governments and summarized in the committee's report, and secondly from the subsequent correspondence between the India Office and the Government of India. From the report, it appears that every province's proposed figure for the total electorate was increased by the committee,² although in U.P., C.P., Assam, and Madras the discrepancy was largely because of the question of women's franchise, and in the other provinces the first reduction suggested by local governments was always in the number of women voters.³ A second candidate for economy was often the educational qualification. Both these points will be considered separately. In certain provinces, however, there was disagreement with the general basis of the franchise.

¹Ibid., pp. 136-7.

²Provincial schemes and the committee's proposals are in ibid., pp. 48-80.

³RD 1930/2167, 'Views of the Local Governments on the Recommendations Made by the Indian Franchise Committee on the Basis of the Franchise for Governors' Provinces' (July 1932).

In Bengal, the original provincial proposal, simply on administrative grounds, was for an electorate of $7\frac{1}{2}\%$, but the Lothian Committee was not satisfied and increased it to 16% . It considered that even on the figures given by the local government a much larger electorate would be possible, as it was totally unrealistic to assume that the whole electorate would actually vote. When asked to comment on the Lothian proposals, the Bengal Government accepted them, but unenthusiastically.¹

In Bombay, the government scheme provided for an electorate of 13.25% , but the committee considered that this contained too small a rural element and increased the total to 17.1% . In its comments the government said that it would prefer to stand by the initial proposals,² but once the committee's qualifications had been formally proposed in the White Paper of March 1933, they were accepted.³ The Punjab's initial proposal was for an electorate of 2.28 million or 10% . The committee criticized this as being too low, and as being three-quarters composed of 'agricultural tribes'. It was worried not so much about urban interests, as about non-agricultural, largely Hindu interests in rural areas. The local government continued, for administrative reasons, to oppose any increase, and denied that only 25% of the electorate would be non-agricultural.⁴ The India Office, however,

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³RD 3415/3839, note dated November 1933.

⁴RD 1930/2167, loc.cit.

thought that there was some justice in Hindu objections to the Punjab proposals, in that non-agricultural elements formed 50⁰/o of the population, and raised the matter again in October 1932.¹ The Punjab Government's reply was that, including those qualified by education and the Scheduled Caste voters, the percentage of non-agriculturists was 40⁰/o, and that in rural areas, agriculturists spoke for the unenfranchised.² This was a dangerous doctrine, but the India Office seemed disposed to favour it on the grounds of 'the special political importance of the so-called Agricultural Tribes'.³ Shortly before the White Paper proposals were formulated, the Punjab Government made a further concession by including all the payers of haisiyat (profession tax);⁴ with this the matter was allowed to rest, despite continuing pressure from Hindu leaders in the Punjab, notably Pandit Nanak Chand and Raja Narendra Nath, whose influence, the Punjab Government assured the India Office, was not as great as they made out.⁵ The Punjab Government continued, however, to object to the global figure, on the grounds that the province, with its three major communities, was uniquely complex.⁶ The India Office considered that it was over-estimating the problems involved, in particular the number

¹RD 2274/2274, telegram S of S to G of I, 17/10/32.

²RD 2274/2404, Punjab Government to G of I, 7/11/32.

³RD 2274/2748, note by Laithwaite, 17/2/33.

⁴RD 2274/2748, telegram G of I to S of S, 7/2/33.

⁵RD 2274/2955, minute by Laithwaite, 10/4/33.

⁶RD 3415/3839, summary by Laithwaite, 12/10/33.

who would actually vote; the final decision, therefore, was that the local government must be overruled, and the White Paper proposals adhered to.¹

Bihar and Orissa² presented a similar problem, although it was more one of administrative backwardness than of political complexity. Compared to the 2-3⁰/o electorate achieved in other provinces under the old system, Bihar and Orissa had had an electorate of only 1⁰/o. In addition to being backward the province was permanently settled, and there was therefore a very small official infrastructure. Police were in short supply, and there had actually been rioting at the previous council elections.³ An unusual feature was that, in contrast to every other counterpart committee, the provincial committee was firmly behind the local government in resisting a large extension of the franchise. This was because the provincial council was dominated by the landlords who, after the 1930 elections, held 29 out of 33 seats.⁴ The Bihar and Orissa Government therefore proposed to the Lothian Committee a maximum electorate of 7.6⁰/o, with a preference for 4-5⁰/o. The special circumstances were noted, but even so the committee recommended a figure of 9.3⁰/o. At the time the local government accepted it, with considerable apprehension,⁵ but when

¹RD 3415/4072, telegram G of I to S of S, 12/12/33, and note by Laithwaite.

²At this stage one province, although by the time the Act was inaugurated, it had been divided.

³RD 3415/3839, loc.cit.

⁴RD 3415/3587, note by Sir John Kerr, 16/10/33.

⁵RD 1930/2167, loc.cit.

the question of practicability was again raised during the Joint Select Committee hearings, the Bihar and Orissa Government reverted to the question of raising the general franchise qualifications. Although the India Office was prepared to stand by the Lothian Committee proposal for a qualification of the payment of 6 annas chaukidari tax, the Joint Select Committee was more sympathetic, partly because of the Bihar earthquake of 1934, and raised the level permanently to 9 annas, and for the first two elections to 12 annas.¹

Bihar and Orissa was the only province where the recommendations of the Lothian Committee, which were often considerably higher than the initial proposals by provincial governments, were substantially altered. This reflected the willingness of the British Government and the India Office to expand the electorate despite local official protests. Why the initial official proposals were lower is difficult to say. When India became independent and held her first elections, it proved possible to poll the whole adult population. Three suggestions may be made. First, an election was seen as an extraordinary disruption of normal administrative routine, rather than as an integral part of it. Even under the 1919 system election days had had to be public holidays, and the Lothian Committee recognized this as a check upon franchise extension.² Officials also did not take into account the simplification of polling systems proposed by the committee,³ and still thought in terms

¹Report, p.73.

²LCR, p.16.

³See below, pp. 71-6.

of the complicated system used in previous elections. Lastly, there was the indefinable factor of official caution; provinces such as Bengal and Punjab felt they had to work on absurdly high figures of expected turnout. Table 1.1 sets out the effect of the various proposals on the size of the electorate.¹

¹The final franchise qualifications are set out in the Fifth Schedule to the 1935 Act.

Table 1.1

Summary of Lothian Committee Proposals and Related Information

| | Electorate under 1919 Act as percentage of total population | Provinces proposed electorate as percentage of total population | Lothian Committee proposals ^a ('000s) | Lothian Committee figures as percentage of total population | Lothian Committee figures for male electorate as percentage of male adult population | Lothian Committee figures for female electorate as percentage of female adult population | Seats | Actual electorate in 1937a ('000s) |
|-------------------|---|---|--|---|--|--|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Assam | 3.3 | 10.0 | 1,040 | 12.1 | 33.5 | 10.7 | 108 | 815 |
| Bengal | 2.6 | 7.5 | 8,000 | 16.0 | 48.1 | 12.6 | 250 | 6,695 |
| Bihar and Orissa | 1.1 | 7.6 | 3,500 | 9.3 | 32.9 | 3.5 | ^b | 2,932 ^b |
| Bombay (and Sind) | 4.1 | 13.3 | 3,726 | 17.1 | 50.5 | 14.3 | ^b | 3,248 ^b |
| C P. | 1.3 | 10.0 | 1,950 | 12.5 | 40.1 | 8.7 | 112 | 1,741 |
| Madras | 3.1 | 13.7 | 7,244 | 15.5 | 48.2 | 12.0 | 215 | 6,437 |
| N.W.F.P. | 5.0 | 9.9 ^c | 242 | 9.9 | 36.9 | 0.0 | 50 | 246 |
| Punjab | 3.1 | 9.7 | 2,800 | 11.9 | 36.0 | 8.7 | 175 | 2,686 |
| U.P. | 3.4 | 13.9 | 7,500 | 15.5 | 45.3 | 12.4 | 228 | 5,335 |
| Totals | 2.8 | 10.8 | 36,002 | 14.1 | 43.4 | 10.5 | 1,585 | 30,138 |

^aThe differences between these columns were partly the result of the modifications of the Lothian Committee's proposals, mentioned in the text, but also partly because the earlier figures were estimates, prepared in the absence of electoral rolls. It is not possible to work out what percentage of the difference is due to each factor.

(cont.)

Notes (cont.)

| | Seats | Actual electorate |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------|
| ^b Bombay less Sind | 175 | 2,609 |
| Sind | 60 | 639 |
| Bihar | 152 | 2,412 |
| Orissa | 60 | 520 |

^c Approximate figure.

Source: LCR, pp. 42-80; Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1937, Cmd. 5589 (1937).

The Educational Franchise

The dialogue between the officials and the Lothian Committee over the general franchise qualifications was carried on within narrow limits in that both sides recognized that property, as evidenced by the payment of tax or rent, would continue to be the main qualification, that those with the necessary qualifications would be enfranchised automatically, and that there was no possibility of achieving uniformity over the whole of India. This was not so with the educational qualification. The Lothian Committee considered that such a qualification was desirable for two reasons. It would draw in a number of literates who, because of poverty or their position in a Hindu joint family, did not possess the necessary property qualifications, for example government employees and schoolmasters, and it provided an automatic means whereby the franchise would be extended. Although educational facilities were concentrated in urban areas, the recommended level of the upper primary standard only involved some four to five years attendance. The committee also suggested that a special examination could be held, and that corresponding standards in traditional methods of education could also be accepted. It further considered that the upper primary standard should be uniform throughout

India, and that where evidence existed in authoritative records, registration on the electoral roll should be automatic.¹

All these principles were attacked by local governments. The simplest to criticize was automatic registration. All claimed that the administrative work entailed would be much greater than the committee had imagined, even if it were possible, given the state of most primary education records; as the work involved in the fourfold expansion of the electorate would stretch their resources to the limit, registration should be by application only.² This view was supported by the Government of India,³ and approved by the India Office.⁴ Registration by application was embodied in governors' rules despite opposition in England and India. In the Central Legislative Assembly there were demands for better registration procedures,⁵ and in the House of Commons Sorensen asked why application should be necessary at all. He was told that it was for administrative reasons,⁶ and no action was taken.

The principle of uniformity was also attacked. When the committee's proposals were first considered, the upper primary level was accepted by all the provinces,⁷ but when the White

¹ICR, pp. 40-1.

²RD 2274/2748, note dated 17/2/33.

³RD 2274/2277, loc.cit.

⁴RD 2274/2274, note by Laithwaite, 7/10/32.

⁵Central Legislative Assembly Debates (CLAD), 1936, vol. iv, p.2816, 18/3/36.

⁶House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. cccxiii, c.1399-1400, 22/6/36.

⁷RD 1930/2167, loc.cit.

Paper was being formulated, a variety of different levels were suggested. Although the Government of India agreed with the committee on the desirability of uniformity, the India Office considered that the administrative grounds on which local governments claimed freedom of action were adequate, and overruled the Government of India.¹ The result was that while U.P., the Punjab, Assam and N.W.F.P. used the upper primary standard, Bombay, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and C.P. used matriculation, which was much easier to administer. Madras, which had a very good record of education, preferred its initial proposal for simple literacy. The use of the matriculation standard was attacked in the Joint Select Committee by Lord Eustace Percy, who considered that its use as a qualification would lower the status of vernacular schools.² He was supported by Sir George Anderson, Educational Commissioner to the Government of India.³ They did not necessarily want a return to the upper primary level but simply a recognition of vernacular school qualifications, as the Lothian Committee had suggested. The local governments refused, for the usual administrative reasons, to contemplate it, and they were supported by the Government of India.⁴ As a result R.A. Butler had to inform Percy that the

¹RD 2274/2748, loc.cit.

²Report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, vol. ii C, Minutes of Evidence, H.C. 112 (II C) of 1934, p. 1774.

³RD 4163/4250, note by Anderson, 5/2/34.

⁴RD 4163/4211, 4216, 4237.

White Paper qualifications had to stand.¹

Running through both of these sniping actions at the Lothian Committee recommendations was a deep dissatisfaction with the whole principle of an educational franchise. Despite the recommendations of the first Round Table Conference,² only a couple of provinces included an educational qualification in their initial proposals. In the initial discussion after the Lothian report only Bombay openly opposed it,³ but none of the provinces was enthusiastic, and as time went on opposition mounted. By February 1933, the Government of India claimed that there was a large body of official opinion against it and recommended that it be dropped altogether.⁴ This, of course, went against definite British government policy, and although the Government of India quoted a Cabinet directive that there were to be no unrealistic proposals, it was overruled.⁵ The reason for the protest was said to be administrative, but political motives could be imputed. The only two provinces which gave non-administrative reasons for their objections were Bengal and Bombay. The Bengal Government objected to matriculation as the qualification because 'it would enfranchise an unruly and unstable fraction of the population'.⁶ Bombay's

¹RD 4163/4250, Butler to Percy, 27/6/34.

²Proceedings, p.387.

³RD 1930/2167, loc.cit.

⁴RD 2274/2706, telegram G of I to S of S, 7/2/33.

⁵Ibid.

⁶RD 2274/2315, telegram Bengal Government to G of I, 27/10/32. This was a view shared by the India Office: see RD 2274/2748, loc.cit.

objection to the educational franchise was that it would overweight the voting strength of the urban areas.¹ As they were not allowed to omit an educational qualification, both provinces chose the matriculation rather than the upper primary level of education, partly at least because it was easier to administer.

The history of the educational franchise shows the power that officials were able to wield. Faced with a large increase in the electorate through changes in the general qualifications, which they could do little to alter, they concentrated their criticisms on the novel, and also more troublesome, educational qualification. Although they were unable to have it abolished, it was very substantially altered, with remarkably little protest.

The Scheduled Castes Franchise

The differential qualifications introduced for the Scheduled Castes formed part of a wider strategy to give them an assured place in the political order. Although proportionate representation was not possible within the electorate, efforts were made to alter the balance dictated by the general qualifications. The Lothian Committee was not asked to make final recommendations but simply to ascertain the facts and to make suggestions. The first problem was to determine which castes were to be included. This was a technical question of anthropology which had taxed Census Commissioners for many years, but it also had major political implications. The committee was not able to come to any final conclusions (the matter was

¹RD 2274/2706, loc.cit.

eventually the subject of a separate order-in-council) but in general, although it claimed that it had taken ritual untouchability rather than economic backwardness as its criterion, where there was dispute it did not accept the more extreme definitions made by caste Hindus.¹

The committee then decided to work on the basis of enfranchising 10⁰/o of the Scheduled Castes. As possible means it suggested a simple literacy qualification, enfranchisement of village servants, of wives of Scheduled Caste voters, or of heads of households, a lowering of the property qualification, or a system whereby all Scheduled Caste voters were given an extra vote in a special Scheduled Caste constituency. None of these was totally satisfactory, for administrative reasons, because they would not produce many extra voters, or because they concentrated voting power within one section of the community, but the committee preferred the simple literacy qualification as a starting point.² From provinces' initial comments, it seems that Madras, whose idea it had been, accepted the two-vote system, that Bengal and Bihar and Orissa were, if necessary, prepared to accept simple literacy, and Bombay to accept a lower property qualification, but that official opinion was very definitely opposed to the whole idea of

¹ICR, pp. 112-23. The two provinces where the question of definition was most acute were Bengal and U.P. In Bengal, the government's estimate of the numbers of the Scheduled Castes was 11.2 million, the provincial counterpart committee's 0.07 million. In U.P., the government estimate was 6.8 million, the committee's 0.6 million. The committees were dominated by caste Hindus.

²ICR, pp. 126-7 and 130.

differential qualifications.¹

The situation was then changed by the publication of the Communal Award, which provided for a two-vote system. The Government of India officials concerned heaved a sigh of relief and recommended that nothing more need be done.² Their complacency was short-lived, for even while the despatch was being written the Poona Pact was emerging from the hurried consultations at Gandhi's bedside. The pact stated that the franchise was to be as laid down in the Lothian Committee Report. This meant achieving the 10⁰/o target, and the India Office accepted it.³ The Government of India also took the point, and proposed the adoption of a simple literacy test, while making a further protest against differential qualifications as being likely to lead to administrative breakdown.⁴ The Lothian Committee had already pointed out that literacy would only enfranchise a few extra from the Scheduled Castes, and the India Office reiterated this, at the same time making clear the absolute necessity of achieving a 10⁰/o Scheduled Caste electorate, in view of the British Government's acceptance of the Poona Pact.⁵ At this point, the Government of India gave in, and accepted the India Office position.⁶ The actual

¹RD 1930/2167, loc.cit.

²RD 2274/2277, loc.cit.

³RD 2274/2274, note by Laithwaite, 7/10/32.

⁴Ibid., telegram G of I to S of S, 10/10/32.

⁵Ibid., telegram S of S to G of I, 17/10/32.

⁶RD 2274/2297, telegram G of I to S of S, 24/10/32.

qualifications were not laid down till later. The only troublesome province was Madras whose local government fought for its initial two-vote system, on the grounds that any other system would introduce a mass of poor and unintelligent voters into the electorate.¹ There can be no doubt that other provinces concurred, but as the Poona Pact was a modification of the Communal Award mutually agreed to by the parties concerned, it had to be accepted.²

Other Franchises

Although the Indian women's case for special franchise qualifications resembled that of the Scheduled Castes, the debate was carried on in rather different terms. The general official view, held most strongly by the Government of India, was that special qualifications were undesirable on administrative grounds.³ It received support from Indian women's organizations, primarily the Congress-inclined All-India Women's Conference, whose objections were based on a dislike of any form of special treatment for women;⁴ representatives of the poorer sections of the population expressed the fear at the first Round Table Conference that any increase in the number of enfranchised women would be at their expense.⁵ In favour of preferential

¹RD 2274/2748, loc.cit.

²For other complications of the Poona Pact, see below, pp 59-68.

³RD 2274/2277, loc.cit.

⁴LCR, p.82.

⁵Proceedings, p.389.

treatment for women, however, was an influential section of British unofficial and government opinion, which was partly inspired by the only recently concluded struggle for women's franchise in the United Kingdom. The co-ordinator of British pressure was Eleanor Rathbone who in April 1933 organized the British Committee for Indian Women's Franchise.¹ Although she was in touch with leaders of the All-India Women's Federation, her specific proposals did not have their support.² The result of this curious line-up of forces was that to begin with the Government of India was able to whittle away the Lothian Committee proposals to give the vote to all female literates and to wives and widows of all voters who would have been qualified under the property franchise of the 1919 Act.³ In the White Paper the educational qualification was omitted and the 'wives and widows' qualification was to be available on application only.⁴ At this point, however, the question became open to public discussion in Britain, and Eleanor Rathbone and her allies were able to put pressure on the government. The result was that the differential qualifications were again expanded - in some provinces the literacy qualification was reintroduced and in others the application condition was dropped.⁵ R.A. Butler admitted that he had been impressed by Eleanor Rathbone's

¹Mary Stocks, Eleanor Rathbone (1949), pp. 162-5.

²Ibid., pp. 169-71.

³LCR, p.86. For the role of the Government of India, see RD 2274/2297, loc.cit.

⁴Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform, p.94.

⁵Report of the Joint Committee, p.75.

campaign.¹

Besides the qualifications for the franchise in provincial territorial constituencies, there were many other franchises to be worked out, for the upper house, where these existed, for the Council of State, and for the special seats in the provincial legislatures. Most of these latter followed lines already laid down under the 1919 Act and the Lothian Committee made no comment upon them, beyond fixing the number of seats to be allotted to each interest, but a number of minor problems remained for the consideration of the Hammond Committee. The most important concerned the landlords' seats. The Simon Commission had in fact recommended their abolition,² but the Lothian Committee had bowed to pressure from local governments and had proposed that the number of seats be kept at their existing levels.³ In all provinces but one, election was by landlords directly, and this was approved by the Hammond Committee, but in the Oudh part of U.P. election had been through the landlords' association, and the U.P. Government proposed that this form of election be extended to the Agra divisions. This was accepted by the committee, but at the same time it considered that small landlords who belonged to the associations should be barred from voting, and therefore fixed

¹RD 3415/3713, S of S to G of I, 12/8/33.

²Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, vol. ii, p.78.

³LCR, p.137.

a qualifying limit of the payment of Rs 10,000 land revenue.¹

After the committee's report was published, this was challenged by the U.P. Government, which considered that the limit would 'jeopardize the very existence of the Talukdari body'.²

It had powerful support from Sir Harcourt Butler who, in addition to being an ex-governor of U.P., and a noted amir-parwar,³ was also R.A. Butler's uncle, and from the Government of India.⁴

Despite this impressive array of forces, the India Office rather surprisingly decided not to accept the alternative limit of Rs 5,000 land revenue, which would have excluded very few landlords who belonged to the associations. Similar issues were also at stake in the division of seats between the two parts of the province. The British India Association wanted four out of the six seats, which it had had under the 1919 arrangement, while the Agra Zamindars Association wanted an equal division. A vigorous campaign was waged by the Oudh talukdars which made the U.P. Government change its initial pro-Agra stance. This time, the Hammond Committee accepted the local government point of view.⁵

A minor problem arose over the franchise for the universities' seats. The Lothian Committee had not been unanimous,

¹Report of the Indian Delimitation Committee, vol. i, Cmd. 5099(1936), (HCR), pp. 145-9.

²RD 6307/6489, telegram U.P. Government to S of S, 12/3/36. When the initial allotment of seats under the Communal Award was being discussed the U.P. Government had pressed for an increase from six to twelve.

³Philip Woodruff, The Men Who Ruled India, vol. ii (1954), p.289.

⁴RD 6307/6489, Sir Harcourt Butler to R.A. Butler, 8/3/36; RD 6307/6555, telegram G of I to S of S, 20/3/36.

⁵HCR, pp. 145-9.

but the majority accepted the claims of the whole graduate body, rather than the senate, to be the electorate.¹ The Hammond Committee decided that registered graduates of at least seven years' standing should receive the vote.² This was challenged by Madras and C.P., who wanted the electorate confined to senates, to ensure the election of true representatives of learning rather than politicians.³ The committee had considered their proposal but had rejected it because of the need for uniformity, and the India Office took the same view.⁴ There were also questions connected with the labour franchise, but these were more concerned with the method of election.

Qualifications for the candidates were broadly the same as for the franchise. With a few minor exceptions, nothing more was necessary than to be over 25, an Indian subject, and an elector in a constituency of the same class as the constituency in which one stood. Imprisonment for more than two years in the five years preceding the elections was a disqualification, although it could be lifted at the discretion of the provincial governor. The question of a residential qualification, which under the 1919 Act had been in force in Bombay, the Punjab, and C.P., was again considered, but was rejected as unsuitable and unnecessarily restrictive.⁵

¹LCR, pp. 137-8.

²HCR, p.141.

³Ibid., p.140, and RD 6307, note dated 20/2/36. The senates themselves were in fact as 'political' as the general body of graduates.

⁴RD 6307/6409, telegram S of S to G of I, 5/3/36. The view of the Congress majority in the Central Legislative Assembly was that all graduates of five years' standing should have the vote: CLAD 1936, vol. iv, p.2818, 18/3/36.

⁵RD 4714/5092, minutes of reforms officers' conference, 5-7/3/35.

The Distribution of Seats

Although the distribution of seats did not raise the same problems of administrative practicability as the franchise qualifications had, it was perhaps of greater significance in the development of the Indian political system. The struggle over the proportion of political representation given to each religious community and the debate over the theory that religious differences formed overriding lines of cleavage were, however, part of the continuing communal problem. This was recognized when the British Prime Minister after the second Round Table Conference issued the Communal Award, alterable only by mutual agreement among Indian leaders.¹ Table 1.2 expresses the award and related information in percentage terms; the actual distribution of seats is given in chapter 5. The award was based on existing practice with somewhat increased representation for Muslims, especially in the Punjab and Bengal. The government could claim general support for its policy in the Lucknow Pact, made between Congress and the Muslim League in 1916.²

The motives of the British Government in making the Communal Award were, of course, open to question. The British position in the 'communal triangle' was, however, as old as the problem itself, and there seems little evidence that the award was more especially inspired by anti-nationalist feeling than any other aspect of British policy. It was said later

¹The Communal Award (Communal Decision, Cmd. 4147 (1932)) was of course a major theme of politics in this period, but its terms effectively excluded it from challenge at the official level. The Marquess of Zetland greatly disliked it (Zetland, 'Essayez' (1956), p.121) but even he was unable to have it altered.

²Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, vol. i, p.138.

Table 1.2

Comparative Position of Muslims in the Population
and in the Legislatures^a

| | Population | | Lucknow Pact proposals | 1919 Act | 1935 Act |
|----------|------------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Assam | 36.2 | | - | 36.4 | 41.5 |
| Bengal | 55.0 | | 40.0 | 45.9 | 59.8 |
| Bihar | 12.8 | (and Orissa) | 25.0 | (and Orissa) 27.3 | 29.4 |
| Bombay | 9.3 | (and Sind) | 33.3 | (and Sind) 37.0 | 20.0 |
| C.P. | 4.4 | | 15.0 | 17.1 | 13.9 |
| Madras | 7.8 | | 15.0 | 16.7 | 16.0 |
| N.W.F.P. | 92.3 | | - | - | 75.0 |
| Orissa | 1.6 | | - | - | 6.7 |
| Punjab | 58.6 | | 50.0 | 50.0 | 53.4 |
| Sind | 73.6 | | - | - | 64.2 |
| U.P. | 14.9 | | 30.0 | 32.6 | 31.4 |

^aThe figures in all cases are percentages of the total Hindu, Muslim and Sikh populations, and of the territorial seats (including women's seats) allotted to them. The population figures are those used by the Hammond Committee in 1936 and differ slightly from the 1931 Census figures.

Source: HCR p.xiii (population); Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, vol. iv, Memoranda Submitted by the Government of India and the India Office (1930), p. 138 (Lucknow Pact proposals); Report of the Committee Appointed ... to Enquire into ... the Franchise (Lord Southborough's Committee), Cmd. 141(1919), pp. 19-79 (1919 Act); Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1937 (1935 Act).

that the award, by promising the Muslims a percentage point or so more than they were being offered directly by the Hindus, sabotaged the Allahabad unity talks of August 1932.¹ Such a view assumes, however, that the Muslim leaders at the talks could have persuaded the rest of the Muslim middle classes to accept the terms offered.

The distribution of seats within communal groups was made by the Hammond Committee, which was appointed after the 1935 Act itself had been passed. Unlike those of the Lothian Committee, its recommendations were not meant to be the basis of subsequent discussion, but were to be incorporated, more or less unchanged, into orders-in-council. There were innumerable protests against the demarcation of individual constituencies, but these were rarely based on legitimate grievances and were overruled. No attempt was made to secure constituencies of equal size. Once the overall allotment of seats had been made by the Communal Award or by the local governments, the committee used existing administrative units, the district, tahsil, or municipality, wherever possible.² This was virtually essential, but it produced wide variations in the size of constituencies. To take two random examples, the population per seat in Madras General Rural constituencies ranged from 131,765 (the Nilgiris), to 436,858 (Musiri), and in U.P. Muhammadan Urban constituencies from 47,472 (Ghazipur cum Jaunpur cum Gorakhpur cities), to 114,956 (Meerut cum

¹ Indian Annual Register (IAR) 1935 II, p.306: proceedings of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha annual session.

² HCR, p.24.

Bulandshahr cum Khurja cum Nagina cities).

The only major problem to be settled by the Hammond Committee was the distribution of seats between urban and rural areas. Under the 1919 Act seats had been allotted partly according to population, and partly to voting strength, which had quite deliberately been worked out to favour urban areas.¹ The result was that urban areas were given very substantial weightage. The declared aim of the Lothian Committee was to remedy this. It used as a dividing line between towns and villages a population level of 5,000; this was successful to the point that the relative percentage of rural voters in some areas was actually higher.² When the Hammond Committee began work, however, the dividing line in most provinces was much higher; as only true cultural and mercantile centres were included under most provinces' definitions, the percentage of voters in them was naturally much higher, and also the claims of such towns to special treatment, on grounds of their special position, was greater. In the circumstances, the population criterion of the Lothian Committee was not enough, and the 1919 principle of a mean between voting and population strength had to be used again. The Hammond Committee laid down as a principle that urban areas should receive 'the full representation to which they were entitled', including weightage if necessary, but that any weightage should not be greater than was appropriate.³ Unfortunately, no comprehensive figures are available in official reports, but table 1.3 is an attempt

¹Report of Lord Southborough's Committee, p.5.

²LCR, pp. 44-5.

³HCR, p.11.

to show the degree of weightage given to urban areas under the 1919 and 1935 Acts. These figures must remain extremely approximate, as they have been calculated from figures which were not designed to yield the information given, and which were compiled before electoral rolls were drawn up. They show clearly, however, that in actual practice a very large measure of weightage was given to urban areas. This applies equally to those provinces not mentioned in the table.

A closely related problem was that of defining a town. As has been seen, it had a bearing on the percentage of voters in urban areas; it also controlled directly the percentage of urban seats in the legislature, and indirectly the nature of both urban and rural constituencies. Provinces had already had to define a town for the purposes of the 1919 Act, and their existing practice was continued. This varied widely: in Madras even some towns of over 50,000 population were included in rural constituencies, while in Bengal any area which was a municipality was counted as urban, so that settlements of only 2-3,000 were abstracted from their rural surroundings. In both these cases, however, the practice was in accord with widely felt divisions within the province, and the Hammond Committee acquiesced, although it had some doubts.¹ The only local disagreement was in the Punjab. Under the 1919 Act, much the same policy had been followed as in Bengal, and small market towns of over 10,000 population had been classed as urban. This had been done with the object of removing urban influence over the 'simple' peasantry and thus isolating the

¹HCR, pp. 30 and 42.

Table 1.3

Comparative Populations for Urban and Rural Seats

| | Urban seats | | Rural seats | |
|---------------------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| 1919 | | | | |
| Madras | 88,000 | | 590,000 | |
| Punjab ^a | 217,000 | | 395,000 | |
| U.P. | 122,000 | | 635,000 | |
| | Hindu | Muslim | Hindu | Muslim |
| 1935 | | | | |
| Madras | 96,000 | 66,000 | 276,000 | 95,000 |
| Punjab | 126,000 | 158,000 | 170,000 | 158,000 |
| U.P. | 103,000 | 83,000 | 216,000 | 120,000 |

^aThe eight Sikh seats were not formally divided into rural and urban; as the great majority of Sikhs lived in rural areas, such seats have been regarded as rural.

Source: Calculated from Report of Lord Southborough's Committee, and Indian Delimitation Committee, vol. ii, Proposals for the Delimitation of Constituencies, Cmd.5100(1936).

'agricultural tribes'.¹ The policy was objected to by many Hindus, who would have preferred to have had some influence on elections in the rural constituencies within which the towns lay and from which they derived their livelihoods, rather than to be yoked to other small towns many miles away.² Nevertheless, the Hammond Committee agreed with the Punjab Government

¹The Views of the Government of India on the Southborough Committee Report, Cmd.176(1919), pp. 11-12. This interpreted the low dividing line as an attempt to remove from urban areas the weight of rural backwardness, but the initial idea was that of the local government, whose other actions at this time leave no doubt as to its motives.

²HCR, p.56.

that a divergence of interests existed which should be recognized, and it in fact lowered the dividing line to 7,500 population.¹ The net result was that rural areas were left with their 'natural leaders', although the removal of the residence qualification meant that urban candidates were able to contest rural seats. This marked divergence in definitions may perhaps explain the equally marked divergence in relative weightage between provinces. From table 1.3 Madras is seen to have had the highest degree of weightage, and Punjab the lowest. Madras had one of the highest, and Punjab one of the lowest, definitions of urban areas. The smaller the percentage of urban areas, the greater became the demand for weightage.

A parallel may perhaps be drawn between the provisions of the 1935 Act and developments in the Congress constitution at this time. As part of his Bombay package in October 1934, Gandhi had insisted that rural areas be brought into the Congress structure on a more equal footing, and in a modified form this was agreed to. According to article VIII of the Nagpur constitution of 1920, the Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs) were given charge of the election of delegates, subject only to the provision that the number should not exceed one per 50,000 of the population. In the Bombay constitution, it was laid down in article VI that, of a maximum of 2,000 delegates, 511 should come from urban, and 1,489 from rural areas, that this ratio should apply to each province individually, and that the dividing line

¹Ibid., pp. 60-61.

between town and country should be 10,000 population.¹ Even so, considerable weightage was given to urban areas, for the population in towns over 10,000 would have been less than 10⁰%, and there was no residence qualification. It was, however, a recognition of the integral role of the peasantry, and the definition of a town was low, so that the villagers were left to themselves. Both the British and Congress had decided to bring forward the peasantry, although they had different expectations of its behaviour.²

The Method of Election

The question of the manner in which votes are counted and seats allotted to constituencies essentially concerns minorities, of which India has many. Fortunately for the constitutional historian, if not for Indian development, the main problem of religious minorities was solved by the Communal Award, but there were other minorities who did not have separate electorates but did have reserved seats, and others again who had neither but were a force to be reckoned with. Some of them were accommodated in the General (i.e. Hindu) constituencies; others had to have special constituencies formed for them.

Certain constituencies had to be allotted more than one

¹ M.V. Ramana Rao, Development of the Congress Constitution (1958), pp. 37 and 54-5.

² This did not prevent the Congress group in the Central Legislative Assembly from describing the Hammond Committee report as unfair to U.P. urban interests: CLAD 1936, vol. iv, p. 2813, 18/3/36. N.V. Gadgil's attack on the Bombay proposals (*ibid.*, p. 3432, 28/3/36) is a classic example of the misunderstanding of statistics.

seat so as to accommodate reserved seats,¹ but it was also suggested that a number of open seats be allotted to each constituency both in the general and in the special classes. Broadly, the argument in favour of multi-member constituencies is that they permit some form of proportional representation to be practised, and in favour of single-member constituencies that they are more manageable for the administration, the candidate, and the voter alike, particularly where each community has to have its own constituency. Until 1937 multi-member constituencies were used in Madras and Bombay, and single-member ones elsewhere.

The first question was whether multi-member constituencies should be extended to other provinces. It was briefly mentioned by the Lothian Committee but not properly considered until the Hammond Committee report. In view of the overwhelming political and public support for their retention, and indeed of their own terms of reference, the committee decided to recommend that single-member constituencies be retained. Because the majority of the electorate would be voting for the first time, it was felt that methods of voting should be as simple as possible, and also that multi-member constituencies would cover too large an area.² These problems were certainly not insuperable. The first could have been overcome by the use of the single non-transferable vote, and the second by increasing the number of seats, which had already

¹The current Indian practice of reserving whole constituencies for specified groups was not adopted.

²HCR, pp. 13-15.

been largely increased from the 1919 levels.¹ There was, however, no compelling reason to adopt a new system, and so nothing was done.

The two provinces which most obviously needed a proportional system to cater for minorities without separate electorates already had multi-member constituencies under the 1919 Act. Bombay had to provide for Parsis, Jews, Jains, and non-Brahman castes, principally the Marathas, and provincial opinion was very firmly in favour of continuing the existing system.² As the local government supported this, the committee exempted it from its general preference for simple constituencies.

Madras had had multi-member constituencies so that seats could be reserved for non-Brahmans. This reservation was abolished in the Communal Award, as the Madras non-Brahmans had established their position, but the division of the province into sharply divided caste groups, particularly into Brahman and non-Brahman, remained. The majority of the Provincial Delimitation Committee, which was dominated by the non-Brahman Justice Party, which had disproportionate representation in the legislature, recommended a reversal to single-member constituencies, ostensibly for simplicity but more probably

¹In Bengal, for example, the provincial legislature was increased from 114 seats to 250, and in U.P. from 100 to 228.

²HCR, p.15. Single-member constituencies were advocated for Bombay by a Bombay Congressman in the Central Legislative Assembly (CLAD 1936, vol. iv, p.3433, 28/3/36) on the grounds that multi-member ones were a means to let in government supporters, but this was not necessarily the opinion of all Congressmen in Bombay, some of whom belonged to the minorities.

because it gave the party its best chance of continuing to dominate. The Madras Government backed the proposal, which was indeed administratively simpler, but as Sir Laurie Hammond later pointed out, the Indian members of the government were all drawn from the Justice Party, which he described as 'corrupt and unscrupulous'.¹ Against this, there was a large minority on the committee which favoured multi-member constituencies and, in the opinion of the Hammond Committee, the general sense of public feeling was also in favour of them.² It therefore recommended that multi-member constituencies be adopted, despite the united front of government and provincial committee.³

The Madras Government quickly retaliated. It was able to gain the support of the Government of India,⁴ and the India Office also favoured single-member constituencies, partly on the grounds that the Hammond Committee's terms of reference only allowed for multi-member constituencies in special

¹RD 6307, note with no number or date, but written in February 1936, and filed in front of 6409.

²HCR, p.17.

³Ibid., p.18. It cannot be assumed that the division in public opinion coincided entirely with the non-Brahman-division. Other caste rivalries as well as political ideals were involved. For instance, the minority on the provincial committee recommended the distributive voting system, instead of the cumulative, which might have been preferred if the only issue had been straightforward protection of caste interests. Congressmen were definitely concerned to eliminate inter-caste rivalries: see Madras Legislative Council Debates, March 1936, pp. 49-50, 11/3/36.

⁴RD 6307/6409, telegram G of I to S of S, 26/2/36.

circumstances and, preferring uniformity, it did not consider that Madras constituted a valid exception. It also thought that the proposed system would give minorities an unfair advantage, although this argument would only have fully applied in the improbable circumstances of a minority being distributed evenly in all constituencies, and voting completely as a bloc.¹ However, to achieve the semblance of popular consultation, the India Office postponed its decision until after the debate of the Madras Legislative Council on the Hammond Committee's report. As the council was dominated by the Justice Party the result was a foregone conclusion, despite a Congress-sponsored amendment, and the India Office then decided in favour of single-member constituencies for the majority of seats.² In other words, established opinions had been preferred to those of the public at large, which had been identified by the Hammond Committee, but which could not be pinned down in council debates. If the committee had been keeping strictly to British government policy, the Madras Government would have had to be overruled, but it was a matter on which the terms of reference of the committee were very vague, talking only of special cases, so that the India Office was in a position to overrule a government-appointed body.

Once the type of constituency had been fixed, the method

¹RD 6307, note dated 28/2/36, no number.

²RD 6307/6409, telegram S of S to G of I, 13/3/36.

of voting had to be decided.¹ Unlike most non-Anglo-Saxon countries, England had always used the simplest forms of voting in its parliamentary elections - the 'first past the post' system in a single-member and the distributive system in multi-member constituencies. Because of this, and because of the technical problems of voting in an underdeveloped country, it was natural for policy-makers to prefer uncomplicated systems at the expense of accuracy. On the other hand, the minorities problem in India was more acute, and there was pressure for some form of proportional representation, both in England and in India.² For single-member constituencies the Lothian Committee had examined the possibility of the alternative vote, but dismissed it because of its administrative difficulties and because it would lead to a proliferation of parties and

¹For a general survey of voting methods, see Enid Lakeman and James D. Lambert, Voting in Democracies: A Study of Majority and Proportional Electoral Systems (2nd ed. 1959).

²Sir John Simon himself was a vice-president of the Proportional Representation Society, and co-author of one of its pamphlets on the subject (P.R. Pamphlet 52). There was probably more interest in the subject then than now. The unsuccessful Representation of the People Bill (1931) (No. 2) had provided for the alternative vote system: D.E. Butler, The Electoral System in Britain since 1918 (2nd ed. 1963), pp. 68-72. Congress in its 1934 constitution adopted the single transferable vote system for the election of delegates to the annual session and of AICC members: Ramana Rao, op.cit., p.56. Difficulties were encountered, however, and at the Lucknow session proportional representation was abandoned in the election of delegates: Indian National Congress, Report of the 49th Session (1936), p.109. There were continuing criticisms of its use in AICC elections: ibid., p.113; Statesman, 29/12/36, and Leader, 23/2/38.

groups, which it considered particularly undesirable in Indian conditions.¹ The only alternative was the English system, which was adopted. Multi-member constituencies existed in every province for the Scheduled Castes: these will be considered later. There were also to be such constituencies, according to the Hammond Committee, in Madras and Bombay. The single transferable vote was recognised by all to be unsuitable in a largely illiterate society, but three possible systems remained. The distributive vote system is similar to the first past the post system. Where rigid parties exist, as in England, it is virtually indistinguishable, but under Indian conditions at the time it did allow some cross-party and cross-caste voting to take place. The cumulative vote system provides some additional protection for minorities, but unless the minorities are well organized and not too thinly spread out, the protection given them is not commensurate with their numerical strength. The single non-transferable vote system takes the cumulative system to its logical conclusion, but the effect is to discourage cross-voting, unless a dominant party is very well organized, and wishes to secure the election of a pliant member of the minority. It is also the simplest method. In conjunction with reservation of seats it was suggested by the Proportional Representation Society as the panacea for the Indian minorities problem,² although it did not solve the problem already mentioned, nor did it provide for communities whose representation in a constituency was smaller than the total number of voters

¹LCR, pp. 152-3.

²RD 3644/3644, P.R.Society to S of S, 25/7/33.

divided by the number of seats to be filled.¹

In Bombay there was no problem. The cumulative system had been used under the 1919 Act, and there was general agreement that it should be continued. In Madras the situation was more complicated. Under the earlier constitutional arrangements the distributive system had been in force, and it was this that the minority report of the provincial committee had had in mind when it recommended multi-member constituencies. The Hammond Committee, on the other hand, claimed to detect a general feeling in favour of the cumulative system, and duly suggested its adoption.² The Madras Government complicated the matter further by being in favour, on administrative grounds, of the single non-transferable vote.³ This time, however, it did not have the support of the Government of India,⁴ and the India Office decided against it and in favour of the cumulative system.⁵ Thus, on what appeared to be similar requests from a local government, the India Office took different lines. The variable factors seem to have been, first, uniformity - single-member constituencies were the preferred pattern, while the single non-transferable vote was a deviant system - and secondly, the attitude of the Government of India, which supported Madras on the one issue and opposed it on the other.

¹The single non-transferable vote system remained nevertheless, apart from separate electorates, the most suitable solution, and had distinct advantages over the cumulative vote system.

²HCR, p.21.

³Ibid., p.19.

⁴RD 6307/6409, telegram G of I to S of S, 26/2/36.

⁵Ibid., telegram S of S to G of I, 5/3/36.

On the general question of voting methods it should also be mentioned that the single transferable vote system was recommended for all elections by the provincial assemblies (i.e. of part of the upper houses in Bengal and Bihar, and of the lower house of the federal legislature). This sprang initially from a suggestion by the Simon Commission,¹ was easy to implement, and, at that level, solved the question of minorities within the Hindu fold.

There was, therefore, fairly general agreement on electoral methods in ordinary constituencies in all provinces except Madras, but there were similar problems in connection with other types of constituency. The most important of these was the Scheduled Caste problem, which became that of the interpretation of the Poona Pact. Under the Communal Award of August 1932 the Scheduled Castes had been allotted 71 seats. The essence of the Poona Pact, made the next month, was that this number was substantially increased to 151 in return for a joint electorate with reserved seats in certain constituencies, with the proviso that for ten years there would be a primary election in which Scheduled Caste voters in those provinces would choose a panel of four candidates for the actual election.² The principle was that each part of the Hindu community would be able to have a share in the election of all the community's representatives. Table 1.4 shows the effect of the Poona Pact.

¹Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, vol. ii, p.118.

²For the text of the Poona Pact, see RD 3644, copy of telegram from Government of Bombay, 24/9/32.

Table 1.4

Comparative Position of the Scheduled Castes
in the Hindu Population and in the Legislatures^a

| | Population | Communal Award | 1935 Act (Poona Pact) |
|--------|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Assam | 11.8 | 8.3 | 14.6 ^b |
| Bengal | 40.6 | 12.5 | 37.5 |
| Bihar | 15.9 | (and Orissa) 4.0 | 15.6 |
| Bombay | 10.7 | 8.3 | 12.5 |
| C.P. | 19.8 | 11.5 | 23.0 |
| Madras | 17.8 | 11.8 | 19.7 |
| Orissa | 12.5 | - | 13.3 |
| Punjab | 22.8 | 0 | 18.6 |
| U.P. | 30.8 | 8.3 | 13.9 |

^aThe figures in all cases are percentages of the total Hindu population, and of the territorial seats (including women's seats) allotted to them. The population figures are those used by the Hammond Committee in 1936 and differ slightly from the 1931 Census figures.

^bThe Assam women's seat is included in the calculation, although it was non-communal, as Hindus formed the majority of the electorate.

Source: HCR, p.xiii (population); Communal Decision; Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1937 (1935 Act).

The problems of interpretation were first to decide the exact procedure for the primaries, and secondly to decide the method of voting at the actual election. The answers to these questions vitally affected the prospects of the Scheduled Castes. The procedure in primary elections was a matter for governors' rules, and was first raised by the Bengal Government

in July 1933.¹ The points at issue were whether it was essential for there to be at least four candidates at the primaries, whether withdrawals from the panel were to be permitted, whether Scheduled Caste members could compete for unreserved seats without going through the primary procedure, and whether, if they headed the poll, panel candidates could be eligible for unreserved seats. On none of these was the Poona Pact clear. The initial India Office view was that all Scheduled Caste candidates would have to go through the panel, although they would then be eligible for unreserved seats, that it would be preferable to have a minimum of four candidates at primaries, and that something would have to be done about withdrawals.² The matter then lay dormant until an informal meeting of provincial reforms officers held at Delhi in March 1935. On each point, their opinion was opposed to the India Office position. The only exception was in Bengal, where it was felt that all Scheduled Caste candidates must go through the panel, because the Scheduled Castes were actually in a majority in certain areas of Bengal. Otherwise, it was felt that it would be easier to take the line of least resistance, which incidentally favoured the Scheduled Castes.³ These views were supported by the Government of India, which thought that there would be difficulty in some cases in finding four candidates,⁴ by the

¹RD 3644/3768, Bengal Government to G of I, 4/7/33.

²RD 3644/4179, I O to G of I, 20/2/34.

³RD 3644/5206, minutes of conference.

⁴RD 3644/5282, telegram. G of I to S of S, 24/4/35.

local governments,¹ and by Gandhi himself.² The official attitude in India was partly determined by administrative considerations, and also by a belief that it was in accord with the true intentions of the Poona Pact. In face of this, the India Office began to incline to the Indian view. In a note written in September 1935, Laithwaite proposed the whole-sale adoption of the local governments' views, and acknowledged Gandhi's opinion as a major factor in his change of mind. He considered that to permit withdrawals was an infringement of the pact, but that they should be allowed for practical reasons. He thought it unlikely that the Scheduled Castes would be sufficiently organized to permit collusive withdrawals and that caste Hindus could always put up their own Scheduled Caste candidates. Butler agreed with this general position.³

All seemed set for the views of both Gandhi and the officials to prevail, but there then came a personal intervention by the Secretary of State, Lord Zetland, who insisted on a rigid observance of his interpretation of the pact, which to him meant a minimum of four candidates and no withdrawals.⁴ His private secretary explained that Gandhi's interpretation of the pact was 'palpable nonsense', and that

¹RD 3644/5791, telegram G of I to S of S, 5/9/35.

²Ibid., report of press interview with Gandhi, 10/8/35.

³Ibid., note by Laithwaite, 9/9/35, and note by Butler, 18/9/35, and RD 6307, note dated 28/2/36, no number.

⁴RD 3644/5791, note by Zetland, 12/9/35.

Bengal Hindus (with whom Zetland strongly sympathized) had let their case at Poona go by default.¹ Although organized evasion of the spirit of the pact by the Scheduled Castes was unlikely, there must be no possibility of adverse criticism from caste Hindus.² In a rather desperate attempt to save its position the Government of India proposed a reference to the Hammond Committee.³ Unexpectedly, Hammond himself welcomed the addition to his work, and Zetland grudgingly gave his consent, with the admonition that the committee should keep to the 'plain meaning' of the pact.⁴ Unfortunately for the Secretary of State, the committee accepted the Scheduled Caste point of view, making an exception only in the case of Bengal for the unreserved seats problem.⁵ There was a small postscript to the matter in December 1936, when Ambedkar tried to use his acquaintance with Butler to get Bombay to change a rule it had made forbidding withdrawals.⁶ Butler sympathized,⁷ and telegrams were sent to Bombay, but the government there refused on the grounds that there had been no objections from Scheduled Caste leaders in Bombay itself (Ambedkar being in London at the time).⁸

¹Ibid., note by Croft, 19/9/35.

²Ibid., telegram. S of S to G of I, 26/9/35.

³RD 3644/5899, telegram G of I to S of S, end of September 1935.

⁴Ibid., telegram. S of S to Viceroy.

⁵HCR, pp. 105-6.

⁶As the procedure at primaries was a matter for governors' rules, it was open to Bombay to ignore the Hammond Committee report.

⁷RD 3644/7787, note by Butler, 4/12/36.

⁸Ibid., telegram Bombay Government to S of S, 7/12/36.

Zetland approved of the Bombay stand, and only regretted that Bengal had not acted likewise.¹

The whole affair is a good example of the complexity of decision-making. It extended over three years, all types of official opinion as well as Indian non-official and British government opinion were involved, and the matter was twice almost settled in the opposite way to the final decision. The first point of interest is that, although Gandhi's views were noted, no attempt was made to reconvene the makers of the pact. This was in fact very sensible, as without the threat of Gandhi's death there would have been not the slightest hope of an agreed solution between the Bengal Hindus and Ambedkar, but it did mean that officials eventually acted autocratically. Although they were determined to interpret the pact correctly, they did so from their own preconceptions. Although the wording of the pact was, of course, far from clear, it is probably true that Zetland's interpretation was more correct, but officials in India were also very aware of what would be possible to administer. All the officials concerned thoroughly disliked being involved with something they had not themselves formulated.² In addition to the fundamental problem caused by the vagueness of its wording, both caste Hindus and Scheduled Castes could, if they wanted, evade the spirit of the pact by collusion, and it was impossible to

¹ Ibid., note by Zetland, 9/12/36.

² RD 3644/5797, note by Laithwaite, 9/9/35.

frame rules which took care of both contingencies.¹ The second point is the interplay of power. Broadly, the combination of Gandhi and local governments was stronger than the India Office; a Secretary of State could play the ace of his personal intervention; this could be trumped by the quasi-independent weight of an official committee. Also, the examples of Bengal and Bombay show that an obstinate local government could often get its own way.

The question of voting methods was equally important to the Scheduled Castes, but was much simpler in its evolution, as it was agreed that it should be referred to the Hammond Committee and there were no Delphic provisions in the pact concerning it. Voting in the primaries was, according to the pact, to be by single non-transferable vote, but nothing was said about the actual election. Theoretically, the cumulative system favoured the Scheduled Castes, in that there was less chance of caste Hindus giving votes for Scheduled Caste candidates, although equally it diminished Scheduled Caste influence on the election of caste Hindu candidates. In February 1934, the India Office inquired from M.R. Jayakar and Ambedkar whether the question had ever been raised at the time of the Poona discussions. Both said that it had not, although Ambedkar added that he had had the Bombay (cumulative) system in mind.² The reforms officers' conference in March 1935, on the other hand, favoured the distributive

¹The main emphasis was, in fact, on the Scheduled Castes evading the pact, but over the Bombay issue Ambedkar persuaded Butler that the caste Hindus would use the disputed rule against the Scheduled Castes.

²RD 3644/4179, I O to G of I, 20/2/34.

system.¹ Nothing more was done until the Hammond Committee was at work. In its report, in which it generally accepted the Scheduled Castes' point of view, the committee said that it had found their leaders to be in favour of the cumulative system, and although the Madras and U.P. Governments wanted the single non-transferable vote system for administrative reasons, and the C.P. and Punjab Governments a distributive system, it preferred a uniform cumulative system, and recommended it.² The provinces which advocated the single non-transferable vote had powerful support from the proportional representation lobby, including Lord Lothian, but the system was strongly denounced by Gandhi and caste Hindus as going against the whole spirit of the Poona Pact, in that it would effectively prevent any cross-voting.³ The cumulative system was also denounced by caste Hindus, with official Congress support, for the same reasons.⁴ It is clear from their subsequent comments, that the C.P. and Punjab Governments were also worried about the political implications of the cumulative system, in that the Scheduled Castes might win unreserved seats,⁵ but the India Office felt that the danger of caste Hindu dominance was the more real, and that the framers of the pact had probably had the Bombay system

¹RD 3644/5206, minutes of conference.

²HCR, pp. 21 and 106, and RD 6307, note dated 20/2/36, no number.

³RD 6307, note dated 28/2/36, no number.

⁴CLAD 1936, vol. iv, p.2813, 18/3/36, and p.3409, 28/3/36.

⁵RD 6307, note by Sir Laurie Hammond, February 1936, no number.

in mind.¹ The recommendations of the Hammond Committee therefore stood, despite the very strong support from Congress for the distributive system.²

To some extent all this discussion took place in a vacuum, in that predictions of Scheduled Caste behaviour had to be theoretical. Although it had been assumed that they wanted the cumulative system, the Scheduled Castes in Madras provided an exception. In September 1937, after the first elections, the Scheduled Caste leader, M.C.Rajah, proposed in the Madras Legislative Assembly the substitution for the cumulative system of the distributive system, as had earlier been suggested in the minority scheme of the Provincial Delimitation Committee.³ This was passed by the Congress majority, and accepted by the India Office, despite a protest by Ambedkar.⁴ The arguments put forward by M.C.Rajah read as though they were being put forward by a caste Hindu. The reason for this was that in Madras most Scheduled Caste Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were supporters of the Brahman-dominated Congress party against the Justice Party. Congress having won the elections, it was in their interests to support distributive voting, which worked against the Justice Party. Although M.C.Rajah himself had always supported the Madras

¹RD 6307, note dated 28/2/36, no number.

²CLAD 1936, vol. iv, loci cit.

³Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, September 1937, pp. 1046-7, 29/9/37.

⁴RD 6392, Part II/8177 and 8847.

Congress view, the other Madras Scheduled Caste leaders had supported the cumulative system at the time of the Hammond Committee investigations.¹ The India Office was prepared to accept the views of an official body, even where it meant disturbing existing practice, although it had not accepted the same views when they had been put forward by non-officials. It is by no means certain, however, that if the pre-1937 Council had come out in favour of the distributive vote its view would have been accepted, as after the introduction of the 1935 Act the opinions of provincial legislatures acquired a new weight. Overall, the India Office thus achieved what it considered to be a reasonable interpretation of the Poona Pact. Its leanings, and those of local governments, towards the Scheduled Castes can be explained more in terms of administrative convenience than political sympathy, although the latter did play some part. Officials did not believe that the Scheduled Castes would be able to muster sufficient organization to take advantage of the loopholes which practical considerations left open.

A less controversial but important problem arose over the seats that were allotted to women. Unlike the case of the Scheduled Castes the intention was not to have women fully represented as an interest group, but simply to give a boost to the development of political activity among them. The question was to decide the most suitable form of constituency. The Lothian Committee was the first body to consider the

¹Indian Delimitation Committee, vol. iii, Selections from Evidence (1936), pp. 47-59.

the matter and, having fixed the percentage of seats at from 2-5⁰/o, it proposed four possible types,¹ of which the one most generally approved by the provinces was reserved seats in territorial constituencies.² The problem was then taken up by a reforms officers' conference. Bombay, Bihar and Orissa, and C.P. were prepared to reserve seats in ordinary constituencies, while the remaining provinces wanted to create special territorial constituencies as the size of these could be restricted, thus making it easier for women candidates to canvass. Voting was to be by men and women jointly, except in Bengal and Bihar Muslim seats.³ The Hammond Committee decided that in all cases special constituencies should be formed. It was obviously easier for candidates if these were formed in urban areas, but there were also political reasons for forming them in rural areas, and the committee allowed the Madras and U.P. Governments to do so. It decided against a similar proposal from the Punjab, presumably because it considered rural conditions in the Punjab more difficult than elsewhere. The local government protested, but to no avail. Some provinces had also suggested to the committee that women's seats should rotate from area to area, but it was considered that, although there were advantages in rotation, it was more important to establish a constant

¹ LCR, pp. 89-90.

² RD 1930/2167, loc.cit.

³ RD 4714/5092, minutes of conference, 5-7/3/35.

member-constituency link.¹ The only remaining question was which areas were to have voting by women only. Voting in Bengal and Bihar Muslim reserved seats had been confined to women in the 1935 Act itself, and after the Hammond Committee reported the India Office decided, with local government approval, that in Punjab and Sind also voting in the special constituencies should be by women alone.²

A small but illuminating point arose over the Assam and Orissa women's seats. Organized women's opinion had been strongly in favour of decommunalizing women's seats, and in Assam and Orissa the local governments were prepared to agree. The matter was raised at the reforms officers' conference, but the Government of India was firmly opposed to it on the grounds that it would contravene the Communal Award.³ The India Office, however, placed less emphasis on the need to appease the women's menfolk, and decided that the seats should, nevertheless, be decommunalized.⁴ Although the India Office was as legally-minded as the Government of India, it did have more awareness of the progressiveness of politics.

The Hammond Committee had also to make a decision on the form that labour constituencies should take. The choice lay between constituencies specially formed in industrial areas and election through trade unions. Trade unions had been

¹ HCR, pp. 122-7 and RD 6307/6481.

² RD 6307/6409, telegram S of S to G of I, 5/3/36.

³ RD 4714/5118, telegram G of I to S of S, 25/3/35.

⁴ Ibid., telegram S of S to G of I, 12/4/35, and RD 4714/5237, telegram G of I to S of S, 16/4/35.

recommended by the Royal Commission on Labour in India in 1931 but they varied very much in efficiency and representativeness from area to area. Although the Lothian Committee recognized that using them for electoral purposes would help their development, it was unwilling to place the whole of labour representation on such a basis. A dual system was therefore recommended,¹ and this was confirmed by the Joint Select Committee,² as several provinces had grave doubts about trade unions, particularly Bombay which was worried about communist elements.³ The Hammond Committee showed again, however, that policy-making bodies were often more dynamic in outlook than ordinary official opinion, and recommended that trade unions be used unless there were special circumstances.⁴ In pursuance of this, it insisted that some of the labour seats in Madras, Bihar, and C.P. be allotted to trade unions, although the local governments had wanted all seats to be allotted to special constituencies.⁵

The Conduct of the Poll

Under the 1919 Act the procedure from the nomination stage to the casting of votes had been complicated and time-consuming because, as it was based on English models, elaborate methods

¹LCR, p.101.

²Report, p.71.

³RD 4714/5092, loc.cit.

⁴HCR, p.182.

⁵HCR, pp. 187-99.

had had to be devised for a largely illiterate society. It was essential for the procedure to be modified if a large electorate was to be polled; it was, indeed, a prerequisite of the enlarged electorate proposed by the Lothian Committee that simpler voting methods be used.¹ Local governments raised no objection to the principle involved,² and by adopting new methods India was able to move in the direction of popular politics. Procedures could either be embodied in orders-in-council or in governors' rules and the India Office decided that it would be better to leave them to the latter, so as to avoid the long delays and uninformed criticism that would result from having to have orders-in-council approved by Parliament.³ This meant that there was less scope for uniformity and that on procedural points the Hammond Committee was more of an advisory than a policy-making body.⁴ The first step was to simplify nomination procedure in order to prevent the challenging of elections on minor technicalities as had previously happened. This was done by having the scrutiny of nomination papers held on the same day as nomination, rather than allowing a week to elapse in which factitious objections could be prepared, and by making an unsuccessful petitioner against an election pay part or all of the costs.⁵ The recommendation of the Hammond Committee that Returning Officers

¹LCR, p.59.

²RD 1930/2167, loc.cit.

³RD 6138/6579, telegram S of S to G of I, 1/4/36.

⁴RD 6434 Part I/6908, telegram G of I to IO, 4/8/36.

⁵ HCR, pp. 258-60.

should have discretion to correct mistakes in the electoral roll was, however, considered by local governments to allow an unwise degree of discretion, and was not implemented.¹

The second step was to make withdrawals more difficult.

According to the Hammond Committee collusive withdrawals had been common, and it suggested that they be made more difficult to prevent the buying off of rival candidates.² This was done by making withdrawals possible for only one day after nomination, except in U.P. where the period allowed was three days.³ The third and major step was to devise a suitably simple method of casting votes. Three systems had been in use under the 1919 Act: the coloured box, where voters merely put a token in the appropriate box, the symbol, where voters placed marks against symbols, and the ordinary ballot paper, which in practice meant that the Presiding Officer or a polling clerk had to mark the ballot paper on behalf of the majority of voters. The objection to the symbol system was that it appeared that many illiterate voters were unable to identify the symbols correctly.⁴ The coloured box system, although it gave the greatest degree of secrecy, was considered by the Hammond Committee to provide opportunities for

¹RD 6434, Part I/6908, loc.cit.

²HCR, pp. 263-4.

³RD 6434 Part III, copies of Conduct of Elections Rules.

⁴HCR, p.269. This objection was in fact only based on the evidence of one province, Madras. The symbol system has been used, with candidates having separate boxes as in the coloured box system, in post-independence India.

palming votes for later sale.¹ The questions at issue were whether a uniform system should be adopted, and what improvements could be made within the systems. The Lothian Committee recommended the uniform adoption of the coloured box system, with its emphasis on trusting the voter,² but the Hammond Committee was prepared to allow local governments to choose. The result was that Bengal and Assam chose the symbol system, Bombay, Sind, N.W.F.P. and the Punjab continued to have ballot papers marked, Bihar, Orissa and C.P. continued with the coloured box system and Madras changed over to it, while U.P. retained its old marking system for rural areas but adopted the coloured box system for urban areas.³ The committee did, however, propose an improvement in the marking system. Previously the Polling Officer had marked the ballot papers of illiterates in the presence of candidates' agents, which effectively destroyed the secrecy of the ballot. The committee proposed that the paper be shown to a person named by the voter, who would normally be the agent of the candidate he had voted for.⁴ The new procedure was adopted by U.P., the Punjab continued with the old system, while the other provinces concerned included a clause in their rules leaving it to the discretion of the Polling Officer.⁵

¹Ibid., p.266.

²LCR, p.273.

³RD 6434 Part III, loci cit.

⁴HCR, p.265. This proposal was a little naive, as the main problem was to prevent harassment by agents, who would know if they were not asked to check the ballot paper.

⁵RD 6434 Part III, loci cit.

The Hammond Committee was thus prepared to leave the decision to local governments, whose views were in this instance dictated by quasi-administrative considerations, but the matter had a direct political significance. The coloured box system gave the greatest degree of secrecy, and because of this was demanded by Congress, who had most to fear from landlord interference, for the whole of India.¹ This was refused, but a rearguard action was fought on behalf of the rural areas of U.P. which, in addition to containing areas of strong Congress influence, also had a relatively vigorous landlords' party which specifically counted on personal influence.² Nehru circulated a note to selected MPs late in 1936, calling for the coloured box system and saying that the local governments' scheme was designed to give every advantage to the big zamindars.³ The U.P. Government defended its policy on the grounds that, with many voters voting for the first time, it was best to keep to tried methods.⁴ As the pressure had come entirely from non-official sources, nothing was done. Although governments' own justifications are hardly an infallible guide, it seems probable that the U.P. Government's reasons were as stated.

Another part of the voting procedure was the identification of the voter, and here the Lothian Committee had

¹CLAD 1936, vol. v, pp. 4407-9, 22/4/36.

²P.D.Reeves, 'Landlords and Party Politics in the United Provinces, 1934-37', in D.A.Low (ed.), Soundings in Modern South Asian History (1968), pp. 274-5.

³RD 6434 Part I/7294.

⁴Ibid., telegram U.P. Government to S of S, 13/12/36.

recommended a substantial simplification of existing practices.¹ Governors' rules varied, but under the new system the most a voter had to do was to sign or make a mark on the counterfoil of his ballot paper.²

The final step was to control such disputes as arose after the elections were over. There was of course no desire to control genuine election petitions, but they were costly and time-consuming. The Hammond Committee therefore recommended that a deposit be made by the petitioner and that, as already mentioned, the unsuccessful parties be made to pay part or all of the cost.³ Some provinces fixed a definite sum as a deposit, while others left it to the discretion of the commission appointed to try the petition.⁴ The order-in-council which dealt with general procedure for election petitions included another recommendation made by Hammond personally for the same purpose. This was that no one could secure a seat by a petition unless the result of the petition meant that he had in fact secured a majority of votes cast, or would have done but for the corrupt practices that had been proved.⁵ The committee also recommended that a deposit be made each time a vote was challenged, but this was not accepted by local governments, which did not feel that there had

¹LCR, p.275.

²RD 6434 Part III, loci cit.

³HCR, pp. 260-1.

⁴RD 6434 Part III, loci cit.

⁵RD 6138/6663, telegram S of S to G of I, 14/5/36, and the Government of India (Provincial Elections) (Corrupt Practices and Election Petitions) Order, 1936: RD 6138/6837.

been any great abuse of the procedure.¹ The system of deposits by candidates, to be forfeited if they did not secure $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ of votes cast (or the equivalent in multi-member constituencies) was continued as before. The deposit, which was normally Rs 250, was lowered to Rs 50 for Scheduled Caste candidates and for manual workers in labour seats to encourage their candidature.²

In addition to simplifying and tightening up electoral procedure, the new constitution made other modifications in existing practice. On the questions of 'treating' and the hire of conveyances, which were dealt with by order-in-council, Indian rules had followed the English pattern. Both were regarded under the 1919 Act as corrupt practices. With regard to the second the Hammond Committee recommended the lifting of the ban altogether, since polling stations were often much further apart than in England and private cars were much less frequent.³ The question of 'treating' was more complex. The committee thought that the provision of refreshments to voters could be regarded as part of the Indian tradition of hospitality and patronage and not as an attempt to influence the voting, and proposed that some 'treating' be allowed.⁴ The first draft of the order, possibly because of an instinctive preference for British models,

¹HCR, pp. 267-8 and RD 6434 Part I/6908.

²HCR, pp. 108 and 186.

³Ibid., pp. 271-2.

⁴Ibid., pp. 272-3.

nevertheless made all 'treating' impermissible.¹ Several provinces, however, protested,² and the second draft of the order permitted it.³ This in turn was criticized by Hammond and Butler, who thought that too much latitude was given.⁴ As a result of this double criticism, Dawson evolved a formula which referred to 'customary hospitality'.⁵ The responsibility for deciding what was customary was placed with the commissioners who tried cases arising from it.⁶

Closely connected to the problem of 'treating' was the question of whether or not to impose a general limit on election expenses. No limit had been imposed under the 1919 Act and most official opinion agreed that it was impossible to do so, in view of the difficulty of obtaining definite data and accurate returns of expenses. The Government of India officially supported a laissez-faire policy.⁷ There was, however, pressure from British opinion to have a limit imposed. Both the Lothian Committee and the Joint Select Committee considered one necessary.⁸ The India Office therefore evolved a compromise by which provinces would have to bring in a

¹RD 6138/6609.

²RD 6138, note dated 1/2/36, no number. Bihar at an earlier stage had pointed out that if an effective ban on 'treating' was made, 'the result would be that elections would be decided by a microscopic proportion of the voters' (RD 3762/3853, 'Views of Local Governments...').

³RD 6138/6609.

⁴RD 6138/6663, notes for a meeting on 13/5/36.

⁵Ibid., note dated 14/5/36.

⁶RD 6138/6837, Corrupt Practices and Election Petitions Order.

⁷RD 3762/3846, G of I to S of S, 29/9/33, and RD 3762/3853, 'Views of Local Governments...'.
⁸LCR, p.280 ; Report, p.76.

limit on expenses by the time of the second general election under the new Act. This meant that legislatures were free to decide on limits for their own provinces.¹ In the event, U.P. and Madras introduced a limit for the first elections by governors' rule, while in other provinces a return of election expenses was supposed to be made by candidates.²

The Date of the Elections

The elections could not be held until the details of procedure had been settled, but the pace of the preliminary work was to some extent determined by the date of the elections. Lord Lothian had hoped in 1932 that the elections could be held in 1933.³ This was wildly inaccurate, but in 1934 the private opinion of the India Office was that elections could be held in 1936. Sir Vernon Dawson thought that the exigencies of the Parliamentary timetable would mean that they could not be held until the end of that year,⁴ while R.A. Butler thought that 'India will regard the postponement of the Elections to Autumn 1936 as a serious matter'.⁵ A memorandum sent to the Viceroy in October 1934 proposed the first months of 1936 as most suitable and suggested that the provinces could begin to prepare provisional electoral rolls.⁶ This was circulated

¹ RD 3762/3904, note by Laithwaite, 19/10/33, and RD 3762/6005, note by Dawson, 15/11/35.

² RD 6434 Part III, loci cit.

³ RD 1930/1999, speech made in India, 10/5/32.

⁴ RD 3943/4384, note by Laithwaite, 26/6/34, and marginal note on it by Dawson, 6/7/34.

⁵ Ibid., note by Dawson, 26/7/34, and marginal note on it by Butler, same date.

⁶ RD 4317/4384, memorandum dated 10/8/34.

to the provinces but, with one exception, local governments considered that it would be impossible to hold elections before the autumn of 1936.¹ The India Office also realized that unless the Delimitation Committee was to be appointed before the final reading of the Bill, which was politically unwise, there would be little hope of holding elections early in 1936.² At the end of 1934 all seemed set for elections in the autumn of 1936, with the introduction of provincial autonomy on 1 January 1937. In the middle of 1935, however, the question was raised of budgetary arrangements for the transition to responsible government, and there were further difficulties in squeezing all the necessary preparation into the limited time that would be available. Some provinces would not even have finished their elections before January 1937.³ For both reasons it was decided to postpone the elections for a few further months. It would have been feasible, although less easy, to have held some elections earlier and to have separated financial and executive autonomy, but it was tidier and gave provinces more room to manoeuvre to bring all elections back into 1937. The introduction of the new constitution was thus delayed for a year, despite the political reasons that had been advanced for holding the elections in early 1936. It was a fitting end to a decade of constitution -

¹RD 3943/4498, 'Analysis of Views of Provincial Governors...'

²Ibid., note by Butler, 31/10/34.

³RD 3943/5371, telegram G of I to S of S, 17/5/35, RD 5659/5659, Dunnett to Carter, 22/7/35, and RD 5659/6341, circular letter G of I to local governments, 4/11/35.

making which had been dominated by the need to reconcile the local governments to the new era.

The Administration of the Elections

So far, the focus of attention has been the interplay between New Delhi and Westminster. Once the full array of orders and rules had been drawn up the Home Department and the Reforms Office of the Government of India, and the local governments, regained control over the elections. Administrative convenience no longer had to be tempered with concern for the reactions of Parliament or the Round Table Conferences. Congress claimed that as a result the government was able to discriminate against it more readily. Before the specific charges of government interference are examined, a comprehensive outline will be given of the administration of the elections.

Although the approximate date of the elections was known in the middle of 1935, exact dates were not determined until the latter part of 1936 after the reforms officers' conference in June. The matter was left entirely to the local governments, who could thus take into account factors such as religious festivals and court sittings.¹ The elections took place from 18 January to 20 February 1937, as shown in table 1.5. Even within the same province it was not possible to hold all the elections simultaneously. Simply to poll the constituencies of one class could take three or four days; in some areas the polling in each

¹RD 36/7/36-F, notes by V.P.Menon and W.H.Lewis, 13/10/36.

constituency had to be spread over several days and the electorate was formed into 'daily polling units'. There were often intervals of several days between polling dates in the different classes of constituency.

Table 1.5

Overall Polling Dates in Each Province

| 18th January - 20th February, 1937. | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Assam | xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx | 18/1-8/2 |
| Bengal | xxxxxxxx | 18/1-26/1 |
| Bihar | xxxxxxx | 22/1-28/1 |
| Bombay | xxxxxxxx | 11/2-18/2 |
| C.P. | xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx | 4/2-19/2 |
| Madras | xxxxxxx | 15/2-20/2 |
| N.W.F.P. | x | 1/2 |
| Orissa | xxxxxxxx | 20/1-27/1 |
| Punjab | xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx | 18/1-3/2 |
| Sind | x | 1/2 |
| U.P. | xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx | 7/2-18/2 |

Source: RO 14/36-F and RO 20/III/1936-F.

The protracted period of the elections opened two possibilities. First, a 'snowball' effect: this could not occur within provinces to any great extent as it took some days for most constituency results to be declared, and it is unlikely that Muslim results would have had much effect on Hindu constituencies and vice versa. It was, however, possible for news of Congress (or conceivably League) successes

in one province to influence the results in another. Secondly, election workers could move about between constituencies and provinces. Both possibilities were considered within the Home Department, but no action was considered necessary.¹

There had been a Reforms Office within the Government of India since 1933 and as the election preparations began reforms officers were appointed in each province. The district work was carried out by the district officer or a deputy. During the polling period itself all government officials, whether in central or provincial departments, were made available to serve as presiding and polling officers or as polling clerks.² Even so, non-officials, frequently teachers, had to be employed as well.³ In Madras 38,088 people were employed to administer the poll.⁴ Policing was also difficult. In U.P., where each polling station had an average of four constables in attendance, nearly 60% of the police force was used, supplemented by almost 15,000 village chaukidars.⁵

¹ HPU 1/52/36, Emerson to Craik, 14/9/36, and notes by Hallett, 15/9/36 and 16/9/36. An additional consideration was that Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly did not want any of the elections to overlap the Assembly session: ibid., note by Thorne, 16/7/36. See also below, p.222.

² RO 30/36-F, passim.

³ RO 20/III/1936-F, 'Report on the First Elections to the U.P. Legislature', (hereafter U.P. Report); 'Report on the General Elections in Bihar, January 1937', (hereafter Bihar Report).

⁴ Ibid., Madras G.O. No. 596 Public (Elections), 29/3/37, 'Review of the Elections', (hereafter Madras Report),

⁵ U.P. Report.

The number of polling stations used varied substantially according to the geographical size of the province and the administrative resources available. In Bihar, where the revenue system needed relatively few local officials, there were 457 polling stations for the 70 general constituencies, and in Madras, 3,204 for 111. In U.P. the ideal was that no elector should be more than five or six miles from a polling station, but in the most remote and sparsely populated areas this may not have been achieved.¹ The relative scarcity of polling stations meant that access to transport was an important factor in some areas.² Local boards were expected to make schools and offices available and police stations were used, but in some rural areas tents were erected as makeshift stations.³ It was generally reckoned that each set of polling staff could cope with about a thousand electors. In U.P., where both methods were in use, it was reported that one or two hundred more electors could be handled by the coloured box system than by the ballot system.⁴ There was often, of course, more than one set of officials per polling station. In certain urban areas separate facilities were provided for women voters.⁵

¹Bihar Report; Madras Report; U.P. Report.

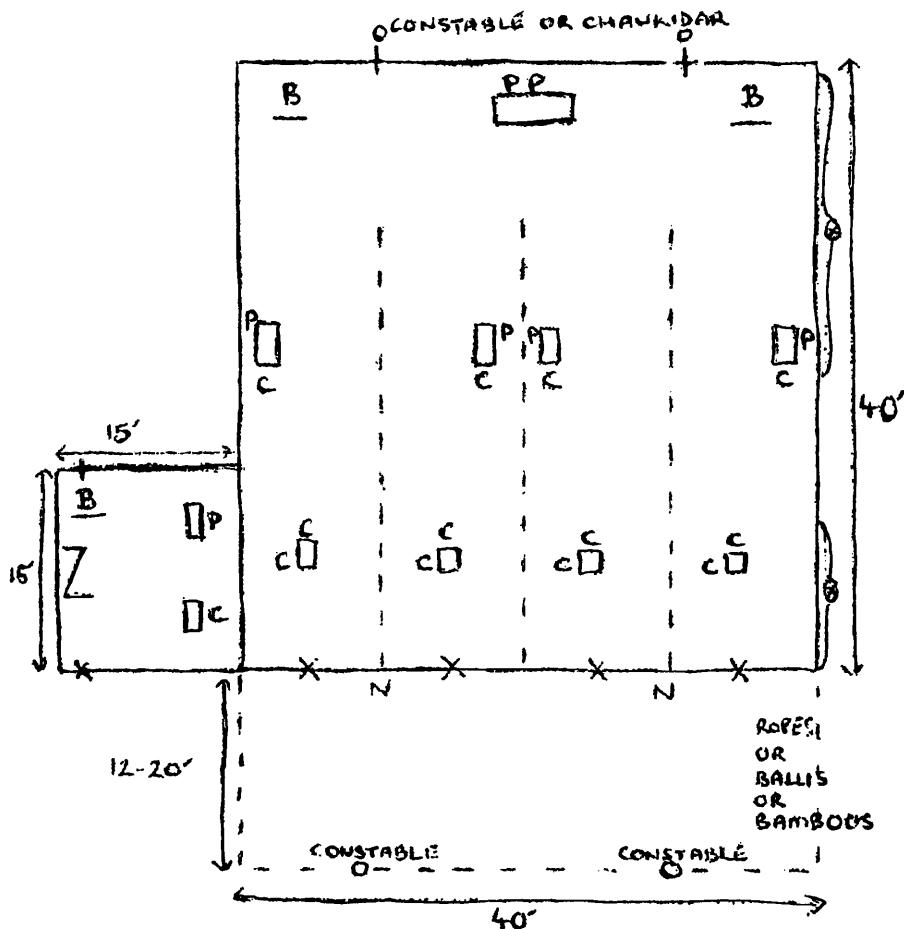
²Bihar Report; RO D683/37-Fed., Hammond to Laithwaite, 17/8/37. Hammond quoted the Governor of U.P. as saying that Congress's use of hired transport (newly legitimized under governor's rules) was a factor in its success.

³RO 30/36-F; Bihar Report; U.P. Report.

⁴Bihar Report; U.P. Report.

⁵Ibid., RO 20/III/1936-F, 'Report on the General Elections in North-West Frontier Province February 1937', (hereafter N.W.F.P. Report).

Plan of Polling Station



- X Entrance
- + Exit
- B Screened place for ballot boxes
- C Clerk
- P Polling Officer
- PP Presiding Officer
- Z Women's booth
- N Placards with names of candidates and colours
- ⊗ These parts to be covered. Other parts may remain uncovered.

At each entrance a notice with roll numbers of voters to be admitted at that entrance.

Source: U.P. Report.

Three local governments reported the cost of the elections. In N.W.F.P. the cost was given to the last pice - Rs 74,507-13-5. In Bihar, it was given as Rs 225,520, excluding the cost of printing at the government press and the pay and allowances of government officials on election duty. In U.P. the estimated cost was about Rs 850,000, excluding the ordinary pay of officials. In each case, the major expense was the printing of the electoral rolls. A certain amount was recovered in the form of forfeited deposits and receipts from the public sale of copies of the electoral rolls. In Bihar Rs 28,400 were received from these sources. Deposits forfeited in U.P. amounted to Rs 33,250.¹

Although the official polling dates were not announced till quite late, preparation of the electoral rolls had been going on for years. In some provinces it had begun even before the 1935 Act had been passed. In Bihar, for instance, instructions had been issued as early as May 1933 for the preparation of lists of those who would be qualified by property or by education to matriculation standard. Such lists were in fact the basis on which the constituencies were delimited. When the time came to prepare the actual register these lists were revised, usually by local revenue officials and village officers, and applications invited from those who were not entitled to automatic registration. This took place in the early part of 1936 and the draft rolls were

¹N.W.F.P. Report; Bihar Report; U.P. Report.

published in June or July.¹

After publication of the draft rolls a period of two or three weeks was allowed for claims and objections, which were heard by magistrates. In U.P. 36,462 claims and 3,859 objections were allowed. In Bihar 7,005 out of 16,801 claims for inclusion were allowed. The reforms officer in Bihar commented that the level of claims was surprisingly low, and attributed this in part to a lack of interest among potential electors. He thought that a large number of women who were eligible had certainly not been included.² After claims had been heard, the final rolls were prepared and published in October or November. These usually consisted of copies of the draft rolls together with addenda and corrigenda. The process of choosing the Scheduled Caste panel occupied part of November and December. Closing dates for nominations usually fell in the same period. Thus at least six weeks elapsed between the closing of the nomination list and polling. After the list had closed, only a very short period, usually a day, was allowed for withdrawals. This was intended as a measure against 'collusion', but was criticized for causing hardship to those who wanted to retire for other reasons.³

¹Bihar Report. The timetable in other provinces was broadly similar.

²U.P. Report; Bihar Report. Claims were supposed to refer only to inaccuracies in the roll, but in some provinces de novo applications were allowed. This may have been the case in U.P. RO 1/1/36-F & K.W., 'Proceedings of Conference of Reforms Officers at New Delhi, 16th June 1936'.

³U.P. Report.

Seemingly to the surprise of many officials, the first experiment in conducting elections among a largely illiterate electorate passed off almost without incident. One or two polling stations had to be closed for short periods owing to disturbances, but nothing in the nature of a riot took place. In some places Congress workers organized processions to the polling stations, which inevitably involved a certain amount of noise.¹ During the weeks before the poll there had in some areas been lively campaigning. Numerous charges and counter-charges were made of speakers having been shouted down but, with the exception of a couple of murders that were alleged to have had a political motive, nothing serious occurred.²

The actual mechanics of casting votes worked well. The method of placing tokens in variously coloured boxes was regarded as a success in the provinces where it was used, but it was pointed out from some quarters that the necessity of having an official present while the vote was cast destroyed the secrecy of the ballot. Some candidates helped by providing their supporters with slips of the appropriate colour to remind them which box to use.³

¹Bihar Report; U.P. Report.

²HPO 4/9/37, passim; FR Punjab, January 1936 I.

³U.P. Report. It was necessary for the casting of the vote to be witnessed, for it would have been possible for a voter to 'palm' his token and give or sell it to one of the candidate's agents. In Madras an ingenious system was evolved whereby a 'watcher' looked through a slit in the wall that was so designed that he could only see the voter's hand. The complaint was made, however, that some watchers whispered candidates' names through the wall: Madras Report.

One criticism of the voting methods used was that in multi-member constituencies where cumulative voting was allowed, many people had 'plumped' their votes for a single candidate. This applied particularly to constituencies in which a seat was reserved for a member of the Scheduled Castes. It was observed that while Scheduled Caste electors had often given all their votes to candidates for the unreserved seat, the opposite had not occurred. Congress objections to the cumulative system of voting thus turned out to have been justified.¹

There were inevitably a certain number of election petitions. In U.P. 27 were filed, of which nine were against independent Muslims and six against Congressmen.² Even so, the number of irregularities seems to have been low. In part this was due to liberalization of the rules. The hiring of conveyances to take electors to the poll and 'customary hospitality' were now both allowed; only Madras and U.P. placed any limit on expenditure. Rules for nominations had also been simplified to avoid the sort of technical dispute that had arisen earlier.³ The detected level of fraudulent personation was very low, although there was some personation of close relatives.⁴ The main difficulty appears to have been with the system of postal voting in certain special constituencies, in which widespread abuses were reported.⁵

¹U.P. Report; see above, p.66.

²U.P. Report.

³Bihar Report.

⁴Ibid.; U.P. Report.

⁵N.W.F.P. Report; Bihar Report.

Charges of Government Interference

During the campaign there were a number of allegations, both general and specific, of government interference.¹ The general attitude of the government to the elections must first be considered. Some measure of ministerial responsibility had already been introduced by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and even the Simon Commission had recommended full provincial autonomy. Many members of the ICS were prepared to work the 1935 Act in the spirit of the Montagu Declaration.² Even those officials who regretted the passing of the age of autocracy had to recognize that there could be no going back. In any case, the legislatures were a useful means of legitimizing the raj to certain sections of the Indian population and, more importantly, to Parliament. Nevertheless, the thought of Congress contesting the elections produced ambivalent reactions. Congress was recognized to be the largest organized political body in the country but at the same time it stood for the overthrow of the system. During the elections officials were principally concerned with four aspects of this classic dilemma of democratic theory. First, it was thought that Congress might, under cover of electioneering, preach or even practise subversion. This fear was especially strong in those parts of the country where civil disobedience had been

¹ These were in addition to the charges of institutional bias discussed above.

² Philip Woodruff, The Men Who ruled India, vol. ii (1954), p.255.

mingled with violence, as in N.W.F.P. and Bengal.¹ Secondly, it was felt that Congress might try to win unfairly by making wild promises to the villagers concerning remission of land revenue and rent.² Thirdly, it was realized that Congress had the only organization worth the name, and that this, while not exactly 'unfair', distorted the natural balance of representation of views and interests within the electorate.³ Finally, some officials put forward a general view that many electors did not possess the necessary normative orientations towards a democratic system of responsible government. In a situation where the prevailing values were hierarchical, if the government was seen to abstain from an election the ordinary elector would regard Congress as being about to replace the British, and would hasten to vote accordingly.⁴ As Nehru put it, there were only two parties in the country, the government and Congress.⁵ The government, although not willing to allow its own power to be an issue, had to accept that the elections were to some extent regarded as a battle

¹HPO 40/1/36, memorandum by the N.W.F.P. Government, 11/7/36.

²PR Bihar, 9/2/37; PR C.P., 10/2/37; PR Madras, 1/3/37.

³PR Bihar, 9/2/37; FR C.P., February 1937 II.

⁴HPO 111/37, 'Memorandum ... on the Results of the Elections ...'. The author stated further that Congress deliberately exploited the situation by threatening subordinate officials and by holding meetings in the vicinity of government offices and police stations. See also HPO 4/13/37, Bengal Government to Home Department, 27/1/37.

⁵Leader, 5/1/37.

between itself and the national movement.¹

First, therefore, the government monitored the progress of the campaign very carefully. This was done through well-established intelligence channels. Most large meetings had a police officer present to take notes and the mail of certain individuals and organizations was regularly intercepted. Secondly, many officials must have felt tempted to intervene, as they saw it, to keep the scales even. In a circular to district officers, the U.P. Government told them that they need not feel debarred from expressing views on the Congress' policy of wrecking the new constitution or from helping informally to settle nomination disputes. It reminded them that the elections were not to interfere with maintenance of law and order. They were not, however, to express support for any particular party.² The basic attitude was that Congress was free to contest the elections provided it obeyed the ground rules laid down by the government and behaved like any other political party.

Government interference could be directly against Congress or in support of pro-government groups. Under section 69(1)(e) of the 1935 Act, anyone imprisoned for more than two years within the five years prior to the election

¹These points are well illustrated by a discussion within the Home Department as to whether All-India Radio should carry election speeches. Sir Henry Craik noted first that All-India Radio had not in the past carried political material, which had been a self-denying ordinance to the government; secondly, that Congress would take the opportunity to attack the government itself; thirdly, that the existence of a well-organized pro-government party would have altered the situation. HPO 52/10/36, passim.

²HPO 24/13/36, circular enclosed with letter from U.P. Government to Home Department, 27/8/36.

was ineligible to stand as a candidate unless he applied for special permission from the provincial government. Although the clause was designed to cope primarily with non-political offences, a certain number of civil disobedience prisoners had been sentenced for terms of over two years. The policy adopted by the government was that disqualifications should not be lifted in cases where the offence had involved violence or the advocacy of communism. In the event, only a handful of prospective candidates were affected. In Madras and Bombay all applications were accepted, but in Bengal, where there was a constant fear of terrorism, only two out of eleven were.¹ Congress organizers were aware of the problem and a circular was issued to PCCs reminding them to take necessary action.² They seem never to have raised the matter in public, perhaps because no major candidate was debarred. A question arose at one point of whether a retired government servant should be allowed to stand as a Congress candidate. He was allowed to do so, although it was noted that at some future date he might be placed in a compromising position by Congress actions.²

Several charges were made in the Central Legislative Assembly of action against Congress activities in N.W.F.P. and Bengal. A procession in Peshawar in connection with a speech by Dr. Khan Sahib was banned and several Congressmen prosecuted for seditious speeches. The N.W.F.P. Government

¹ HPU 39/10/36, passim; RO 20/II/36-F, passim.

² AICC El(a)/1936, Congress Parliamentary Committee (CPC) circular 7, 3/11/36.

justified its actions on the grounds that if it relaxed control too far, the Red Shirt movement would revive. It claimed that in attempting to take out election processions the Congress leaders were actually finding out how far the government would let them go.¹ In Bengal a number of allegations were made about the actions of the government in Midnapore district, which had been the scene of some of the most notorious terrorist incidents. It was said that the houses of Congress workers had been searched, that there had been military activity in the area, that chaukidars had been scaring people away from Congress meetings, and that there had been government-sponsored meetings at which Congress had been attacked. The Bengal Government admitted all the charges except the third, but insisted that the actions had been aimed against terrorism and not Congress's legitimate activities.² Another matter that was raised in the Assembly was the suspension of some patwaris and peons in Aligarh district, U.P., who had attended one of Nehru's meetings. The official view was that they had been punished not for attending the meeting but for doing so in work hours.³

Much more significant than these isolated instances of direct action against Congress were the activities of the government in support of certain other parties. The relationship of successive governors of U.P. and the landlord parties of the

¹HPO 40/1/36, memorandum by N.W.F.P. Government, 11/7/36, See also HPO 24/11/36, passim.

²HPO 4/13/37, Bengal Government to Home Department, 27/1/37.

³HPU 41/4/36, district officer, Aligarh, to Home Department, 15/10/36.

province is well known, but there were other provinces where the government was instrumental in bringing pro-British, usually landlord, parties into existence, or in helping the development of such parties.¹ A particularly striking example occurred in Sind where the governor attempted to persuade all the Muslim MLAs to join the United Muslim Party, which had been founded shortly before the elections by Shah Nawaz Bhutto who had been a minister under the old dispensation.² It was also said, probably with some justification, that the United Party in Bihar and the United Muslim Party in Bengal had been formed with official encouragement if not active support.³ Such activity was not necessarily aimed against Congress. In Sind there was hardly any possibility of a Congress majority or of many rural seats going to non-landholders. On the other hand responsible government would have been virtually impossible without some sort of legislative groupings. In Bengal likewise, separate electorates meant that the Hindu-dominated Congress was not affected directly by the existence of a conservative Muslim party, although there were radical Muslims to whom the government might well have wished to set a counterpoise. In U.P. itself, where the National Agriculturist Parties (NAPs) were supported by most leading zamindars and talugdars, it was admitted that some district magistrates had helped to settle differences among

¹ P.D.Reeves, 'Landlords and Party Politics in the United Provinces, 1934-7', in D.A.Low (ed.), Soundings in Modern South Asian History (1968), pp. 261-282. In some cases it was suggested to landlords that they exercise restraint in dealing with their tenants: FR Bihar, June 1936 II.

² GR Sind, 19/4/37.

³ HPO 22/21/36, extract from CLAD, 8/10/36, speeches by Satya Narayan Sinha and A.K.Fazlul Huq.

rival groups so as to produce a single candidate.¹ Although the U.P.'s Government's policy was not to support any particular party, such candidates would almost inevitably have stood on the NAP ticket.

There were occasions when Congressmen considered that officials had openly canvassed support for pro-government candidates. The Midnapore meetings have already been mentioned. In U.P. it was alleged that 'village uplift' meetings, which were officially organized, were at the same time NAP meetings, or that an NAP meeting was held immediately before or after. It was said that on public occasions local officials urged the people to vote for those who believed in 'constitutional activities' - code for anti-Congress. These charges were not denied by the U.P. Government, which did not regard them as unfair practice.² Local board employees were also charged with partiality; the government did not, however, have the powers to control their political activities. Allegations were made both by and against Congress.³ Many candidates held office in local boards, and it would have been surprising if some had not encouraged employees to work for them.

Nehru himself took up the issue of what was known as the 'Court of Wards Circular'. The Court of Wards was an official body charged with the management of those taluqdari estates

¹HPO 24/13/36, circular from Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to MLAs (Central) 16/9/36, and letter from U.P. Government to Home Department 27/9/36.

²Ibid., loci cit.

³Ibid., letter from U.P. Government, D.O. no. 967-CX; Bihar Report. The matter had in fact been raised during the formulation of the order-in-council relating to corrupt practices, but no action was taken: RD 6138/6358, telegram G of I to S of S, 14/2/36.

whose owners were unable to look after them; its local agents were the district magistrates. The circular to which objection was taken asked district magistrates to recommend the names of suitable candidates who would defend landlord interests. The resources of the estates under the court's control were then thrown behind these candidates. The government's defence of this was that the court was intended to protect the interests of the landlord class. It was also said that if estate officials were not given guidance, the local Congress would induce them to place the power of the estate behind Congress candidates.¹ In some circumstances neutrality was thus impossible.

In assessing the various charges of government interference it must be remembered that as well as the inter-party contest at the polls, a long-term struggle was in progress between the government and the national movement as a whole. The Central Legislative Assembly, which remained in being throughout the campaign, was a major arena of this conflict. Non-Congress nationalists such as Fazlul Huq joined hands with the Congress members to attack the executive. Charges of interference in the elections were useful weapons. The government on its side was prepared to retaliate in kind. A Home Department file was opened with the title: 'Collection of Material from Newspapers and Official Reports Dealing with Instances of Congress Disturbances, Intimidation, and Lying Propaganda in Connection with the Elections Preceding

¹HPO 24/13/36, letter from U.P. Government, D.O. no. 967-CX.

the Introduction of Provincial Autonomy'.¹ In the Assembly government apologists such as Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan made use of the tu quoque (et maior) argument. In addition, the allegations that were made tended to come from only a few areas, in particular Bengal, U.P., and N.W.F.P., where the nationalist movement had in the past been very sharply opposed to the whole system of government.² There was also some correlation with the existence of strong landlord interests. In August 1936 the Home Department circularized local governments to find out what allegations had been made up till then: only Bengal, Bihar, and U.P. reported that there had been any.³

Direct anti-Congress action was limited to cases where it could at least be argued that there was a threat to the maintenance of law and order and efficient administration. It was in any case of peripheral importance. The effect of government action in support of non-Congress parties was of greater significance. There was, of course, disagreement over what constituted unwarranted disagreement. What was said at anti-terrorist propaganda meetings could easily be construed as advice to the villagers to avoid Congress and all its works. To Congress, any government action weighted the scales against it; to the government, its actions were merely a means of keeping them even so as to facilitate the introduction of Westminster-style democracy. It was, however, an impossible

¹HPO 4/9/37.

²Personal disputes could also trigger allegations. In Bilaspur in C.P., numerous charges were made against E. Raghavendra Rao, who had been a leading Congressman but had apostasized: PR C.P., 4/2/37, and HPO 24/13/36, telegrams Bilaspur District Congress Committee (DCC) to G of I, February 1937.

³HPO 24/13/36, Bengal Government to Home Department, 29/8/36, Bihar Government to Home Department, 21/8/36, and U.P. Government to Home Department, 27/8/36.

task. Well-organized parties were a prerequisite, but no unified opposition to Congress could develop so long as the colonial situation remained. Nevertheless, the attempt had to be made, if only to prevent too great an erosion of government prestige. The government's intention was not necessarily to prevent Congress's success. A defender of the current political system in India wrote of the 1967 elections: 'If official interference were not the exception but the rule, such Congress Party stalwarts as Kumaraswami Kamaraj, S.K.Patil, Atulya Ghosh and the Chief Ministers of several states would not have been allowed to lose their seats in the legislatures.'¹ The same test may, by and large, be applied in 1937.

A sidelight on the whole question of the government's attitude to the elections is provided by the official estimates of how many seats Congress would hold in the various legislatures. Table 1.6 gives the estimates made by the governors for six provinces compared to the actual results. In no case did they approach the actual figures. It was in the light of these underestimates that many officials complained of Congress's wild promises, misuse of Gandhi's name, creation of disturbances, etc. It is possible that if official estimates of Congress strength had been more accurate, there would have been more strenuous efforts

¹Krishan Bhatia, 'India Adrift', Foreign Affairs, vol. xlv no. 4 (July 1967), p.653.

to influence the course of the campaign.¹

Table 1.6

Governors' Estimates of Seats
That Would Be Won by Congress.

| | Estimate | Actual number of seats |
|--------|----------|---------------------------|
| Assam | 20 | 34 |
| Bombay | 65-80 | 86 |
| C.P. | 34 | 70 |
| Madras | 115 | 159 |
| Orissa | 25 | 36 |
| U.P. | 80 | 134 |

Source: PR.

¹The Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India would also have made estimates. These are still not available. It is possible, however, that its estimates would have been more accurate. Occasional extracts from its reports in other official files reveal an altogether more gloomy view of the situation.

Chapter Two

THE POLITICAL PARTIES

I

THE ALL - INDIA SITUATION

Over 30 parties contested the 1937 elections, but almost all of them were confined to limited area. Even Congress functioned for many purposes as a federation of provincial parties. Each province has therefore to be examined individually, but an all-India analysis is necessary to establish heuristic categories of political action and to define the limits within which local politicians worked. The analysis in this chapter provides a means of classifying the parties within a static framework; it also takes account of the factors which led to change and development. These included both the constitutional changes that have already been examined and politicians' attitudes following the collapse of civil disobedience after 1932.

No single dimension is used as a means of classifying parties. In the political rhetoric of western democracy parties are placed at points along a continuum, but this implies not only that parties possess coherent and integrated policies but also that the parties interact directly with each other. In India in 1937, however, separate electorates and the fact that only provincial elections were being held meant that parties existed which in terms of policy, and to some extent of social composition, were parallel. Each party

(or, at the all-India level, type of party) has therefore to be located within a multi-dimensional space defined by policy, social and communal bases, and organizational coherence. Each dimension could be further defined in terms of particular variables, but the resulting framework of classification would be far more precise than the evidence that is actually available.

Within the policy dimension attitudes towards independence are in themselves of little use. Just as most post-independence parties in Asian countries are 'socialist',¹ so most parties and candidates in 1937 were in favour of self-government, although there was a division between those who insisted on total severance of the British connection and those who would have been content with dominion status. There were, however, differences over the metaphysics of independence. Some saw it as initiating a new social contract; others insisted that the lines of a future constitution had to be settled in advance. There were also those who felt that structural change in society should be an integral part of the process of independence.

More revealing than attitudes to independence were views on the role of elections and legislative action. Positions on economic and social issues - the basis of most party classifications - are of only limited use. The range of short-term policies that could be advocated was limited by the specific restraints of the 1935 Act and by the implicit knowledge

¹H.R.Tinker, Ballot Box and Bayonet (1964), pp. 76-7.

that the government would never allow a far-reaching social revolution. Long-term proposals were usually vague. As only a few of the parties had contested legislative elections before 1937, it is not possible to test proposals against actual behaviour. Most parties presented themselves as more radical than they subsequently were. This was partly due to a failure to work out the consequences of policies in terms of group conflict and partly to the fact that radical statements were not based directly on class interest. The issue is further complicated in that while policy was often defined in terms of horizontal cleavages, vertical divisions within society were just as important.

To describe the parties in terms of the social bases of their support is only possible at a high level of generality. Chapter 4 provides data on the social origins of some of the successful candidates, but in 1937, even more than now, the leaders of the various parties were drawn from a limited section of society. The evidence for the nature of the mass support of each party and for the grounds on which parties obtained it must remain impressionistic. Although caste rankings to some extent corresponded with economic and social classes, the degree of correlation between party and caste at the local level was the result of a number of factors. Because of the existence of separate electorates the relationship between party and religious community was always evident, but the degree to which parties emphasized or denied their communal bases naturally varied. Also significant were the particular aspects of a community's position that an overtly communal party chose to concentrate on.

Assumed correlations with policy positions provide an additional means of approaching the problem of the social bases of politics. There is an obvious, although in India complex, connection between a party's economic policies and its class make-up; it is also possible that those who most favoured constitutional agitation for independence did so because prolonged direct action might lead to an unwelcome politicization of the urban and rural masses. It was an essential part of the thinking of many radicals at the time that communal policies indicated a party that represented vested economic and social interests. This theory - strongly held, for example, by Nehru - will be examined in this chapter. All parties were of course 'bourgeois' in that the initiative within them came entirely from the middle and upper classes, but it is nevertheless important to analyse as far as possible the internal stresses within these classes and the means whereby they secured mass backing.

Organizational coherence forms a third dimension. There was a crucial division between those parties that selected candidates and those that did not. Also important was the willingness of the parties to enter into pacts or alliances with Congress. This is not simply a measure of how far a party was from Congress on either of the other dimensions but also reflects the circumstances in which it came into existence.

Congress

Although less dramatic than the immediately preceding years, 1934-7 was a period of vital consequence in the development

of Congress. At the risk of a certain amount of repetition the treatment of Congress here will consist, first, of a brief summary of events and an account of its organizational structure, secondly, of an analysis of the various groups within it, and thirdly, of an analysis of its policy and organization.

After the failure of the second Round Table Conference at the beginning of 1932, civil disobedience had been renewed with increased vigour, and for a time a state of open war had existed between Congress and government. Except for the AICC all Congress organizations had been banned; there was a recrudescence of terrorism and no-rent campaigns; people from all levels of society went to prison repeatedly. After a temporary suspension in 1933 civil disobedience was finally abandoned in April 1934 but it had in fact ceased to be an effective means of agitation some time before.¹

Apart from its effect on Congress-government relations, the civil disobedience period had seen important changes within Congress. On one side, a number of Congressmen who had been active in the 1920s disapproved of law-breaking and left the party. Prominent among them were M. R. Jayakar in Bombay, E. Raghavendra Rao in C.P., and N. R. Sarkar in Bengal.² Although no longer in Congress such men continued to be important as foci for dissident groups within it. On the other side, new elements were recruited into Congress or moved from the

¹For Gandhi's statement of 7 April 1934 suspending civil disobedience, see D.G.Tendulkar, Mahatma, vol. iii (1952), pp. 317-20.

²Some of them had virtually left Congress before 1930. The Responsive Co-operation Party in Bombay and the Nationalist Party in the Punjab were breakaways from the Swaraj Party. Loose Congress discipline, however, meant that the moment of truth did not come until a resolution of the Lahore Congress in December 1929 called on all Congress MLCs to resign.

fringe into more central roles. As in the non-co-operation movement there was an influx of students and other young intellectuals. Younger members of communities that had previously co-operated in working the Montford reforms began to take a more active part in Congress affairs.

Although Congress had boycotted the process of consultation, it was affected by the reforms scheme. The Communal Award and the prospect of Muslim domination in certain provinces aroused latent fears in many of its members. The advent of provincial autonomy and the failure of civil disobedience to achieve swaraj added new dimensions to the conflicts of the 1920s between 'changers' and 'no-changers'. There was no hope that the government would grant anything more than was contained in the White Paper of March 1933. Secure in the position granted them by the Communal Award, the Muslims were less likely than ever to join in the sort of totally united national movement that could, in theory, have swept the British out of India.

The first task in 1934 was to re-establish the committee structure of Congress. This was done at the first regular working Committee meeting. Leading Congressmen were given powers to reorganize the various PCCs, and the machinery was set in motion for the election of delegates to the next Congress session.¹ At the next meeting the 'constructive programme' of khaddar work, abolition of untouchability, etc.

¹ Indian National Congress, The Indian National Congress, 1930-34 (INC I), (n.d.), pp. 178-9: Congress Working Committee (CWC) proceedings, 18-20/5/34. The Working Committee remained officially banned until 6 June 1934 but no obstacles were placed in the way of this first meeting.

which had already been proposed by Gandhi, was made official policy.¹

Groups within Congress also began to organize themselves. After holding a preliminary meeting at Delhi in March 1934 and having obtained Gandhi's assent, M. M. Malaviya, M. A. Ansari, and B. C. Roy summoned a conference at Ranchi of those interested in reviving the Swaraj Party of the 1920s.² Approval was given by the Working Committee and AICC to the establishment of the Congress Parliamentary Board (CPB).³ The CPB, probably at Malaviya's instigation, then requested that the Working Committee establish a Congress policy 'towards the Communal Award. This was expressed in the formula that Congress could 'neither accept nor reject' the award.⁴ An immediate consequence was that Malaviya and his lieutenant from western India, M.S.Aney, established the Congress Nationalist Party (CNP) at a meeting in Calcutta on 18 and 19 August 1934.⁵ They hoped that, as they merely objected to one aspect of policy, they would be allowed to remain fully within Congress. After long discussions with them, however, the Working Committee effectively forced the

¹INC 1, p.180: CWC proceedings, 12-13/6/34.

²The Delhi meeting was held on 31 March 1934: B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, The History of The Indian National Congress, vol. i (1946 ed.), p.567; Gandhi's assent was conveyed in a letter to Ansari of 5 April 1934: ibid., p.568; the Ranchi conference was held on 2 and 3 May 1934; ibid., p.570. Gandhi was in Ranchi during the period of the conference: Tendulkar, op.cit., vol. iii, p.329.

³INC I, pp. 176-7: AICC proceedings, 18-19/5/34, CWC proceedings, 18-20/5/34. At this stage the immediate object was the Central Assembly, elections to which, under the 1919 Act, were due in November 1934.

⁴Ibid., pp. 183-4: CWC proceedings, 17-18/6/34.

⁵Sitaramayya, op.cit., vol. i, p.577.

CNP to operate independently by insisting that all candidates in the Central Assembly elections had to accept Congress communal policy.¹ In the elections Congress gained 44 seats, the CNP 11, including a clean sweep in Bengal.² Although in some places there were Congress-CNP contests, no disciplinary action was taken. It had earlier been agreed that no Congress candidates would be put up against Malaviya and Aney.³

In May 1934 a group of newly released civil disobedience prisoners founded the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) at a meeting at Patna.⁴ The Working Committee's first reaction was to insist that the Karachi Resolution of 1931 had not contemplated class warfare or confiscation of property without compensation but later it softened the blow by stating that it had not intended to reflect on the CSP.⁵

The first normal Congress session since 1931 was held in Bombay at the end of October 1934. Its policy resolutions broke no new ground but it was notable for the introduction of a

¹ INC I, pp. 186 and 192-3: CWC proceedings, 27-30/7/34 and 9 & 11/9/34.

² A statement of the results is contained in Return Showing the Results of the General Elections to the Legislative Assembly in India, 1934, Cmd. 4939 (1935). Not all party affiliations are given, however. See also AICC G9/1934, statement of election results.

³ INC I, p.193: CWC proceedings, 9 & 11/9/34.

⁴ Hari Kishore Singh, A History of the Praja Socialist Party (1959), p.16. This meeting coincided with the first meeting of the AICC after the suspension of civil disobedience.

⁵ Indian National Congress, The Indian National Congress, 1934-36 (INC II) (1936), p.21: CWC proceedings, 17-18/6/34; ibid., p.23: CWC proceedings, 27-30/7/34. The Karachi Resolution was the first time that Congress committed itself to a general position on social and economic reform: INC I, pp. 66-8: Karachi session proceedings, 29-31/3/31.

new constitution and for the retirement of Gandhi from Congress membership. He had for several months been uneasy at the developments in Congress. While he had no desire to hinder them - indeed he had encouraged Congressmen to fulfil their dharma - he did not wish to be personally associated with them. He therefore announced in September that he was going to cease to be even a four-anna member of Congress. Later on, the Sabar-mati ashram, from which the various satyagrahas had been planned, was given over to harijan work and a new ashram established from which Gandhi carried out constructive work. The new constitution was his parting gift to Congress and was intended by him to tie the leadership more closely to the masses and to the constructive programme.¹ It incidentally provided an opportunity to remedy defects in the 1920 constitution. The main innovations were: a reduction in the number of delegates to Congress sessions to 2,000 and a fixed proportion between urban and rural delegates; more stringent rules governing the amount of spinning or other manual work to be carried out by Congressmen; the formation of PCCs from a province's delegates to Congress sessions; increased powers for the president.² It should be noted that not all of Gandhi's proposals were accepted.

The next Congress session was not held until April 1936 and the intervening eighteen months saw little activity by the central organs of Congress. Only two AICC meetings were held

¹The text of Gandhi's statement is printed in Tendulkar, op.cit., vol. iii, pp. 361-9.

²M.V.Ramana Rao, Development of the Congress Constitution (1958), pp. 52-61.

and Working Committee business was routine. The original CPB was dissolved and a new one elected directly by the AICC.¹ Its personnel, however, remained largely unchanged. Some Congress committees raised the question of whether the party should form ministries under the new constitution (office acceptance) but it was decided that a substantive decision would be premature.² Gandhi and his followers were busy with the establishment of the All-India Village Industries Association and the new ashram near Wardha, and with relief work in the train of the Bihar earthquake.³ Other sections of the party, however, were active in building up their activities, especially at the local level.

Rajendra Prasad was president of Congress from October 1934 to April 1936. A prominent follower of Gandhi and a satyagraha leader, he had initiated no new departures in Congress policy or strategy. He was succeeded by Nehru who at this time was at the height of his radical phase. The decision to make him president had primarily been Gandhi's. Equally, Gandhi had ensured that the composition of the Working Committee remained largely unchanged and only three members of the CSP were appointed.⁴ Nehru's presidential address at the Lucknow Congress session in April 1936 was, however, largely

¹INC II, pp. 2-3: AICC proceedings, 24-5/4/35.

²INC II, p.6: AICC proceedings, 17-18/10/35; ibid., p.52: CWC proceedings, 29/7/35-1/8/35.

³Sitaramayya, op.cit., vol. i, pp. 671-2, and Tendulkar, op.cit., vol. iv (1952), p.1.

⁴Michael Brecher, Nehru: a Political Biography (1959), pp. 213-4. See also Jawaharlal Nehru, Eighteen Months in India (1938), pp. 6-8.

a lecture on socialism.¹ Other similar statements of his beliefs so alarmed certain members of the Working Committee that in June seven of them submitted their resignations and only withdrew them after Gandhi had intervened.²

Shortly after the Lucknow Congress the CPB was replaced by the Congress Parliamentary Committee (CPC), which from June onwards undertook the necessary organizational work for the elections.³ An AICC meeting was held at Bombay in August at which the election manifesto was adopted. Although there had been continuing pressure from some PCCs for a definite decision on office acceptance, the manifesto stated that no decision would be made until after the elections.⁴

Before the Faizpur Congress session at the end of December 1936 Nehru was re-elected president, the first man to be honoured with consecutive terms of office. Originally Vallabhbhai Patel, who was Nehru's opposite both in policy and personality, had been proposed, but he was persuaded by Gandhi to withdraw his candidature.⁵ As before, the Working Committee was dominated by the established leadership.

Under the 1934 constitution the ruling body of Congress was the AICC, but in practice the Working Committee was

¹For text, see Jawaharlal Nehru, India and the World (1936), pp. 64-107.

²Jawaharlal Nehru, A Bunch of Old Letters (1st British ed. 1960), pp. 188-98.

³Indian National Congress, Indian National Congress, 1936-37 (INC III) (n.d.), p.24: CWC proceedings, 27-9/4/36. For the CPC's work, see chapter 3.

⁴INC III, pp. 2-8: AICC proceedings, 22-3/8/36. The proceedings include the text of the manifesto.

⁵Brecher, op.cit., p.227.

dominant. The latter was given plenary powers between meetings of the AICC, which only sat when required by the Working Committee on the requisition of at least fifteen members. The Working Committee was nominated by the president, who was himself elected annually by the delegates to the Congress session. The annual session had no executive authority and generally rubber-stamped resolutions passed on to it by the AICC sitting as Subjects Committee. The delegates were elected by all Congress members who were additionally qualified by having been members for six months and having been regular wearers of khaddar and performers of approved manual work. The delegates from a particular province formed its PCC and elected one-twelfth of their number to the AICC. A PCC had its own constitution and disciplinary powers, although it was subject to the overriding control of the Working Committee which had the power to suspend it.¹

Two points must be made before analysing the political components of Congress. First, the groups to be discussed are not to be defined solely in terms of the institutional expressions of particular tendencies or of the avowed followers of individual leaders. Secondly, the groups were not differentiated according to any one criterion. There was, therefore, considerable overlapping of membership and on many issues cross-group alliances existed. Nevertheless, the four categories that will be discussed - neo-swarajist, Hindu nationalist, Gandhian, and radical - appear to have been the

¹For the text of the 1934 constitution, see Ramana Rao, loc.cit.

most enduring and significant in the 1930s, although their relative strength varied. All were seen at the time as forming distinct groups.

The neo-swarajists who formed the original CPB in 1934 were drawn both from the old Swaraj Party and from the ranks of the 'no-changers', but all had a common interest in the complex policy matters that were discussed in the Central Legislative Assembly, and were able to appeal to a relatively small and sophisticated electorate. After the November 1934 elections, as the political situation became generally more stable and the provincial elections drew closer, the original group of neo-swarajists attracted increasing support from other levels within Congress. The majority of PCCs took a direct interest in legislative elections within their areas. At another level, many district leaders began to evaluate the possibilities opened up by the 1935 Act. Some of them in fact had earlier taken part in politics as individuals or through loosely knit local parties and had only joined Congress recently as a means to further their legislative ambitions. The period after 1934 saw many local Congress committees contesting district or municipal elections and it is reasonable to assume that those who entered the morass of local politics would have been as willing to contest provincial elections.¹ It was known very early that Congress would take part in the coming elections and there was therefore no need for any institutional expression of this grass-roots

¹In U.P., for example, Congress more than doubled its representation on local boards in 1935: HPO 4/5/36, statement of results.

support for the neo-swarajists. The original CPB fulfilled the task of re-introducing electoral politics as a Congress activity; thereafter neo-swarajism was simply a prevalent feeling among the majority of local and provincial Congress leaders. What was significant, however, was the pressure that began to build up as early as mid-1935 for a firm decision in favour of accepting office.

The neo-swarajist belief that wrecking the 1935 Act from within was the best strategy for independence in the mid-1930s did not have any necessary corollaries. Most neo-swarajists were conservative on matters affecting redistribution of wealth, but there was no uniformity of view on communal questions. Notwithstanding Gandhi's personal dissociation from electoral activity, it is no contradiction to say that many neo-swarajists regarded themselves as Gandhians. They shared his cautious, in some ways conservative view of social structure, and had often taken an active part in civil disobedience. Although Patel managed the election campaign in 1936-7, he may be regarded more as the patron than the leader of the neo-swarajists. Although he was aware of the advantage to the cause of independence of electoral success, he was equally concerned to minimize the strains on party unity that such success might lead to.

The Hindu nationalists were united only by the need to defend what they regarded as the legitimate interests of the national majority. Usually, however, Hinduism was a surrogate for the interests of much narrower groups. Hindu nationalism was confined to the upper castes, and in many cases strong

regional feelings were involved. The general questions of whether communalism was simply a means of protecting vested interests will be considered below; here it need only be noted that Hindu nationalists could come from landowning, professional, or commercial backgrounds.

In this period, the communal question arose primarily within the provinces, where the hard issues of job-reservation education, and local grievances were handled. Provincial politics were also important in that the federal assembly was to be elected by the provincial assemblies. Whether or not a Hindu nationalist belonged to Congress was determined, therefore, by the local political situation rather than by any intrinsic attitude towards the party as an all-India phenomenon. The significant variables were the proportionate strength of the Hindu community in a particular province and the outlook of the local Congress unit. Only a few fanatics regarded Congress as incorrigibly tainted by its association with Gandhi and its conciliatory attitude towards minorities. The CNP occupied an indistinct position. At the national level it functioned only to legitimate the actions of Malaviya in his negotiations with other leaders both in and out of Congress. In the provinces it existed only where a ginger group was necessary for some reason or where one faction in a PCC required an institutional focus. For many purposes the Hindu nationalists within Congress were closely linked to the neo-swarajists. Malaviya played a leading role in the establishment of the CPB. Their motivation was, however, slightly different in that the object was to prevent the Muslims as

well as the British gaining control of the machinery of government. In certain cases, notably Bengal, this led to a situation in which the Hindu nationalists were keen to contest the elections but opposed to Congress' acceptance of office.

Virtually every Congressman accepted Gandhi's leadership over the timing of agitational movements but, despite the 'spinning franchise' for active membership, only some had adopted the Gandhian way of life and the constructive programme. Although it had economic implications, Gandhianism linked men of diverse views on economic policy and political strategy, for example Lal Bahadur Shastri, Achyut Patwardhan, and Jammalal Bajaj. In so far as they devoted their energies to the constructive programme, most Gandhians played small roles in the Congress developments of these years, but Gandhianism had a wide influence. Members of all groups were affected by it and Gandhians had a wholly disproportionate influence within the national leadership.

Compared to the rather amorphous groups described above, the radicals formed a more defined, although fragmented, group. Foremost among them were the socialists, especially the members of the CSP. Although there had been earlier socialist activity in Bengal, the Punjab, and Bombay, the CSP represented a new departure. Most of its leaders were young and had studied abroad or been active as youth leaders in the 1920s. They had taken part in civil disobedience and had been imprisoned together at Nasik, where they had conceived the idea of the CSP.¹ There were also a few older men such

¹ Singh, A History of the Praja Socialist Party, p.16.

as Narendra Deva and Sampurnanand - intellectuals who had undergone a later conversion to formal socialism.¹ The original group was centred in Bombay, but branches were soon set up in other provinces. After 1936 the Communist Party of India, which had been active during the 1920s in trade union work, adopted the 'united front' policy of the seventh Congress of the Comintern and began to infiltrate CSP branches, especially in south India.²

There were other groups apart from the CSP which professed radical ideas. Although the Kisan Sabha movement contained elements of peasant conservatism, its methods and demands in the 1930s were radical. The All-India Kisan Sabha, founded in 1936, had no formal links with Congress, but individual leaders, such as N.G.Ranga in northern Madras and Sahajanand Saraswati in Bihar, were members of Congress.³ Local leaders were often simultaneously members of the CSP. M.N.Roy was released from prison in 1936. He had already become a heterodox communist and in this period he devoted his energies to reforming Congress; its policy was to be radicalized and workers and peasants were to be given functional representation, but specifically socialist demands were not to be pressed and fractional organizations, especially the CSP, were to be dissolved.⁴ This self-denying version of a united

¹ Ibid., p.22; Sampurnanand, Memories and Reflections (1962), pp. 39 and 72-3.

² M.R.Masani, The Communist Party of India (1954), pp. 56-75.

³ For the All-India Kisan Sabha, see N.G.Ranga, 'The All-India Kisan Movement' in IAR 1936 II, pp. 280-293, and Peasants and Congress (n.d.).

⁴ See M.N.Roy, On the Congress Constitution (1939). For Roy's brief honeymoon with the CSP and his break with it, see John Patrick Haithcox, Communism and Nationalism in India (1971), pp. 225-33 and 237-9.

front policy was hardly practicable but such was Roy's influence, particularly among certain trade unionists, that he retained a following. Although in 1934 many terrorists were still under detention and Subhas Chandra Bose was abroad, considerable numbers of detenus were released in the period up to 1937. Some of them adopted radical stances, which were probably based as much on Bengali regional nationalism and Hindu revivalism as on western theories of socialism.¹

There were, finally, a number of individuals who were not, whether out of loyalty to an ideal of Congress or for opportunistic reasons, identified with any particular group. Nehru was the most prominent; the inspiration he had received from his visit to Russia in 1927 had been reinforced by subsequent study and contacts. When the CSP was founded, however, he would not himself join. The motives for his refusal can be variously interpreted.² Clearly important was his desire not to isolate himself from the dominant leadership group within Congress or become identified with impracticable short-term policies. Other individual radicals, such as Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Sardul Singh Caveeshar, may be identified by their membership of the Anti-Ministry Committee.³

With so many groups among the radicals it is hardly surprising that there were wide variations in policy. On the strategy for independence, most were agreed on the necessity to wreck the working of the provincial assemblies from the

¹For Bose's views, see Bose, The Indian Struggle, 1920-42 (1964), pp. 312-4, and Chattar Singh Samra, 'Subhas Chandra Bose: an Indian National Hero', in Richard L. Park and Irene Tinker (eds.), Leadership and Political Institutions in India (1959), pp. 77-8.

²Brecher, op.cit., pp.218-9.

³Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Acceptance of Offices under the New Constitution (n.d.). This names Caveeshar as president of the committee, and Kidwai and M.R.Masani as secretaries.

very beginning, although it was accepted that the election campaign would provide a useful means of appealing to the masses. Functional representation of peasants and workers, on the pattern of trade union representation within the British Labour Party, was another issue on which there was wide agreement. On matters of economic and social policy there were several opposed models. Nehru's political thinking was a blend of Marxism and Fabianism; both schools of thought were more starkly represented within the CSP. There were wide differences over the role of industrialization and the importance of rural development. Specifically Indian theories of socialism were suggested by figures such as Sampurnanand. Nevertheless, most radicals subscribed to a number of proposals, for example expropriatory land reform, debt moratoria, control of industrial working conditions, and state-sponsored industrial development. It was considered that independence could most easily be achieved by making it clear to the masses that it would mean freedom from social and economic oppression.¹ Ultimately the radicals were differentiated by their attitude towards the unity of Congress but this was not always apparent at the time. It was Nehru who boldly proclaimed that Congress would be stronger for the loss of its reactionary elements,² but his actions belied his words; it was only in 1948 that CSP members had to make their final choice. To the Marxists

¹ A representative selection of radical views may be obtained from:

- a) Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle 1920-1942 (1964).
- b) Narendra Deva, Socialism and the National Revolution (1946).
- c) Jaya Prakash Narayan, Towards Struggle (1946).
- d) J. Nehru, Eighteen Months in India 1936-1937 (1938).
- e) N.G. Ranga, The Modern Indian Peasant (1936).
- f) Sampurnanand, Indian Socialism (1961).

² Leader, 5/6/36.

Congress was a joint front of proletarian and bourgeois elements, but except to the committed members of the Communist Party such an analysis had little practical relevance in the 1930s

The strength of these groups within Congress lay at different levels. The neo-swarajists were especially prominent at the district and provincial level where power was not so intimately bound up with the struggle for national independence. Their strength lay in the fact that they often had close links to other power structures within their area. The Hindu nationalists likewise found their place in provincial bodies. In Bengal and Maharashtra they were able to exploit regional as well as communal feeling. The radicals, on the other hand, were stronger within the all-India organs of the party. Often more articulate and more mobile than other groups, they were able to achieve a disproportionate membership of the AICC.¹

The Gandhians' main strength lay in their virtual control of the central leadership of the party. Prasad, Patel, C. Rajagopalachari, and Abul Kalam Azad formed a group known variously as the 'old guard', the 'high command', or the 'inner circle'. Behind them lay the authority of Gandhi. Although Nehru was also a member of this group he was not able to dominate it. When the seven members of his Working Committee threatened to resign they were acting from a position of strength. Subhas Bose was later to discover that despite his nominal powers as Congress

¹See, for example, Times of India, 28/12/36.

president he was helpless in the face of determined opposition from the inner circle. It is not suggested, however, that Congress leadership at this period was either monolithic or all-powerful. Apart from the obvious point that the all-India leadership lacked the organizational resources fully to control provincial and district activities, two major qualifications must be made. First, each member of the inner circle, in addition to his personal relationship with Gandhi and absolute commitment to the ideal of a Congress that united as many different groups in India as possible, had links with sectional elements within the party. These links were regional, communal, and ideological. At times the strains within the inner circle were as significant as its unity. Secondly, the inner circle was only able to preserve its authority by making some concessions both to the provincial leaders and to the new forces within Congress. The most striking example was the adoption of a veneer of socialism, but there were other instances. When adequate concessions were impossible, breakaways took place. Within the period before the elections the CNP and the Democratic Swaraj Party led separate existences. A couple of years after the elections Bose and a large section of the Bengal Congress broke away. Gandhi's authority, too, was not absolute. Although his power at moments of crisis was unquestioned, at other times his role was often confined to that of arbitrator. It was only by withdrawing from active participation in Congress during this period that Gandhi was

able to preserve his authority for later use.¹ Attempts to swing all Congressmen behind the constructive programme would only have revived the old controversy between 'changers' and 'no-changers' in a much more damaging form.

At the local level, internal Congress politics were often much more complicated than this analysis of sectional groups might suggest. Factionalism was already widespread within many District Congress Committees (DCCs) and, although the rival groups often professed allegiance to particular ideologies, in practice a group's position was often defined by the principle of instant opposition. Two frequently interrelated factors accounted for the presence of local factionalism within the nationalist movement. DCCs were often merely another arena in which traditional power struggles took place. These could either be between powerful families or between caste or communal groupings. Secondly, factionalism often originated from disputes over local board elections. Congress had contested these in the 1920s and again after 1934. The incidence of factionalism was thus directly correlated with the success of Congress in establishing itself as an integral part of the local political system. Although the data do not exist, one might expect there to have been a quantum increase in factionalism after the acceptance of office in 1937.²

¹He always remained in close touch with the Working Committee. Concerning the venue of a CWC meeting Nehru wrote 'ordinarily we would have chosen Wardha to suit the convenience of Gandhiji': Nehru Papers, File Indian National Congress AICC 2(a), circular from Nehru to CWC members, 24/11/37.

²For references to Congress factionalism, see Leader, 9/6/36, 17/6/36, and 2/7/36, Statesman, 31/3/36, AICC Ell/1936, statement by U.C.S.Bhatt, 8/1/37, and AICC P25/1937, reports from Karnatak and Tamilnad PCC for 1936.

The wider issue of the social origins of Congress leaders will be taken up in chapter 4, although no information has been collected concerning the primary members of the party. At this point only the size of the membership will be considered. Membership figures for each Congress province are available for 1935, 1936, and 1938, and are given in table 2.1. The overall figure for 1937 was 3,102,113. There was thus an almost 500% increase in membership over the period in which the elections occurred. This increase was attributed by the General Secretary of Congress to the influx of people who wished to share in Congress's power.¹ Of the twelve provinces that showed a more than 500% increase all but the Punjab, Ajmer, and Sind were in Congress-ruled areas. There were, however, other such areas where Congress membership did not increase so dramatically. In theory Congress membership was open to anyone, but in practice, the membership figures were distorted by a number of factors. In some areas adequate Congress organization did not exist for the recruitment of members. Conversely, special recruiting drives were sometimes launched. The huge membership in U.P. after 1937 was presumably due to the mass contacts campaign that was carried out there. Membership totals could also be a function of factional struggles. Recruits might be made solely to boost a person's or group's strength. It was reported that such recruits might have their membership fee paid for them. It could happen that

¹Indian National Congress, Report of the General Secretary, March 1938-February 1939 (1939?), pp. 36-7.

Table 2.1

Congress Membership 1935-8: (i) number enrolled;
(ii) membership as percentage of population (1931).

| Congress province | 1935 | | 1936 | | 1938 | |
|-------------------|----------------------|------|---------|------|-----------|------|
| | (i) | (ii) | (i) | (ii) | (i) | (ii) |
| Ajmer | 282 | 0.02 | 1,769 | 0.10 | 13,151 | 0.75 |
| Andhra | 45,103 | 0.18 | 52,537 | 0.21 | 335,205 | 1.34 |
| Assam | 2,620 | 0.04 | 8,325 | 0.14 | 37,321 | 0.62 |
| Bengal | 60,775 | 0.11 | 85,128 | 0.16 | 483,158 | 0.89 |
| Berar | 7,058 | 0.21 | 11,692 | 0.34 | 78,396 | 2.28 |
| Bihar | 78,805 | 0.24 | 104,743 | 0.33 | 563,269 | 1.74 |
| Bombay (City) | 17,262 | 1.52 | 29,015 | 2.56 | 61,936 | 5.46 |
| Delhi | 8,637 | 0.62 | 11,843 | 0.86 | 19,423 | 1.40 |
| Gujarat | 24,065 | 0.21 | 36,659 | 0.32 | 92,418 | 0.81 |
| Karnatak | 21,049 | 0.13 | 31,048 | 0.19 | 172,103 | 1.06 |
| Kerala | 4,062 | 0.04 | 6,990 | 0.07 | 55,031 | 0.54 |
| Mahakoshal | 26,044 | 0.18 | 36,427 | 0.25 | 126,554 | 0.87 |
| Maharashtra | 28,258 | 0.16 | 45,746 | 0.26 | 148,544 | 0.86 |
| Nagpur | 8,138 | 0.27 | 6,961 | 0.23 | 44,854 | 1.48 |
| N.W.F.P. | no figures available | | | | | |
| Punjab | 12,618 | 0.04 | 26,511 | 0.09 | 188,791 | 0.66 |
| Sind | 4,024 | 0.10 | 3,512 | 0.09 | 22,293 | 0.57 |
| Tamil Nad | 55,004 | 0.24 | 65,105 | 0.28 | 364,393 | 1.58 |
| U.P. | 62,703 | 0.13 | 65,733 | 0.13 | 1,472,456 | 2.97 |
| Utkal | 6,829 | 0.04 | 5,760 | 0.03 | 198,325 | 1.19 |
| Total | 473,336 | 0.15 | 635,504 | 0.20 | 4,479,844 | 1.40 |

Source: INC II, p.62, and HPO 4/12/36 (1935); Indian National Congress, Report of the General Secretary, April-December 1936 (1937), p. 22 (1936); Indian National Congress, Report of the General Secretary, March 1938 - February 1939 (1939), p.72 (1938).

a dominant group might make it impossible, through withholding of receipt books, for members to be enrolled in a particular area.¹

The interaction of the various groups within Congress was reflected not only in the balance of leadership but also in the policy decisions and structural changes that took place in response to the changing external environment. By examining these areas of debate (and also the areas in which there was little disagreement) and by assessing the positions of the various groups, Congress can be defined within the political system of the 1930s. Official policy changed very little after 1934, but at the same time a number of alternative ideological positions were articulated.

The Congress view on independence was that all links with the British Empire, except any that might voluntarily be established, should be renounced, and the constitution of a free India should be framed by a constituent assembly.² Although there were differences over the method of election of this assembly and potential differences over the treatment of British-owned assets in India, these issues were not seriously debated in this period. In a first flush of enthusiasm, the CSP had called for a boycott of the Central Assembly elections in 1934 but no one in Congress thereafter challenged the desirability of contesting the elections.³

¹Ibid., pp. 37-8.

²INC II, p.77: Lucknow session proceedings, 12-14/4/36.

³Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942 (1964), p. 267. A call at the Lucknow session for a boycott of the elections received only two votes: Indian Review May 1936, p. 298.

To Gandhi constitutional activity was an alternative to constructive work; to the radicals it was a means 'to combat the Act', ... so as to end it'.¹

The only major debate concerning techniques for gaining independence was over whether or not to accept office.² On the one side it was said, first, that the best way to expose the 1935 Act was to attempt to implement Congress policies in the face of official opposition and thus provoke a breakdown; secondly, that it was necessary to exclude reactionary elements from office; thirdly, that some limited ameliorative legislation might be possible, despite the safeguards built into the Act. On the other side the major argument was that it would be impossible to touch pitch and remain undefiled. Many radicals feared that Congress might be induced to abandon its demand for a constituent assembly and negotiate a settlement in which commercial and industrial interests might be given special protection. Before the elections, when it was not certain that Congress would gain an absolute majority in all the Hindu-dominated provinces, there was the additional fear that coalitions might be established with other parties. In Hindu-minority provinces, where there was no hope of pure Congress ministries, it was presumably thought that if Congress accepted office elsewhere, Muslim ministries in these

¹ INC III, p.94: Faizpur session proceedings, 27-8/12/36.

² It was of course argued by members of the CSP and others that the adoption by Congress of radical social and economic policies would, by raising the level of mass political awareness, bring independence more quickly: Sampurnanand, op.cit., p.72.

provinces would be legitimized; if Congress did not accept office there was a chance that such ministries might be brought down in the general confusion.

The question of office acceptance was repeatedly raised at AICC meetings and Congress sessions in 1936, usually by those who were opposed to it, but the resolutions passed always postponed the decision. Opposition to it united virtually all the radicals and also included the Congress nationalists in Bengal, many Sikhs, and M.M. Malaviya himself. Those in favour were broadly the neo-swarajist group together with some of the Hindu nationalists. Although there were a substantial number of opponents of office acceptance within the AICC, only a few PCCs were opposed to it.

The Working Committee was able to take a detached view; of Nehru's post-Faizpur committee only Pant was to become a minister and only Nehru, Sarat Bose, and the two CSP members had ideological objections to the principle of acceptance.¹ The majority was prepared to allow the neo-swarajists to follow the logic of their position and accept office, but there were good reasons for postponing the decision. Although it is unlikely that a pre-election decision to accept office would have led to any serious defections, there would have been a major row which might have led to Nehru actually resigning the presidency, as he several times threatened to do. It would also seriously have weakened Congress's bargaining power in the argument over the governors' use of their

¹ Besides Pant, Narendra Dev and Sarat Bose were the only members to become MLAs.

reserve powers. By postponing the final decision both Nehru and Gandhi, in their different ways, were able to emphasize to Congress as a whole and to the potential ministers that constitutional action was to remain a subordinate and strictly controlled part of the strategy for independence.

Another aspect of Congress' strategy is illustrated by the debate over one of Gandhi's proposed constitutional amendments in 1934. He had suggested that the words 'legitimate and peaceful means' in the first article of the constitution be replaced by the 'unequivocal' words 'truthful and non-violent means'.¹ The amendment was, however, rejected by the Subjects Committee of the Bombay session. The radicals, including Nehru, were not prepared to accept the exclusion in all circumstances of violent action. By themselves they did not form a majority in the committee, so that others too must have felt Gandhi's formula to be unduly limiting.²

The Karachi Resolution of March 1931 had been regarded as a major advance - Congress for the first time accepted the need for direct legislative action to change the fundamental order of society. It had not, however, accepted any specifically socialist stance, as the idea was understood in the 1930s, nor had it committed itself to specific proposals. These came only with the advent of the CSP and the Kisan Sabha.

Although to the Marxian socialists the radicals' proposals on economic and social reform were only a minimum

¹Tendulkar, op.cit., vol.iii, p.367.

²Leader, 27/10/34.

programme, the Gandhians and neo-swarajists were alarmed. Until 1936 socialists could largely be ignored - although they were constantly gaining adherents - but with Nehru as president this was no longer possible. He immediately attempted to introduce socialist ideas into official Congress policy. His first move was to produce a set of resolutions for the Lucknow Congress session. The Working Committee itself did not reject them but in the Subjects Committee they were so watered down as to be virtually meaningless.¹ The crucial proposals for agrarian reform were not accepted; instead, the whole issue was referred to the PCCs for their suggestions.² The question of collective affiliation was similarly referred to a committee.³ In his presidential address Nehru refrained from details, but his statement that socialism 'means the ending of private property, except in a restricted sense' was hardly calculated to reassure many of his listeners.⁴ He followed it up with a series of similar statements which were only checked by the action of members of the Working Committee already mentioned. By the time of the Faizpur session most PCCs had not reported; although an 'agrarian programme' resolution was passed, it amounted to little more than terms of reference for detailed inquiries.⁵ In U.P. and Maharashtra,

¹Brecher, op.cit., p.219, HPO 4/18/36, 'Appreciation of the 49th Congress Session...', and AICC Misc. 21/1936, minutes of Subjects Committee discussion, 11/4/36.

²INC II, pp. 79-80.

³Ibid., pp. 78-9.

⁴Nehru, India and the World, p.83.

⁵INC III, pp. 96-7.

however, inquiry committees had been set up which had made specific proposals going some way beyond previous policy.¹

✓ The Mass Contacts Committee had also to be reappointed, although some vague recommendations were made to PCCs.² Other gains for the radicals were the resolutions on foreign policy at both the Lucknow and Faizpur sessions, which placed Congress on the side of the angels over Spain, Ethiopia, and the rise of fascism in Europe.³ These were small achievements: Congress had not adopted any policies which would have led to

✓ any serious dislocation of the existing system. Yet at the same time the efforts of the radicals were not entirely without consequence. The election manifesto of 1936 hardly went beyond the Karachi Resolution in its promises of social and economic advancement, but it meant that no Congress ministry would be able to ignore the need for reform. It is not, of course, being suggested that the Congress leadership was oblivious to agrarian conditions or that it would not have included a commitment to economic and social reform in the manifesto. The efforts of the radicals did, however, lead to a greater stress than there might have been on the need for structural changes in the rural areas.

¹ For U.P., see U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report (1936). For Maharashtra, ✓ see AICC E23 (i)/1937, 'The Election Campaign in Maharashtra'. Reports were also produced in some other provinces, but no details of their recommendations are available: H.D. Malaviya, Land Reforms in India (2nd ed. 1955), p.63. ✓

² INC III, pp. 91-2.

³ INC II, pp. 76-7; INC III, pp. 85-6 and 88.

The methods whereby the leadership ensured that the doctrine of social harmony was maintained were simple. Although Nehru professed socialism he could in fact be relied on to put the preservation of Congress unity before sectional advantage. In a message to the CSP conference at Faizpur he wrote:

'that cause (socialism) today is best served by building up a powerful anti-imperialist joint front in the country. It is obvious that the National Congress is the only organization which can function as such a joint front'.¹ ✓

Although at times he talked of resigning the presidency, Gandhi was always able to talk him out of it and thus to preserve his unique position of link between generations and between groups.² Non-co-operation was a method used to water down the effects of particular resolutions. The personnel of the Mass Contacts Committee was dominated by Gandhians. ✓ At the provincial level, many PCCs simply did not bother to submit reports on local agrarian conditions.

The discussions over Congress's communal policy had implications for all sections of the movement. Only a certain group of Congressmen campaigned continuously for a commitment to the abolition of all communal safeguards, but the situation created by the Communal Award, especially in Bengal and the Punjab, was bound to concern all Hindus. To many radicals the danger was not so much of Muslim dominance as of vested ✓ interests in both communities using the communal question

¹ Nehru, Eighteen Months in India, p.95.

² Brecher, op.cit., p.225.

as a cover. Nehru's hostility to Jinnah was the direct counterpart to his efforts to reform Congress. In addition to the feelings of Hindu Congressmen the Congress leadership had also to consider the effects its policy might have on its Muslim support. Although the majority of Muslims had never supported Congress, and by 1934 virtually all the former Khilafatists had drifted away, there had always been a small Muslim element within it led by Azad and M. A. Ansari. This was reinforced in the 1930s by a few entirely secular radicals such as K. M. Ashraf, Sajjad Zaheer, and Yusuf Meherally. Of more importance, however, were those Muslims on the fringe, such as the Momins and the Muslim Unity Board group.¹

Repeated attempts were made to alter the 'neither accept nor reject' formula of June 1934. Rebuffed in its initial attempt to have Congress MLAs allowed freedom of conscience over the Communal Award, the CNP again approached the Working Committee after its clean sweep in Bengal: but to no avail.² At its conference in April 1935 the Bengal PCC unilaterally adopted an anti-Award programme.³ The issue was raised again at the Lucknow session, at the AICC meeting at which the election manifesto was adopted, and at the Faizpur session. Despite this continuous agitation, no substantive changes were made in Congress policy, although the manifesto expressed the Congress position on the theoretical undesirability of special electoral arrangements rather more robustly

¹For the Muslim Unity Board, see below, pp. 156-7.

²INC II, pp. 33-4: CWC proceedings, 5-7/12/34.

³IAR 1935 I, p.356.

than before. The Bengal PCC again produced its own programme, a modified version of which it was allowed to keep on record.¹ Although this was significant in internal Bengal affairs and in the Bengal PCC's relations with the Working Committee, it had no effect on the general Congress position.

In refusing to give in to pressure the leadership was allowing room for possible co-operation with the Muslim League and with the Muslim community in general. It was perhaps significant that (with the partial exception of Azad) none of the inner circle of leaders came from a Muslim majority area. Conversely, the most vociferous opposition to Congress policy came from Bengal, which had for some time been under represented at the centre, and whose PCC was almost permanently in dispute with the Working Committee over organizational matters.

The most significant of the structural changes within Congress in this period was the transition from CPB to CPC. The CPB was originally the personal fief of the neo-swarajist leaders. Malaviya and Ansari were given full powers to nominate the members of the board up to a maximum of 25 and it was subject only to very loose control by the Working Committee.² The CPB was reconstituted at the first AICC meeting after the 1934 elections, and its members were thereafter elected directly by the AICC.³ After the eclipse of Malaviya and the death of Ansari, Bhulabhai Desai, Govind Ballabh Pant,

¹See below, pp. 255-6.

²INC I, p.176: AICC proceedings, 18-19/5/34.

³INC II, pp. 2-3: AICC proceedings, 24-25/4/35.

S. Satyamurti, and Asaf Ali became the leading members. The only one of the inner circle of leaders to be a member was Rajagopalachari, who did not take an active part. Even so, the board assumed it would be allowed to control the provincial elections, and at a meeting in Simla in September 1935 a committee was appointed, with Asaf Ali as convenor, to consider the methods to be used in conducting them.¹ An item on the agenda of the next meeting of the board in February 1936 was 'to lay down Congress policy for Provincial Legislatures under the new constitution'. An explanatory memorandum by Pant made it plain that such matters as alliances with non-Congress groups would be discussed.² At the meeting it was agreed that PCCs should set up provincial parliamentary boards but that the CPB would have the power to nominate members to them and to make the final selection of candidates.³ In other words, the CPB hoped to be able to control the whole of Congress's work in the constitutional field and, by implication, the part such work would play in overall strategy.

The CPB did, however, feel that it should have the Working Committee's approval for its empire-building and Pant

¹ AICC G9/1934, minutes of CPB meeting, 14/9/35. Shortly after the meeting Asaf Ali sent out a circular letter asking for suggestions on the question of setting up provincial parliamentary boards: ibid., letter dated 8/10/35.

² Ibid., agenda for CPB meeting, 8-9/2/36 and explanatory memorandum. See also ibid., letter from K.F. Nariman (member of CPB) to Pant, 27/1/36, which suggests that even the question of office acceptance was regarded as a matter for the CPB.

³ Ibid., minutes of CPB meeting, 8-9/2/36.

accordingly asked the Congress secretary to place before it the rules that the CPB had made.¹ It is not possible to tell whether the members of the Working Committee had previously considered the type of organizational structure that would be needed for the elections before the CPB tried to force its hand. The immediate response to the request for approval was an instruction from J.B.Kripalani, the Congress secretary, that the views of PCCs be obtained on the whole question.² The Lucknow session followed shortly and it was there decided that the CPB be abolished and the question of election organization referred to the Working Committee.³ At its first meeting after Lucknow the Working Committee established a parliamentary committee, the CPC, to which were transferred the functions previously fulfilled by the CPB.⁴ Although the members of the CPB had not presumably wanted it abolished, there is no evidence of any formal protest from them. They may have realized that it was unrealistic to expect a political movement to delegate one of its most important functions.

The CPC consisted first of seven named individuals: Prasad, Patel, Rajagopalachari, Azad, Narendra Deva, Bhulabhai

¹Ibid., Pant to AICC secretary, 22/2/36.

²Ibid., Kripalani to Pant, 26/2/36.

³INC II, pp. 77-8.

⁴INC III, p.24: CWC proceedings, 27-9/4/36; see also Statesman, 23/4/36.

Desai and Pant, who was also the convener. Four of them had been members of the CPB, but Azad and Rajagopalachari had not taken much part in its work. Desai and Pant, however, had been its mainstays after its reconstitution in 1935. Desai, in addition to being leader of the Congress bloc in the Central Legislative Assembly, had presided over the meetings at Simla and New Delhi when the CPB had discussed its election plans. Pant was the more important link in that he had been appointed secretary of the CPB in September 1935¹ and served the CPC in the same capacity. Of the newcomers Narendra Deva was presumably appointed in deference to Nehru. Patel and Prasad were members of the old guard. Although they had stayed aloof from the CPB, which was too closely associated with the old Swaraj Party, they were pragmatic in their approach to constitutional activity. The rest of the CPC was made up of the PCC presidents ex officio; many of them had been individual members of the CPB.

There was thus a considerable degree of continuity in personnel between the CPB and the CPC, but it would be wrong to suggest that there was no real difference between them. The CPC was integrated into Congress in a way that the CPB had never been. Whereas the CPB had been appointed by the AICC and had been subject only to a general surveillance, the CPC was wholly a creature of the Working Committee. Its appointment was not even ratified by the AICC. Its leading members were at the same time part of the inner circle of

¹AICC G9/1934, minutes of CPB meeting, 14/9/35.

Congress leaders. This integration was necessary first because provincial elections under the 1935 Act demanded large resources of manpower, money, and authority; in this context it was significant that PCC presidents belonged to the CPC ex officio. Secondly, the effects of constitutional action under the new conditions created by the 1935 Act were potentially extremely important. Even if the Act could not be wrecked at the provincial level, it was essential to control the provincial assemblies when they elected the members of the federal assembly. A vigorous election campaign was also a means of creating political awareness among the masses. Thirdly, the exercise of power under the Act would feed back new resources into the party structure, especially at the provincial and district levels. Patel, although without any personal ambitions in the legislature, realized the importance of controlling the organization of Congress' electoral activity so that he could regulate the impact on Congress of contesting elections. Nehru, too, had an interest in seeing that Congress MLAs and their supporters were kept under strict control.

A side effect of the integration of constitutional action into the mainstream of Congress was that the hostility between the radicals within the Working Committee, led by Nehru, and the old guard, led by Patel, was sharpened. The CPC provided Patel with an independent power base within the central leadership. The institutionalization of this rivalry is strikingly illustrated by the geographical division that occurred. The AICC office and specialist divisions

were housed in Nehru's former family home in Allahabad: the CPC office was established on Patel's home ground in the Congress House in Bombay.

Despite the internal differences within the Working Committee, the general lesson of the transfer of authority for election organization was that henceforth there would only be one structure of power within Congress. In the 1920s, the Swaraj Party had been virtually independent, and Congress members were able to set up other groups within the legislatures and even accept office while still remaining within the general orbit of Congress. The creation of the CPB subject to the overall control of the Working Committee, was a small step in the process of integration, its direct election by the AICC in 1935 another. The process was completed by the establishment of the CPC. In setting up the CNP Malaviya and Aney were looking to the past for their organizational model. They too were told that in the conditions of the 1930s autonomous power centres in Congress were no longer allowed.

A further problem of contesting the elections directly was that of the attitude to be taken to other organizations. Non-militant groups had been ignored during the agitational campaigns, but in some provinces their representatives formed important blocs in the legislatures. In some cases the question was the terms on which such groups were to be incorporated in Congress, in others, whether or not coalitions should be formed or election pacts made. The problem of coalitions was not considered as such before the elections

but it became a major issue once the prior question of office acceptance had been settled. The terms on which alliances were to be formed will be discussed later. What must be stressed is that by even considering the possibility of alliances and pacts Congress was abdicating its role as an organization above competitive party politics. This earlier concept continued to be held by two of its sections. The radicals regarded it as a joint front of all anti-imperialist forces; the Hindu nationalists held that its name was the common property of the nation and that it was open to any self-professed nationalist to use it.¹

Parallel to the development of Congress as an election-fighting party, but autonomous in its origins, was the greater cohesion that was produced by the 1934 constitution. Previously there had been two sets of elections: the PCC was elected by the various DCCs and in turn elected members to the AICC, while the 6,000 or so delegates to the annual session were elected separately by those Congress members who complied with the khaddar clauses of the constitution.² The major innovation in 1934 was to amalgamate the two systems. A province's delegates to the annual session formed its PCC ex officio, and a proportion of them became members of the AICC.³ As had happened before 1934, the effective leaders of each PCC were usually chosen as AICC delegates. In addition,

¹For the view of L.B.Bhopatkar, president of the DSP, see Leader, 22/1/37.

²Ramana Rao, op.cit., pp. 34-41 and 45.

³For details of the 1934 constitution, see above pp.111-12.

PCC presidents were very frequently members of the Working Committee. Nehru slightly reduced their number to make room for his socialist nominees, but this was more than offset by the role they played in the CPC. The members of the inner circle were not primarily provincial leaders but all of them (with the exception of Azad and Jammalal Bajaj) had considerable authority within their home areas and kept in close touch with them.¹ Although neither annual session nor AICC had any real authority, they served as means whereby the leadership could gauge members' feelings. They were also means whereby Congress ideals could be publicly reaffirmed and leadership decisions legitimated. There were thus major structural and personal linkages between the various levels of Congress. Conflicts between the PCCs and the national leadership could and did arise but there was no generalized movement for 'states rights'.

The 1934 constitution had been drawn up in response to Gandhi's suggestions that Congress keep more in touch with the masses. Whether it had the desired effect is doubtful, but a new constitution which generally tightened up the Congress structure was necessary and no objections were raised except on points of detail. Two such points of detail became issues between the radicals and the rest of Congress. The first was the method of election to be employed. The radicals, especially the CSP, realizing that they were in a minority everywhere, pressed for the use of proportional

¹See above p.121.

representation both in the election of delegates and in subsequent elections of AICC members.¹ Provisions for this were incorporated in the constitution, but soon came under attack. In October 1935 a subcommittee of the Working Committee was appointed to consider possible improvements to the constitution, and at the Lucknow session proportional representation was abandoned in the election of delegates, although it was retained for other elections.²

The second constitutional question raised by the radicals was whether there should be functional representation of workers and peasants. Leaving aside the dreams of a system of soviets, the most usual proposal was for a post-1918 British Labour Party model whereby the membership of the annual session and Congress committees would comprise , representatives of individual Congressmen and of trade unions and kisan sabhas. One of Nehru's resolutions for the Lucknow Congress embodied a proposal for the collective affiliation to Congress of such organizations but, like his proposals for agrarian reform, it was rejected in favour of a committee.³ The Mass Contacts Committee, however, was dominated by Gandhians and failed to make any major recommendations before the Faizpur Congress. Nehru devoted part of his presidential address to the question, but the only result

¹ Sampurnanand, op.cit., p.77.

² See above, p. 55.

³ INC II, pp. 78-9.

was the reappointment of the committee.¹ Eventually, pressure produced the mass contacts campaign, but this aimed to recruit peasants and workers as individual members. The only structural changes were in U.P., where a seat on the PCC was allotted to the trade unions and attempts were made to activate the primary Congress committees.²

The final aspect of Congress organization to be considered is the growth of specialized Congress agencies in this period. Some of them were formally independent or enjoyed autonomous status within Congress. The All-India Village Industries Association, established in 1934, was a means to facilitate the constructive programme. The Civil Liberties Union, which was independent, was an attempt by Nehru to rally all educated elements in the country behind the emotive issue of the release of political prisoners.³ It virtually collapsed when the liberal establishment, headed by Tej Bahadur Sapru, refused to join.⁴ Within the AICC bureaucracy two new departments were set up after the Lucknow Congress. The Foreign Affairs Department, under Ram Manohar Lohia, kept in touch with international developments and supplied information about Congress to sympathizers abroad; the Political and Economic Department, under K.M.Ashraf, carried out

¹INC III, pp. 91-2.

²Hindustan Times, 3/9/36, in HPO 4/44/36. See also Leader, 10 & 11/6/36.

³IAR 1936 II, p.259, circular letter from Nehru, 23/4/36.

⁴Statesman, 27/5/36; see also Paranjpye Papers, Chintamani to Paranjpye, 24/4/36, and Sastri Papers, Srinivasa Sastri to S. G. Vaze, 10/6/36.

research on various topics and published a series of pamphlets presenting the results. Both were very much Nehru's creations: sanctioning them was part of the price the old guard had to pay for Nehru's taming. A Labour Committee was also set up by the Working Committee to maintain contact with the various trade union organizations that then existed. Although its creation was in line with Nehru's thinking, its members were almost all Gandhian moderates.¹

The main theme of this account of Congress development in the mid-1930s has been increased ideological and organizational differentiation in response to changing external conditions and the influx of new elements. Yet at the same time the various parts of Congress were better integrated than before; the centre of gravity within the party had not shifted markedly and there had been few defections. Although the exercise of constitutional power produced strains, the Party's capacity for unity was able to deal with them. This capacity was the result of the outstanding charismatic power of Gandhi and the good sense of most Congressmen, who realized that independence could best be achieved through unity. Those with sectional interests to pursue recognized that their best chance of achieving their ends lay in working within Congress and appealing to the people as part of it.

Hindu Communal Parties

After their initial reverses in 1934, the leaders of the CNP had to find other strategies. Alongside their direct efforts

¹The Labour Committee was first appointed in August 1935: INC II, p.50. It was reappointed in April 1936 with the addition of M. R. Masani: INC III, p.23.

to have official Congress policy altered they considered the possibility of establishing the CNP as a separate organization within the general orbit of Congress, as they had hoped to do in 1934.¹ There were also moves to break away from Congress altogether and set up an independent party or parties. In this case there were a number of other Hindu groups with whom alliance was possible. The origin and nature of these groups will be analysed, but it must be stressed that many of their leaders had links, either past or present, with Congress.

The CNP itself had been founded as a direct response to the 1934 election campaign. Once this was over, it lapsed into virtual inactivity until the approach of the 1937 elections. At the all-India level, where the party had never been more than an insubstantial grouping of individual leaders, Malaviya and Aney pursued their other interests. In the provinces only the Bengal CNP continued an active existence. Essentially, the CNP was a parasite on Congress; when Congress was in a trough, as in 1935, so was the CNP.

In Maharashtra, however, there existed a number of individuals who felt that attempts to form a party within Congress were fundamentally wrong. One of the most prominent, M. R. Jayakar, considered that Malaviya had been humiliated

¹Under the CPB system the CNP could contest elections without coming into direct conflict with the inner circle of leaders or with Congress as such. Once control of electoral matters had been transferred to the CPC this was no longer the case. The CNP could only contest the elections separately by coming to a formal understanding with Congress at either the all-India or the provincial level. For the formation of the CNP, see above, pp. 107-8.

over the formation of the CNP.¹ Jayakar had broken with the Swaraj Party in the mid-1920s to form the Responsive Co-operation Party. By 1934 he was convinced of the need for a new Hindu party which would take a modern view on economic development and would include non-Congressmen.² Other former Responsivists inclined more towards the CNP model. At an 'All Maharashtra Political Conference' in October 1933 the Democratic Swaraj Party (DSP) was formed. Its president was N. C. Kelkar, a colleague of Jayakar from the earliest days when they had both been followers of Tilak.³ The DSP wanted the establishment of 'a well-defined All-India Party, having the same ideal and objective as the Congress, but which will avoid [its] rigidity'.⁴ Common to both groups was a belief that Congress was not only neglecting the interests of the Hindu majority but was also relegating Maharashtra to a subordinate role in the national movement. Jayakar wrote of the 'Gujerati gang of Patel and [Bhulabhai] Desai'.⁵

The third source of Hindu communalism at this time was the Hindu Mahasabha. As an organization it was formally outside politics and there was no bar to a Congressman being

¹ JP 408, Jayakar to Sapru, 11/11/34.

² Ibid. Jayakar did not, however, totally rule out the possibility of co-operation with the neo-swarajists: JP 207, Jayakar to Moonje, 10/4/34.

³ JP 600, Mandlik to Jayakar, 7/1/34.

⁴ IAR 1935 II, p.319.

⁵ JP 408, Jayakar to Sapru, 11/11/34.

a member.¹ It was, however, divided into pro- and anti-Congress groups. At the head of the former was Malaviya himself. The latter was headed by the two main organizers of the Mahasabha, Ganpat Rai and Padamraj Jain. They were prepared to use the machinery of the Mahasabha to promote political action in defence of communal interests. There were Hindu Sabhas in the provinces, which were constituent parts of the Mahasabha but were virtually autonomous. There was nothing to prevent a provincial Hindu Sabha from putting up its own candidates.

In the event effective political groups based on communal identity were established only at the provincial level, but the efforts to achieve an all-India framework formed an essential background: their failure is itself highly significant.

According to a later press report it was only at the insistence of the Bengali members that the CNP retained the word 'Congress' in its title in 1934.² Whether Malaviya was contemplating a separate Hindu party at this stage is not clear. The next initiative came from Jayakar who, when approached to join the DSP in May 1935, said he would, provided the DSP became the nucleus of an all-India party in opposition to Congress.³ At the same time, however, the DSP leaders were in touch with M. S. Aney, who favoured close links with

¹Under article V section (c) of the 1934 constitution no Congressman could belong to designated communal organizations, but up to 1937 no organization was so proscribed.

²Leader, 22/4/36.

³JP 630, Jayakar to Mandlik, 31/5/35. The file also contains a cutting from the Indian Liberal, 22/6/35, which refers to a meeting of Jayakar and C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer to discuss the possibility of a new party to oppose Congress.

Congress. The result of these contacts was that Aney joined the DSP at the beginning of August and immediately became president.¹ Jayakar later referred to Responsivists who tried to achieve an 'effete attachment' with Congress, but the fact was that he was politically isolated.² Ganpat Rai attempted during July and August to persuade Jayakar to continue his efforts to establish an all-India Hindu party, but with no effect. Jayakar replied that a new party could only be formed if Malaviya were to take the initiative.³ A further move by the Mahasabha was made at its Poona session in December 1935 when it called on provincial Hindu Sabhas to take steps to contest the elections 'wherever necessary'.⁴

Malaviya had taken no initiatives in 1935, but in the first part of 1936, with the pending elections becoming increasingly a part of the political scene, he attempted both to establish a new and definitive relationship with Congress and to widen the basis of the CNP. After Nehru's return from Europe in March 1936 a series of talks was held between him and Malaviya. The talks appear to have continued intermittently until August and were probably held at Malaviya's instance, but it is not possible to be definite as no records were kept and the press printed little information ✓

¹ Times of India, 1/7/35 and 6/7/35; IAR 1935 II, pp. 20 and 321.

² JP 408, Jayakar to Sapru, 8/7/36.

³ JP 630, Ganpat Rai to Jayakar, 15/7/35, 6/8/35, 24/8/35; Jayakar to Ganpat Rai, 18/7/35.

⁴ IAR 1935 II, p.36.

about them.¹ Nothing came of them: Malaviya was unable to get freedom of conscience for CNP members who might be selected as candidates, whether individually or as part of an agreement over nominations, or to have any substantive changes made in official Congress policy. P. D. Tandon and Aney also had talks with Nehru during this period, but to no avail.²

Although Malaviya's talks with Nehru were held with the consent of the CNP executive, the party was simultaneously considering independent action. On 16 April 1936 an important meeting was held of CNP, Hindu Sabha, and Sikh leaders. It took place at that point because the Lucknow Congress had just concluded without modifying Congress communal policy. The meeting changed the name of the CNP to the 'Nationalist Party' and agreed that it should run its own candidates, subject to alliances with other groups; this meant primarily Congress but also included liberal and landlord parties.³ The meeting, however, set up no machinery to contest the elections, not even a co-ordinating committee. Implementation was left entirely to the provincial branches, some of which continued to call themselves 'Congress Nationalist'. The Nationalist Party had little more than a self-proclaimed existence. The next sign of life was a meeting of the party's

¹For dates of meetings see Statesman, 24/4/36, 11/7/36. In June Nehru made a formal press statement on the occurrence of the talks: Times of India, 29/6/36. Malaviya had received CNP permission to carry on the negotiations: Statesman, 22/5/36.

²Statesman, 11/7/36; Times of India, 24/8/36.

³Statesman, 20/4/36; see also Times of India, 17/4/36.

executive committee at Benares in August. At this the decision to contest the elections was reaffirmed and the provincial branches given formal authority to make local pacts.¹ The main reason for these meetings was probably to gather strength for the last ditch attempt that was made at the Bombay AICC meeting to change Congress communal policy. Thereafter the Nationalist Party (or CNP) functioned only at the provincial level, although Malaviya acted as negotiator for the provincial branches in the Punjab and U.P.²

The other two groups of communal leaders also made further efforts to establish all-India structures. After the Bombay AICC meeting Jayakar telegraphed to Malaviya:

'Don't neglect present splendid opportunity by forming all India Nationalist Party broad rational lines stop avoid short-lived humiliating compromises'³

The Lahore session of the Hindu Mahasabha in October 1936 expressed the wish that provincial Sabhas should 'capture the elections'.⁴ The Sabhas were encouraged to form election boards but no material support was provided nor was any real uniformity demanded in policy matters. As late as December 1936 Padamraj Jain promised Jayakar support for any party he might form, but it was a forlorn hope.⁵

¹Times of India, 11/8/36. The executive committee had been appointed before the April meeting.

²See below, pp. 211-12,

³JP 630, telegram Jayakar to Malaviya, 28/8/36.

⁴JP 65, 'Report of Lahore session', resolution 22.

⁵Ibid., Padamraj Jain to Jayakar, 27/12/36.

It is difficult to analyse the ideological positions of the Hindu communal parties, partly because of lack of information and partly because of the disparate and elusive nature of the groups involved. Some of them were barely distinguishable from landlord groups, others were closely connected with Congress. Although individual leaders were visible and were usually former Congressmen and/or members of the National Liberal Federation, their supporters were often concealed within Congress or some other organization. Similar views on communal matters did not necessarily indicate agreement on other questions. ✓ ✓

In general, ideological positions covered the same range as within Congress, although with different emphases. Some form of dominion status was perhaps more acceptable than it was to Congressmen. On strategy direct action was accepted and some adopted fundamentalist positions on office acceptance. At the same time, however, others were even prepared to work the federal part of the 1935 Act to which Congress was implacably opposed. While the Bengal CNP flirted with the authoritarian socialism of Subhas Rose, most communalists adopted cautious attitudes to economic and social issues. Some structural change was recognized as being necessary for economic development but no far-reaching reforms were proposed. Urban elements were keen to see the removal of British-imposed blocks to economic development, while landlords were concerned that tenancy reform should not affect their incomes or social status. Even on communal issues

there was not complete uniformity. All agreed that the minority communities should not be granted more than minimum constitutional protection and should not have a veto on the development of legitimate Hindu interests. There was, however, no specific demand for a theocratic political system: only for non-interference by the state in religious matters.¹

Despite the similarities in policy between Congress and Hindu communal groups, there remained the essential difference of priorities. The latter were not prepared to accept that independence might have to be attained at the cost of the establishment of a plural society. To Nehru and other radical thinkers, by establishing themselves as the protectors of their community's interests communalists were attempting to avert the replacement of community by class as the organizing principle of society.² Yet this is only a partial explanation of the ecology of Hindu communalism and of the complex relations between Congress and its communal fringe. An immediate difficulty is to explain the patchy distribution of overtly communal parties. This can only partly be done by reference to the differing economic conditions of each province. While in some provinces landlords and commercial interests (the main targets of the radicals in the 1930s)

¹ Even here opinions varied over what constituted a religious practice. The Sarda Act of 1929 had aroused considerable controversy, but some of its proponents, as well as its opponents, were communally-minded. There were advocates within Congress of the reconstruction of the state according to the ideals of ancient India although theocracy was not envisaged.

² A systematic contemporary exposition of the radical view of communalism is provided by Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan, The Communal Triangle in India (1942).

did support communal groups, in others the same interests found political expression within Congress. Conversely, in certain areas much of the communal parties' support came from those professional classes that were elsewhere the backbone of Congress.

The analysis of communal conflict at the provincial level must therefore be refined beyond a simple description of economic structures. Clearly, the relative numerical strengths of the communities and their economic interrelations were crucial. In some areas economic cleavages largely coincided with communal divisions, while elsewhere the communities' profiles were similar. In the latter case each community could form a closed economic system, although in practice there was always some external contact. Although each type of interrelation could lead to communal expressions of economic conflict and competition, each provided characteristic means whereby communal leaders could mobilize support; consequently the form of communal parties varied, as did the nature of inter-communal co-operation.

Even when communal distribution has been taken into account, difficulties remain. Two further variables must be added to complete the theoretical framework. First, the situation within the Hindu community might have a bearing on the behaviour of certain of its members. Where there were sharp horizontal divisions the higher castes might use communalism as a means to protect their hierarchical interests. Secondly, the position of the province in all-India Congress politics was important. Maharashtra and Bengal were both areas which

had previously been the heartlands of Congress activity; in the 1920s the centres of power had shifted to Gujarat and northern India. This affected both the party's leadership and its style. When communal leaders in Maharashtra and Bengal raised the question of the defence of Hindu interests they were at the same time asserting the importance of their region (whose particular genius they saw as being expressed in Hinduism).¹ Some communal groups can in fact be better seen, not as extraneous elements that were attempting to infiltrate the national movement, but as a minority within it representing an earlier strain of Congress politics based on Hindu revivalism within urbanized upper castes.

What has been said does not invalidate the radical view of the origin of communalism (although in the present state of knowledge it would be difficult to prove it beyond doubt). All the variables mentioned clearly have direct relevance to economic and social interests. It does, however, shift the area of study away from the unreal dichotomy between Congress and overtly communal groups.² As Nehru himself wrote, 'many a Congressman was a communalist under his national cloak'.³ The pattern of communal politics at the provincial was as much a function of local Congress characteristics as of underlying class conflict. Similarly, the strength of

¹ Thus Moonje wrote to Jayakar that Maharashtra occupied a subordinate position in all-India politics and that there was a need to establish an independent position from that of Gandhi: JP 630, letter dated 29/3/30 (in fact 35).

² It has already been observed that Hindu communalists defined Congress in broader terms than did the official leadership.

³ Autobiography (1942, new ed.), p.136.

overtly communal parties in a province was not an index of communal feeling there.

The lack of any absolute distinctions between Congress and a large section of the Hindu communalists accounts for the ultimate failure of all attempts to establish an all-India Hindu party. Besides the short-term obstacles - the non-implementation of the federal part of the 1935 Act, the lack of charismatic leaders, except for Malaviya who was too old and was unwilling to make a final break with Congress, and the absence of any community of interest on economic matters - there was always the fatal attraction of Congress as the institutional expression of the national movement. Had there ever been any serious possibility of an independent Hindu party or of the Congress Nationalists seriously eroding its position, Congress would only have had to make a few concessions to communal demands to re-establish its position.

Muslim Political Parties

Although they had not had to overcome the emotional trauma of the collapse of civil disobedience, the Muslims were equally affected by the developments of the 1930s. More effective party organization in the provinces was necessitated not only by the enlarged electorate but also by the new concept of collective responsibility within the legislatures. At the centre, the expected implementation of the federal part of the 1935 Act raised further fundamental questions about the future of the community as a whole. So did the probability that Congressmen would form the government in those provinces

where Muslims were in a minority. The principal response to all this was a much greater degree of unity and organization among the Muslim leadership, and the increasing politicization and mobilization of the masses. Four phases may be distinguished: first, provincial parties were established or reorganized; secondly, under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the central organs of the Muslim League were strengthened and extended; thirdly, the League's, in effect Jinnah's, authority was asserted over the various provincial parties; fourthly, the League itself was transformed into a mass organization with provincial branches that were themselves the units of political action. The last of these processes largely took place after the 1937 elections.

Up to 1934 all-India leadership within the Muslim community was exercised on an individual basis either by leaders of provincial parties or by extremely powerful landlords who had climbed the ladder of official favour by being ministers, executive council members, etc., under the Montford reforms. The Muslim League was simply a deliberative body where such people came together to pass resolutions on matters of general concern to the Muslim community. Implementation was left to individual leaders, except for the brief period around 1916. Thus Muslim interests were well represented at the Round Table Conferences despite the fact that the League had been paralysed since 1927 by the split between the Shafi and Jinnah sections.

In 1934 there were other organizations apart from the moribund League which were potential foci for all-India

Muslim politics. The Muslim Conference was a body which had met occasionally at moments of particular importance since 1929. Even more than the League it was an association of notables and there was little possibility that it could provide an organizational framework for Muslim politics.¹ The Muslim Unity Board, set up in 1933, brought together a number of Muslims, mostly from U.P., with pro-Congress leanings.² The most important were former Khilafatists who had belonged to Congress during the 1920s. Some, like M. A. Ansari, Asaf Ali, and Tassaduq Sherwani remained committed Congressmen. Others, such as Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, had doubts about the Congress attitude towards communal safeguards, but remained on the Congress fringe. Ideologically not far removed were a few progressive members of the taluqdar class, such as the Raja of Mahmudabad. The attitude of the ulema towards politics was always based on their theological views but did not always coincide with political communalism. While the official attitude of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, the representative of the leading seminary in India, remained ambivalent, individual leaders such as Maulana Ahmad Said, were favourably inclined towards Congress.³ Mention must also be made of the Ahrar Party, founded in 1930. Primarily a provincial party from the Punjab, it had some support in

¹For meetings of the conference in this period, see IAR 1934 II, pp. 309-11, and IAR 1936 I, pp. 301-5.

²Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, Pathway to Pakistan (1961), pp. 119-20.

³For an account of the Jamiat, see Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan (1963), chapter 3. This work overstates its pro-Congress leanings. See also Z. H. Zaidi, 'Aspects of the Development of Muslim League Policy, 1937-47' in C.H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright (eds.), The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives 1935-1947 (1970), pp. 246-7.

other parts of northern India. It wanted complete independence, but its attitude towards Congress varied.¹

Although it was dominated by Congress Muslims, the Muslim Unity Board did not make Congress membership obligatory. Its primary aim was to achieve a settlement with Congress on communal questions which could replace the Communal Award.² Such a settlement, it was hoped, would lead to the obsolescence of communalism rather than its institutionalization through separate electorates. It was in the tradition of a series of 'unity conferences', the last of which had been held in August 1932; its successor was to be the Azad Muslim Conference. Although Khaliquzzaman was involved in the setting up of the CPB and approved of the 'neither accept nor, reject' resolution of June 1934, the Muslim Unity Board decided to contest the 1934 elections separately. Unlike the CNP, it had to face no Congress opposition and Gandhi gave his approval for its action. In the event, its candidates won three of the six Muslim seats in U.P. In the Assembly they co-operated with the Congress members.³

The two sections of the League had continued to hold occasional sessions during the period of civil disobedience. Then in March 1934 they agreed to reunite under the presidency of Jinnah.⁴ Jinnah, who had been the original leader of . . .

¹Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Modern Islam in India (2nd ed. 1947), pp. 271-3.

²Khaliquzzaman, op.cit., p.120.

³Ibid., pp. 123-30. For the results, see AICC G9/1934.

⁴S.S.Pirzada, Foundations of Pakistan, vol. ii (1970), p.229. See also Matlubul Hasan Saiyid, Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1953, 2nd ed.), pp. 312-13.

one of the sections and had failed to establish overall authority at the first Round Table Conference, was now the architect of unity. He was best fitted for this role because he had the necessary flexibility and originality of outlook, the skill in negotiating, and contacts with secular nationalists and communalists alike. It was not only the League leaders who felt that the political situation in 1934 demanded a new departure in Muslim organization. A number of nationalist Muslims, led by Asaf Ali, attended a meeting of the League Council in April 1934, which was the first regular meeting since reunification. In the voting on the resolution accepting the Communal Award one of them voted against it while the remainder abstained.¹ In August 1934 a joint meeting was held of the councils of the Muslim League and Muslim Conference. It was decided not to put up candidates for the Assembly elections but an appeal was issued asking Muslims to vote for candidates who subscribed to the League's views on communal matters.² This marked a small move away from the previous domination of Muslim electoral politics by individual notables; much more important was the fact that the independent Muslim MLAs were welded by Jinnah into a cohesive group within the Assembly on a number of issues including the Joint Parliamentary Report, the Ottawa Trade Agreement and the budgets.

Despite the activity of 1934 the League remained a relic of the suppliant age of Indian politics. It only began to

¹Pirzada, op.cit., vol. ii, p.231.

²Statesman, 15/8/34.

evolve after Jinnah's final return to India in October 1935. His immediate concerns were Assembly matters and acting as mediator in the Lahore Shahidganj agitation. His next action was to ally himself with the Muslim Unity Board. Khaliquzzaman had been approached in December 1935 by Pant who wanted the Muslim Unity Board, in effect, to contest the elections as the agent of the CPB. After the request was renewed in January 1936, Khaliquzzaman arranged a meeting of the Board to discuss the question of the elections. This was to be held in February at Delhi. Shaukat Ali, Khaliquzzaman and representatives of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind came, but Jinnah contacted the various members just before the meeting and was able to persuade them to postpone it until after the next session of the League, on the understanding that they would be made members of the parliamentary board that was to be formed. Jinnah promised that he would purify the League and give members of their group a majority. When one of the ulema queried the League's commitment to independence he was told 'when I give you a majority in the Parliamentary Board you can do everything'.¹

The first annual session of the reunited Muslim League was held in April 1936 at Bombay under the presidency of Sir Wazir Hasan. Its principal achievement was the setting up of the Muslim League Central Election Board (CEB). The

¹This account of the negotiations is taken from Khaliquzzaman, op.cit., pp. 140-1. Khaliquzzaman would have been concerned in his memoirs to emphasize his association with Jinnah, and it must be remembered that the negotiations took place before the establishment of the CPC.

resolution stated:

'Whereas the Parliamentary system of government ... presupposes the formation of parties with a well-defined policy ... and co-operation between groups with proximate aims and ideals ... and whereas in order to strengthen the solidarity of the Muslim community and to secure for the Muslims their proper and effective share in the provincial governments, it is essential that the Muslims should organise themselves as one party, with an advanced and progressive programme, it is hereby resolved that the All-India Muslim League do take steps to contest the approaching provincial elections, and for this purpose appoint Mr. Jinnah to form a central election board under his presidentship, consisting of not less than 35 members, with powers to constitute and affiliate provincial election boards in various provinces, having regard to the condition of each province, and devise ways and means for carrying out the aforesaid objects.'¹

This resolution simultaneously extended the scope of the League's activities and gave Jinnah effective control of them. Thereafter the CEB rather than the League Council was the primary unit of action. By the words 'advanced and progressive programme' the radicals within the League, and also Congress, were told that it would no longer be the

¹Saiyid, op.cit., pp. 341-2.

tool of vested economic interests. This impression was confirmed by the absence from Bombay of the leading landlords and by the presidency of Sir Wazir Hasan, who was known for his nationalist views.¹ At the same time Jinnah was instructed to have regard to the condition of each province, which left him full freedom of action.

The principal means of extending the mantle of the League over Muslim electoral activity was by the creation of provincial election boards, which will be considered later. Appointments to the CEB, which were made on a provincial basis, were also part of the strategy. A few days after the Bombay League session a meeting of the League Council was held at Delhi, which a number of Muslim leaders, including representatives of the Jamiat and the Khaliquzzaman group, attended by invitation, and informal discussions were held concerning the composition of the board.² Jinnah followed this up with a visit to the Punjab, in some ways the most important of all Muslim areas.³ He then announced the members of the CEB in May. It was a remarkable achievement. Representatives of all shades of political opinion and from most groups of Muslims were included. In U.P. Congressmen and members of the National Agriculturist Parties belonged. In Bengal membership spanned the ideological and

¹ Khaliquzzaman, op.cit., p.144.

² Leader, 28/4/36 and 29/4/36; Star of India, 28/4/36.

³ Statesman, 1/5/36 and 4/5/36; Tribune, 2/5/36.

and personal differences between Fazlul Huq and the Nawab of Dacca and also included representatives of the Muslim business community.¹ The existing Muslim League structure was ignored - the Bihar Muslim League actually protested against the choice of members for Bihar.²

There were, however, significant gaps in the membership of the CEB. The most important was the absence of any Unionists. Jinnah had also not included some Muslim conservatives who were too closely identified with the British administration. They in their turn attacked him for trying to establish a 'communal' party. In June, the Nawab of Chhatari and Sir Muhammad Yusuf resigned.³ There were also difficulties with some of the radical members. At the April meeting the Ahrar leaders had demanded that the League adopt complete independence as its objective. They had nevertheless been named to the CEB but later resigned.⁴ So too did Zafar Ali Khan, the leader of the Ittihad-i-Millat, a small group in the Punjab in some ways resembling the Ahrars.⁵ Khaliquzzaman said that the CEB was disfigured by the inclusion of Nawabs. He and his followers nevertheless remained members.⁶

The definition of the CEB as a political entity raised important questions which were discussed at the League Council meeting in April. First, it was confirmed that although it

¹A list of members is given in Khaliquzzaman, op.cit., pp. 416-7.

²Leader, 27/5/36.

³Leader, 17/6/36. Yusuf's letter of resignation and an interview with Chhatari are printed in ibid., 20/6/36.

⁴Leader, 29/4/36, and Times of India, 25/6/36.

⁵Times of India, 10/6/36.

⁶Leader, 3/6/36.

would follow general League policy the CEB would be able to frame its own rules and issue its own manifesto. Secondly, the position of CEB supporters who were simultaneously committed to other parties had to be clarified. Where such parties were primarily Muslim the problem was whether they should be regarded as agents of the League or should be replaced by structures under its direct control; in other cases the issue was whether candidates of other parties could present themselves as being sponsored by the League.¹ No decisions were made, as it was a matter for the CEB rather than the League Council; in U.P., the one instance where it was a live issue, it was later claimed by Khaliquzzaman that the NAP members of the CEB had given an undertaking to stand only as League candidates, although Sir Muhammad Yusuf and the Nawab of Chhatari denied it.²

The CEB held several meetings, at the first of which a manifesto was produced, but it fulfilled its main function simply by existing.³ As a collection of provincial leaders with independent followings it lent additional weight to Jinnah's position as leader of the Muslim community in all-India affairs; at the same time it provided a means whereby Jinnah could prove to the various provincial leaders that the 1937 elections had all-India as well as local importance

¹Leader, 29/4/36.

²Leader, 3/6/36; 4/6/36.

³For meetings of the CEB, see Leader, 13/6/36, and Times of India, 22/9/36.

and that ultimately an all-India leadership had to be accepted. In his negotiations to set up provincial parliamentary boards Jinnah regarded himself as having plenipotentiary powers without any obligation to take account of the views of the League Council or CEB. He allowed local Muslim parties to continue to exist on whatever terms he thought most suited to the conditions of a particular province.

Any analysis of Muslim politics in this period must concern itself first with Jinnah. During 1936 his aim was to get Muslims of all political viewpoints to accept, not an ideological stance, even on communal issues, or an organizational structure, but merely the necessity on some issues for the Muslim community to regard itself as a political unit at the all-India level with the Muslim League as its representative. The framework that Jinnah was able to establish in 1936 had no authority behind it and did not include the Unionists and other important groups but it was a major psychological breakthrough for him. By skilful manipulation of his electoral successes in 1937 and through exploitation of external factors, especially the establishment of Congress ministries, he was able to strengthen and institutionalize his authority and widen its scope, although even in 1946 it was not complete.

In 1936 Jinnah's problem was to reconcile groups with mutually exclusive views on social and economic questions in a situation where communal consciousness was not yet an overriding factor. He did this by giving the League as a whole a slightly progressive tinge while at the same time allowing

provincial leaders who accepted membership of the CEB virtual autonomy both organizationally and ideologically. Although he tried to ignore them, serious differences existed between conservatives and radicals in U.P. Jinnah allowed the latter to predominate. In Bengal, however, the situation was such that, to begin with, the more conservative of the two Muslim parties became Jinnah's agent. There were several reasons for his allowing the League to appear progressive. First, although averse from revolutionary change, his own preferences were for development towards a liberal-bourgeois system of society. Secondly, it allowed greater room for negotiation with Congress. Thirdly, it was more expedient to make concessions towards the radicals. If the radicals were forced out they might be lost to Congress, while the conservatives were less likely to form a stable union with their Hindu counterparts. Even if in 1936-7 some of the latter preferred to participate in a three-cornered alliance with the government and other conservatives, it was certain that as responsible government was extended to the centre they would be forced back to communal-based support. Jinnah did not, of course, commit himself to any particular group or item of policy, even on communal matters, and took care to leave all his options open.

To his provincial allies Jinnah offered the prestige of the League's name and an association with an all-India organization, also in some cases the services of a mediator between rival personalities. In 1936 these things were of relatively little importance: Jinnah was operating in a

buyer's market. In general, therefore, he got his support from groups and individuals whose political position was weak or who were in conflict with other Muslim groups. Thus the Unionist Party, whose position in the Punjab was strong and unchallenged, refused to surrender any of its powers to him; in Bengal where the Muslim community was divided both on personal and ideological lines, he was able to get one of the two main groups to commit itself to the League. He was able to get support from the business community both in Bombay and Calcutta, whose position was never entirely secure, but had less success with Muslim landlords.

A consequence of Jinnah's strategy at this time was that large areas of policy were left unexplored. As in Congress, policy statements did not originate within the provinces, and at the national level statements were only made at the highest level of generality. In 1934 the aim of the League was still self-government, as stated in its 1913 constitution. This was changed in October 1937 to 'full independence'.¹ Jinnah condemned the federal part of the 1935 Act as 'fundamentally bad', but there were no scruples about working the Act 'for what it is worth', if necessary by means of coalitions.² The CEB and the League did not commit themselves to any economic and social policies beyond the broad goal of economic development. The manifesto published in June 1936 was in fact modelled on the Congress Karachi resolution, perhaps at the instance of Khaliquzzaman, but any possibility of expropriation

¹Pirzada, op.cit., vol. ii, p.274.

²Saiyid, op.cit., p.338.

was excluded.¹

The fourteen points that had been adopted in March 1929 as a counterblast to the Nehru Report remained the generally accepted position on the constitutional protection of communal rights. The 1935 Act's federal scheme was regarded as dangerous because it gave too much power to the centre. The use of religious communities as units of political action was of course central to the thinking of most Muslims outside Congress, and to some inside it, but its implications had not been worked out in 1936. After independence the question had to be faced of the definition of a Muslim but though the Ahrars attempted to raise the matter of the Ahmadis,² Jinnah used the entirely secular criterion of self-definition. The ulema were led to believe that the Muslim League wished to allow them a voice in matters affecting the community, but no commitment was made.

The Muslim League has often been characterized as an anti-national, reactionary, and even fascist phenomenon: to the radicals of the time it was the natural counterpart of the Hindu nationalist organizations.³ To a large extent the parallel is just, and what was said above applies here, mutatis mutandis. It is especially important to reiterate that communalism was not confined to any particular group. In 1936 the members of the CEB and the provincial boards were held together by political circumstance. The economic interests

¹ IAR 1936 I, pp. 299-301.

² Leader, 29/4/36.

³ Lal Bahadur, The Muslim League (1954), chapter 16; Mehta and Patwardhan, op.cit., p.154.

represented the same wide range from urban professional to landowner. At the same time, however, there were significant differences. Because the Muslim community as a whole was in a minority, its middle classes were unable to take refuge within Congress. Even in the heartlands of Bengal and the Punjab the Muslims were not an effective majority and therefore most middle class Muslims were acutely aware of the need to protect their economic position. Only in N.W.F.P. was there the right combination of circumstances for the Muslim majority to take an active role in Congress. A second source of difference was that Muslim League leaders were more secular in outlook than their Hindu counterparts. They were not as concerned with the reform and revival of religion. Nor did Muslim communalism carry overtones of regional nationalism: as the expression of a minority it could not afford to. To some extent it was more analogous to the non-Brahman movement than to Hindu communalism.

Congress and the League had worked together during the period of the Lucknow Pact, but co-operation thereafter was impossible because of the new style of Congress activity after Gandhi took over. The period after 1934 saw fresh possibilities for co-operation as Congress adopted a programme of activity within the legislatures. By the end of 1937 the door was again closed but there had been at least exploratory contacts in the previous years. On the Congress side there were no inherent objections to establishing alliances with communally-defined groups, as the experience of the Muslim Unity Board

had shown. On the other side, as has been seen, Jinnah rejected the totally collaborationist policies of the earlier generation of League leaders and had deliberately courted radical elements within the Muslim community.

There had been no co-operation during the 1934 elections - Jinnah and most other Muslims won their seats as independents. In the Central Assembly itself, however, Jinnah gathered the Muslim members into a single bloc which held the balance between Congress and the official members. Although no formal understanding was ever established, Jinnah frequently used his position in favour of Congress. Thus the budget of 1935 had to be certified and the Ottawa trade agreement was rejected. The most important instance of this co-operation was the rejection of the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The original Congress amendment to the official resolution, which used the 'neither accept nor reject' formula towards the Communal Award, was defeated. Jinnah then introduced his own amendment, which accepted the award 'so far as it goes, until a substitute is agreed upon by the various communities concerned'. The Congress bloc abstained from voting on this part of his amendment, but supported the remainder, which condemned the actual report.¹

To a large extent Jinnah thrust his support upon the Congress leaders in the Central Assembly, but it was a base

¹The information in this paragraph is taken from S. Satya-murthi and Nilakantha Das, A Statement of the Work of the Congress Party in the Assembly: Delhi Session 1935 (1935).

from which further contacts were possible. Apparently at Prasad's initiative, a series of talks was held between the two presidents in New Delhi in February 1935, and a formula was worked out, based on reservation of seats within a joint electorate.¹ It foundered, however, on Jinnah's insistence that the formula be endorsed by the Mahasabha leaders, some of whom were in New Delhi at the time in connection with an 'Anti-Communal Award Conference' and at least one of whom, Bhai Parmanand, had conversations with Jinnah and Prasad.² In retrospect it seems impossible that Jinnah could have imagined that Hindu communal leaders, or even a large section of Congress, would have agreed to the formula. Equally he could not have hoped to have swung more than a section of the Muslim community behind it.³ One explanation of Jinnah's conduct would be that it was merely a cynical propaganda ploy, a foretaste of the tactics of 1945-6. It is also possible that it was a sign that at this early stage he was still exploring the extent of his freedom of action and the possibilities open to him after his long absence from India. It is significant that the formula worked out in 1935 was not dissimilar from the one he had proposed at Calcutta in December 1928. Ultimately he was only prepared to negotiate on the basis that each party represented the whole of one community, but at this stage he may well have hoped

¹ Star of India, 16/2/35 and 11/3/35; 26/4/35. A feature of the formula was that it provided for differential communal franchises where a community was underrepresented in the electorate.

² Ibid., 2/3/35; 16/2/35.

³ For the attitude of many Bengali Muslims, see Star of India, 19/2/35.

for an alliance based on sections of each community.

There were no formal contacts between the Congress and the League after the breakdown of the Prasad-Jinnah talks, but there have been claims that an informal understanding was reached over the elections. This is sometimes stated to have been a general understanding, sometimes to have been confined to U.P.¹ It is not in fact realistic to discuss whether or not an agreement existed because there was during the elections themselves little to agree about. Separate electorates and the limited support that Congress as a party had among Muslims meant that there was no question of no-contest pacts or similar arrangements. In such circumstances the fact that Jinnah chose to make gestures towards the more radical section of the Muslim community led some people to think that League and Congress had decided on a policy of friendly co-existence. Whether or not this was true, the essential point was that no mutual obligations had been created. In U.P. Khaliquzzaman and his friends chose to support the League rather than Congress. They undoubtedly did so in the belief that a legislative alliance would later be possible between the two parties in U.P. but there is no evidence at all that there was any actual understanding to this effect.

Congress, the CNP and its allies, and the Muslim League were the only parties to have any claim to an all-India existence, but something must be said of the general

¹ See, for example, M.A.H. Ispahani, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah as I Knew Him (1966), p.34, Ajit Prasad Jain, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: A Memoir of his Life and Times (1965), pp. 45-6, and A.B. Rajput, Muslim League Yesterday and Today (1948), p.65.

categories into which the numerous one- or two-province parties fell. Even in Hindu-dominated provinces Congress often represented one particular complex of social and economic groups and other parties grew up to cater for other sections of the community.

Landlord parties

In almost all provinces there were parties led by the leading landholders, many of whom had sat in the Montford councils as independents. Indeed, such parties were little more than legislative groupings often formed at official instance.¹

Once the franchise had been extended and the method of casting votes changed in some areas to allow greater secrecy, and with the advent of Congress as a serious contestant, it became clear to the more percipient landlords that they could no longer rely entirely on traditional patterns of loyalty and economic sanctions.

Few of the landlords were avowedly anti-independence. At the same time most would happily have settled for dominion status. Above all else, progress had to be through constitutional means and by agreement with the British at all stages. Only thus could the leading landlords preserve their economic and social position which, whatever its original source, by the 1930s depended largely on government support. Although there could be no question of extending occupancy rights to tenants-at-will, politically active landlords were in favour of considerable rural development in such fields as irrigation,

¹See chapter 1.

education, and extension of co-operative finance. With such policies they doubtless hoped to win over the smaller landowners and hereditary tenants.

The link between communalism and vested interests has already been discussed. Some landlord parties were avowedly communal or were in practice confined to one community. Thus the Independent Muslim Party in Bihar was at the same time the expression of a minority communal group and of landlord interests. Other parties, such as the Unionist Party in the Punjab and the NAPs in U.P., were cross-communal although not non-communal. Many of their members retained active links with communal organizations. In U.P. some landlords actually stood jointly for the NAP and the Hindu Sabha.

Liberals

In the Montford councils there had been a number of members who held certain common views and belonged to the National Liberal Federation, but who were otherwise independent in that they organized their own electoral support and were subject to no party discipline. They were especially prominent in areas with a developed urban intellectual life, such as Bengal and U.P. Common to them all were beliefs in the development of India through industrialization and in the diffusion of education. There was also a concern among most of them on the one hand for the reform of Hindu social practices and on the other for the rights of the Hindu community. This reflected the origins of Liberalism as the creed of those sections of Indian society that had first been affected by

British rule. The largest group of Liberals came from the upper reaches of the professions but some were industrialists or large landowners. Some of the most influential belonged to the Servants of India Society. Most of them had belonged to Congress at one time or another.¹

In 1934 several leading Liberals had been defeated by Congressmen. In the provincial elections the Liberals were squeezed between Congress and the various communal and landlord parties, all of which had more specific power bases and more articulated points of view either on strategies for independence or on the protection of sectional interests. Nevertheless, a few candidates stood as Liberals. A meeting of the National Liberal Federation was held at the end of 1936, whose resolutions bore some similarity to those of Congress, but no effort was made to co-ordinate or promote electoral activity.² Most former Liberals either opted out of electoral politics in 1937 or identified themselves with one of the parties whose ideology and class composition most closely resembled their own.

Non-Brahman and Tenant Parties

In some provinces the interests of the tenants and cultivating landholders were either looked after by elements within Congress or were ignored. In other places, however, they formed the bases for local parties. One factor was the land tenure system in particular provinces. In Bombay, Madras, and the Punjab, sections of the peasantry had substantial rights

¹For a general study of the Liberals, see B.D.Shukla, A History of the Indian Liberal Party . (1960).

²LAR 1936 II, pp. 241-9.

over their land as the result either of ryotwari land settlements or of subsequent legislation such as the Land Alienation Act in the Punjab. A second factor that led to the creation of local parties of this sort was the existence of social cleavages based on cultural and historical experience which reinforced those based on economic class. The leaders of such parties generally came from economically prosperous backgrounds and were often themselves landlords, but they were able to build up support by exploiting their other common interests with the cultivators. Both in the Punjab and in Bengal Muslim leaders obtained support from the peasantry on this basis. In the Punjab, the Unionist Party exploited the rural/urban division, while in Bengal the Praja Party concentrated more on the tensions within rural society that paralleled communal divisions. In Bombay and Madras the non-economic factor was non-Brahman resentment of Brahman domination of public life and of rural society. Landowners who resented the former could mobilize caste-fellows who experienced the effects of the latter. Non-Brahman parties were, however, inherently unstable in that Congress could attempt to transform itself locally into a non-Brahman-dominated party or could appeal directly through tenant-oriented policies. They were helped in this by factionalism and caste conflict within non-Brahman ranks.

As with the landlord groups, non-Brahman parties cooperated with the British Government in working the Montford reforms. Rural development through the extension of education and credit facilities was important as a means for breaking

Brahman domination of rural society. Job reservation within the public services provided a means to establish the rights of the non-Brahman majority in public life, as did the system of seat reservation.

Scheduled Caste Politics

Before 1937 the Scheduled Castes had principally been represented in legislative bodies by government nominees. Under the 1935 Act they were underrepresented in the electorate but by the Poona Pact were given a disproportionately high number of reserved seats. They thus became objects of political attention. At the same time their level of political awareness and organization was extremely low, although there were a few exceptions. Three forms of Scheduled Caste activity existed. First, they could look to Congress for leadership. Congress was the party of Gandhi and also often the party of those who had direct economic control of village menials and landless labourers. In addition it provided a means of upward mobility for the occasional educated member of a Scheduled Caste. Secondly, the Scheduled Castes could create their own parties. The Independent Labour Party (ILP) in Maharashtra was the only significant one. There was also the Depressed Classes League in Bihar but this was more of a caste association than a political party. The aims of the ILP were limited to the improvement of the lot of the Scheduled Castes both economically and socially. Finally, Scheduled Caste representatives could be independents, very often men who had become wealthy through contracting work. These forms

of Scheduled Caste activity developed partly on a regional basis and partly according to divisions between the various castes involved.

Independents

Most of the parties in 1937 were in any case collections of leaders with independent power bases, but there were in addition a number of completely independent candidates. Some of them would have stood for one or other of the parties but for personal disagreements. Others were independent from choice. In some provinces such MLAs formed legislative groupings while preserving their electoral autonomy. Independents naturally held a variety of political views but most of them were conservative in their general approach. Common to many was the belief that policy was properly the concern of the legislators and that the role of the electorate was simply to choose its representatives on the basis of their innate qualities.

Table 2.2 gives the number of successful independent candidates in each province. The prevalence of independent MLAs was to some extent a reflection of a province's level of political development. It was also perhaps a function of the system of separate electorates. An independent power base could be built on economic power, particularly land ownership, but it could also be built up through non-political leadership within the community. The latter source of power was more readily exploited where an electorate was confined to one community.

Table 2.2

Number of Independent MLAs

| | Number of MLAs | Number of seats | Percentage |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Assam | 30 | 108 | 27.8 |
| Bengal | 79 | 250 | 31.6 |
| Bihar | 26 | 152 | 17.1 |
| Bombay | 31 | 175 | 17.7 |
| C.P. | 17 | 112 | 15.2 |
| Madras | 14 | 215 | 6.5 |
| N.W.F.P. | 3 | 50 | 6.0 |
| Orissa | 9 | 60 | 15.0 |
| Punjab | 19 | 175 | 10.9 |
| Sind | 13 | 60 | 21.7 |
| U.P. | 40 | 228 | 17.5 |
| Total | 281 | 1585 | 17.7 |

Source: Tables of results in chapter 5. Europeans and certain other groups are excluded. See p. 348.

II

THE PROVINCES

Unity was given to Indian public life by British rule and the nationalist movement, also by the many all-India professional associations. Nevertheless, each province formed an autonomous political system.¹ Within these systems the

¹There were certain regional movements which crossed provincial boundaries, but except in Maharashtra they did not provide the bases for alternative units of action.

distribution and strength of the parties or party-types described above depended as much on local historical factors as on economic and social cleavages. The condition of India was such that there were no overriding cleavages (in the absence of a mass movement of urban and rural labourers) which could dictate party divisions. Most parties in fact cultivated as wide a range of support as possible; this reflected the fragmented character of the social structure in which there was no single interest strong enough to dominate the rest. The actual party system in a particular province was only one of a number that were consonant with the economic situation there. Non-economic factors determined which pattern was established. Caste and communal conflicts, rooted in the historical experience of each province as well as in class divisions, the pattern of British imperialism, the short-term demands of factional conflict within Congress, all played a part.

The limitations of the data are such that no set pattern is used to describe the situation in each province. In all cases the government records provide some material, but the percipience and diligence of the writers of official reports varied considerably. Supplementary material for some areas has been obtained from newspapers, the Congress records, and secondary sources. Table 2.3 provides basic information on the distribution of the population between urban and rural areas, and on the stratification of the rural population. The latter figures give only the broadest indication, as each province's definition of cultivator, tenant, etc. varied.

Table 2.3

Provincial Population Data

| | Total population | Rural population as percentage | Non- cultivating proprietors ^a | Cultivating owners ^a | Tenant cultivators ^a | Agricultural labourers ^a |
|----------|---------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Assam | 8,214,076 | 97.5 | 1.37 | 59.66 | 35.68 | 3.29 |
| Bengal | 50,114,002 | 92.6 | 6.88 | 56.64 | 9.08 | 27.40 |
| Bihar | 32,371,434 | 98.6 | 1.00 | 2.33 | 69.65 | 27.02 |
| Bombay | 18,192,475 | 76.6 | 2.52 | 20.95 | 14.89 | 61.64 |
| C.P. | 15,507,723 | 89.1 | 1.02 | 39.28 | 2.17 | 57.53 |
| Madras | 44,183,690 | 86.4 | 5.01 | 42.34 | 12.61 | 40.05 |
| N.W.F.P. | 2,425,003 | 84.1 | 8.33 | 49.77 | 33.78 | 8.11 |
| Orissa | 8,174,251 | 96.4 | 1.21 | 7.01 | 63.27 | 28.51 |
| Punjab | 23,551,210 | 87.0 | 6.48 | 46.23 | 32.98 | 14.30 |
| Sind | 3,887,070 | 82.0 | 10.65 | 7.33 | 75.66 | 6.36 |
| U.P. | 48,408,763 | 88.8 | 3.09 | 8.92 | 64.60 | 23.38 |

^aPercentage of total population dependent on agricultural occupations or on income from land.

Source: HCR, p.xliii (total population), and Census of India, 1931.

The communal distribution of the population is given in table 1.2 (p.45).¹

Assam

The province of Assam had been formed in the aftermath of the repeal of the partition of Bengal. Although its creation had administrative logic, communal divisions there were reinforced by linguistic, racial, and geographical factors. To the north, the Assam valley was populated by people who were Assamese by race and language and mostly Hindu. The Surma valley in the south contained a majority of Muslims who had originated in Bengal, from where there was a continuing stream of immigrants. Besides the population of the valleys, there were a number of tribal people,, among whom external political influences had not begun to work.

Congress was the only political organization of importance in the province. Its main strength came from the Hindu population of the Assam valley.² Sylhet district, which comprised the greater part of the Surma valley, was included within the Congress province of Bengal and seems, like the Punjab Congress, to have been faction-ridden in the face of the Muslim majority.³ When the Congress group in the Assembly came to elect a leader, an Assam valley man, Gopinath Bar-doloi, was preferred to the Sylhet leader, Basanta Kumar

¹ Additional references in the text to population distribution are in all cases derived from the Census of India, 1931.

² PR Assam, 28/10/36.

³ GR Assam, May 1937 II. See also AICC E5/1936, report by disciplinary subcommittee of Sylhet DCC.

Das, apparently on regional grounds.¹ Unlike the other provinces that had a substantial Muslim population, there seems to have been no major Hindu communal party. Although this may have been the result of the generally low level of politicization, the concentration of Hindus in the Assam valley and the fact that the Sylhet DCC was part of the Bengal Congress may also have been factors.

Before 1937 organized Muslim political life in Assam had revolved around occasional conferences, often on a valley basis.² The most important leader to have emerged was Sir Mohammad Saadullah, who had some influence in both valleys, but he was unable to establish a single Muslim party from among several competing groups.³ After the elections, however, he was able to bring together all but the Muslim League MLAs into a 'Muslim Party'. The Muslim League, under the local leadership of Abdul Matin Chaudhury, had had some success, particularly in the Surma valley.⁴ Although it may be assumed that most of the Muslim candidates were landowners and local notables, there were some peasant associations on the same lines as the krishak samitis in Bengal. These could be used to mobilize support, and Congress also attempted to use them, although with little success.⁵

¹FR Assam, February 1937 II.

²For an example, see IAR 1935 II, pp. 315-6, report of Assam Valley Muslim Political Conference.

³PR Assam, 28/10/36.

⁴FR Assam, November 1936 II, and PR Assam, 28/10/36.

⁵AICC E5/1936, letter from secretary of Sylhet DCC, FR Assam, October 1936 II, and Statesman, 17/6/36.

Bengal

The numbers of Muslims and Hindus in Bengal were almost equal, but the profiles of the two communities were very different. Although points of contact existed they formed largely self-contained political systems. Mutual hostility and suspicion, however, which dated back at least to the partition of Bengal and had been reinforced by subsequent experience, provided much of the stimulus for political activity. The provisions of the Communal Award were felt by Hindus to bear particularly heavily upon their community, and the attempt to have them altered was a major theme of Bengali politics in the 1930s.

The Hindu community's political life was controlled by the bhadralok. This group, whose members were defined according to varying combinations of class, cultural pattern, and caste origin, dominated Calcutta and, through its control of the professions and much of the land, had a major influence throughout the province.¹ Although the uneven distribution of wealth and political power provided a basis for differentiation, strife remained essentially fratricidal.²

Congress in Bengal had from the first been controlled by bhadralok elements. Although some of its members were prepared to follow the dictates of the centre, they had always been outnumbered by those who identified more with other groups in Bengal and resented their own lack of influence within all-India Congress affairs.³ Terrorist activity,

¹The three castes generally regarded as comprising the greater part of the bhadralok - Brahmans, Kayasthas, and Baidyas - formed 14% of the total Hindu population of Bengal, but 41% within Calcutta.

²For a study of the bhadralok, see J.H. Broomfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society (1968), esp. pp. 5-20.

³Ibid., pp. 268 and 306. Subhas Chandra Bose openly criticized

which was anathema to Gandhi, was encouraged by a few Bengali Congressmen and condoned by many more. Many of the leaders signed the Bengal Hindus Memorial to the Secretary of State for India in June 1936, although it was counter to official Congress policy.¹ The party was also characterized by endemic factionalism at all levels. At the provincial level a constant factor was Subhas Chandra Bose (whose brother, Sarat, deputized for him while he was abroad or in prison). His first opponent, J.M.Sen-Gupta, had died in 1934, and thereafter his main antagonist was B.C.Roy.² Two interrelated issues divided them. The first was the place of constitutional action. Bose was strongly opposed to the possibility of accepting office, while Roy had been a founder of the CPB. Secondly, Roy had strong links with Gandhi, for whom Bose had little time. Likewise, Roy was on good personal terms with Nehru, whose relations with Bose were somewhat fragile. Although neither supported Congress' equivocation over the Communal Award, the Roy group was less prepared to come into direct conflict with the national leadership. At the district level similar patterns of factional conflict existed. Although each district faction formed part of one of the provincial factions, it seems likely that they were of independent origin.

The bhadralok had other political outlets. Communalism and conservatism led many to dissociate themselves from Congress. Most of those whose disagreement was confined to

the style of Gandhi's leadership: Bose, the Indian Struggle 1920-1942 (1964), pp. 210 and 295-7.

¹Statesman, 27/6/36.

²Broomfield, op.cit., pp. 260 and 268; K.P.Thomas, Dr.B.C.Roy

communal questions in fact remained within Congress as members of the Bengal CNP. This had consolidated its initial success in the 1934 elections by getting the provincial Congress to declare itself officially opposed to the Communal Award.¹ Although it supported Bose, its members formed a separate group. After lengthy manoeuvres certain of them contested the elections separately.² There was also the Hindu-Nationalist Party.³ Many bhadralok leaders stood and were returned as independents. The close-knit nature of the group made the task of the independent easier. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee was able to win the university seat, which in other provinces usually went to Congress.

The caste structure of the Hindu community in Bengal meant that there was little scope for a non-Brahman party to develop, but the Scheduled Castes formed a relatively compact unit and were a greater proportion of the population than elsewhere. The Namasudras and Rajbansis were numerically dominant and seem to have developed already a sense of their political importance. In Dinajpur, where Scheduled Caste voters were in a majority, their leaders established a no-contest pact with Congress.⁴ Although politically active members of the

(1955), pp. 187-8. Another major figure was N.R. Sarkar, but he had left Congress by the mid-1930s. For Nehru's uncomplimentary views on the Bengal Congress, see Nehru, A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 117.

¹ LAR 1935 I, p. 356.

² For further discussion of Congress and the CNP in Bengal, see below, pp. 254-8.

³ Times of India, 25/11/36; PR Bengal, 6/1/37.

⁴ RO 20/IV/36-F, 'Summary of General Results of Primary Election of Scheduled Caste Candidates'.

Scheduled Castes may have been pro-Congress, they were able to organize their electoral support by themselves.

Although a few Muslims qualified as bhadralok there were many more cultivating tenants within the electorate. There were also a number of aristocratic landowning families who, while they had something in common, were not part of the bhadralok. There were two types of Muslim political activity, based on the professional middle class and the landowning families respectively. The one exploited tenant discontent; the other relied on its hierarchical power. There were also overtones of conflict between Bengali and Urdu elements in the local Muslim culture. In some ways the two major parties of the period fit the stereotypes very well.

The United Muslim Party was founded in May 1936 with the general support of the government.¹ Its leaders had been active in provincial politics for a long time and the party was largely a means to extend the basis of their support. Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin and other relatives of the Nawab of Dacca, the most prominent Muslim landlord, were the dominant force. As the Governor of Bengal himself pointed out, the party had no clear issue on which to approach the electorate.²

In opposition to it was the Krishak Praja Party of Fazlul Huq. Huq had been active in Bengal politics for many years and, besides regular flirtations with Congress, had built up a network of krishak samitis - peasant associations - which mobilized support on class lines, although their membership was predominantly Muslim.³ Huq was very much an

¹ Star of India, 25/5/36.

² PR Bengal, 31/12/36.

³ Ibid; Modern Review, April 1937.

unpredictable quantity in Bengal politics. Connected to all groups but committed to none, he was prepared to do whatever promised an immediate return. At the district level, however, it is less easy to sort the parties into neat categories. Traditional rivalries between families or factional conflicts between Muslim bhadralok often determined party composition.¹

Initially, Jinnah had been able to get both sides to support the CEB. A committee was then appointed of the Nawab of Dacca, Fazlul Huq, and Jinnah, to consider the question of establishing a provincial board;² Jinnah visited Calcutta for this purpose towards the end of August. After lengthy discussion, however, it became clear that the two sides could not be brought together into a single unit. Although personal calculation was clearly important, the differences were expressed in ideological terms.³ The provincial board therefore consisted almost entirely of members of the United Muslim Party and Huq subsequently lost his membership of the CEB.⁴ Although in theory Jinnah had a choice, there were strong pressures on him to select the United Muslim Party as his ally. First, Huq was unreliable and unwilling to accept Jinnah's authority. Secondly, there seemed little possibility in Bengal of establishing a rapprochement with Congress on terms acceptable to the League. Lastly, Jinnah received his most

¹FR Bengal, November 1936 II.

²Statesman, 10/8/36.

³Times of India, 24/8/36.

⁴Ibid., 26/8/36 and 3/11/36.

committed support in Bengal from members of the Calcutta business community such as M.A.H. Ispahani, who were linked to the United Muslim Party rather than to Huq.¹

Bihar

Bihar in the 1930s was almost entirely a rural province. Although its tenurial system resembled that of Bengal and its social and cultural patterns to some extent those of U.P., its political development had been very different from both. Although challenged from below, the landowning section of society controlled Congress in Bihar. While supporting the Gandhian approach to politics it was able to preserve its own interests. Caste was an important factor in the province's politics, both as a cleavage within the landowning group and in reinforcing the social gap between landlord and tenant. Most landlords were either Rajputs or Bhumihar Brahmins (Babhans), between whom a traditional rivalry existed. Kayasthas provided the other major element of the province's elite.²

The controlling element within Congress was made up of Rajputs, Bhumihar Brahmins, and Kayasthas.³ Final authority rested indisputably with Rajendra Prasad, who was a Kayastha, but below him factions tended to form on caste lines.⁴ Apart

¹ Kamruddin Ahmad, The Social History of East Pakistan (2nd ed. 1967), pp. 34-5. See also Ispahani, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah as I Knew Him, pp. 17 and 25-33.

² Ramashray Roy, 'Caste and Political Recruitment in Bihar', in Rajni Kothari (ed.), Caste in Indian Politics (1970), pp. 229-31.

³ Ibid., pp. 242-3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 252.

from the problem of internal dissension the landlords within Congress had to face outside challenges. The most serious was from the kisan movement aided by members of the CSP.¹ This was a genuine reaction to rural conditions, although the leadership may have included itinerant radicals from the towns. Its mass activities did not immediately concern Congress but throughout 1936 and after the elections its leaders attempted to extract concessions from the Bihar PCC. In return they could offer electoral support. Congress leaders were, however, sufficiently confident in their hold on the majority of the electorate to reject most of their proposals, for example functional representation.² A Kisan Inquiry Committee was set up in pursuance of the Lucknow Congress request, but its activities were primarily concerned with electioneering.³ Although he had reportedly made concessions to the orthodox position as part of an agreement, Sahajanand Saraswati was so disappointed with the number of election tickets given to kisan sympathizers that he resigned from the PCC, although he did not withdraw entirely from Congress.⁴ Another challenge to the Congress leadership came from the Tribeni Sangh which translated economic protest into caste arithmetic and complained that only three Congress candidates came from the

¹See above, p.117.

²FR Bihar, August 1936 I.

³Ibid., June 1936 I.

⁴PR Bihar, 3/12/36.

63 lakhs of Jadavs, Kurmis, and Kushwahas, while 45 were of Rajput, Babhan, or Kayastha origin.¹ It does not, however, appear to have been a serious threat. The elements of class and caste combined could in some circumstances have led to the emergence of a fully-fledged tenant party, but in Bihar the kisan movement lacked adequate access to local power structure. In addition, Congress could point to some genuine achievements on behalf of the whole rural population, particularly after the Bihar earthquake of 1934.

Besides a tenant party, Bihar also lacked a Hindu communal party. This reflected the absence of a vigorous urban intelligentsia as well as of direct economic conflict between communities. There were no particular regional grievances and the principal Hindu Sabha leader in the area, Jagat-narayan Lal, was known for his pro-Congress sympathies. It was therefore possible for an agreement to be reached between Congress and the CNP without the difficulties that were encountered in western India. Under this agreement the Congress Nationalists were allowed to nominate seven candidates from the list approved by Congress, who would have freedom of speech on communal questions.²

Although the landowning class in general supported Congress, there remained some individuals, mostly leading

¹ AICC E6/1937, Jagdeva Singh (organizer of Tribeni Sangh) to Nehru, 4/1/37. See also PR Bihar, 14/1/37.

² Times of India, 2/11/36. The main difference between this and other agreements appears to be that the CNP did not have carte blanche in its choice of candidates. As in Berar, the Congress sympathies of the CNP (or DSP) leader may have been the factor which persuaded the central leadership to accept the pact. Prasad's sanction would also have been important.

landowners, who had been too closely associated with the government to stand for Congress. Deprived, however, of the support of the lesser landowners, their position was very weak. Congress gained the support of the Scheduled Castes primarily by allying itself with the Depressed Classes League, headed by Jagjivan Ram. Congress had merely to pay the price of accepting ready-made nominations. A pact was established before the primary elections took place and in nine of the fifteen seats no contest took place.¹

As in U.P., the Muslim community was more urbanized than the Hindu, although its traditional leadership came from the landowners. With most Hindu landowners supporting Congress there was no possibility of a cross-communal party emerging and most Muslims supported either the United Muslim Party or the Independent Muslim Party. The former was led by Syed Abdul Aziz, a prominent figure in past Bihar politics, the latter by Maulana Sajjad, who had some sympathy for Congress.² The Ahrars formed a third group. Although they carried on negotiations with Sajjad, in the end they contested the elections separately.³ There were also a number of independent Muslim candidates.

¹RO 20/IV/36-F, 'Summary of General Results of Primary Elections of Scheduled Caste Candidates'.

²PR Bihar, 3/11/36; IAR 1936 II, pp. 271-2.

³Statesman, 9/7/36.

Bombay

To an even greater extent than in the other multilingual provinces, Bombay's politics existed within separate regional compartments. In the north was Gujarat, economically one of the most advanced areas of India. All levels of Hindu society there supported Congress and within it the established leadership. Several factors accounted for this overwhelming support. First, Congress leadership at this time was not the preserve of any particular caste or economic interest. Although Brahmans were well represented, others were not excluded. Cultivating castes, notably the Patidars, the traditional mercantile castes, and the mill owners all had a share of power within Congress.¹ Secondly, the prevailing ideology of Congress which stressed social harmony was reflected in its actions in Gujarat. Gandhi himself had established the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association; the Bardoli satyagraha proved that Congress had the best interests of the cultivators at heart; the headquarters of the Harijan Sevak Sangh were at Sabarmati. Thirdly, both Gandhi and Patel were natives of Gujarat, and the area had been the scene of the most famous episodes of civil disobedience. Much of Congress's ideology of action derived from traditional Gujarati ways of thought.

In the Marathi-speaking parts of Bombay, however, the spirit of Bal Gangadhar Tilak was still strong and his former followers were a large part of the political elite. Some continued within Congress; the more prominent established

¹For the caste composition of the Bombay Assembly, see chapter 4, table 4.4. The Patidars came exclusively from Gujarat.

first the Responsive Co-operation Party and then the DSP, whose role as a Hindu communal party has already been noted.¹ According to a Congress report in 1937, Poona was 'the temple of... responsiveness'.² In the mid-1930s, however, the Maharashtra PCC was dominated not by Tilakites but by Gandhians, led by Shankarrao Deo. It also contained a number of young socialists. Recognizing the support that the DSP enjoyed and the close links that its members had with Congress, Deo was prepared to consider the possibility of an electoral arrangement and engaged in negotiations with Aney in mid-1936. The latter was, however, unable to persuade the DSP to accept the terms offered and therefore resigned as president.³ N. C. Kelkar continued the talks with Deo but was unable to reach a satisfactory agreement.⁴ Aney was replaced as president by the overtly anti-Congress L.B.Bhopatkar under whom arrangements were made to contest the elections.⁵ The Maharashtra PCC was less prepared to make concessions to another politically powerful group, the Khots of Ratnagiri district. Under pressure from above it was forced to tone down its attacks on them, but the Khot Association nevertheless put up its own candidates.⁶

¹ See above, p.145.

² AICC E23(i)/1937, 'The Election Campaign in Maharashtra'.

³ Times of India, 28/7/36, 3/8/36, and 17/9/36.

⁴ Ibid., 19/9/36.

⁵ Ibid., 5/10/36.

⁶ AICC E23(i)/1937, loc.cit. Individual members of the DSP, notably S. L. Karandikar, were also active in the Khot Association.

Congress in Maharashtra had to consider its relations not only with the old political elite but also with other sections of the population whose political strength was increasing. The non-Brahman cultivating castes, themselves divided between Marathas and others, particularly Lingayats, were fighting a twofold battle against landlords and Brahman arrogance. Earlier, Congress had been associated with both, and in the 1920s some non-Brahmans had found that co-operation with the government was an easy road to power. By the mid-1930s Congress already contained a few non-Brahmans, notably K. M. Jedhe, and during 1936 a determined effort was made to win over the community en bloc, partly by nominating a number of non-Brahman candidates and partly by direct contact with established leaders.¹ Non-Brahman candidates had in any case to be put up for the seats reserved for the Maratha castes, and they were put up for other seats also. It was clear that Congress would be the future fount of power and it had shed some of its earlier features which had repelled the non-Brahmans. Jedhe utilized his position to win over a section of the community. At a provincial non-Brahman conference at the beginning of 1936 it was reported that there was a division between the younger non-Brahmans and the rest over the attitude to be adopted towards the 1935 Act.² The split continued until in July a number of non-Brahmans decided to join Congress.³ It was later reported that the split had

¹For a general account of the non-Brahmans and Congress, see Maureen L.P. Patterson, 'Caste and Political Leadership in Maharashtra', Economic Weekly vol. vi, 25/9/54, pp. 1065-7 and below, pp. 261-2.

²Leader, 2/1/36.

³Leader, 27/5/36, FR Bombay, July 1936 II, and August 1936 I.

been patched up, and official non-Brahman candidates were put up.¹ Some defections were permanent, however, and further weakened the position of the established leadership within the community.

The Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra were dominated by the Mahars both numerically and in terms of political awareness. Unlike most Scheduled Castes their political awareness stretched some way back and expressed itself in a vigorous independence of other parties. This was the result partly of the charismatic qualities of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal Mahar leader.² In order to contest the election, Ambedkar established the Independent Labour Party in August 1936.³ In theory it was open to anyone, but its support came almost entirely from the Mahars. Not believing that Congress had the best interests of the Scheduled Castes at heart, Ambedkar wanted to get what was possible out of the working of the 1935 Act. The Chamars formed the other large Scheduled Caste in Maharashtra; they supported Congress, partly at least because the Mahars did not.⁴

Jinnah himself came from Bombay, and his political style and ideas found a ready reception there. The Muslim community was predominantly an urban, mercantile one and lacked a landlord element which could have provided an alternative

¹PR Bombay, 12/12/36.

²For a general account of Mahar political activity, see Eleanor Zelliot, 'Learning the Use of Political Means: the Mahars of Maharashtra', in Kothari (ed.), Caste in Indian Politics, pp. 29-69.

³Times of India, 15/8/36. See also Zellior, op.cit., pp. 49-51, and Dhananjay Keer, Dr. Ambedkar, Life and Mission (1954), pp. 275-6.

⁴Zelliot, op.cit., p. 50.

base for political action. The existing political leaders were prepared to form themselves into a party under Jinnah's guidance. The Bombay Muslim League Board was formed at a meeting of some 300 Muslims on 5 July 1936, which Jinnah chaired; its first meeting was held a few days later. Jinnah was appointed chairman; the other leading members were Sir A.M.K. Dehlavi and Suleman Cassum Mitha, who were both well-known politicians.¹ Some existing leaders, for example Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtoola, continued to operate outside the orbit of the League but maintained contacts within it. The dominant position of the League was not seriously challenged.

Although Gujarat and Maharashtra formed separate political systems, for some purposes they were compelled to interact. In terms of population Maharashtra predominated, but Gujaratis were more prominent within Congress. Bombay city provided one arena in which competition took place. The position there was complicated by the Parsi community, which had provided many Congress leaders in the past, and by the complex of radical activity based on the CSP and the trade union movement. The radicals were treated hostilely by the local Congress leadership, and the application of the Communist R.S. Nimbkar for an election nomination was rejected.² Parsis continued to have an important place within Bombay city, but their position at the provincial level was precarious. The

¹ Leader, 8/7/36, and Times of India, 20/7/36.

² AICC E14/1936, S.A. Dange to Nehru, 19/1/37, and FR Bombay, November 1936 I.

Bombay city Congress in the 1930s was controlled by a combination of Parsis and Gujaratis, and in the 1934 elections to the Central Assembly a Congress candidate in Bombay was said to have lost through attempting to rely on Gujarati solidarity.¹ The other point of conflict at this time was the question of the leadership of the Assembly party. Here population numbers told, and B.G.Kher, a previously little-known figure from Maharashtra, was preferred to K.M.Munshi, a Gujarati, and K.F.Nariman, a Parsi.²

C.P.

The politics of C.P. in many ways resembled those of Bombay, although they were more parochial in style, and there were close links between the Marathi-speaking parts of the two provinces. In the northern part of C.P. was the Hindi-speaking tract of Mahakoshal. As in Gujarat, Congress predominated. It had suffered a setback when E. Raghavendra Rao, a former president of the Mahakoshal PCC and leader of the Swaraj Party in the C.P. Council, had left Congress to become a minister, but in general it enjoyed support from the dominant groups in the area. A few landlords were strong enough to stand as independents but the urban professional classes were firmly behind Congress. The pro-Hindi movement in the area was given a sympathetic hearing. Unlike Bihar, there was no kisan movement, perhaps

¹ JP 408, Jayakar to Sapru, 23 /11/34.

² AICC E7(i)/1937, and AICC E7(ii)/1937, passim, and PR Bombay, 13/11/36.

because economic categories were less clearly defined.

In the Marathi-speaking parts of C.P., which formed the Congress provinces of Nagpur and Vidharba, Tilak's influence had been widespread, and the same political parties were found as in Bombay. The major difference was that the two PCCs were sympathetic to the aspirations of the DSP and in both provinces pacts were concluded under which the local DSP units gave their support to Congress in return for a guaranteed number of tickets and a declaration of opposition to the Communal Award, in contravention of official Congress policy.¹ In Nagpur the pact was vetoed by the national leadership, partly because the list of candidates proposed by N.B.Khare, the PCC president and an extreme Hindu nationalist, was offensive to non-Brahman susceptibilities.² In Berar, however, despite a protest by Nehru, the pact was implemented.³ This may have reflected the powerful position of Aney within Berar and his strong links with many Congress leaders. In addition to the DSP candidates, a number of other Hindu nationalist leaders stood as Hindu Sabha, Nationalist, or independent candidates.⁴

The non-Brahman movement in the Marathi-speaking parts of C.P. was not as substantial as in Bombay, but a focus was

¹Times of India, 9/11/36; PR C.P., 9/12/36.

²Times of India, 20/11/36 and 25/12/36; PR C.P., 9/12/36.

³AICC EL/1936, Nehru to Brijlal Biyani, 30/11/36.

⁴Times of India, 25/12/36; PR C.P., 10/11/36.

provided by the Shetkari Sangh and some candidates were put up.¹ Some prominent non-Brahman leaders, however, joined Congress and were selected as candidates.² The action of the central leadership in ensuring that the list of candidates in the Nagpur area was not dominated by Hindu nationalists and direct appeals on economic issues by Congress leaders were both of use in obtaining non-Brahman support. Scheduled Caste support was divided between the Independent Labour Party, locally influential figures, and Congress-sponsored candidates. The Mahars were less dominant than in Bombay and the remainder of the Scheduled Castes had virtually no organization.

Perhaps because there was no leader from C.P. with a national reputation and unchallenged authority, both the Mahakoshal and the Nagpur PCCs were particularly subject to factional disputes. There was at the same time latent hostility between the Hindi- and Marathi-speaking areas but this was partly concealed by cross-PCC links between factions. The Mahakoshal PCC was divided into the Govind Das and D.P. Mishra and the Ravi Shanker Shukla factions;³ the Nagpur PCC was dominated by N. B. Khare, who faced continual opposition from other Hindu nationalists, particularly Poonamchand

¹FR C.P., October 1936 II.

²PR C.P., 7/3/37.

³PR C.P., 10/11/36.

Ranka.¹ The main link was between Khare and the Mishra-Das faction.²

Muslim politics in C.P. were urban-based, but unlike Bombay the leadership was sharply divided into factions, led by Rauf Shah and M.Y.Shareef respectively, both of whom had been prominent figures in the 1920s. Both sides were represented in the CEB but established separate election boards.³ Jinnah visited Nagpur at the beginning of January 1937 but failed to reconcile the two groups, although a tentative pact had earlier been achieved.⁴ In the event the Shareef group became the official League representatives, but the choice appears to have been totally arbitrary, as Shareef himself later defected to Congress for the sake of a ministership.

Madras

The province of Madras was divided into Tamil- and Telugu-speaking areas, but in both the major political divisions of the 1920s had followed the cleavage between non-Brahman and Brahman. In the early 1920s the Justice Party had established itself as a party with some organizational structure outside the legislature. The non-Brahmans objected to Brahman ritual and social arrogance and also to their dominance within public life, although many Justice Party supporters were

¹AICC Misc. 13/1937, Khare to Nehru, 7/12/36.

²GR C.P., September 1937 I.

³PR C.P., 9/12/36.

⁴Times of India, 4/1/37.

themselves substantial landowners. Congress was widely regarded as a party of Brahmans intent on preserving their privileged position.¹ By 1937, however, the situation had changed to the point where Congress was able to achieve a dramatic electoral victory.

The Justice Party had been defeated in 1926 by the Swaraj Party but had been able to re-establish its power following the withdrawal of Congressmen from the Council in 1930. During their period in office, Justice Party leaders attempted to strengthen their position by giving a larger share of government jobs to non-Brahmans, and by judicious use of patronage.² The 1935 Act deprived the non-Brahman community of its reserved seats but increased its representation in the electorate. By 1936, however, the Justice Party was in a very bad state. Congress victories in the Central Assembly elections and in many local board elections, together with defections, had demoralized and weakened it. It had always relied on the influence of substantial landowners among their caste fellows, mostly Kammas and Reddis, but this left room for other parties to erode its support. As the Justice Party relied on caste solidarity, so it was exposed to caste factionalism. Congress could also appeal directly to those who were dissatisfied with the Justice Party's policies, distribution of patronage, and general association with the politics of collaboration.

¹E.F.Irschick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India (1969).

²PR Madras, 1/11/36 and 1/3/37.

Although in the 1930s Congress was the only party to which Brahmans belonged in any numbers it was no longer their exclusive preserve. Non-Brahmans within Congress secured their first victory when C.N.Muthuranga Mudaliar was elected president of the Tamilnad PCC in 1929.¹ Just as significantly, he defeated S. Satyamurti for the same post towards the end of 1936. Satyamurti was particularly unpopular with the non-Brahmans and in recognition of their importance within the electorate he was replaced as prospective leader of the Congress group in the Assembly by Rajagopalachari.² Although not a particular supporter of the non-Brahman movement he was recognized as having a genuinely national outlook and as being prepared to remove the social disabilities of the lower castes. Congress in south India, with the exception of the Kerala PCC, was in favour of office acceptance and of moderate economic and social policies, which must have commended it to former Justice Party supporters. Entering the arena of local board elections provided a means of recruiting through defections.³

In the northern parts of the province, where landlord influence was stronger, the activities of the Kisan Sabha attracted support from sections of the community which had previously been ignored both by Congress and the non-Brahman

¹Irschick, op.cit., pp. 328-9.

²FR Madras, December 1936 I and January 1937 II.

³Ibid., August 1936 I. Congress could also occasionally lose support: ibid., November 1936 II.

movement.¹ Although the kisan movement obtained some of its support through a direct economic appeal, it was also significant that its leader, N.G.Ranga, was a Kamma who led a caste faction in Guntur district.²

As well as suffering defections to Congress, the Justice Party also lost ground in certain areas to the Peoples Party, which competed for the support of the same groups. It had been founded in May 1936 by the Maharaja of Pithapuram as a vehicle for his personal ambitions and rivalry with the Raja of Bobbili, a principal Justice Party leader. He was able to use his substantial influence within East Godavari district, and the party put up candidates in other parts of Madras as well.³

The Scheduled Castes were courted by both Congress and the Justice Party. They suffered at the hands of Brahman and non-Brahman alike, but Congress was at least the party of Gandhi with whom Rajagopalachari was closely associated. M.C.Rajah, the most prominent Scheduled Caste leader, had taken part in Montford politics but he preferred to continue to work in co-operation with the government as an independent rather than to start a separate party.

The Muslim community, which only formed 3⁰/₀ of the population, was divided between Tamil and Urdu speakers. There were a number of Congress-inclined Tamil speakers as well as

¹ Ibid., November 1936 II.

² Myron Weiner, Party Building in a New Nation (1967), p.140.

³ Leader, 21/5/36, PR Madras, 1/11/36, and FR Madras, January 1937 I.

Urdu-speaking conservatives. Jamal Mahomed succeeded in bringing both groups together in August 1936 into a Muslim League Parliamentary Board. He then went on to reach some sort of electoral understanding with Rajagopalachari. The Urdu speakers on the board resigned in protest and formed the Muslim Progressive Party which in fact opposed all communal understandings.¹

By the 1930s, therefore, Congress in Madras enjoyed support from many sections of the community. Although it was to lose much of its non-Brahman support - E.V.R.Naicker created difficulties for the Congress ministry as soon as it was formed and kisan leaders and communists also came into direct conflict with it - at this period it approximated to the stereotype of a middle-class-led movement for political independence which transcended conflict. As far as can be seen from the evidence available, there was not even any serious conflict between the Tamil- and Telugu-speaking areas. Rajagopalachari was from Tamilnad but he was recognized as having the authority of the inner circle of leaders behind him. Congress at this time supported the idea of linguistic provinces and, unlike the situation in Bombay, Tamil- and Telugu-speaking areas shared many features of their caste systems and cultural patterns.

¹This account of Muslim activity is drawn entirely from Kenneth McPherson, 'The Social Background and Politics of the Muslims of Tamil Nad, 1901-1937', Indian Economic and Social History Review, vol. vi no. 4 (Dec. 1969), pp. 381-402. See also Statesman, 5/8/36.

N.W.F.P.

N.W.F.P. had only been made a full province as recently as 1932 and only one election had been held under the 1919 Act, but although the traditional tribal leaders of society, the Khans, remained powerful, its politics were more clear-cut than in most other provinces. The Khans, like the landlords in other provinces, were reluctant to organize themselves. The only one with any reputation as a leader with the skills appropriate to electoral politics was Sir Abdul Qaiyum Khan, who had been a minister, but he was regarded as an upstart by many of the others and was at first unable to persuade them to co-operate with each other.¹ It was only after Congress had scored a striking success in the Peshawar district board elections in October 1936 that he was able to bring some of them into a very informal relationship.² Jinnah visited the province once before the elections and formed a committee, but was unable to bring any major leaders into his orbit.³

Congress was not, as in the Punjab, largely confined to the minority Hindu community but was almost entirely Muslim. It had a large measure of autonomy and its militant incarnation, the Red Shirts or Khuda-i-Khidmatgars, were suspected by the British of departing not a little from the true path of Gandhian non-violence. Congress in N.W.F.P. remained banned after 1934 and it was only as a consequence of the

¹PR N.W.F.P., 9/11/36.

²Ibid., 7/12/36.

³FR N.W.F.P., October 1936 I and II.

pending elections that the government allowed the revival of a PCC in 1936. It was kept under strict surveillance and Abdul Ghaffar Khan remained externed from the province. Both Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his brother Dr. Khan Sahib, who became president of the PCC, were members of the Khanate, but most Congress support came from the ordinary villagers.¹

The Hindu and Sikh communities were confined to the towns and had always regarded themselves as under more or less permanent siege by the Muslim majority. Although Congress put up some Hindu candidates, the majority supported the Hindu-Sikh Nationalist Party, which was formed in 1936 with the aim of protecting the cultural and economic interests of the two communities.²

Orissa

Orissa had only been separated from Bihar on 1 April 1936 and its political life was even less developed than its sister province's. Its public life had traditionally been dominated by a few feudal families, but Congress too had the support of many landowners and other influential figures. The Utkal Union which had led the fight for separation had been a focus of political activity before 1936 and had enjoyed the support of both Congress and notables.³ After separation had been achieved Congress withdrew its support, but the other members

¹PR N.W.F.P., 9/11/36; Olaf Caroe, The Pathans, 550 B.C.-A.D.1957 (1958), pp. 431-3.

²FR N.W.F.P., December 1936 I.

³F.G.Bailey, Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959 (1963), pp. 163-5 and 170.

did not establish a single landlord party.¹ Instead, two factions among them started separate parties. The Maharaja of Parlakimedi started the National Party, and the Rajas of Kanika and Khallikote were responsible for the foundation of the United Party.² Although both were threatened by Congress they were not prepared to co-operate. Indeed, it was thought that the Maharaja of Parlakimedi had surreptitiously supported Congress in the Ganjam district board elections so as to defeat a landlord rival.³ It may be that the only reason landlord parties existed at all was because of the political experience gained in the Utkal Union. At all events, the two parties were nothing more than loose coalitions of notables.

Congress was able to exploit hostility to the feudal landowners both at elite and tenant level, but it too suffered from factional disputes. F.G.Bailey refers to a division within the Orissa Congress between Gandhians, mostly Karans from Cuttack and Balasore, and Swarajists, mostly Brahmans from Puri.⁴ These groups would seem to coincide with the factions led by Harekrishna Mahtab and Nilkantha Das respectively. During 1936 the latter was PCC president but he was defeated at the beginning of 1937 by Mahtab.⁵ There was also a kisan movement which had some influence within Congress.⁶ In terms

¹Ibid., pp. 170-1.

²PR Orissa, 24/10/36.

³Ibid., 12/1/37.

⁴Bailey, op.cit., pp. 168-9.

⁵AICC G. 65/1936, Kanungo to AICC Secretary, 15/2/36; PR Orissa, 17/2/37.

⁶FR Orissa, October 1936 II.

of declared policy the Orissa Congress appeared somewhat radical - at one stage a majority of the PCC was reported to be against office acceptance.¹ This may simply have been window-dressing for election purposes, but it may have been a result of the domination of much of Orissa by a few non-Congress landlords.

Punjab

The Punjab was still in the 1930s the main recruiting ground for the Indian Army and the Government of India remained as anxious for its political stability as it had been at the time of Jallianwalla Bagh. The province was unique in 1936 in possessing a long-established and still-flourishing non-Congress party. Political tension was generated in the conflict between the Unionist Party and conservative Hindu nationalists. Jinnah's activities created an additional centre of interest within the Muslim community. Congress itself was unimportant although there were radicals with Congress sympathies among the urban Muslims and the Sikhs.

The Unionist Party had been founded in 1923 and had dominated Punjab politics since then. Sir Fazl-i-Husain remained its leader until his death in July 1936. Although this was untimely, the party was well enough established for Sir Sikander Hyat Khan to take over smoothly while Sir Chhotu Ram, Sir Fazl-i-Husain's principal Hindu lieutenant, provided continuity.

¹PR Orissa, 17/2/37. See also ibid., 10/2/37.

The party was an alliance of rural Muslim and Hindu - mostly Jat- landholders, with a certain number of urban Muslims. Its communal policy rested on the constitutional recognition of religiously defined communities but it also had an economic programme aimed at protecting the interests of the whole agricultural sector. Central to it was the preservation of the 1902 Land Alienation Act.¹ In some ways the party was a landlord party. Its leadership was drawn from the principal landowners and it suffered severely from the continuation of traditional feuds such as that between the Tiwana-Noon and Wah families. At the same time it secured its mass support through its policies as much as through the exploitation of feudal loyalty. The Punjab contained a large number of independent landholders and substantial tenant farmers.

The Unionist Party's main antagonists, both on communal and economic grounds, were the well-organized Hindus from the mercantile and professional groups. They were by no means confined to the urban areas - one of their principal grievances was the Land Alienation Act which limited their right to acquire land - but their economic interests were opposed to the landholding community's. There was even a 'non-agriculturists conference' which acted as a spokesman for them.² The Hindu Sabha was also an organization to which many belonged, for communalism embraced economic grievances. During the Montford

¹ Azim Husain, Fazl-i-Husain (1946), pp. 153-5. See also Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs vol. ii (1966), p.225.

² Tribune, 28/4/36.

period leaders such as Sir Gokul Chand Narang had been ministers, but there had been no idea of joint responsibility with Unionist ministers. The Hindu Election Board (later known as the National Reform Party) was established in early 1936 to cope with the 1937 elections.¹ Its principal leader was Raja Narendra Nath. The Khalsa National Party, founded in July 1936, was similarly the party of those Sikhs who had co-operated in working the Montford reforms.² Although opposition to the Communal Award united them with the Hindus, the Khalsa National Party leaders came mostly from the leading Sikh landowning families.

Each of the three parties faced a challenge from within its own community. The Unionists' main opposition was from the urban areas where several parties drew support from workers and small traders.³ The largest was the Ahrar Party, already mentioned as having support in several parts of northern India. Although bitterly opposed to it over the Shahidganj mosque dispute, the Ittihad-i-Millat drew support from the same strata.⁴ Its leader was Muhammad Alam who, like some of the Ahrar leaders, had previously belonged to Congress. Jinnah was intensely concerned with the Punjab, because success there would provide a solid base. He had visited Lahore in connection with the Shahidganj dispute in February 1936 and he returned

¹Leader, 30/4/36. The Hindu Sabha also set up an election board but this was probably no more than a liaison committee: ibid., 9/5/36.

²Tribune, 14/7/36.

³For the antipathy to the Unionists of Muslim intellectuals, see Husain, op.cit., pp. 315-16.

⁴FR Punjab, May 1936 II.

at the end of April to attempt to bring as many groups as possible under the umbrella of the League. Although he had talks with leaders of all parties, including Fazl-i-Husain, only the Ahrars showed any interest.¹ At this stage the Unionist Party felt that it could only lose support by linking itself to Jinnah and his radical allies.² It felt that its future lay as a provincial party rather than as part of an all-India grouping. Jinnah did have some support in the Punjab, particularly from dissident Unionists such as Ghazanfar Ali Khan, but the League remained weak until after the elections.³

The challenge to the Hindu Election Board came primarily from Congress. Within the Hindu community its support came mainly from the urban areas and on all but communal issues its policies were little different from other Hindu groups. Indeed, some of the leaders of the Hindu Election Board had earlier belonged to it. The leadership was sharply divided into two factions, led respectively by Satyapal and Gopichand Bhargava, and the party was not a major force in Punjab politics. Between Congress and the Hindu Election Board was the Congress Nationalist Party, led by Mahashe Krishan, which hoped to combine the appeals of both. In the face of the common Unionist enemy, the three groups made several attempts

¹ Leader, 2/5/36 and 4/5/36; Tribune, 2/5/36 and 5/5/36.

² Husain, op.cit., pp. 307-8 and 310.

³ Unionists, however, continued to be the strongest group within the Punjab Muslim League Council, even while they boycotted the election board: FR Punjab, June 1936 I.

to establish a common platform. The initiatives came from each group in turn and lasted until Malaviya's visit to the province at the end of October. It would appear that some sort of understanding was reached between Congress and the CNP but it did not extend to every constituency.¹ It seems to have depended on personal relations between the respective leaders in the various districts.

Unlike the Hindu community, the Sikhs were sharply divided and there was no possibility of a reconciliation. Economic divisions within the community had hardened in the 1920s, partly as a consequence of a three-cornered fight over the control of Sikh religious endowments.² The Akali Dal that was then formed provided the opposition to the Khalsa National Party in the 1930s. It had always had links with Congress and its only major difference was over the question of the Communal Award. Although in June 1936 it stated that it would contest the elections independently, by December an electoral pact had been established with Congress.³ There had always been a number of Sikh revolutionaries and several of them became Congress candidates under this arrangement, although Akali candidates retained their separate identity.

¹ AICC E17/1937, Satyapal to Nehru, 25/12/36, and secretary of Punjab CSP to president of Punjab PCC, 29/9/36.

² Khushwant Singh, op.cit., chapter 13. The quarrel was not directly between the two groups of Sikhs but the moderates were eventually drawn in by Sir Malcolm Hailey on the side of the government.

³ Leader, 16/6/36; Tribune, 15/12/36, and AICC E17/1936, Gurdit Singh to Nehru, n.d.

Sind

Sind had been separated from Bombay in 1936 so as to give its Muslim population, who formed an overwhelming majority, a separate identity. The Hindu community was very largely urban and mercantile but there was not the open social structure and separatist sentiment which had led in N.W.F.P. to the emergence of Congress as a Muslim party. Politics were thus very simple. Muslim politics were dominated by leading land-owners and pirs (religious dignitaries); Congress and the Hindu Sabha vied to protect the economic and cultural interests of the Hindus.

The three most prominent Muslim leaders were Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, and Abdulla Haroon. With the encouragement of the governor, the United Party was formed towards the end of 1936 as a loose coalition of landlords.¹ Originally all three leaders were associated with it, but Hidayatullah almost immediately broke away and was in fact able to gather enough support from among the elected MLAs to form the ministry. Although the United Party also secured a number of seats, it split into factions immediately after the elections.² Jinnah made no headway at all within the province. The Muslim majority was such that the leaders felt no need at the time to secure additional safeguards at the cost of subjecting themselves to an all-India organization.

¹PR Sind, 16/10/36; GR Sind, 19/4/37.

²GR Sind, 19/4/37; PR Sind, 22/3/37; FR Sind, November 1936 I,

Congress and the Hindu Sabha had to obtain their support from the same sections of the population. The differences between them appear to have been as much personal as ideological, although Congress made no attempt to outflank the Hindu Sabha by declaring its open opposition to the Communal Award. Congress was divided into two factions. The dominant one, led by Jairamdas Doulatram and Choithram Gidwani, was largely comprised of members of the Amil community.¹ Its position was strengthened by Doulatram's links with the all-India leadership. The opposing faction was led by Swami Govindanand and seems to have been centred on Karachi. It wanted Congress to take a stronger line against the Communal Award but was powerless in the face of the central support its opponents received.² After his application for a Congress ticket was rejected Govindanand in fact broke away to form a 'People's Congress Party', but it did not receive popular support.³

U.P.

To the British, U.P. was perhaps the most important of the provinces. Although its population was not the largest nor its strategic position vital, it was, with the Punjab, the province where there seemed the most chance of integrating British rule into the structure of rural society through the co-operation of both Hindu and Muslim landowners.⁴ Conversely, it was

¹ AICC E18/1936, Hiranand Advani to Nehru, 23/1/37.

² Ibid., Govindanand to Nehru, 5/12/36.

³ FR Sind, November 1936 I.

⁴ Thomas R. Metcalf, The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870 (1965), pp. 172-3.

the province where Congress posed the most real threat not only to British rule but also to the social order. Many middle-class Muslims and Hindus shared a common cultural background and as in Bengal there was no sharp urban/rural divide. United action against imperialism as well as in favour of it was possible.

Congress in U.P. was well established before the Gandhian takeover but after 1919 it took on a new life and was one of the chief centres of non-co-operation and rural unrest. During the civil disobedience period Congress again received support from many rural areas as well as from the towns. Although it never had their full loyalty, it received support from a section of the Muslim community. By the mid-1930s it almost certainly contained a numerical majority of socially conservative elements but the radicals who had emerged in several of the major cities made all the running.¹ Nehru's position in all-India politics gave them protection and prestige. U.P. was also notable for the number of its full-time social and political workers. The Servants of the People Society had many of its workers there, and the Kashi Vidyapith continued to operate.

Although the U.P. Congress was dominated by the upper castes - the Congress ministry of 1937 was known as the all-Brahman ministry - caste conflict did not play a major part in politics. One reason was that, except for the Scheduled Castes, no single caste formed a large section of the

¹For examples, see above, pp. 129-30 and 142.

population.¹ A second reason may be that the efforts made by Congress leaders to improve rural conditions reconciled the lower castes to their leadership.

Many landlords in U.P. chose to establish separate parties, rather than work through Congress as in Bihar or Bengal (this was probably a cause rather than a consequence of the relative radicalism of the U.P. Congress). Congress received support from some of the small zamindars, but the aristocratic landowners who dominated parts of the U.P., encouraged by the government, set up the National Agriculturist Parties (NAPs) of Agra and Oudh, based on the local landowners associations. The NAPs were perhaps the archetypal landlord parties - Hindu and Muslim landlords combined in an effort to preserve their position through carefully controlled development of the rural areas.² Despite prodding from the government, however, they were unable to see that for the 1937 elections the exercise of personal influence was not enough. Some Kanpur businessmen also supported the Agra NAP, although there was continued tension between them and the landlords. Much of the drive behind the Agra NAP campaign in fact came from Sir J.P. Srivastava, who was a businessman.³ Many NAP members maintained strong links with their respective communal organizations; as these organizations decided to contest

¹Paul Brass, 'Uttar Pradesh', in Myron Weiner (ed.), State Politics in India (1968), p.68.

²For a study of the NAPs in this period, see P.D. Reeves, 'Landlords and Party Politics in the United Provinces, 1934-7', in D.A. Low (ed.), . Soundings in Modern South Asian History (1968), pp.261-93.

³Ibid., p.272.

the elections, so some landowners decided to stand for them rather than for the NAPs, or to stand jointly. The NAPs themselves, however, were partly protected from communal conflict by their loose structure and by separate electorates.

There were two strands in Hindu nationalist politics: landlords and the urban professionals. The former were able in some areas to gain support through their position in rural society. The latter, however, had to compete with Congress on the same ground. Almost all of them had at one time belonged to Congress and some of them were active members of the Liberal Party, but nothing comparable to the DSP emerged. There were no regional grievances, nor was there a dissident group within Congress. Malaviya, who might have been a focus for a Congress Nationalist Party, was in U.P. prepared to rely on his personal influence within the party.

It has already been pointed out that it was vital for Jinnah to have a firm basis in U.P. and that his progressive posture was at least partly designed to attract those Muslims associated with the Muslim Unity Board and the Deoband seminary. He had also to consider the possibility of attracting the Muslim members of the NAP and prominent independent Muslim landlords. He had an initial advantage in that some of the Muslim landlords had been prominent in the League before 1936, and he was able to persuade representatives of all groups to join the CEB in April 1936. His triumph was short-lived, however, as disputes flared up between the two halves. After a public controversy with Khaliquzzaman over their relations with the NAPs, the Nawab of Chhatari and Sir Muhammed Yusuf resigned

from the CEB.¹ At the beginning of July a meeting of Muslim leaders was held to consider alternative courses of action. Most who attended were NAP members, but other leading Muslims were also present.² A number of Muslim landlords, led by the Rajas of Salempur and Mahmudabad, remained with the provincial League board, but most swung against Jinnah.³ Although most of the formerly pro-Congress Muslims followed Khaliquzzaman's lead, Congress retained enough support to make it worth its while to put up a few Muslim candidates at the elections.

¹Leader, 8/6/36, and 20/6/36.

²Leader, 2/7/36.

³At the initial meeting of the provincial League board in August, a group led by Liaquat Ali Khan walked out because their candidates were not accepted: Times of India, 4/8/36.

Chapter Three

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

During the period from the formation of the CPC in April 1936 until the poll in the early part of 1937, a number of processes took place which may collectively be called the election campaign. The primary determinants of the nature of an election campaign are the unique features of the political system and culture concerned, but if the campaign is regarded as a self-contained process it can be analysed in more general terms. In this chapter the various processes are described within a framework derived from a dichotomy between the categories of direct and indirect mobilization. The specific techniques used by each party are also analysed in terms of their probable effectiveness and their impact on the party's structure and characteristics. In the first place, however, the 1936-7 campaign will be located on certain other dimensions common to all elections in a competitive party system.

Scope One definition of an election campaign would be those political activities carried on with the specific object of persuading electors to cast their votes for a particular party or candidate. Such a definition, however, faces difficulties if applied to the 1936-7 campaign in India. It is first of all possible, because of the limited franchise, that some activities ostensibly directed to raising electoral support were in fact intended to reach the majority of non-electors. Conversely, Congress as a movement had members whose activities were not overtly political in the sense of

being election-oriented, and who might even disagree with the wisdom of contesting elections, but who were nevertheless prepared to allow structures that they had built up to be used for electoral purposes. Secondly, the fact that the elections were to be held according to the provisions of the 1935 Act, and that therefore the new assemblies were to have much greater powers, was itself directly responsible for the number of small parties which came into existence during 1936.

It therefore seems that the definition of the campaign should be widened to include all political or quasi-political activities which took place from April 1936 to February 1937.¹ For convenience, major areas of activity with wider relevance have been treated in separate chapters, but they must also be regarded as part of the campaign.

The Timescale The timescale of an election campaign has other relevances besides being a contributory determinant of its saliency. In the English system an election can be held at short notice, and where it is not held at the end of a five-year period it is usually the result of a crisis within the legislative subsystem or of the calculation by the prime minister of short-term advantages. Party organization remains in readiness for a campaign, but the election itself only dominates political life for a short time. Where fixed terms are laid down for elected bodies, the campaign can develop according to

¹Cf. Thomas Hodgkin's definition of African nationalism as a description of all groups opposing European authority, whatever their ideology and institutional forms: Nationalism in Colonial Africa (1956), p.23. The scope of an election campaign is not necessarily to be equated with the importance of the election's functions within the political system. In some situations, for instance, an election whose main function is the symbolic affirmation of legitimacy may be attended by much display and publicity.

a schedule. American party conventions, for example, not only fulfil a vital role in the choice of presidential candidates, but are also an integral part of the public display necessary in a campaign. In India, after the suspension of civil disobedience in 1933, Congressmen who were not committed to the Gandhian or socialist programmes had had very little to do, except perhaps to contest local elections. Provincial councils, from which all Congressmen had resigned in 1930, provided little excitement for members of any party in view of their imminent disappearance. The coming elections and the associated question of office acceptance were therefore discussed long in advance, and the ordinary business of political life acquired a patina of relevance to them. The Congress Working Committee passed its first resolution on office acceptance at its Wardha meeting in July 1935, and stated that it did so in response to several resolutions passed on the subject by lower Congress committees. At the same meeting, a resolution from the Berar PCC concerning election organization was referred to the Parliamentary Board. The AICC also discussed the question of office acceptance at its meeting at Madras in October. It took no stand itself but raised no objection to general discussion of the issue within Congress.¹ A further consequence of the protracted timescale and the absence of alternative political interest, and also of the wide scope of the campaign, was that considerable awareness of the election was generated among the general public. The salience of the campaign was

¹For references, see above, p.110.

one factor in producing the relatively high turnout of 54⁰/o in an electorate largely composed of new members.

The approximate date of the elections was known at least a year in advance, although the official announcements were not made until the latter part of 1936.¹ This led to the formal inauguration of campaigns long before they actually got under way. A further feature of the 1937 election was that polling dates varied from province to province, according to administrative convenience. Even within each province polling was spread over some days. This meant that there were possibilities for co-operation, as happened between the U.P. and Bihar PCCs.² A 'band wagon' effect was also possible as the results were not announced simultaneously.³

Perception of the electorate In a country with a well-established electoral system, information about the class or ethnic composition of the electorate can be assumed to be equally available to all the major parties. The development of opinion surveys has also provided campaign planners with behavioural data about particular groups in the electorate. In India in 1936 there was a new but limited franchise. This affected the ecological information that was available and also the campaign managers' perception of what would happen. Most qualifications for electors were based on the possession of land or property, and economic programmes could therefore easily be angled to appeal

¹See above, pp. 80-1.

²AICC El(a)/1936, 'Report of the All-India Parliamentary Committee', 15/3/37.

³HPU 1/52/36, Emerson to Craik, 14/9/36. See also Pran Nath Chopra, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai (1960), p.46.

to the tenants or cultivating landowners who formed the bulk of the electorate. Separate electorates obviated the need for balancing Hindu and Muslim votes. Further information about the voters was, however, limited. This was largely irrelevant to those like Nehru who simply took the election campaign as a starting point for a broad appeal to the masses, but the campaign strategists and district leaders had to take important decisions in areas where their knowledge and perception was inadequate.

Previous experience was of limited use. Many local board elections were fought on more limited franchises than those used in 1937, and in any case modern experience in India has shown that such results can be very different from those of legislature elections.¹ Candidates and local leaders always have considerable unsystematic knowledge of the population. Congressmen would usually have taken part in civil disobedience and were often active in social service organizations, but this by no means enabled them to predict how a peasant would vote. Many Congressmen and other politicians, although often coming from rural backgrounds, lived in the district towns and followed professional occupations. Landlords, whether in or out of Congress, might well overestimate the impact of their position. Local leaders were also liable to have their outlook distorted by considerations of local politics. Leaders at higher levels were detached from purely local issues, but might be affected by their own

¹For example, Weiner, Party Building in a New Nation, p.169, and Donald B. Rosenthal, The Limited Elite (1970), chapter 9.

factional alignments. They were also more likely than local leaders to miss the significance of hitherto non-politicized elements in the electorate and of social structures at the local level that might affect voting.

There were three areas in which lack of information about the electorate was a serious limitation. First, there was no exact way of relating the economic divisions on which the franchise was based to the equally valid cleavages of caste and village factionalism. Secondly, strategy based on any pattern of group support had to take into account variable rates of turnout. The use of a wealth qualification for the franchise meant that, where a group was economically backward, an automatic equalizing mechanism in effect existed, but the turnout rate was determined by cultural as well as economic factors. A major complication was that the Scheduled Castes had been given especially low qualifications, so as to enfranchise a given percentage of them, and after the Poona Pact a substantial number of general seats were reserved for their members. As well as estimating relative turnouts, the planners had also to guess at the overall rate. Thirdly, in many parts of India newly enfranchised tenants were in a hierarchical relationship with their landlords. Even where hereditary tenancies were assured by law, the landlord had other sanctions. Although the ballot was, at least theoretically, secret, there were frequent claims that landlords were able to exercise undue influence.¹ Congress and non-landlord

¹See above, p.75.

parties had to choose between appealing directly to the tenants and making some sort of deal with the landlord. Campaign planners therefore had not only to decide what the composition of the electorate was, but also to make a further effort of the imagination to decide how best to approach the new electors.

Mobilization Mobilization of mass support is a primary function of most political parties, but when it is carried out for electoral purposes it has several distinguishing features. First, the support need not be placed on a regular institutional basis. Many parties would not welcome or have the resources to cope with a mass membership. Secondly, the units involved are finite. On the one hand, the voter has simply to mark a ballot paper, an act which is usually encouraged by the government of the day. On the other, the party's object is simply to have a particular individual elected. Almost all parties, of course, aim at achieving diffuse as well as specifically electoral support, and this applies a fortiori in a colonial situation where the legitimacy of the regime is challenged. This being so, the dichotomy of direct and indirect mobilization is not completely valid, but it is heuristically useful when analysing an individual election campaign.

Direct mobilization includes all efforts made by the parties and their candidates to establish a direct relationship with the electorate on the basis of the advantages, material and psychological, to be gained from their success at the polls.

Indirect mobilization describes those methods whereby

the candidate or party exploits a relationship with the electors which was not primarily established for the purpose of gaining electoral support. Where the candidate (or his party) does not himself control the relationship, a two-stage process operates in that he has first to secure the support of those who do. Three types of relationship can be distinguished, according to the position of those who control them:

(1) Associational relationships. Mass parties of extra-parliamentary origin frequently have allied organizations to cater for particular groups, and Congress was no exception.¹ In addition to its peripheral political organizations, such as the Congress volunteers, and its informal links with the All-India Trades Union Congress, Congress was supported by bodies such as the All-India Women's Conference, the All-India Students' Federation, and the All-India Kisan Sabha, all of which were run by people with strong nationalist sympathies. It would perhaps be wrong to speak of them as Congress 'fronts', but they lent general support to Congress objectives, and in some cases socialized their members into political roles. There were also the various social service organizations which had been started at Gandhi's initiative, and were under Congress auspices but completely autonomous. For their leaders, Congress remained the political expression of the national movement, but for some of those among whom they worked, the particular organization rather than Congress

¹ Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (1964 ed.), pp. xxx-xxxiv and 6. Congress was not of course a true 'indirect' party.

was the reality. It was a feature of the period that higher levels of personal commitment were often found among those working outside the arena of electoral politics. In a situation where a colonial government still retains power, non-political organizations can be especially useful in blaming the ills of society onto the government. Although Congress did not actually control them, the organizations mentioned above were so closely bound up with it that their support for its election efforts was automatic. In many cases candidates or Congress leaders held office within them at district or provincial level. Non-Congress candidates had a more limited range of associational relationships to draw on. Some would have held office within co-operative banks and other quasi-official bodies, while in some areas, particularly Bengal, kisan groups were under non-Congress control. Communal pressure groups such as the Hindu Mahasabha, although based on ascriptive ties, were in some senses associational in that they appealed differentially to members of the primordial group.

(2) Ascriptive relationships. Where a candidate wished to mobilize support on a communal basis, he had access to the religious and cultural leaders of his community, provided they agreed with his concept of communal action.¹ Similarly he could appeal to his caste fellows for support. Such support could of course be given as a result of direct mobilization techniques. There were obvious advantages to the

¹ Even when religious leaders did not support overtly communal candidates, they could still use their influence, as did certain members of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind: see above, p.156.

elector in voting for a member of his own caste.¹ Only those cases are being considered in this section where the internal structures of the caste and community were used to deliver the vote. That this happened at all was the result of the existence of different levels of political action in India. Models of political interaction derived from western competitive democracies are based on a polarity between elite(s) and mass within a single political system. Although leaders act in response to the articulated demands of the electorate, often transmitted by intermediaries, mobilization is essentially from the top downwards. In India, however, there are distinct levels or arenas of political action within the formal constitutional unity of the nation. Since independence, an increasing number of vertical linkages have been established which serve to integrate the various levels. On the one hand, the locus of power within the parties has steadily shifted towards the district level, and on the other, groups which previously functioned only at the parochial level have extended their scope.

In 1937, however, there were no such linkages as panchayati raj. Also, some new recipients of the franchise had not been socialized into the roles of elector or member of a political party whose instructions were to be carried out. They were not, however, socially isolated, and owed loyalty to their primary group and its leaders. Campaign managers were therefore unable to reach them effectively by

¹ Thus the Independent Labour Party and the specifically caste-based parties of the post-independence period.

simple appeals to national or party interest. In many cases the party was associated with the group's traditional rivals at the lower levels of politics. Horizontal mobilization on economic issues was another possibility which was tried in some areas, but most parties lacked the resources and often the inclination. Some sort of bargain was therefore necessary between the party leaders and the group or a section of it. From the group member's point of view, such an arrangement provided better access to the administration and the possibility of individual members becoming actors at higher levels. The situation where a candidate was of the same caste or group as a substantial number of the electors has already been mentioned. The difficulty for the observer who has to rely on written records is to know whether such choices were merely prudent planning by the party's leaders or were the result of informal bargaining between the party and the group. The major variables were probably the degree of political awareness among the group and the extent to which it was already represented within the party.¹ An alternative means of establishing an agreement was for the group to form a political organization which could then bargain directly with the party. This was liable to happen if the group concerned functioned over a wide area, and also if

¹It was perfectly possible, however, for a group that had participated in Montford-style provincial politics to adapt itself to the radically new environment of 1936-7 by means of group bargaining. The behaviour of non-Brahmans in Bombay and Madras could be analysed in this way. ---

its traditional leadership was inadequate.¹ It is not, of course, being suggested that the parties in 1937 necessarily organized their support on caste lines. Lack of information, factions both within the party and the caste, the political costs of exclusively caste-based support and the unwillingness of many to make the compromises that such a policy demanded all meant that caste mobilization was only one option, even where it was feasible.

(3) Hierarchical and factional relationships. As well as making use of ascriptive loyalties, party leaders could attempt to use other relationships. Landowners considered that they commanded the support of their tenantry, and they were prepared to trade this support for formal endorsement if they were themselves candidates, or for influence within the party if they were not. There were also men who in later times might have formed completely separate parties, but who in 1936-7 felt themselves unable to break from Congress completely. Congress leaders sometimes tried to accommodate these men where they commanded support among the electorate, especially if their price was limited to a share of the nominations rather than control of policy.

The candidate has several times been mentioned as the means whereby the party is able to make use of the various types of indirect mobilization. It must be noted that a

¹The peculiar position of the Scheduled Castes is relevant to this whole process. Their guaranteed seats gave them a much greater importance than before, but at the same time they often lacked any established leadership beyond the local level.

candidate may consciously establish a non-electoral relationship with the local population with the intention of cashing it for electoral support.

Other categories can also be used for classifying techniques of mobilization. The distinctions between vertical and horizontal¹ and between stalactite and stalagmite mobilization² both relate to structure, and parallels are possible with the categories suggested here. Vertical mobilization is related to 'two-stage' mobilization by hierarchical or caste leaders, but the dichotomy between vertical and horizontal perhaps suggests a class structure that is not entirely applicable to India in 1936-7 and also diverts attention from the fragmentation of Indian local politics and from the mobilizing power at all levels of the symbolism of national independence. In a colonial situation, all indigenous mobilization is of the 'stalagmite' variety, but the further distinction made by Nettl between 'national-constitutional' and party-based legitimization would be useful in a comparison of independence movements.³ It would serve to stress the legitimacy accorded by many Indian politicians in 1936-7 to the legislative institutions of the raj and in consequence to the elections. Other classifications refer to the style of mobilization. The dichotomy between ideological and instrumental appeals is useful. So also is the modern/traditional/saintly classification.⁴

¹Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition (1967), pp. 24-6.

²J.P.Nettl, Political Mobilization (1967), pp. 271-2.

³Ibid., p.219.

⁴W.H.Morris-Jones, 'India's Political Idioms', in C.H.Philips (ed.), Politics and Society in India (1963), pp. 133-54.

Organizational Structures

Just as the officials had to develop new administrative techniques for the elections, so did the party leaders. Before 1936 only Congress had had a permanent administrative structure below the provincial level, and that had been developed for managing agitations rather than elections. The setting up of the CPC in April 1936 has already been shown to have been important in marking Congress's emergence as a fully fledged political party which had integrated the parliamentary programme into its activities. The CPC was also responsible for adapting Congress organization to the demands of the election campaign. The Working Committee, or more precisely the inner circle around Gandhi and the president, was universally recognized as Congress's strategic planning body. The decisions to initiate civil disobedience were taken by it, as was the decision to embark on electoral activity. It was, however, an oligarchic, largely self-perpetuating body. It contained some members who were not concerned with electoral activity, and who were not in touch with the lower levels of the party. It was rightly known as the 'High Command', and was an unsuitable body to take direct responsibility for the campaign. What was needed was a body which contained on the one hand those members of the Working Committee who were national organizers and on the other the effective leaders of the provincial units. The majority of the CPC was therefore made up of the PCC presidents ex officio. The remaining seven were all members of the Working Committee.

The CPC was set up in accordance with the wishes of the Lucknow Congress by a resolution of the Working Committee at the end of April. The resolution read as follows:

'Resolved that a Parliamentary Committee ...
be constituted, to take such steps as may be
necessary in connection with the organisation
of elections to the legislatures. The Committee
shall report to the Working Committee from time
to time and shall be guided by the Working Com-
mittee's directions.'¹

Its first meeting was at Wardha on 1 and 2 July 1936. Patel, Prasad and Pant were elected as office-bearers, with Patel in the vital role of president. The remaining eleven present were all regional leaders, with the exception of Bhulabhai Desai.² An executive committee of eleven was appointed, which included all the important members. As attendance at full meetings was never more than seventeen, it is probable that the appointment of this committee was simply an attempt to give an appearance of formality and hierarchy. It was resolved that a committee of action should be appointed to tour the provinces and give general help with the campaign. A series of rules was also made for the guidance of PCCs, dealing inter alia with the subject of candidate selection.³

¹INC III, p.24: CWC proceedings, 27-9/4/36.

²Desai was leader of the Central Assembly Congress group.

³AICC E1(a)/1936, minutes of meeting.

A second meeting took place six weeks later at the time of the Bombay session of the AICC. A few nominations were approved and the division of powers between component PCCs and the composite committees that existed in certain areas was settled.¹ Its only other action was the endorsement of the manifesto which had already been approved a day or so previously by the Working Committee.² A further meeting took place at Benares at the end of October. Its main concern was candidate selection. It also considered the question of a national fund-raising appeal.³ In addition, one meeting of the executive was held at Simla in September, which also concerned itself with selection questions and cleared up a minor problem concerning the Madras composite committee.⁴

The matters over which the CPC exercised direct control can thus be listed as selection of candidates, the manifesto, national financial appeals and inter-province co-operation. All of these except the last will be examined in detail later.

¹ Since 1919 Congress had been organized according to linguistic provinces and in 1936-7 each PCC looked after its own election campaign, even if it was not coterminous with the governmental unit. The composite committees were simply co-ordinating bodies. The real problems came after the elections, when ministers had to be chosen. For this, the Working Committee set up a much smaller Parliamentary Sub-Committee, which consisted only of national leaders.

² Ibid., minutes of meeting, 23/8/36.

³ Ibid., minutes of meeting, 24-5/10/36.

⁴ Ibid., minutes of meeting, 26-7/9/36. Only six members were present.

Besides having direct authority in some spheres, the CPC was also intended to provide general assistance to the lower levels of Congress leadership. A secretariat was established at Bombay shortly after the first meeting of the CPC and a series of circulars to PCCs was issued. Unfortunately, only some of these are preserved in the AICC records.¹ These are as follows:

No. 4. 22/7/36. This rehearsed the CPC's recommendations for provincial election organization, and urged their adoption. It suggested that election workers be appointed for each constituency, and asked to be informed of the progress that had been made. There is, however, no evidence of any follow-up to this request for information. PCCs at this time were notoriously bad at responding to such appeals.

No. 6. 8/10/36. This was an appeal for funds expressed in general terms.

No. 7. 3/11/36. This reminded provincial organizers of the need to ensure that, where a candidate was formally disqualified as a result of a prison sentence of more than two years, appropriate action should be taken for removal of the disqualification.

No. 8. (i) 10/11/36. This laid down that the fortnight beginning 16 November should be used for fund collection. No specific procedure was laid down for

¹In AICC EL(a)/1936.

dealing with the money.

No. 8 (ii) 16/11/36. This advised local organizers that electors in remote constituencies had to be approached, and that electors had to be told how to divide their votes in multi-member constituencies.

Unnumbered. 19/11/36. This laid down that Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly would not normally be allowed to stand as candidates for provincial assemblies. This was an anti-careerist measure. Members of the Central Legislative Assembly might reasonably have expected to have become ministers if allowed to stand for election in their provinces. In actual practice, the rule was often breached. Pant was the most prominent of those who retired from the Central Assembly. Others included S.K.Sinha in Bihar, N.B.Khare in C.P. and Dr. Khan Sahib in N.W.F.P.

Pant also issued a circular letter to all members of the CPC in May, which suggested a number of measures that provincial organizers should take. It mentioned the need to ensure that the electoral registers were as complete as possible, and that the 'necessary machinery' had been set up for organizing election work.¹ This circular is of additional interest in that it was issued before the first meeting of the CPC and contains several references to work carried out by the CPB.

¹HPO 4/45/36, copy of circular letter from Pant, 8/5/36.

Certain of the regular AICC circulars also dealt with election matters.¹ They were issued from the AICC office in Allahabad and the relevant ones were all drafted by Nehru. They are clearly attempts to ensure that Congress would not become constitutionalist in its approach, and would not give prominence to 'unsuitable' people in its search for votes. The following list includes all AICC circulars in 1936 that related to electoral matters:

No. 18. 23/9/36, emphasized the need to publicize the manifesto.

No. 25. 26/11/36, called for use of the national (i.e. Congress) flag during the campaign.

No. 26. 2/12/36, deplored the lack of knowledge of the manifesto among many candidates.

No. 27. 2/12/36, called for more women to be nominated for unreserved seats.

No. 32. 19/12/36, laid down new disciplinary rules to deal with the new types of offence arising in the course of the election campaign.

With the exception of No. 32, however, all Nehru's circulars were advisory, even though he was Congress president. Effective power lay with Patel, who was less concerned with the niceties of Congress purity.

Besides CPC and AICC circulars, there was another significant missive to the provincial organizers from the national leadership. This was signed by Nehru, Patel, Prasad, Abdul

¹ AICC Pl/1936 contains a complete set of AICC circulars for this period.

Ghaffar Khan and Jammalal Bajaj, and deplored the selection in some provinces of unsuitable candidates, in particular some who had until shortly before their election actively opposed Congress. It warned against striving for a 'fictitious majority'.¹

There were also some direct contacts between the CPC and the provincial leaders. There is no record of any activity by the Committee of Action set up at the July meeting, but extensive tours were made by various national leaders. The most important were the propaganda tours of Nehru, but he was not a member of the CPC. Patel, Prasad and Pant more usually toured for specific purposes, normally candidate selection, although they too conducted propaganda tours in the period immediately preceding polling. Patel visited N.W.F.P. in company with Bhulabhai Desai in December. Congress there still had to operate under severe restraints.² Patel's regional interests were centred on Bombay, so that he had no need to travel to oversee them. When not in Bombay, Prasad spent much of his time in Bihar, of whose PCC he was president. It was at Patna that he met Bengal Congress leaders to try to sort out the Bengal PCC's internal difficulties. When he visited C.P. on the eve of the poll, the government report stated that he had systematized Congress propaganda in the rural areas there.³ Pant also intervened in Bengali affairs and visited Calcutta to assist in candidate selection.

¹ AICC El(a)/1936, statement issued from Wardha, 17/11/36.

² HPO 40/3/36, N.W.F.P. Government to secretary of Congress Parliamentary Board, 7/8/36, and PR N.W.F.P., 7/12/36.

³ FR C.P., February 1937 I.

It may be assumed that during all these visits the leaders made sure that the provincial arrangements for propaganda were adequate. There was no formal division of territorial responsibilities, as there was to be later with the Parliamentary Subcommittee, but there was some degree of specialization according to the regional interests of the leaders.

The CPC office was set up as soon as Patel and Prasad returned from the Wardha meeting.¹ It opened on 6 July and was situated in the Congress House in Bombay, which was very much Patel's home ground.² It was arranged that the triumvirate would take it in turns to supervise the work there.³ It must be stressed, however, that except over the matters already mentioned, the CPC exercised no direct control over the provinces. It took action only where there was a danger that election disputes might weaken the fabric of Congress or where co-ordination was necessary, but otherwise confined itself to an advisory role. This meant that control of the selection of candidates was by far its most important function.

One reason for the circumscribed authority of the CPC was that it was itself largely composed of PCC presidents. By being associated with the framing of organizational recommendations they acted in effect as informal agents of the CPC. It is significant that Pant's letter of May,

¹Capital, 16/7/36, pp. 80 and 92.

²Statesman, 7/7/36.

³Leader, 8/7/36.

suggesting that electoral machinery should already be being set up, was addressed to PCC presidents in their capacity as members of the CPC.

In the provinces there was no uniform pattern of organization. As at the centre, the most important function was candidate selection.¹ Whereas the CPC as such had only to see that suitable candidates were chosen and to arbitrate in cases of dispute, the provincial organizations had actually to choose individuals, and were therefore often the arena for factional disputes. Thus the main determinant of provincial organizational forms was the existence or otherwise of a factional rivalry and the relationship between any such factions. The size of the PCC was also significant. No particular guidance was given by the CPC. The PCC, or in larger provinces the PCC executive committee, could itself undertake the task of candidate selection, or it could appoint an ad hoc committee or board; of which the PCC president was usually the chairman. For other election work, which did not have the same bearing on the power balance within the PCC, a propaganda sub-committee was often appointed. Functions of such a committee included translation of the manifesto into the regional language, the production of supplementary manifestos and other propaganda material, local appeals for finance, and arrangements for the tours of national leaders. Beyond

¹This was always the prerogative of the Congress provinces. The Madras Presidency composition committee attempted to carry out the selection itself, but was restrained by the CPC: AICC El(a)/1936, minutes of CPC executive council meeting, 26-7/9/36.

this, the PCC or parliamentary board had to be satisfied that each constituency or district was adequately supplied with resources, and that the local leaders were using them properly. It had to distribute such financial resources as it had. This supervisory and controlling function could not easily be carried out by a committee, and it usually happened that whoever was the president of the appropriate committee or board undertook the work, in some areas with help from other prominent leaders.¹ By doing so he was able to reinforce his own position.

Below the province, the district, which normally included a number of assembly constituencies, was the basic Congress unit. There were instances of DCCs setting up election committees on the provincial model, but it was probably more common for the DCC itself or its executive committee to control the work.² Alternatively a local figure of undisputed prestige might be responsible for the organization. A.P.Jain wrote that he 'looked after' his home district of Saharanpur in U.P. in the same way as his patron Kidwai (who was president of the U.P. Parliamentary Board) looked after the province.³ Certain DCCs however were either moribund or totally immobilized by factional disputes.⁴ In such

¹The Bihar PCC appointed Ramcharita Singh as 'special election officer' in May 1936: Leader, 20/5/36. With Prasad as PCC president, Bihar may have needed a more formal organization.

²The existence of such committees is mentioned in FR Bombay, August 1936 I.

³Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: A Memoir of His Life and Times (1965), p.18. Jain became a parliamentary secretary in the U.P. Congress ministry of 1937.

⁴PCCs were equally liable to factional disputes, but the outside pressures on them were normally such that a modus vivendi had to be found.

districts candidates presumably either managed their own campaigns entirely, or relied on informal support from one or other of the local leaders who could make contact with the provincial leadership if necessary. In any case, the crucial variable in the relationship between the DCC and the campaign on the ground was whether the candidate had an independent power base within his constituency or was dependent on the DCC or a faction within it.

There was no system of constituency agents as such. Pant had advised the provinces in July that full-time workers should be appointed in each constituency. There were indeed numerous full-time Congress workers, but it is by no means certain that they carried out the functions that Pant had envisaged. Some of them would have been itinerant propagandists rather than organizers. Each candidate had by law to nominate an election agent, but could nominate himself. There is no information as to who was appointed, and whether the appointments were more than nominal.

The organizational structure of Congress has been examined in detail partly because much of what has been said is applicable to the rudimentary organizational forms developed by other parties. In particular, the technique of having a separate committee to control election work was used by a number of different groups, including the Muslim League. It has been mentioned earlier that Jinnah's strategy at this time was to use the elections as a means of activating Muslim politics at the provincial level and of establishing his own

and the League's suzerainty over the Muslim community. The League's Council in 1936 was representative only of the landed or otherwise established Muslim upper classes and in any case only met occasionally. Rather than transform the League's institutions from within, Jinnah saved time by bypassing them.

After being given full control of the election campaign at the April 1936 League session, Jinnah proceeded to recruit as many Muslim politicians as possible to the CEB. Its personnel was announced in May 1936, and the first meeting took place at Lahore in the middle of June. Rules were drawn up and officers elected: Jinnah became president, and Abdul Matin Chaudhury secretary.¹ A second meeting took place at Simla in September, at which a number of provincial boards were affiliated.²

Unlike the CPB or the CPC, the CEB had no organizational functions. At the June meeting it agreed on a manifesto, but that was the sum total of its activities. Its function was to provide a structural framework into which Jinnah could slot provincial Muslim groups as and when he persuaded them to contest the elections under the League banner. The only central organizational work was carried out by Jinnah or occasionally by such lieutenants as Abdul Matin Chaudhury and Shaukat Ali. This was confined to identifying suitable Muslim groups in each province, and negotiating the establishment of provincial League election boards. Alternatively, special relationships were established with particular parties,

¹Leader, 13/6/36 and 14/6/36.

²Statesman, 20/9/36.

which left the internal structure of the latter unchanged. In theory, the boards had the same powers and responsibilities as their Congress equivalents, but in practice they had little authority. This was inevitable since they did not have effective control of the selection process. The Bombay board perhaps came closest to the Congress model in that it was based on an existing Muslim League and on a well-established tradition of Muslim public life, and had no serious rival. In U.P., however, although the province was the stronghold of the League, the CEB was simply a means of bringing together antagonistic groups, each of which had alternative structures to turn to.

Very little can be discovered about the internal organization of any other party, and it may be assumed that very little existed. As with the Muslim League, inability to control the selection process removed the main purpose of electoral organization. Men who intended to stand for election whatever happened, had no need of financial or logistic support. Even if they derived any symbolic support from their association with a party and its leaders, this could be obtained informally.

A broad division can, however, be drawn between parties and election boards as primary units of political action. In one sense the difference between an election board or other ad hoc electoral committee and ephemeral groups such as the United Orissa Party is purely a verbal one. Both were set up in situations where previous political groupings

had been so informal that they had no public image nor any corporate identity with which other groups could negotiate. Members of both were usually men who had already established themselves in political life or who came from backgrounds from which politicians had been recruited before 1937. Election boards and local parties, although created under the same external pressures, did, however, spring from slightly different sources within the political system. It may be suggested that election boards were more often to be found where the members' support was communal, and parties where it was based on patronage and personal loyalty. A related point is that election boards may have arisen in circumstances where the differences between groups were not based on irreconcilable political or personal differences but simply on separate communal identities. Election boards were also more often to be found where the people concerned had actually taken part in dyarchy politics, and parties where the new conditions of politics had galvanized a hitherto dormant class. It follows that election boards were more likely to be found among urban groups, for before 1937 politicians had come overwhelmingly from the towns and cities. Finally, election boards were more likely to be the political expression of a group than of the followers of a single provincial leader.

A good case study of local parties and election boards is provided by the Punjab. The predominant political force there was the Unionist Party. Unlike most local parties, it

had built up loyalty to itself as well as to individual leaders. At the same time, however, it was a party of local magnates on which was superimposed the authority of the party's leaders, in particular Fazl-i-Husain and his successor Sikandar Hyat Khan, and Chhotu Ram. Rather than attempt to cope with the inevitable personal disputes among the district notables, or indeed with the wider rivalry between the Tiwana-Noon and Wah families, the leadership often simply allowed several candidates to stand in its name.¹ The Sikhs formed an extremely well-defined community but one which was at the same time deeply divided within itself. The non-zamindari Sikhs had been organized as the Akali Dal since the mid-1920s. They had strong nationalist sympathies, but wished to retain their separate political existence. They therefore set up an election board at the end of June.² The landowning Sikhs, some of whom had taken part in the politics of the dyarchy period, were organized into the Khalsa Diwan, but for the elections constituted themselves into the Khalsa National Party rather than an election board.³ Some members of the Hindu community who had taken part in dyarchy politics formed the Hindu Election Board, which later became known as the National Progressive Party.⁴ The Punjab was of course

¹PR Punjab, 19/10/36. Parallels can be found in certain African one-party systems.

²Tribune, 30/6/36.

³Tribune, 14/7/36.

⁴Tribune, 24/7/36 and 23/2/37.

exceptional in that Congress was relatively weak among the Hindu community, but similar local parties existed elsewhere.

The factors mentioned above did not always determine a group's political and electoral organization. Situations existed where the factors were inconsistent, or where an external circumstance affected the outcome. This particularly applied to groups on the fringes of Congress. The Congress Nationalist Party in some areas was made up of men who might have been expected to have formed a Hindu election board on the Punjab model. The overwhelming presence of Congress made it difficult for them to establish a totally separate organization.¹

Finally, mention must be made of the organization of groups that were involved in the process of indirect mobilization. The nature of the relationship between candidate and caste leaders meant that it rarely took an institutional form.² Sometimes, however, larger units found it necessary to discuss the elections formally. In western India, leaders of the non-Brahman castes discussed the question of their political allegiance. It was not however, until after independence that election matters were widely discussed on a formal basis within castes or caste associations. Various voluntary associations also considered that they held a watching brief and discussed election matters at their

¹Tribune, 24/7/36 and 23/2/37.

²A glimpse of the relationship is given in a letter from a U.P. elector to the Pioneer, quoted by P.D.Reeves in D.A. Low (ed.), Soundings in Modern South Asian History (1968), p.278. 'Tribe' in this letter may be equated with caste.

conferences or elsewhere. In particular, the Hindu Mahasabha, in addition to participating in the moves to promote an all-India Hindu party, suggested to the various provincial Hindu Sabhas that they should contest the elections 'wherever necessary'.¹

The selection of candidates

Both logically and in point of time the selection of candidates comes first in a consideration of the actual campaign. It was through this process that the basic characteristics of a party's campaign were established. It was the moment at which electoral alliances were cemented and when appeals could be made to particular groups by judicious selections. It was also a process with implications for the internal structure of the party. The candidates themselves, by the very fact of their selection, were given a standing within the party. Factions gained and lost according to their share of nominations.

The statistical data to be presented in the next chapter provide insights into the end products of the selection process, but there are aspects of the process to which the general characteristics of the candidate are not relevant.² Where a candidate was clearly representative of a particular group, it is important to know if this was the result of perception of the nature of the constituency by the campaign organizers,

¹ IAR 1935 II, p.36.

² The data presented in the next chapter relate only to successful candidates while the present discussion is also concerned with those who failed at the polls.

of 'colonization' of the party by the group concerned, or of a bargain between party and group. In more general terms, one often needs to know why one of a number of similar aspirants was chosen. It is therefore important to study the actual process of selection, although the material available for 1936-7 relates mainly to the formal structure. It has already been pointed out that it was only within Congress that selection of candidates was a significant process; ✓ therefore only Congress will be considered.

The criteria for selection There were no substantial precedents in 1936 so that Congress leaders had a free hand in laying down procedures, within the general constraints of the political situation.¹ They had first to ensure that the candidate chosen had a good chance of winning. Apart from the core of committed Congress workers, the electorate was not so well disciplined that it would have voted for a bullock, let alone an untouchable.² Although caste considerations played a part, it was not simply a matter of arithmetic calculation. Apart from the factor of differential turnout, a candidate's personal qualities and sacrifices, his inherited prestige, or his acquired authority all played a part in determining his chances of success. Secondly, it was desirable that the candidates should be men who would maintain the reputation of Congress as an organization

¹The Swaraj Party and the CPB had carried out the process of candidate selection, but within a different framework.

²See above, p. 89. See also AICC Ell/1937, letter from a voter to Nehru, 11/2/37, and note by Nehru.

devoted to the cause of national freedom. Apart from the moral aspect, it was obviously in Congress's long-term interests to uphold its internal standards. Thirdly, a candidate's selection should not so offend other Congressmen, either on personal or ideological grounds, as to endanger the party's unity and effectiveness, both during the campaign and in the future. Finally, any arrangements with other parties or groups had to be honoured. These aims were by no means always compatible. The possible conflict between the second and the others is obvious. The third was liable to conflict with the first, in that in some instances factional conflicts were so strong that people might prefer the selection of a particular candidate at the expense of electoral success. Such attitudes might stem from particularistic or ideological motives, and were even to be found among national leaders, although more commonly at the provincial level. Preference for a particular candidate at the expense of electoral success might also occur where Congress had been 'colonized' by a minority group.

The only formal conditions for applying for selection as a Congress candidate were the signing of the Congress pledge and a contribution of Rs 50 to the election funds. The pledge stated:

- a) I am a member of the Indian National Congress
at ...
- b) I offer myself for election for the Assembly
(Council) for the constituency of ...

- c) If I am not accepted as a Congress candidate
I hereby undertake not to stand independently
or on any other party ticket against a candi-
date put forward by the Congress.
- d) On my being accepted as a Congress candidate
for the said or any other constituency, I
hereby undertake to conduct the election cam-
paign in accordance with the instructions
issued by the Congress Committee.
- e) I further declare that I will follow the
principles and policy laid down by the Congress
or by any competent authority on its behalf
and will conform to the rules and directions
duly issued from time to time, as well as to
the instructions issued by the party organi-
sation in the Assembly (Council) for the guid-
ance of the members thereof.
- f) I also undertake to resign my seat whenever I
am called upon to do so by a competent Congress
authority.¹

Clause e) was not likely to weed out any intending candidates, except on the major issue of communal policy. The commitments an applicant had to make all concerned his future behaviour.

It should also be noted that no length of membership was specified. The CPC had decided at the outset that as

¹IAR 1936 II, p.182.

many seats as possible should be contested and had resolved that, 'so far as practicable, the Congress should set up candidates not only for the General Constituencies, but also for scheduled caste, Mahomedan, Sikh, and other special constituencies'.¹ As Congress had few supporters in certain of these categories, the CPC also had to provide that non-Congressmen could be selected as candidates, if its specific approval was obtained.² This provision was in practice irrelevant, because the length of time over which the selection process took place gave intending candidates time to enrol themselves as primary members.

In addition to the pre-selection contribution of Rs 50, candidates were also expected to be able to pay their own election expenses. Exceptions for poorer applicants were possible, and Scheduled Caste candidates were particularly mentioned as needing support from general election funds.³ Nevertheless, when a prospective candidate wrote to Nehru complaining that he was unable to find the Rs 50 contribution, he was firmly told that he should ask his friends for it.⁴ Another disappointed Congressman wrote to Nehru to complain that he was refused a ticket specifically because he was not a wealthy man.⁵

The circular from the national leadership warning against the achievement of a 'fictitious majority' by the selection of unsuitable candidates has already been mentioned.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p.181.

³AICC E1(a)/1936, CPC circular no. 6, 8/10/36.

⁴AICC E14/1936, letter to Nehru, 7/9/36, and note by Nehru.

⁵AICC G5(kw)(ii)/1936, T.S.Thiagaraja Pillai to Nehru, n.d.

Because of the range of provincial situations and the discretion that had inevitably to be allowed to the lower levels of leadership, it was impossible for more specific criteria to be laid down at the all-India level. Where conflict arose between the different aims of the selection process, no rigid rules were laid down for its resolution. Where the norms of the national and provincial leaders were at variance those of the latter prevailed, unless the national leaders took specific action.

The selection procedure The CPC had to approve all nominations and could if necessary substitute other names. At its first meeting Patel, as president, was given authority to approve nominations.¹ In practice, the other leading members of the CPC were given similar powers for particular provinces.² The CPC was not, however, an initiating body, the Congress province was the level at which the primary decisions were taken. As has been seen, in some cases a counterpart parliamentary committee or board was set up, while in others the PCC or its executive committee undertook the work of selection. Procedure varied, depending on the size of the province and whether divisions existed within the PCC. In some cases the PCC invited applications directly to itself, while in others it relied on recommendations from the DCCs, either endorsing their decisions or choosing from

¹AICC El(a)/1936, minutes of meeting, 1-2/7/36.

²For example, Pant in Bengal: ibid., minutes of meeting, 24-5/10/36.

a short list.¹ Although the procedure adopted was the responsibility of the PCC, Nehru at least considered that it was desirable that the DCCs should have a say.² At each level, therefore, the selection procedure was flexible, often reflecting the balance of power within the party.³

The selection of candidates in Bengal The points made above are well illustrated by a case study of Bengal but, as always with Bengal, it must be said that the degree of internal dissension within the Congress there was such that the actual pattern that evolved is not directly comparable to those in other parts of India.

The political situation in Bengal has been outlined in chapter 2. Congress had no hope of gaining an absolute majority because the general seats formed a minority of the total. The party itself was highly factionalized both on ideological and on personal grounds. At the provincial level

¹For the procedure in Tamil Nad, see FR Madras, October 1936 II; for Bombay, Times of India, 19/8/36; for C.P., AICC G5(kw)(ii)/1936, D.P. Mishra to Nehru, 23/8/36.

²AICC EI/1936, Nehru to Patel, 12/10/36: 'Such selection should not be left to the Provincial Board entirely but should come originally from the districts. I think this is a good practice everywhere and specially so in Bengal.'

³The selection process in 1936-7 can usefully be compared with the account of the process in 1957, 1962 and 1967 by Ramashray Roy, 'Selection of Congress Candidates', Economic and Political Weekly vols. i and ii, 31/12/66, pp. 833-40, 7/1/67, pp. 17-24, and 14/1/67, pp. 61-76.

there was a division between the Sarat Chandra Bose and B.C. Roy factions. The former included a number who may be identified as Congress Nationalist. Factions paralleling the provincial divisions existed within most districts. In this situation, the main efforts of district and provincial leaders went to maintaining or improving the position of their own factions. The national leadership could not remain entirely neutral on the issue of communal policy, but otherwise it had to respond by making preservation of Congress unity its first aim. In the Bengal situation, where Congress was not completely dominant within the Hindu community, an open split was a major possibility. Although there were those within the Bengal Congress who might have welcomed such a split, the leaders of the two factions were prepared to make concessions in the cause of party unity.

At the end of 1935 the Bose faction had largely succeeded in eliminating the Roy group from the PCC, but had not destroyed its local power bases. Members of the Roy group were, for instance, elected to the Calcutta corporation as independents against official Congress candidates in March 1936.¹ As the initial preparations for the campaign began, and after the attempts in June at a rapprochement between Congress and the CNP over communal policy, the two groups made efforts to reach a new understanding. On 16 August, 1936

¹Statesman, 20 & 28/3/36.

the Roy group accepted a compromise whereby Sarat Bose formed a new Bengal PCC executive committee with representatives from both groups. Under this agreement candidate selection was to be left to a parliamentary committee of which Roy was to be chairman, and which was otherwise to be composed equally of the two sides. The price of this accord was a resolution of the Bengal PCC condemning the Communal Award.¹ On 2 September after the publication of the Congress manifesto, a further resolution was passed claiming, against the plain and simple meaning of the manifesto, that substantive Congress policy had altered and that open agitation against the Communal Award was not legitimate.² It was an attempt to get Congress as a whole to pay the price of Bengal unity, but the price was too high. Prasad wrote to Roy to say that Bengal's candidates for the election could not be chosen until the PCC's misinterpretation of the manifesto had been dealt with.³ After considerable effort, including a visit by Nehru to Calcutta, a compromise resolution was evolved which preserved the ideological unity of the Bengal PCC.⁴

Nevertheless, the personal differences remained and became more significant as the time for the selection of candidates approached. The procedure was that nominations were made by the districts and were then forwarded to the

¹D. Chakravarti and C. Bhattacharyya, Congress Policy on Communal Award. Bengal Forces a Change (1939), pp.33-4.

²Ibid., p.36.

³AICC E1/1936, Prasad to Roy, 8/10/36.

⁴Times of India, 9/11/36, and AICC G24(i)/1936, draft of resolution in Nehru's hand.

parliamentary committee which adjudicated in disputed cases.¹ Presumably because Roy was chairman, the decisions of the committee appeared to favour his group. As a result, eighteen members of the committee, headed by Prafulla Chandra Ghose and Indranarayan Sen-Gupta, resigned and Bose himself threatened resignation.² The disputed nominations were referred to the joint decision of Roy and Bose, with Pant as final arbiter. Not surprisingly, Pant's arbitration was needed, and of the nine cases referred to him four were altered so that the nominations at issue were almost equally divided between the two camps.³ Throughout the 1930s the national leadership repeatedly intervened in Bengal to restore the unity of its PCC, and this policy was followed during the election campaign, both because of the intrinsic value of unity and in order to win seats. Even so there were losses. On the one side, Roy was so disgruntled that he withdrew from any active part in the campaign. On the other, certain members of the Bose faction, whose commitment to communal politics was stronger than their Congress allegiance and whose applications for nominations had been rejected, defected and stood as unofficial Congress Nationalist candidates. A couple of members of the Roy faction who had been denied tickets also stood as independents.⁴ But unity at the top had been maintained so

¹ AICC E5/1936, Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty (?) to Nehru, 3/12/36.

² Times of India, 3/12/36.

³ AICC E5/1936, Roy to Pant, 17/12/36.

⁴ Ibid., loc.cit., and telegram Bose to Nehru, 5/1/37.

that only one or two of the rebels were successful. Although Bose at first prevaricated, Nehru finally forced him, as president of the PCC, to take disciplinary action against the rebels, even where they were his supporters.¹

In Bengal candidates had also to be chosen after the main elections for the seats in the Legislative Council which were to be filled by election from the Legislative Assembly. Their selection does not appear to have been an issue between the factions, perhaps because of Roy's withdrawal from an active role in the campaign. Complaints were, however, made from several quarters that of the ten Congress candidates, six or seven had not previously been Congressmen and some had openly opposed Congress in municipal elections. Several were also objected to as communalists or wealthy businessmen. In his defence of the selections, Bose claimed that the people concerned had 'rendered extremely valuable help during the elections'.² Although the selections were criticized, there was no attempt to overthrow them as they were not threatening Congress unity.

The Bengal case is well documented in the central Congress records, but it mainly illustrates the selection process as it affected Congress unity. The upper castes in Bengal were relatively homogeneous and were not seriously challenged

¹ Ibid., telegram Nehru. to Bose, 6/1/37, and telegram Bose to Nehru, 15/1/37.

² AICC E5/1936, telegram. Bose to Nehru, 23/2/37.

from below, so that the question of the representativeness of candidates was subordinate to factional disputes. Elsewhere it was of much greater importance, and Congress successes demonstrate that most candidates were acceptable to the electorate. No very definite indication can be given of how this was achieved. To argue back from post-independence experience is unreliable, owing to the emergence of previously unpoliticized groups as self-conscious units. There is virtually no information concerning the caste of the successful candidates. All that can be attempted is to suggest what happened in a few, perhaps typical, cases.

Particular units of Congress in 1936-7 can be placed on a continuum showing their representativeness of the politically important groups in the population. At one extreme, Congress was controlled by the dominant castes of an area, as in Gujarat. Candidates chosen according to achievement norms would at the same time usually satisfy the 'representativeness' criterion. At the other extreme, Congress had little or no support, not necessarily among the population as a whole, but among a community that had a separate electorate. Despite official policy, most such seats were left uncontested. This applied to almost all the Muslim seats outside N.W.F.P. In the intermediate situation, where Congress was controlled in 1936 by a minority group, some diffusion of power within Congress usually took place, either as the result of a voluntary act by the existing leadership or through a takeover by the previously excluded groups. In many areas, the selection of candidates marked a significant shift towards

representativeness. It was not of course a clear-cut process. On the one hand, it is unlikely that the dominant group in the electorate had had no contact with Congress before 1936, and on the other, that the minority group lost all influence at that point. The diffusion of power could take place in two ways. A unit of Congress could allow those of the dominant group in the electorate who were already its members to take leadership roles within Congress or it could make room for outsiders who already had leadership roles in the dominant group and adopt them as candidates.

Madras provides an example of the former. In the early 1920s the Justice Party was the main vehicle for non-Brahman political expression, but the declining competence and blinkered vision of its leaders led many to transfer allegiance to Congress. After an initial success in 1929, when C.N.Muthuranga Mudaliar was elected PCC president to succeed Srinivasa Iyengar, non-Brahmans participated in the civil disobedience movement.¹ Thus when the time came for the selection of candidates, there were many non-Brahmans available within Congress. The list of successful Congress candidates contains a number of Reddis and Naidus and others whose names are recognizably non-Brahman. B.R.Ambedkar claimed, without giving his source, that of the 159 Congress MLAs in Madras, 38 were Brahman, 90 non-Brahman of clean caste, 26 untouchable, and 5 of unknown caste.² Also significant was the replacement

¹E.F.Irschick, Politics and Social Conflict in India (1969), pp. 328-9.

²What Congress and Gandhi have Done to the Untouchables (2nd ed. Bombay 1946), p.216. Ambedkar may have used a legislative directory. The Bombay directory gives a certain number of caste affiliations.

of S. Satyamurti as prospective leader of the Congress parliamentary party by Rajagopalachari. Both were Brahmans, but Rajagopalachari was more acceptable to non-Brahman Congressmen.¹ Non-Brahman hostility to Congress persisted, but the Self-Respect movement which took up the struggle drew its support more from the lower economic strata of non-Brahman castes, which had not taken part in Justice Party activities. After 1937 the movement also attracted non-Brahmans who had been Congressmen.² But in 1937 Congress was able to win a landslide victory by using its own non-Brahman membership to capture the Justice Party's ground.

The non-Brahman movement in Marathi- and Kannada-speaking areas also lost heavily to Congress in this period, but the process whereby Congress was non-Brahmanized appears to have begun rather later than in Madras. In Belgaum district, for instance, A.B. Latthe, a prominent state administrator who had been active in non-Brahman associations, did not join Congress until 1936 but was immediately chosen as a candidate. In the same year the Belgaum DCC acquired its first non-Brahman president.³ Latthe's nomination had in fact more than district significance. His prominence as a non-Brahman leader and as an administrator were recognized by his being made finance minister in the Congress government. In other areas the non-Brahman community was divided. There were splits between the radicals and conservatives and between

¹FR Madras, January 1937 I.

²For the Self-Respect movement, see Irschick, op.cit., pp. 330-50.

³Myron Weiner, Party Building in a New Nation (1967), pp. 231-5.

Marathas and others. Congress was able to play its own version of divide and rule and induced non-Brahmans who had already decided to stand to accept Congress tickets.¹ Bombay thus illustrates the second way in which Congress could absorb new elements through the process of candidate selection. But both in Madras and Bombay it is important to note that this was a controlled and partial process; the existing provincial leaderships did not relinquish power, nor was the disproportionate share of political power held by the Brahman community totally reduced.

Discipline

The fact that Congress as such was contesting the elections meant, first, that some who might otherwise have stood as independents wanted to stand as Congress candidates, and secondly that it was directly against Congress's interests to allow any of its members to stand for election except as official candidates, or to work for non-Congress candidates. The surplus of applicants over available tickets produced strains, which in some cases led to direct defiance of Congress. It was therefore necessary to evolve suitable disciplinary procedures. Even during the 1920s occasions arose when individuals came into conflict with Congress policy. Of particular relevance was the call for the resignation of all Congress MLCs and MLAs made at the Lahore Congress of 1929.²

¹PR Bombay, 12/12/36.

²Pattabhi Sitaramayya, History of the Indian National Congress, vol. i (1946), p.357.

A few refused to do so and left the party. The 1934 constitution gave the party leaders adequate powers, and procedural rules were laid down.¹ Nevertheless, in December 1936 the Working Committee found it necessary to strengthen the rules. As Nehru explained, they were not meant to penalize opinion but to deal with direct and deliberate action against Congress. They laid down that any member (or any Congress committee) could be suspended for the general offence of lowering Congress power or prestige. Action could be taken by the president, the Working Committee, or a PCC. The person concerned was to be given 'full opportunity for explanation', and all action taken was to be reported to the AICC office. It was said that the new rules were a direct response to the situation produced by the elections.² The most prominent individual to fall foul of the rules was M.M.Malaviya, who had supported anti-Congress candidates in the Punjab while at the same time supporting Congress candidates in U.P. Nehru asked advice from the other members of the Working Committee, most of whom were not in favour of taking formal action. In the end the matter was allowed to drop.³ This was partly a tactical move in that Malaviya enjoyed widespread support within Congress, but it was also the result of a genuine desire not to be vindictive. Apart from this one instance, disciplinary

¹ M.V.Ramana Rao, Development of the Congress Constitution (1958), pp.60-1; INC II, pp. 39-41; CWC proceedings, 16-18/1/35.

² AICC P1/1936, AICC circular 32, 19/12/36. The rules were approved by the Working Committee on 11 December: INC III, pp. 34-6, CWC proceedings, 9-11/12/36.

³ AICC E17 and E24/1937, passim. The only person to request action was Azad.

action was taken at the provincial level, and was applied quite extensively in some areas. The aftermath of the Bengal dispute over candidate selection was the suspension of the rebels, and the Mahakoshal PCC took action against at least 24 individuals.¹ The most serious offence was for an unsuccessful applicant to stand against a Congress candidate, but action could also be taken against those who supported non-Congress candidates. The new disciplinary powers could be used as a weapon in factional battles. The Sylhet DCC for instance set up, apparently on its own initiative, a disciplinary subcommittee which recommended action against a number of people. Its report was not accepted by the Bengal PCC, and the DCC complained that this was because the accused were 'agents' of those in power in the PCC.² The opposite situation, where no action was taken against offenders, could also occur. In Sind, Jairamdas Doulatram, himself a member of the Working Committee, undoubtedly helped members of his community in their election campaigns and suffered no penalty.³ After receiving reports of the vindictive action taken in some places, Nehru had to circulate further instructions that disciplinary action had to be confirmed by the whole PCC, not just by the office-holders, and that all cases were to be reviewed by the Working Committee.⁴

¹ Mahakoshal Congress Committee Papers, File AICC 11, letters to AICC office, 17/1/37, 4/2/37, 18/2/37, 23/3/37. There are some inconsistencies in the lists. 24 is the minimum figure.

² AICC E5/1936, report by disciplinary subcommittee of Sylhet DCC, n.d. (? April 1937).

³ AICC E18/1936, 'some Sind Congressmen' to AICC president (Nehru), 8/2/37; Hiranand Advani to Nehru, 23/1/37. Doulatram belonged to the Amil community, as did the president of the PCC, Choithram Gidwani.

⁴ AICC P1/1937, AICC circular 10 of 1937, 7/2/37.

Participation in the elections thus forced Congress to define itself more closely. Before 1936 no action had been taken against those who did not observe the rules concerning khaddar and spinning, but anti-Congress activity in the competitive arena of elections was a different matter. A defence put forward by those accused of anti-Congress activity was that primary membership of Congress did not involve an obligation to follow specific political strategies.¹ However justifiable in terms of Congress's past history as a movement, this was hardly an appropriate philosophy in 1936. Even so, Nehru and the Working Committee attempted to minimize the disruptive effect on Congress unity of taking disciplinary action. Discipline was to be a continuing problem. Offenders during the campaign were mostly minor figures; later K.F.Nariman and N.B.Khare both fell foul of the Working Committee as a result of the formation or operation of the Congress ministries.

Finance

Finance is an area where accessible information is very limited, although this in itself is highly significant. The basic questions are how much the campaign cost, and where the money came from. The possibility of imposing a limit

¹See the statement by L.B.Bhopatkar in Leader, 22/1/37. This applied only to those who had not applied for Congress tickets and had therefore not had to sign the pledge demanded of prospective Congress candidates. The fact that the CPC felt it necessary to draw up such a pledge is in itself significant of the equivocal status of Congress.

on election expenses had been raised during the formulation of the 1935 Act.¹ For the 1937 election only U.P. and Madras imposed a limit, although all provinces insisted on a return of expenses. In U.P. the limit was Rs 20,000 in rural constituencies and Rs 15,000 in urban ones. In Madras the limit was Rs 1,000 where there were less than 8,000 electors, and 2 annas per elector in other cases, i.e. Rs 1,000 per 8,000 voters.² By contrast, the limits in 1952 varied from Rs 4,000 to Rs 8,000 in single-member constituencies.³

These divergent figures can hardly be taken as guides to actual expenditure. Returns of election expenses were not forwarded to the Reforms Office in New Delhi, but even if they had been, they would probably not have included several major items of expenditure. For example, the practice of 'treating' voters to refreshments was legalized by the 1935 Act and such expenditure was supposed to be declared, but it is highly likely that much of it went unrecorded. Donations to local causes and payments to canvassers may also have been understated.

The only provincial figures available in the AICC files concern Berar and Kerala. In the former, the total constituency expenditures given range from Rs 1,700 to Rs 10,000 with a mean of Rs 4,787.⁴ It may well be that these figures

¹See above, pp. 78-9.

²RD 6434 Part III, governors' rules.

³Report on the First General Elections in India, 1951-2 (1955), vol. 1, p.174.

⁴AICC E23(i)/1937, report from Vidharbha PCC secretary, 12/4/37.

relate only to the Congress candidates' official returns. The Kerala report simply states that the cost of the campaign for the twelve successful candidates was Rs 20,000, an average of Rs 1,667 per candidate.¹ This figure may only refer to the amount spent by the PCC and not to the candidates' own expenditure, although low expenditure figures might be expected in Kerala, in view of the small size of constituency there.

Reports also exist for some individual constituencies. In Coconada Rural, in the Telugu-speaking area of Madras, it was said that the election campaign itself cost approximately Rs 8,000 and that a further Rs 3,000 were spent on propaganda by the DCC. It was claimed that the other candidate, the immensely rich Maharaja of Pithapuram, had spent the vast sum of Rs 250,000.² In the election in Coconada town it was said that Congress expenses were less than Rs 1,000, while the opposition spent Rs 20,000.³ Summary figures for a few individual constituencies in C.P. range from Rs 1,250 to Rs 20,000.⁴ The Jhansi by-election, which took place in July 1937, was critical in

¹Ibid., report from Kerala PCC.

²AICC E23/1937, report on Coconada Rural constituency.

³Ibid., report on Coconada Urban constituency.

⁴AICC E23(i)/1937, report on C.P. elections.

Congress's relations with Muslims and it therefore received a great deal of support from the major Congress leaders in U.P. Keshav Dev Malaviya, who was in charge of the organization, estimated that a total of Rs 4,600 would be required.¹ This perhaps represents a true total of what was spent within the constituency, but there were in addition the travelling expenses of outside helpers and the personal expenses of the candidate.² It was said by several Congress workers that the Raja of Mahmudabad had agreed to finance the League campaign to the extent of Rs 15,000.³

It would seem therefore that a Congress candidate in an average-sized rural constituency might have to spend between Rs 5,000 and Rs 10,000. There were, however, wide variations in the geographical size and population of constituencies, which were aggravated by separate electorates. In addition, the district and province had to spend substantial sums on the printing of propaganda material and on election tours. Not even the most approximate figures can be suggested for non-Congress candidates. The expenses of a local notable would largely have depended on whether his support came from his control of a large tenantry or relied more on large-scale patronage. According to a Central Intelligence Bureau report, 'in many cases the amount of money

¹AICC G61/1937, Malaviya to Nehru, 7/7/37.

²Ibid., Nehru to Nisar Ahmad Sherwani, 5/7/37.

³Ibid., Sherwani to Nehru, 2/7/37; K.M.Ashraf to Nehru, 7/7/37.

spent by Congress in fighting the elections was small as compared with the vast sums expended by its opponents'.¹

The source of electoral finance is as difficult to determine as its extent. One must assume that the majority of non-Congress candidates financed themselves or received money informally from relatives or friends. Where a powerful landlord's influence extended over several constituencies, he might meet the expenses of candidates who formed part of his clientage.² The Muslim League's candidates were unable to look for help to the Parliamentary Board, but on the other hand wealthy supporters in the various provinces may have made money available, as the Raja of Mahmudabad did in Jhansi.

The conventional account of the sources of Congress finance in general, and therefore of its election funds, is that substantial and sufficient support was received from the Indian business community which found itself hampered by British rule. This support came above all from Gujarat, Bombay city, and the Marwari community, and was mediated through Patel and Gandhi. As such contributions were given informally, it is impossible to determine their extent. It has, however, been shown that constituency expenditure was often quite small, and there is also evidence that some PCCs

¹Political (PJ) Collections 117-C-42, 2750/37, 'Note on Congress Policy up to 1st May 1937'.

²The Maharaja of Pithapuram, for instance, met the expenses of Peoples Party candidates: FR Madras, November 1936 I.

ran into financial difficulties.¹ To gain a true picture, one must examine Congress finance at each level.

The day-to-day running of Congress was the responsibility of the AICC office in Allahabad, which was financed by fixed dues from the PCCs (often in arrears), a small percentage of purses given to the president, and the income from the Tilak Memorial Fund. The AICC was in no position to make extensive finance available.² A loan of Rs 5,000 was made to the U.P. Congress Parliamentary Board, but this may be considered a special case in view of the location of the AICC office and the interlocking of personnel.³ Nor were the PCCs in any position to finance the provincial campaigns out of their regular income. The money therefore had to come from ad hoc sources. The Rs 50 contribution from all applicants for tickets was partly intended to deter frivolous applicants, but it was not returnable. Financially more significant was the ruling that candidates should meet their own election expenses wherever possible. In view of the effect of this ruling on the type of candidate chosen, it could hardly have been adopted as official Congress policy unless there had been strong practical reasons for

¹ AICC G61/1937, secretary, U.P. PCC to Sherwani, 3/6/37; FR Bombay, January 1937 I; Mahakoshal Congress Committee Papers, File DCC Jubbulpore, Avadesh Pratap Singh to Patel: n.d. (mid-January 1937), 'Provincial parliamentary board is bankrupt'.

² Prasad wrote at the end of 1935 that the AICC had no reserves and that 'we are just managing to make the two ends meet': AICC Misc. 4/1935, Prasad to Satyapal, 22/11/35.

³ AICC F18/1935, loan made to Kidwai, president of U.P. Congress Parliamentary Board, 16/11/36.

it.¹ A particularly striking example of the need for candidates to provide the bulk of the finance is provided by a report in Sind that a candidate was nominated on condition that he paid a prominent Congressman's election expenses in addition to his own.² The PCCs would also have raised some funds locally to pay for their own expenses and perhaps to assist the candidates. In addition to its loan of Rs 5,000 from the AICC, the U.P. board also borrowed Rs 3,910 from the Shri Gandhi Ashram at Meerut.³ The 'extremely valuable help' received by the Bengali Congress from its Council nominees may well have been financial.⁴ The Bombay city PCC was able to appeal to its many wealthy supporters for help, and reportedly collected Rs 98,000.⁵ The Bihar PCC received Rs 10,000 from Dalmia, a rich Marwari industrialist, and Rs 7,000 from a local supporter (possibly Dalmia).⁶ A major source of PCC election funds was the money collected during the tours of national leaders, especially Nehru. The

¹ 'It would appear that the nominations ... were influenced to no small extent by the capacity of candidates to finance the campaign.' FR Bombay, November 1936 I.

² AICC E18/1936, Advani to Nehru, 23/1/37. Advani cannot be considered a reliable observer, but he claimed to be quoting from the local press.

³ AICC F19(ii)/1937. The loan is mentioned on a receipt dated 2/1/39.

⁴ See above, p. 258.

⁵ Between 1937 and 1940 the PCC kept from 75% to 90% of such money, the remainder going to the AICC: AICC F19 (ii)/1937.

⁶ FR Bihar, December 1936 I, and February 1937 I.

bulk of such money remained within the province. Similarly, most of the money raised during the national appeal for funds made during the fortnight beginning 16 November was received by the provincial or lower level Congress committees, although the totals collected are not known.

Despite everything, however, many provinces would have needed help from central election funds, which were under the control of the CPC rather than the AICC. Patel acted both as receiver and dispenser of such funds. On one side of him were the wealthy merchants and millowners of western India; on the other the eternally hard up FCCs. Certainly considerable sums were given to the provinces by the CPC. Bihar received at least Rs 25,000; Orissa Rs 8,000; N.W.F.P. Rs 22,000.¹ Of these block grants, some money was used for provincial purposes while some was passed to the districts and candidates.² The CPC also sent earmarked grants to help specific Scheduled Caste and Muslim candidates.³ Yet circumstantial evidence would seem to indicate that there was still a shortage of money in some areas, despite Patel's disbursement of commercial and industrial wealth.⁴ It may be

¹(a) Bihar: loci cit.
 (b) Orissa: FR Orissa, February 1937 II.
 (c) N.W.F.P.: FR N.W.F.P., January 1937 I.
 The information available to the government was not necessarily accurate or inclusive.

²FR Bihar, February 1937 I.

³Mahakoshal Congress Committee Papers, file DCC Jubbulpore, Avadesh Pratap Singh to Patel, n.d.

⁴The CPC published no accounts. All records relating to the CPC in Congress House, Bombay, were removed by the authorities in 1942 and not returned: information obtained from S.K. Patil.

suggested that part of the discontinuity lay in the rudimentary and uninstitutionalized channels of distribution. There was no way of getting candidates to account directly to the CPC. Once the money was given to the PCCs the CPC was unable to control its distribution.¹ Money could therefore only be given to PCCs of whose loyalty and probity Patel was confident. The problem was to a certain extent solved by giving control of financial aid to the president of the PCC. Thus in N.W.F.P., money was given to Dr Khan Sahib and in Orissa to Nilkanth Das.²

The consequences of this inadequate method of distribution were several. PCCs whose leaders were not on good terms with Patel, such as Nagpur, did not have ready access to national funds. There was also considerable scope for the prejudices of the donor to operate. This period was the highpoint in Nehru's avowal of socialism, and it would not be surprising if money was given on the understanding that it was not to go to socialist-dominated PCCs such as the U.P. PCC. It may also have been the case that donors wished their money to go to those parts of the country with which they had ties. This and Patel's preference for giving money through informal channels may explain why little money was spent on 'speculative' seats. Such seats were above all

¹This did not mean that earmarked grants could not be made, only that the CPC had to rely on the good faith of the PCC.

²FR N.W.F.P., January 1937 I; FR Orissa, February 1937 II.

Muslim but also included general seats in difficult areas like the Punjab.

The intelligence report quoted earlier concluded that, 'where it was necessary for money to be spent, Congress was able to obtain it without difficulty'.¹ This was true in many, perhaps in most, cases but one should add that it was not the result of any overall financial strategy. If a candidate was poor, if the area was not within the ambit of Patel's interest and if the PCC did not have access to independent funds, then electoral finance could be difficult.

Policy formulation and propaganda

As well as selecting and supporting its candidates, Congress had also to produce evidence to the electorate of why its candidates should be returned. In the other parties this function was almost entirely carried out by the candidate himself, and this applied to Congress to a large extent. There was limited scope for denunciation of opponents' legislative records, as many were standing for the first time, but ad hominem attacks could easily be made. Conversely, advocacy of the candidate's personal qualities was a prominent feature in all campaigns. In most cases this was the sum of meaningful propaganda. Those parties which existed to preserve the social order naturally assumed that their leaders should be allowed to decide detailed matters of policy. Separate electorates meant that communal policy, as distinct

¹ p.269.

from the communal credentials of the candidate, would not be a major issue. Where policy statements were issued, they were couched in the broadest of term and promised something to everyone. The Congress manifesto was also somewhat vague, but is important in that it was a touchstone for other parties' policies. Some parties simply plagiarized (and to a certain extent bowdlerized) it, while others defined their ideological stance in terms of their disagreement with it. There were also certain issues on which the manifesto took a specific position in accordance with previously determined Congress policy.

The first steps to prepare the Congress manifesto were taken at the initial meeting of the CPC when a subcommittee of Patel, Prasad, Pant, Rajagopalachari, and Bhulabhai Desai was appointed to prepare a draft.¹ The next official reference to the manifesto comes in the proceedings of the Working Committee, CPC, and AICC meetings at Bombay from 18th to 23. August. The manifesto was considered and adopted by the CPC and Working Committee, and then formally adopted, with some verbal changes, by the AICC. This bald account, however, conceals the fact that the original draft drawn up by the CPC subcommittee was abandoned in favour of a draft prepared by Nehru, apparently acting alone.² This could

¹AICC El(a)/1936, minutes of meeting, 1-2/7/36.

²The exact sequence of events at Bombay cannot be determined, as the draft manifesto in Nehru's own hand is not dated. A letter attached to the copy of the CPC subcommittee draft that was forwarded to the Working Committee is dated 20/8/36. Possibly Nehru wrote his draft after reading this copy. Both drafts are contained in AICC G71/1936. The final Congress manifesto is contained in INC III, pp. 2-8.

have been for two reasons: first that the original draft was not considered sufficiently radical; secondly, that it was not considered good enough from the point of view of style and clarity. The first possibility is given credence by the fact that three of the five members of the CPC sub-committee were among those who had threatened resignation from the Working Committee on 29 June 1936 in protest at Nehru's preaching of socialism. It would, however, have to be explained how Nehru was able to push his own draft through a hostile Working Committee. He would hardly have had Gandhi's support on such an issue. The weight to be attached to the second suggested reason must remain speculative, but it fits in better with the actual contents of the two drafts.

On questions of land reform and general economic policy, the CPC draft sets out the Karachi Congress resolution on economic policy in full, while the Nehru draft simply cites it. Both refer to the Lucknow Congress agrarian policy resolution, but the Nehru draft goes a little further in hinting at radical measures to come:

'[Congress] stands for a reform of the system of land tenure and revenue and rent, and an equitable adjustment of the burden on agricultural land ... the declaration of a moratorium, an enquiry into and scaling down of debts and the provision of cheap credit facilities by the State.'

Nevertheless, no firm commitment was made to any particular course of action except a debt moratorium. Nehru's draft

mentioned a wider range of issues than did the CPC's, for instance prison reform, women's rights, and the improvement of industrial conditions in accordance with international standards, 'as far as the economic conditions in the country permit'. On constitutional questions both drafts reiterated the well-known Congress position. The right of India to frame its own constitution through a constituent assembly was asserted. Despite his personal views, Nehru's draft endorsed the postponing of a decision on office-acceptance. How Congress communal policy evolved has been shown elsewhere, and neither draft diverged from the official position. It should be noted, however, that the language in which the Communal Award was condemned was less inhibited than previous Congress pronouncements.

Thus, although the Nehru draft stressed economic and social issues a little more than the CPC's, there is nothing to suggest that one presented more radical policies to the electorate than the other. To an outsider, however, Nehru's reads more convincingly: the work of a single intellectual rather than a committee of organizers, it has considerable style. One has only to compare the perorations. Nehru's runs:

'For the fight for independence a joint front is needed. The Congress offers that joint national front which comprises all classes and communities, bound together by their desire to free India, end the exploitation of her people and build up a strong and prosperous and united

nation, resting in the well-being of the masses.

With this great and inspiring goal before us, for which so many men and women of India have suffered and sacrificed their all under the banner of the Congress, and for which today thousands of our countrymen are suffering silently and with brave endurance, we call upon our people with full hope and confidence, to rally to the cause of the Congress, of India, of freedom.'

The CPC draft runs:

'The Congress therefore appeals to the people to put aside all other considerations and to rally under its banner. The Congress hopes that its services and past record justify its claims for the confidence of the people in its ability to meet every situation, as it may arise, with wisdom, courage and patriotism.'

Similar comparisons could be made at all points.

If the Nehru draft was preferred on stylistic grounds, it is easier to imagine why it was chosen rather than the CPC's. Nehru was recognized as a sort of official apologist for Congress, and the members of the CFC accepted this, provided always that his socialist views were kept to himself. One might also suggest that the organizers set no great store by manifestos as instruments for mobilizing the electorate. The manifesto, which was written initially in English, was meant to impress the intelligentsia, the government, and

foreign sympathizers, especially European and American radicals, rather than the ordinary electors. It was a piece of prestige advertising.

In addition to producing the manifesto, which simply restated existing policy in electoral terms, Congress also attempted to gain support by amplifying its ideas on agrarian reform. The terms of reference for the 'agrarian programme' served both as heads of discussion and as guiding principles, for example, 'a just allotment of state expenditure for social, economic and cultural amenities of villages'.¹ This resolution was partly the result of the growing pressure on Congress of socialist and kisan sabha leaders, but it was also a means of popularizing Congress among the mass of the population. The resolution itself was moved by Bhulabhai Desai, who would not normally have taken the initiative in such a matter. Each PCC was to have reported by 1 August, but only certain socialist-inclined PCCs, such as U.P. and Maharashtra, took any action at all. The question was reconsidered at the Faizpur session, and an agrarian programme resolution was passed.² This laid down thirteen points, pending the framing of definitive policy. These amplified the Lucknow principles, especially on the questions of indebtedness and fixity of tenure, and added provisions for co-operative farming, an agricultural income tax, and the protection of

¹INC II, pp. 79-80: Lucknow session proceedings, 12-14/4/36.

²INC III, pp. 96-7.

agricultural labourers. The Faizpur resolution was more specific and therefore more radical than its somewhat platitudinous predecessor. It reflected the stronger position of Nehru after his re-election as president. His first circular after the Faizpur Congress emphasized that the resolutions adopted there should be used as election propaganda:

'Although this [The agrarian programme] is a provisional programme, it has great importance and the vast body of our rural electors and others will appreciate it. It should therefore find prominent place in our election campaign, especially in rural areas',¹

One result of Nehru's election as president had been the re-appointment of the Congress Labour Committee which kept in touch with the All-India Trades Union Congress and National Trades Union Federation and endeavoured to support union activities. No general statement of Congress policy on labour questions was produced, however.²

At the provincial level, PCCs had a limited area in which they could contribute to the policy content of the campaign. They were empowered to produce supplementary manifestos dealing with local issues. The only ones mentioned in the central Congress records were produced by Sind

¹ AICC Pl/1937, AICC circular 1, 2/1/37.

² See above, p.143. Electors qualified under the labour franchise did of course form a separate electorate.

and Bengal.¹ Election pamphlets issued by PCCs or the candidates themselves presumably made policy statements on local issues. The PCCs were also able to produce detailed proposals for agrarian reform. The Maharashtra PCC produced a scheme calling specifically for the abolition of the khoti system of intermediary land tenure that existed in certain districts, and intended to base a supplementary manifesto on the issue. The Khots were, however, a well-organized group, and approached Patel and S.K. Patil, who was secretary of the Bombay Presidency Parliamentary Board. The latter wrote to the Khot Association assuring it that the majority of the board's members did not approve making the khoti system an election issue.² The Maharashtra PCC could still have issued its supplementary manifesto but in face of such opposition it adopted a more conciliatory policy.³ Another instance of

¹INC III, pp. 33-4: CWC proceedings, 9-11/12/36, and AICC C71/1936, Sind supplementary manifesto; AICC G24(i)/1936, Bengal supplementary manifesto.

²AICC G5(kw)(i)/1936, Achyut S. Patwardhan to Nehru, 22/10/36.

³AICC E23(i)/1937, 'The election Campaign in Maharashtra'. In addition to its direct relevance to the formulation of policy statements, this episode illustrates other points in this chapter:

(a) The Khot Association traded with Congress very much on equal terms, although the units were policies rather than nominations.

(b) Despite the concessions it made, Congress lost all the seats in Ratnagiri district, partly to the ILP and partly to candidates standing specifically in the khot interest. Patel was of course personally in favour of the preservation of the rights of small and medium landowners, but his perception of the situation was also faulty.

(c) Although the Maharashtra PCC in theory had control of the campaign within its area, it was at the same time under the informal control of Patel, in his role as regional leader.

a PCC attempt to formulate general policy occurred in Bengal. As mentioned above, the Bengal PCC interpreted the manifesto's attitude towards the Communal Award as an outright condemnation of all electoral arrangements based on communal divisions. Although it was eventually induced to compromise, it was allowed to retain on record a significantly different version of Congress communal policy. The compromise resolution stated that the Communal Award would be replaced by an agreed solution, but prejudged the issue by stating that the solution would be 'on the basis of a joint electorate and adult franchise, or any other agreed basis consistent with independence and the principles of democracy.'¹

It is clear from these examples that there was no ideological consistency within Congress, either between regions or between the different levels of authority, but controversial issues could be ignored or glossed over by generalizing national policy proposals. A range of local policy proposals was then possible. As a movement Congress did not need a detailed programme. As a party, it had no national rival with a clearly defined ideological position.

The Muslim League did not produce a statement of policy specifically for the campaign, but the CEB adopted a programme at its meeting in June 1936. This was a brief list of points, the first of which stated that the Board would 'protect the religious rights of the Musalmans'. On the political position of the community, the programme merely

¹ AICC G24(i)/1936, draft of resolution.

mentioned the protection of Urdu, the 'amelioration of the general conditions of Muslims', and the creation of a 'healthy public opinion and general political consciousness throughout the country'. The other points called, in the most general terms, for the reduction of taxation, the promotion of industry, the relief of agricultural indebtedness, and similar objects.¹ The programme merely reproduced what had been clichés of Indian politics even before the Karachi resolution.

Other parties also produced manifestos throughout 1936, but on the whole they were, like the CEB manifesto, statements of general policy rather than specific attempts to gain electoral support.² The DSP provides an interesting example in that it put out two manifestos, one in August 1935 and the second in October 1936.³ The first made only one reference to economic matters, and was primarily concerned to demonstrate how the party differed from Congress. The second, in addition to rejecting the Communal Award and pledging the party to office-acceptance, listed a number of measures for economic development, and concluded with a promise of co-operation with all nationalist forces. Differentiation was the keynote of the party in its early days, but during the election campaign it emphasized its similarity to and affinity with Congress.

¹Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, Pathway to Pakistan (1961), p.417.

²See, for example, Statesman, 3/8/36(Oudh NAP), Times of India, 27/8/36(Bombay Non-Brahman party), and FR U.P., October 1936 II (U.P. Hindu Sabha Election Board).

³LAR 1935 II, pp. 319-20, JP 600, text of 1936 manifesto (n.d.), and Times of India, 5/10/36.

Campaign Methods

The discussion so far has been concerned with the ways in which the parties adapted themselves to become election-fighting organizations, and with how they produced the necessary outputs of candidates and policies. The methods by which the parties sold their products to the electorate must now be considered. In some cases they had to make sure that the elector voted at all, as well as voting for a particular party. The range of methods available was limited by the way in which the various internal processes had been carried out. The analysis will deal with the techniques used by the parties at each of three levels - the all-India and provincial, the local organization, and the candidate.¹ As before, the main emphasis will of necessity be on Congress.

The all-India and provincial level In the 1936-7 campaign communication between the elector and the party leaders was restricted. Radio was not used.² Although the newspapers carried considerable amounts of election news, they were only directly available to a small minority in urban areas. The Indian-language press was mostly in the hands of Congress sympathizers, although where Congress faced a strong Hindu communal challenge as in the Punjab and Maharashtra, the leaders of the latter might well control influential papers. Only part of the English-language press fully supported Congress, but by 1936 there was much less direct

¹ A level is defined as a relationship between the elector and a political party or individual.

² Its use was ruled out by a government decision: HPO 52/10/36, note by Sir H. Craik, 25/7/36.

opposition from the Anglo-Indian newspapers. Congress was criticized rather than condemned.¹ Substantial information was now given about Congress activities, even if the editorial attitude was hostile.

To some extent, the public personae of political leaders are defined by their disputes with opponents rather than by their own qualities. In this sense there were limited opportunities for Congress leaders to impress themselves on the electorate. The British Government was impersonal and not directly affected by the election results. Within the Hindu community there were no major, overtly anti-Congress leaders. Jinnah and Nehru fired occasional press statements across the barrricades of the separate electorates, but no real debate developed, the echoes of which might have reached the ordinary elector. Their very remoteness, however, strengthened the symbolic strength of the national and, to some extent, provincial leaders. Accounts of them, however garbled or exaggerated, had reached the smallest village, and were retained within the oral culture. Gandhi had by far the most powerful symbolic appeal. The sources of it have been described before.² Official reports on the election frequently mention the extraordinary reverence that voters had for him or for anything that was associated with his name.³ Although he took no part in

¹ See, for example, the change in tone of the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore, which had earlier been outspoken in its support of Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

² Rudolph and Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition, part two, and Anthony Parel, 'Symbolism in Gandhian Politics', Canadian Journal of Political Science, vol. ii no. 4 (Dec. 1969), pp. 513-27.

³ HPO 111/37, 'Memorandum ... on the Results of the Elections....', RO 20/III/36-F, 'Report on the General Elections in Bihar,

the campaign, the three major social service organizations that he had founded were active in most areas of India. Through their links with these associations, candidates could claim a vicarious acquaintance with the Mahatma. Nehru, Patel, Prasad, and Rajagopalachari, in addition to sharing in Gandhi's reflected glory, were also remembered by many as leaders of the civil disobedience movement, and as leaders of specific movements against landlords or the government such as the Bardoli and Champaran satyagrahas. Nehru in particular was known as a young aristocrat who had given up a life of comfort to serve the nation. All the national leaders addressed a certain number of election meetings, especially in the period immediately before the polling days. As president, Nehru covered the whole country in a series of extensive tours. Using at times a chartered aeroplane, he was able to address hundreds of meetings. Attendances were usually numbered in tens of thousands and it was said that over 100,000 people attended some of them.¹ His intention was to bring the Congress message to the unenfranchised as much as to win votes, and in the earlier tours he made little mention of the elections, but nearer the time he was able to use the mass meetings to appeal for support at the polls.²

January 1937', and PR C.P., 10/2/37. See also AICC E23(i)/1936, report on C.P. elections: 'Mahatma Gandhi ... proved to be a magic and enchantment'.

¹G.S.Halappa (ed.), History of Freedom Movement in Karnataka vol. ii (1954), pp. 248-50, and B.S.Baliga, Studies in Madras Administration vol. i (1960), pp. 17-18.

²For summaries of Nehru's speeches, see HPO 4/7/36, 4/14/36, 4/15/36, 4/32/36, 4/34/36, and 4/36/36.

Certain provincial leaders also enjoyed an aura, not of charisma perhaps, but of aloofness from local politics, and were identified with the wider interests of India. Examples are Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Gangadharrao Deshpande, T. Prakasam, and Subhas Bose. It was not necessary for such leaders to take an active part in the election campaign or to be completely dominant within their own province; the blending of their image with that of Congress provided support for the candidates. It is significant that each of the men mentioned was associated with regional aspirations which, although supported by Congress, enjoyed separate support, and in the Karnataka and Andhra cases had separate institutional forms.

The mobilization of support through loyalty, respect, and affection for individual leaders was by no means confined to the rural areas or the illiterate sections of the electorate. While villagers attended them, the meetings of major leaders were mostly held in towns and cities. Regional nationalism was largely an urban phenomenon. When Bose was forced out of Congress in 1939, he took with him followers from all levels of the party.

The manifesto and other official policy statements were another possible means of communication between the national leadership and the electorate. The gist of the English version was published in the press. The CPC ordered the manifesto to be translated into all the provincial languages and to be widely distributed.¹ The resolution appears, however,

¹ AICC EI(a)/1936, minutes of meeting, 23/8/36.

to have remained a dead letter in some areas, for in December Nehru issued an AICC circular regretting that even some of the candidates themselves were not acquainted with the manifesto's contents.¹ Whether the manifesto was translated in full into every provincial language is uncertain, although in a shortened form it would probably have been the basis for many of the pamphlets that were issued at the local level, and would have been printed in the press.

The local party level The way that the elector related to the party at the local level depended on the position of the elector as well as on the characteristics of the party. If he lived in a village that had taken part in civil disobedience, he might well have had direct relationships with Congress members based on common experience. These could easily be cashed for votes. In many areas, locally influential men would have belonged to Congress, and the support that they enjoyed would have been exploited by the campaign organizers.

Equally, however, the elector might form part of a faction whose interests were linked to those of one or other of the parties. Village factions existed, but whether they were relevant in 1937 is doubtful. The conditions did not yet exist whereby party leaders could develop large-scale clientages of such factions. DCCs were themselves very often factionalized. A negative consequence of intra-party factionalism was that if a faction was dissatisfied with

¹ AICC Pl/1936, AICC circular 26, 2/12/36.

the nominations it might not take an active part in the work of the campaign or, in extreme cases, might form a rival party.¹ Advantages could accrue in cases where the factions within a DCC were based on particular castes, for electoral support could then be mobilized through traditional channels, perhaps by men not directly connected with Congress.

Another possible link between the local party and the electorate lay in the role of party officials as expeditors of local grievances and problems, but in 1936-7 this was of limited importance. Local power was still heavily centralized in the district collector's office, and access at this level was largely the prerogative of the larger landlords and supporters of the government. At the same time, however, Congress was usually the only organized group opposed to the bureaucracy and therefore often took up strictly local grievances as part of its general agitation. During the campaign it was at last in a position to promise to do something about them. This commitment of local units of Congress to dealing with local grievances lay behind the remarkable way in which some of them began to act after the elections as if they were local agents of the government.

Congress could also derive some advantage from its control of certain local boards. Although district boards were still confined to such functions as primary education and minor roads and were subject, especially over finance, to overriding government control, considerable patronage was

¹For example, in Lahore, FR Punjab, January 1937 I, and in Orissa, FR Orissa, January 1937 I.

available. The Calcutta Corporation is a well-known example of a local authority being used to further political ends. Another instance in 1936-7 was Jubbulpore, where the teachers employed by the district board were ordered to carry out election work for Congress.¹

Contact with the electorate was also established in certain areas by kisan organizations. These were particularly active in eastern India, and also in the northern part of Madras. Although Congress was not prepared to grant their specific demands, the leaders of the All-India Kisan Sabha were prepared to support Congress candidates. In Bengal, where there were organizations of Muslim peasants - krishak samitis - that were not allied to the national movement, the Praja Party was the beneficiary. These organizations were prepared to use economic issues as bases for the horizontal mobilization of the small and medium tenant-cultivators.² Where the CSP was active, it too was prepared to support Congress candidates.³

The candidate The distinction between the candidate and the local party is to some extent artificial and misleading. The candidate himself could have links with particular factions or caste groups, and the local party unit might equally be regarded as a collection of influential individuals. Nevertheless the distinction emphasizes the point that a great

¹This tactic could be tried by other parties. An instance relating to the NAP is mentioned in HPO 24/13/36, letter from U.P. Government, D.O. No. 967-CX. See also RO 20/III/1936-F, 'Report on the General Elections in Bihar, January 1937'.

²See above, p. 117.

³HPO 4/6/37, CSP circular no. 1 of 1937.

deal depended on the personal position of the candidate. At its most extreme, the situation could arise in which Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim could win the same seat (Bijnor) twice.

The candidate's relationship with his constituents was in many ways closer than it would be today. First, many constituencies were small in terms of their electorates, although their geographical size was large.¹ Secondly, almost all candidates were local men, at least to the extent of living in the district that contained their constituency.² Many had therefore held office in their local party unit, on local boards, or in other local organisations such as co-operative banks. Candidates very frequently had records of 'constructive work'. In addition to the established All-India Spinners' Association and the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the All-India Village Industries Association had been created in 1934. Although these associations were non-political, their office-holders were by definition Congressmen.³ They undertook much work that is now carried out by government-sponsored

¹For example, Bombay Assembly Muhammadan Rural constituencies ranged from 2,304 electors to 15,225, Bihar Assembly General single-member constituencies from 14,162 to an exceptional 57,619. The largest constituency in area covered 6,611 square miles in the first case, and 4,912.5 square miles in the second: Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1937, Cmd. 5589 (1937), pp. 34-5 and 83-6, and Report of the Indian Delimitation Committee, vol. ii, Cmd. 5100 (1936), pp. 30-1 and 137-144.

²See below, p. 324.

³The resolution which set up the All-India Spinners' Association stated that it was to be 'an integral part of the Congress organization, but with independent existence and powers', D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma vol. ii (1951), p.268.

bodies. A certain amount of patronage was available to candidates who were active in the various organizations, but it was the social service side of their work that was most visible to the electors.

Besides associational ties, candidates had ascriptive ties with their constituencies. The system of separate electorates meant that if a candidate was faced by an overtly communal opponent, he had no alternative sources of support, and had to compete in communal as well as political terms. Although a Hindu candidate would by definition be linked by caste to some electors and not to others, it has already been suggested that the correlation of the caste of a candidate and the largest caste in the area was not as marked in 1936-7 as in more recent elections. It may have been more significant in the case of Scheduled Caste candidates. Under the terms of the 1935 Act, the Scheduled Castes had to provide a certain number of MLAs, but their candidate had few sources of support to draw on apart from caste affiliations.

Finally, most candidates were men of 'standing' in their districts. Many DCCs were dominated by urban professional men. Although their activities as lawyers or doctors did not necessarily make them well known in the more remote villages, many would have owned land within the district or have come from joint families which did. Some would also have been known as leaders of civil disobedience or of regional movements.

Direct Contact with the Electorate The various relationships that could exist between elector and party have been outlined. Some of them were operational from the beginning, but others were latent and needed to be activated by election workers. For instance, to some sections of the electorate the association of Gandhi and the Congress election campaign was obvious, but to others it had to be pointed out that to vote for Congress was a means of showing support and respect for the Mahatma. As the last part of this analysis, therefore, it is necessary to look at the methods by which the elector was approached directly.

The first approach was made during the preparation of the electoral rolls, and its object was to ensure that all those qualified did in fact register themselves as electors. Those qualified under the property franchise were registered automatically, and fairly accurate lists of such electors could easily be compiled from the tax records. Those qualified under the educational franchise and the special franchise for women had, however, to apply for registration. In the Bombay area, therefore, a 'perfect roll' campaign was undertaken, both to urge educationally qualified electors to register, and to check that all those qualified by property were included.

The timing of the campaign was necessarily determined by the government. Provisional rolls of those qualified by property had been prepared in 1935, and these were used as the basis of the draft rolls.¹ Applications for registration

¹RO 14/36-F, Bombay Government to Reforms Office, 2/6/36.

were then allowed until 10 July 1936.¹ The main part of the campaign appears to have taken place in May and June. On 7 and 8 May, Patel met Congress leaders from all over the presidency to discuss election plans, and a committee of six was set up, initially to deal with registration matters.² Patel, accompanied by S.K.Patil, followed this up with a visit to the Chief Secretary to discuss registration arrangements.³ Later on in May, a meeting of almost 1,000 Congress workers was held in Bombay, at which Patel outlined the work to be done.⁴ Thereafter registration drives were reported from all parts of the presidency. The results of the campaign cannot be quantified. The Times of India regarded it as having had 'some success'.⁵ The Gujarat PCC later claimed that the draft rolls had been enlarged by 40-50%, but this seems a little improbable.⁶

There were other reports of Congress activity in this field, but only in Bombay was it tackled systematically. This was the result partly of the organizational ability of Patel and Patil, partly of the concentration of educationally qualified electors in Bombay city, and partly of the fact that Congress faced more than token opposition in Maharashtra. There

¹Times of India, 20/5/36.

²Leader, 10 & 11/5/36, and FR Bombay, May 1936 I.

³Leader, 11/5/36.

⁴Times of India, 28/5/36.

⁵Ibid., 3/7/36.

⁶AICC E23(i)/1937, report from Gujarat PCC, 10/3/37.

was always of course the danger of helping the opposition by indiscriminate encouragement of enrolment, but this was more than counterbalanced by the advantage of establishing an electoral organization that was in touch with the electors from the very beginning.

The Congress election campaign itself was formally inaugurated by Patel at a mass meeting in Bombay on 7 July.¹ Similar meetings took place in the various provinces during the following months.² Intensive work, however, did not begin until candidates had been finally chosen. The election workers could use three approaches - individual canvassing, mass meetings, and distribution and display of printed material. The official reports on the election indicate that individual persuasion was more effective than mass meetings.³ The canvasser could concentrate on an individual's specific orientations towards Congress, its leaders, or its candidates, and endeavour to cash them for electoral support. Things could be said privately that could not be said at a public meeting where a CID officer might be present or where an opponent might remember them. Disgruntled British officials often attributed Congress success in 1937 to the wild promises that were made to the new rural electors. Although extravagant promises, many of which could not be fulfilled within the framework of the 1935 Act and were made

¹Leader, 9/7/36.

²Statesman, 20/7/36, and Times of India, 27/7/36.

³HPO 111/37, 'Memorandum ... on the Results of the Elections...'.

only to discredit it, cannot be regarded as primary causes of Congress success, they can explain how Congress was able to obtain electoral support from people who had not previously been socialized into electoral roles.

Congress was able to indulge in large-scale individual and group canvassing primarily because of the network it had built up in the preceding years. Although formal Congress organization mostly stopped at district or tahsil level, many villages contained Congress supporters who could canvass other villagers' votes.¹ Such supporters had often been recruited during the civil disobedience movement. In some villages there were also full-time social-cum-political workers. They were usually connected with one or other of the social service organizations and, if they were paid, drew their salary from it, but at the same time could act as election workers.² Where villages were within easy reach of towns, the local Congress could send out groups of workers for short periods. Finally, the elector could have been approached by people whose influence over him was non-political. Where, as in Bihar, landlords supported Congress, their employees might have canvassed for Congress. Elsewhere, a caste elder might have done so. In the latter case, the canvasser could persuade the elector to support a particular candidate in terms of shared normative values concerning

¹In U.P. Congress was said to have had workers in almost all villages: FR U.P., February 1937 I.

²N.T.Katagade gives an interesting account of his life as a village worker at a slightly earlier period in 'Pundalik', in D.D.Karve (selected and translated), The New Brahmins: Five Maharashtrian Families (1963), pp. 234-67.

caste solidarity.

The mass meeting approach nevertheless had its value. Above all, it provided the symbols which the canvassers could exploit. Meetings addressed by national or provincial leaders had an effect even on those who only heard reports of them. Where election workers were sent out from a town and had no prior knowledge of the area, village meetings might be effective as an *entrée*. Some villages were barred to Congress workers because of the hostility of a local landowner or of the village officers. Where this was the case, a meeting held nearby could be used to appeal to the villagers. On the election day itself, Congress workers often organized processions to the polling stations. The main purpose of these was to make sure that electors realized the importance of actually casting their votes.¹

Printed material was not of major importance as a means of reaching the electorate, except in urban and special interest constituencies. It could, however, be used as an auxiliary both to mass meetings and to individual canvassing. Those who were literate were likely to be influential in their immediate locality. In particular, pamphlet material provided active Congress supporters with help in their canvassing activity.

The candidate has emerged as the crucial figure in the Congress campaign. He could draw on a rich stock of symbolic status derived from his association with the national

¹For general accounts of Congress techniques, see AICC E23(i)/1937, report on Gujarat elections, 9/3/37.

movement and had the benefit of a long-established organization, but he had also to meet his opponent on the politically neutral ground of status, power, and ascriptive support.

Other parties Candidates of other parties had to undertake almost the whole work of mobilizing support. With a few exceptions, no party could draw on any established prestige of its own or rely on the reputations of individual national leaders. The Muslim League of course had Jinnah, but he had still to develop his charismatic appeal to the Muslim masses. The main purpose of his national tours was to establish provincial League parliamentary boards; where he did address meetings they were in the main towns. League candidates also received active support from Shaukat Ali. Malaviya was another exception in that he supported non-Congress candidates in the Punjab.

At the provincial level, there were some non-Congress leaders who could appeal to the whole province or to large parts of it. They were mostly men who had been associated with Congress at some point and had broken with it for personal or ideological reasons. In Bengal, Fazl-ul-Huq had even been a general secretary of Congress, as well as Mayor of Calcutta and a member of the Central Legislative Assembly. In the Marathi-speaking areas of Bombay and C.P. there was a group of men who had been associated with Tilak and who had perpetuated his brand of Hindu- and region-based nationalism. The most prominent were N.C.Kelkar and B.S.Moonje. In the Punjab many urban Hindus recognized the leadership of men

like Gokul Chand Narang who had at one time belonged to Congress. There were also politicians who had co-operated in working the Montford reforms from the beginning. The prestige and patronage of ministerships and memberships gave them a certain provincial status especially if they had also built up party systems. The most important instance was the powerful position enjoyed in the Punjab by the various leaders of the Unionist Party. In Madras the leaders of the Justice Party in 1937 lost much of the support they had earlier enjoyed, partly because their record in office had not been distinguished. Other examples were S.A. Aziz in Bihar and the Maharaja of Parlakimedi in Orissa. Most provinces therefore had one or two non-Congress leaders who had considerable experience, but they were mostly not well known among the rural electorate.

There were no local party organizations as such. Yet an informal clique or faction within the constituency may have fulfilled some of the same functions as a local party unit, especially in establishing contacts with other local structures such as caste councils.

The non-Congress candidate, therefore, was very much on his own. In many cases he was independent in name as well as in fact. The various sources of support already mentioned as available to Congress candidates were available to him also. Power derived from landholding was especially important to many non-Congress candidates. Indeed, it was through a miscalculation of the strength of their socio-

economic influence that so many failed.¹ Where a candidate was not a powerful landlord he had alternative sources of support in his caste or communal appeal. Free from the secularist ideology of Congress, such appeals could be very blatant.

¹P.D.Reeves, 'Landlords and Party Politics in the United Provinces, 1934-7', in D.A.Low (ed.), Soundings in Modern South Asian History (1968), pp. 276-9. See also FR U.P., December 1936 I and February 1937 I; RO 20/III/1936-F, 'Report on the First Elections to the U.P. Legislature'. See also RO 20/III/36-F, 'Report on the General Elections in Bihar, January 1937'.

Chapter Four

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

This chapter presents the results of a study of selected characteristics of successful candidates in the 1937 elections. Efforts were made to obtain data on all MLAs and MLCs, but the material that was consulted in New Delhi and Bombay provided a somewhat limited sample. Uneven distribution of the sample between provinces and political groupings, and analysis of the sources from which the data were drawn, mean that in some cases more reliable results have been obtained.

The Method and the Data

The usual reasons for studying the social and economic background of members of legislative institutions rest on the assumption that they form a positional and reputational elite. Their background may affect them in the process of decision-making, and knowledge of the social strata from which they come enables general statements to be made about the political system.¹

The assumption that legislators form a generally recognized elite does not, however, necessarily apply in a colonial situation such as India in 1937, where final control over policy was pre-empted by an outside agency. It is also by no means certain that MLAs and MLCs formed a reputational elite within Congress. Gandhi had sanctioned

¹ See Donald R. Matthews, The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers (1954), chapter 1.

the formation of the Congress Parliamentary Board in 1934 but he had made it clear that he regarded parliamentary work as in no way superior to the 'constructive programme'.¹

There are, nevertheless, substantial reasons for studying legislators in this restricted situation. First, the 1935 Act did allow a large degree of responsible government at the provincial level. If its working had not been interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1939, significant patterns of decision-making would probably have emerged in the various provincial assemblies. No-one regarded the elections as a charade or merely an attempt by the British to legitimate their rule. Although many Congress leaders did not stand for elections, others of equal prominence did. Secondly, information for 1937 provides a basis for comparative studies of legislators at various periods. The third and probably the most important reason for the study is that it provides an indicator of the social background of the middle-level leadership of the independence movement, subject to the proviso that those Congress leaders who did not become candidates may have formed a category with markedly different socio-economic characteristics. But information on the social origins of the independence movement is so sparse that anything is worth having.

¹The words he used about Congressmen who wished to enter the legislatures are reminiscent of St. Paul's justification of marriage as a remedy against sin: 'My views on the utility of Legislatures are well known... But I feel that it is not only the right but it is the duty of every Congressman who, for some reason or other, does not want or cannot take part in civil disobedience and who has faith in entry into the Legislatures, to seek entry and form combinations in order to prosecute the programme which he or they believe to be in the interest of the country': Gandhi to Ansari, 5/4/34, quoted in Pattabhi Sitaramayya, History of the Indian National Congress, vol. i (1946 ed.), p.568.

The data¹ The universe for the study is the 1,844 men and women elected or nominated to the provincial legislatures in January and February 1937. Of this number, 1,585 were members of the Legislative Assemblies; all were elected except for four: in Orissa who were nominated to represent tribal interests. The remaining 259 formed the Legislative Councils which existed in six provinces regarded as politically sensitive by the British Government. 186 were elected directly; 39 were elected by the Assemblies in Bihar and Bengal; 34 were nominated. At least one item of information has been found for 930, giving a basic response rate of 50.43⁰/. It is legitimate to deduct the numbers of Europeans and Anglo-Indians. 91 of the universe and 26 of the sample probably belonged to these categories.² The adjusted figures are therefore a universe of 1,753, a sample of 904, and a basic response rate of 51.57⁰/.³ The populations for each variable are of course lower still.

Can any valid conclusions in fact be drawn from such an incomplete and self-selecting sample? Examination of the sources from which the information was derived, and analysis of the ecological distribution of the sample, provide two

¹A list of sources from which the data were drawn is given at the end of the chapter.

²47 seats were reserved for Europeans and Anglo-Indians, and in addition Europeans captured the majority of the 56 commerce and planter seats. Certain of the MLCs elected by the Bengal and Bihar Assemblies were also European. 91 MLAs and MLCs appear to have been European or Anglo-Indian, although it is possible that I have wrongly assigned Indian Christians to these categories or ignored Anglo-Indians. w

³All figures used in the study are based on the adjusted totals.

methods of reducing the margin of error, although complete accuracy can never be achieved when studying a historical situation.

The sources fall into two categories:

(1) Who's Whos. These are 'purpose-made', but almost always rely on the person concerned supplying the details. They are sometimes structured by being based on replies to a formal questionnaire. Even so, a respondent would not necessarily have supplied complete information, either through carelessness or unwillingness to reveal certain facts. Also, some variables used in the study demand data that is not included in general Who's Whos. Of the ones produced in the 1930s three proved particularly useful:

(a) The Indian Year Book, 1940-1. Like others of the period, it tends to concentrate on individuals whose main achievements lay outside politics. Landlords, leaders of commerce and modern industry, and educationalists thus predominate. Men whose support was based on traditional power structures and whose only impact on the metropolitan world was as MLAs tend to be left out.

(b) The Legislative Directory for Bombay, 1938. Without this source, found in Bombay, the study could hardly have been carried out. Deaths prevented a complete response from all MLAs elected in 1937, but substantial information was obtained for 97.6%. The directory was produced officially and is quite clearly based on a questionnaire, as the entries are all of a uniform pattern. Concealment of information,

intentional or otherwise, remains a problem, but is much reduced in comparison with other sources.¹

(c) The 1938 Haripura Congress Souvenir. This gives details of many of the middle-level, middle-aged Congress leaders who are largely absent from other sources. As Haripura was in Gujarat, however, it concentrates very heavily on Bombay.

Later Who's Whos have also been used, especially those for the post-independence Indian Parliaments and a non-official guide for Pakistan. State Assembly Who's Whos were consulted but added little information. MLAs and MLCs who had retired, died, or failed, for whatever reason, to get elected to post-independence legislative institutions are not included in these sources, which are therefore biased in favour of the 'young hopefuls' in the 1937 Assemblies. A further limitation is that they often include only sketchy or undated information for the pre-independence period.

(2) Systematic lists. Typically, these are lists of members of an Assembly, produced by its secretariat, which give some incidental information, most commonly degrees or an occupational status designation such as vakil, advocate, or talugdar. Provided the accuracy of the compilers can be relied on, these lists are exclusive - anyone who is not mentioned as possessing a degree or being a lawyer does not or is not. It is also possible to compare lists of members

¹ A Madras directory also exists, see Kenneth McPherson, 'The Social Background and Politics of the Muslims of Tamil Nad, 1901-1937', Indian Economic and Social History Review, vol. vi no. 4 (Dec. 1969), p.399. Similar directories for other provinces may also be extant.

of other institutions with lists of MLAs and MLCs.¹

Of the 904 total responses 533 were from Who's Whos and 371 from systematic lists; some of the former were supplemented from lists. A study of the various sources has indicated that the sample is probably biased in favour of the more socially prominent of the MLAs and of the young Congress MLAs who later became politically important. In Bombay, however, the sample is virtually complete.

The ecological biases in the data can also be studied. Only the most important will be mentioned. Significantly different response rates were possible for members of Assemblies and members of Councils, but in fact the two rates were extremely close - for the Councils 51.57% and for the Assemblies 51.46%. Secondly, the response rates for different provinces varied wildly from 18.5% in the Bihar Assembly to 97.6% in the Bombay Assembly. Full details are given in table 4.1. With the exception of Bengal, the major provinces have response rates above the mean.² The high rates in Assam, C.P. and N.W.F.P. must be partly discounted as many of the responses are derived from systematic lists and therefore only provide one item of information. Lastly, if MLAs and MLCs are divided into Congress and non-Congress

¹For example, lists of AICC members or of members of provincial constituency delimitation committees. Lack of uniformity in spelling and layout of names is a serious obstacle in such comparisons.

²The low response rate in Bengal was due partly to the relatively low number of Congress MLAs and partly to the absence of contemporary Who's Whos issued from Calcutta.

categories, significantly different response rates are found: the Congress MLAs and MLCs have a response rate of 60.65⁰/o against 41.75⁰/o for non-Congress legislators. As well as providing basic information on the size of each legislature and of the sample, table 4.1 shows the provincial distribution of the sample and the provincial Congress response rates.

Examination of the sources and the ecological distribution of the data thus provides two approaches to dealing with an inadequate sample. These must now be expressed in operational terms. For each variable the problem is to estimate the distribution of the MLAs and MLCs for whom no information is available, that is of the 'no-responses'. It could follow the distribution pattern of the population for that particular variable or it could be biased, in some cases predictably, in others not.

To utilize knowledge of the sources, one must first consider whether the data for a particular variable were drawn predominantly from Who's Whos or from systematic lists. If from the latter, the no-responses may reasonably be allocated to the category or categories not mentioned in the list. The major difficulty is that the categories used in the lists rarely coincide with those used in the study. The variable must therefore be dichotomized in terms that correspond with the list, and the data reworked in terms of the total number of MLAs in the province.¹ Equally, when working

¹It is because of this difficulty that such presumed responses have not been included in the data proper.

Table 4.1

Details of the sample

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|-------|
| Total number of seats | Total number of responses | Column 2 as percentage of column 1 | Column 1 less Europeans and Anglo-Indians | Column 2 less Europeans and Anglo-Indians | Column 5 as percentage of column 4 | Total number of Congress- held seats | Total number of Congress responses | Column 8 as percentage of column 7 | |
| <u>Assemblies</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 108 | 61 | 56.5 | 97 | 59 | 60.8 | 35 | 24 | 68.6 |
| Bengal | 250 | 68 | 27.2 | 221 | 67 | 30.3 | 60 | 41 | 68.3 |
| Bihar | 152 | 28 | 18.4 | 146 | 27 | 18.5 | 91 | 16 | 17.6 |
| Bombay | 175 | 171 | 97.7 | 166 | 162 | 97.6 | 86 | 85 | 98.8 |
| C.P. | 112 | 71 | 63.4 | 109 | 71 | 65.1 | 70 | 46 | 65.7 |
| Madras | 215 | 129 | 60.0 | 205 | 124 | 60.5 | 159 | 106 | 66.7 |
| N.W.F.P. | 50 | 31 | 62.0 | 50 | 31 | 62.0 | 19 | 7 | 36.8 |
| Orissa | 60 | 17 | 28.3 | 59 | 17 | 28.8 | 36 | 14 | 38.9 |
| Punjab | 175 | 77 | 44.0 | 173 | 76 | 43.9 | 18 | 9 | 50.0 |
| Sind | 60 | 14 | 23.3 | 58 | 13 | 22.4 | 8 | 2 | 25.0 |
| U.P. | 228 | 131 | 57.5 | 224 | 129 | 57.6 | 134 | 76 | 56.7 |
| Subtotals | 1585 | 798 | 50.35 | 1508 | 776 | 51.46 | 716 | 426 | 59.49 |

Table 4.1 (cont.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| Total number of seats | Total number of responses | Column 2 as percentage of column 1 | Column 1 less Europeans and Anglo-Indians | Column 2 less Europeans and Anglo-Indians | Column 5 a percentage of column 4 | Total number of Congress-held seats | Total number of Congress responses | Column 8 as percentage of column 7 |
| <u>Councils</u> | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | 7 | 31.8 | 20 | 7 | 35.0 | 0 | 3 | 0.0 |
| 63 | 19 | 30.2 | 56 | 18 | 32.1 | 3 ^a | 2 | 66.7 |
| 29 | 7 | 24.1 | 28 | 7 | 25.0 | 8 | 1 | 12.5 |
| 30 | 29 | 96.7 | 29 | 28 | 96.6 | 14 | 14 | 100.0 |
| 55 | 33 | 60.0 | 54 | 32 | 59.3 | 26 | 21 | 80.8 |
| 60 | 37 | 61.7 | 58 | 36 | 62.1 | 8 | 6 | 75.0 |
| 259 | 132 | 50.97 | 245 | 128 | 52.24 | 59 | 44 | 74.57 |
| Overall totals 1844 | 930 | 50.43 | 1753 | 904 | 51.57 | 775 | 470 | 60.65 |

^aThis figure relates to directly-elected MLAs only.

Table 4.1 (cont.)

| <u>Response rates</u> | Assemblies | Councils | Total |
|---|------------|----------|-------|
| Overall | 50.35 | 50.97 | 50.43 |
| Overall less Europeans and Anglo-Indians | 51.46 | 52.24 | 51.57 |
| Congress | 59.49 | 74.57 | 60.65 |
| Overall non-Congress | 42.81 | 44.00 | 43.03 |
| Overall non-Congress less Europeans and Anglo-Indians | 44.19 | 45.16 | 44.38 |

with the sample of positive responses, it must be accepted that it is biased to the extent that it excludes those categories not given in the list.

Where the data are derived from Who's Whos, no-responses must be divided into those for whom other information is available and those for whom it is not. In the latter case any distribution is possible, although knowledge of the bias built into the sample by the selection of individuals for inclusion in Who's Whos can be useful. In the former case one must also consider the nature of the variable concerned. The categories within the variable may be generally recognized as forming a hierarchy of esteem. Where this is so, no-responses will naturally be clustered at the bottom of the scale, and if the variable is of the zero-type will often fall into the zero category.¹

¹ A zero variable is defined as a set of positive conditions of which an individual need not satisfy any (alternatively one condition may be regarded as zero), and a non-zero variable as a set of which at least one must be satisfied. Both types of variable can be expressed in a dichotomous, non-zero form, as is done when reworking data derived from systematic lists.

The fact of uneven distribution of the sample can be utilized simply by dividing it in various ways and then presenting separately the data for the different sections. In this study, wherever it seems suitable, the sample has been divided into Bombay Assembly, and other responses; the figures for Bombay Assembly Congress responses have also been calculated separately. Two contradictory uses may be made of the results. First, comparisons may be made to establish significant differences between the parties or provinces. Secondly, a section with an especially high response rate can be used as a control for the others. Broadly, the party classification can be regarded as indicating actual differences and the province classification as indicating sampling error. Neither can be more than a rough guide and results obtained must be considered in the light of all other factors.

The variables After an initial study of the sources, nine variables were chosen which seemed most relevant to the themes of the social bases of Indian politics and of continuity and change within leadership groups. They were as follows:

- (1) Age.
- (2) Education.
- (3) Occupation.
- (4) Date of joining political party.
- (5) Financial contribution to political party.
- (6) Party offices held.
- (7) Imprisonment for political reasons.
- (8) Public offices held.
- (9) General social standing. This was treated as a

catch-all category for apparently relevant information that could not be included elsewhere.

When the data were assembled, it was clear that there were not enough responses for the fifth variable to make any further classification meaningful. The last variable could not, of course, be reduced to standardized categories. It was also found possible, for Bombay only, to include details of place of residence and of caste. The findings for these four variables will be outlined at the end. The main part of the study is concerned with the remaining seven.

For the variables of occupation, party office held, and elective office held, multiple responses were frequent. The tables have been compiled initially on the basis of total respondents rather than total responses. A further difficulty arose in the case of respondents who had previously belonged to Congress but who in 1937 stood independently or for some other party. The variables affected were those concerned with party political activity. As virtually all the responses for these variables came from Congressmen, the data have not been differentiated by party. Activity within Congress has in all cases been treated as the primary response; activity within any other party has been placed in a sub-column. Although this may appear a little cavalier, the numbers involved are very small.

The Results

In the first instance, each assembly and each council was taken separately, and for each variable distribution tables

were compiled according to party. The 119 tables thus produced were then combined to form single tables for each variable, classified according to province (with separate entries for assembly and council, where necessary).¹ With these tables as foundations, additional figures are given in the text as appropriate.

Age Responses were obtained from 27.3% of the universe. Age is a more or less neutral piece of information, and there is therefore no reason to suppose that the pattern of non-responses is influenced by anything except the natural bias of the sample. As virtually all the responses are from Who's Whos there is the possibility of substantial weighting in favour both of the socially prominent and of the 'young hopefuls', who might well cancel each other out. When the figures are arranged by party and province, they are seen to be in close agreement. The proportions of the population aged above and below 52 are remarkably similar between the Bombay Assembly and the rest of India. The median age for the Bombay Assembly is, however, somewhat lower. As one might expect, MLCs were noticeably older than their assembly counterparts. Many of the MLAs were thus men whose entire adult life had taken place since the First World War and the opening of the militant phase of the independence movement.

Education The following categories are used:

Foreign. Any period of education or training outside India has been counted. Almost all people receiving such

¹These tables (4.5 - 4.11) are given as a group at the end of the chapter.

training would ipso facto have had a degree, but there were a few exceptions.

University. This category includes anyone who attended an Indian college or university, even if he did not take a degree. There are practical reasons for this - many responses do not specify if a degree was held - but it can also be argued that what is important is the outlook on life acquired by anyone who attends a college or university.

Matriculation.

Nationalist. After the withdrawal of many students from schools and colleges during the non-co-operation movement, nationalist colleges were set up, notably the Gujarat Vidya-pith, the Jamia Millia, and the Kashi Vidyapith. Although their standard was that of other universities their degrees did not have any official standing, so that graduates faced difficulties in certain occupations.

Traditional. A few respondents had attended institutions that were outside both the government-run and the nationalist systems. To evaluate their standards, for a non-Indian at least, is impossible.

Private. It may be assumed that private education did not extend beyond the school level.

Elementary.

No-response/Lawyer. A number of respondents whose educational level is not known were lawyers, mostly vakils or pleaders. In some cases they would have passed pleaders' examinations and all must have had some education, perhaps to

matriculation level.

The figure for university and foreign responses is inflated because lists exist for three provinces giving MLAs' and MLCs' degrees, and other lists give those who held the 'Bar-at-Law' qualification, obtainable only in London. One might expect no-responses of this type to be biased towards the lower categories, but it seems possible that some people assumed that it would be obvious that they had been adequately educated. It would be hard to imagine, for instance, that 27.7⁰/o of the Bombay Assembly in 1937 had only elementary education or none at all.

The lists of university degrees are for Assam, the Punjab, and U.P. In these provinces it is therefore possible to take the whole assembly or council as the population.

Table 4.2

Percentages, within Certain Legislatures, of Those who had
Received University or Foreign Education

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Assam Assembly | 58.8 |
| Assam Council | 30.0 |
| Bombay Assembly ^a | 50.6 |
| Bombay Council ^a | 51.7 |
| Punjab | 34.1 |
| U.P. Assembly | 46.9 |
| U.P. Council | 41.4 |

^aAs these figures are calculated from a Who's Who they are not fully comparable. The true figures may be slightly higher.

These figures do not include any drop-outs among the no-responses. If an allowance is made for them, and if the nationalist responses are added, almost half the legislators in these provinces had had a university-level education.

There is a striking difference in the size of the matriculation category between Bombay and the rest of India. If, however, the no-response/Lawyer and matriculation categories are added together, the combined figures are fairly similar.

Occupation The following categories are used:

Lawyer.

Landholder.

Businessman. This clearly embraces a large range of income- and status-groups. An attempt was made to distinguish between large and small, but the limitations of the data made it very difficult. Broadly, those with banking and industrial interests can be placed in the big business category. The ratio between big businessmen and others in the sample is approximately 4:1, but this is largely because of the bias towards Bombay. If the Bombay businessmen are excluded, the ratio is reduced to approximately 3:1.

Teacher. This includes university teachers.

Medical practitioner.

Journalist.

Social worker. Social work within the villages was often combined with political organization.

Government servant.

Agriculturalist. As with businessmen, the limitations of

the data mean that the dividing line between this and the landholder group is blurred. Personal cultivation of land (with or without hired help) is supposed to mark the boundary.

Industrial worker. There was in fact no response in this category; it will not be used in the tables.

Miscellaneous.

Law degree-holder. This was designed as a supplement to the lawyer category. It includes those known to have had a law qualification (LL.B or Bar-at-Law) for whom there is no evidence that they actually practised.

It must be stressed that these categories relate to a person's occupation and not necessarily to his primary source of income. Also, they do not necessarily imply that he was actively pursuing his profession in 1936-7. Government servants were by definition retired, and many of the others were in fact full-time politicians rather than doctors or journalists. There is a further complication of double occupations. 16.0% of the respondents mention two occupations, and one can be sure that many more had incomes from land, either individually or as members of joint families, even if they took no direct share in managing it. Arbitrary decisions had to be made in many cases as to which was a person's primary occupation.¹ The degree of bias of the evidence is a

¹On the same problem in another context, Barrington Moore writes, 'In the nineteenth century, as in earlier periods, the lines between wealthy nobility, gentry, and the upper reaches of business and the professions were blurred and wavering. In numerous individual cases it is very difficult to decide whether a person belongs in one category or another. This difficulty, the despair of anyone undertaking a statistical analysis of English class structure, constitutes in itself one of the most important facts about this structure.' Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship (1967), p.36.

little difficult to assess. Each category of occupation itself contains a number of status-levels, although some occupations as a whole may have ranked higher than others. No-responses may in fact be concentrated towards the lower end of the scale in each category rather than in one or two particular ones. It would of course be highly desirable to distinguish between status-levels, also income-levels, but the data are not adequate. One can, however, suggest a bias among the responses towards the law, in that systematic lists often gave legal titles, and the profession itself was generally recognized. A law degree was a fitting culmination to the education of many who had no intention of becoming pleaders or advocates. Equally, landed interests may have been understated, for in many cases a private income from ancestral property hardly impinged on a man's way of life. The lower-level district politician who is probably underrepresented in the total sample would very often have been a landlord and/or a businessman with agricultural interests.

Even with the above reservations, it is remarkable how far the truism that Indian politics in this period were dominated by lawyers is borne out. 319 respondents had the law as a primary occupation and 18 were at least qualified, if not practising lawyers. In addition, 89 had a law degree. Thus 426 or 53.8% of the respondents had some legal training. For certain provinces it is possible, using the systematic lists, to take all the MLAs as the population. The results are given in table 4.3. Around a third of all MLAs and MLCs had probably had legal training. The percentage of Congressmen

with legal training was higher, but not dramatically so. Other professions comprised about 10⁰/o of the population.

Table 4.3

Percentages of Lawyers and Holders of Law Degrees Within
Certain Legislatures and the Congress Blocs Therein

| | Whole Assembly or Council | Congress bloc only |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bombay Assembly | 30.7 | 32.6 |
| Bombay Council | 37.9 | 50.0 |
| C.P. | 35.8 | 40.0 |
| N.W.F.P. | 36.0 | 21.1 |
| U.P. Assembly | 30.8 | 31.3 |
| U.P. Council | 22.4 | 37.5 |

Among the other categories, the number of landholders is high, although the percentage within the total universe was almost certainly higher. The number of MLAs who were landholders is significant in that questions of land tenure and agricultural conditions occupied much of the time of the new legislatures. The businessman category is also large, but businessmen did not form a clearly defined group in the legislatures, as their interests were often disparate or irrelevant to provincial politics. The number of social workers among the Bombay Congress MLAs is striking. Most of them would not of course have received any salary.¹

¹ B.R. Ambedkar in What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables (2nd ed. 1946), p.217, provides some figures for Congress MLAs in Assam, Bengal, Bihar, C.P., Madras and Orissa, although no source is given. In this calculation (which does not provide for secondary occupations), 35.8⁰/o are described as landlords, and 26.4⁰/o as lawyers.

Date of joining political party Unequal time-periods have been used, based on a periodization of the development of the nationalist movement:

Before 1916. The period before the Lucknow pact, when Congress was still largely dedicated to gradual constitutional development.

1916-18. The Home Rule Leagues period.

1919-22. The non-co-operation movement. Many students were drawn into Congress by the new tactics of agitation.

1923-28. The lull when a section of the Congress first attempted to enter the legislatures.

1929-34. The civil disobedience period.

1935-7. The immediate pre-election period.

Unspecific. In this category have been placed those respondents who mentioned having belonged to Congress 'for a long time' or having joined 'very early'.

As mentioned earlier, all primary responses are assumed to refer to Congressmen and to Congress membership. There is therefore a 28.1% response rate from the Congress MLAs and MLCs. The information is drawn entirely from Who's Whos. The possibility of a bias in the no-responses towards later dates of joining is very clear; there was political as well as social significance in having joined early. Thus, although it is clear that in some areas numbers of Congress candidates joined the party shortly before the elections, this does not show up in the figures. It is, however, noticeable that the two short periods of active opposition to the government were the most important in the recruitment of future MLAs

and MLCs.

Party offices held As with the previous variable, Congress responses only are being considered.¹ The population is in fact virtually the same. The categories used correspond with the levels of authority within Congress:

Member of Working Committee.

Member of AICC.

Holder of provincial office.

Member of PCC.

Holder of district office.

These categories are largely, but not entirely, cumulative. They relate to the holding of office or membership at any period, not necessarily in 1936. As before, the no-response distribution pattern is almost certainly biased towards the lower levels, and many of the no-responses are probably in the zero category, especially if the MLA or MLC had joined Congress shortly before the elections.

The high percentage of respondents who had been members of the AICC is noticeable, although less marked in the Bombay figures. This may, however, reflect the fact that before the revision of the Congress constitution in 1934, the AICC had been a body of 350. Membership of the AICC carried with it automatic membership of the appropriate PCC. Many respondents who had been AICC members also mentioned having held office at the provincial level. Over half the population -

¹In Bombay, seven Muslim League MLAs, five Independent Labour Party MLAs, and three Non-Brahman MLAs had held office in their respective parties.

63.5% overall, 54.0% in the Bombay section- had either been members of the AICC or had held provincial office. Oddly, none of them mentioned having held district office, although a considerable number of other respondents did so. This may indicate that district office was not highly regarded by those who had reached higher levels. It would be unlikely that the provincial-level leaders were all recruited directly. Not only had many MLAs reached the higher levels of authority within the party, in Bombay at least it is striking how few had not held office at all. 86% of all Congress MLAs in Bombay mentioned having held some elective office. Those figures tend to disprove the theory that many Congress MLAs in 1937 were newcomers, although rapid promotion would have been possible for those who were especially influential.

Imprisonment for Political Reasons The following categories are used:

Imprisoned at least once during the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements.

Imprisoned several times during the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements.

Imprisoned during the non-co-operation or civil disobedience movements and at other times.

Imprisoned only at times other than the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements.

Of the 178 responses, 20 were from non-Congress MLAs and MLCs who had earlier participated in Congress or quasi-Congress (particularly Khilafatist) activities.¹ In discussing the possible distribution of the 617 Congress no-responses,

¹In the Bombay Assembly, two were from independents, three from members of the DSP, two from members of the ILP, and one from a labour member.

the peculiar status of the political prisoner must be considered. Although most Congressmen would be inclined to boast of it, some Who's Whos might not include the information. Congress no-responses would therefore tend to fall almost entirely into the zero category, with a few exceptions largely depending on the source of the response. In the Bombay Assembly there were 31 no-responses of this type compared to 54 positive responses. As all responses were drawn from the same source, the no-responses would almost all have fallen into the zero category. It could therefore be said that about 62.8°/o of the Congress members of the Bombay Assembly had been to prison for their political activity. In C.P., however, only 38.6°/o of Congress MLAs had been imprisoned during the civil disobedience movement.¹ In N.W.F.P., a special case, 63.2°/o had been to jail in the course of the Red Shirt movement.²

Public offices or positions held The categories used relate to local, provincial, and central institutions of government. The term 'office' relates only to public office and not to office within a party grouping, e.g. Chief Whip. The data were principally obtained from Who's Whos, but some systematic lists mentioned previous membership of a 'Montford' Council, so that the responses are biased towards this category.

Unlike the responses for party office, it is noticeable that many of the former MLCs mentioned activity at the

¹PR C.P., 7/3/37.

²PR N.W.F.P., 22/2/37.

district level on local boards. In Bombay 89 (53.6%) of all MLCs did so. The percentage is not so high among the rest of the population, but this is probably because of biases within the sample. It is also striking that 44 of the population had been members of the Central Legislative Assembly and had returned to the provincial level of politics.

Degree of non-residence Data are only available for Bombay.

Out of the 180 respondents from the Assembly and Council only 23 gave an address outside the district in which their constituency was situated.¹ Of these, 16 gave a Bombay city address which may well have been temporary. Most of the other seven lived in districts near their constituency. Usually a district contained several general constituencies, but even so the preference for local men is evident.

Financial contributions to political parties Only eight positive responses were obtained, but clearly many more MLAs and MLCs must have been contributors to party funds, even if not on a large scale. Four of the eight were from Congress members of the Bombay Council. This, together with the evidence for Bengal mentioned earlier,² supports the view that seats in the Councils were given to Congressmen who were wealthy and well established rather than especially devoted and long-standing members.

General social standing Although responses for this variable cannot be reduced to standard categories, certain sorts of information frequently recur. Very many respondents claimed to

¹ Some MLAs and MLCs sat for non-territorial constituencies.

² P. 258.

have been active in various forms of social welfare and development activity. One independent MLA in C.P. claimed to have been 'associated with most of the important social, philanthropic, religious and educational institutions in Madhya Pradesh [I.e. C.P.]'. Where a respondent was more specific, harijan uplift and co-operative banking appear to have been the most frequent activities mentioned. 25 of the 85 Congress respondents in the Bombay Assembly claimed to have been active in harijan work. Some responses also referred to cultural activities often associated with regional aspirations. Others mentioned work for caste associations. The following examples illustrate the range of activities:

(1) Anandannappa Jnanappa Doddamati; Bombay Assembly; Congress. A Lingayat, he had been active in the Karnataka Unification Movement. He had been concerned with harijan work and was president of a local Harijan Sevak Sangh. He was also a khadi propagandist. In his own words, he was 'the driving force of all political and social movements in Karnatak'.

(2) Ram Prasad Tamta; U.P. Assembly; NAD. He had opened libraries for the Scheduled Castes and had generally fought for their rights. He had taken an active part in co-operative banks.

(3) Muhammad Shammad; Madras Assembly; Justice Party. He was an Honorary Magistrate. He had been a pioneer of moplah education, and had founded the Azizia Muslim Education Association and the Moplah Amelioration Committee.

The major difficulty with this kind of evidence is that

there is no means of checking its reliability.

Caste The caste is known of 122 of the 155 Bombay Hindu MLAs and MLCs, giving a response rate of 78.7⁰/o.¹ Reasons for non-response were presumably dislike of the concept of caste-identification, found equally among high-caste social reformers and radical followers of Dr. Ambedkar. The results are set out in table 4.4. Brahmans formed only 4.9⁰/o of the Hindu population but 32.8⁰/c of the respondents.² The lower percentage of Brahmans among non-Congress MLAs is largely due to the bloc of 10 Mahars from the Independent Labour Party.

Table 4.4

Caste Composition of Bombay MLAs and MLCs

| | Total | Assembly | | Council | |
|---------------------|-------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| | | Congress | Non-Congress | Congress | Non-Congress |
| Brahman | 40 | 28 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| Kshatriya | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brahma Kshatriya | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bania | 9 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Lingayat | 13 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Maratha | 15 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Patidar | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

¹Parsis are included because they were eligible for general constituencies.

²This may be compared to Ambedkar's figure of 28.8⁰/o for Brahmans among the Congress MLAs in Assam, Bengal, Bihar, C.P., Madras, Orissa and U.P.: Ambedkar, op.cit., p.216.

Table 4.4. (cont.)

| | Total | Assembly | | Council | |
|--------|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| | | Congress | Non-Congress | Congress | Non-Congress |
| Jain | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Parsi | 7 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Mahar | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Chamar | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Others | 9 | 5 ^a | 3 ^b | 1 ^c | 0 |
| Total | 122 | 76 | 32 | 7 | 7 |

^aAgarwal, Bhadagi, Mali, Nagir (perhaps Nagar Brahman), and Prabhu.

^bBhandari, Gavit, and Prabhu.

^cMaheshwari.

In view of the limitations of the sample, it is not possible to come to any final conclusions. MLAs in 1937 seem to have been men with some previous political experience and with strong roots in their constituency or district, although they would not necessarily have been recognized as 'natural leaders'. The study has not revealed any major objective difference between Congress and other MLAs. At the same time, many Congress MLAs had a substantial record of work within the party as well as in public life in general.

Table 4.5

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Age | | | | | | | | | 13 |
|---------------------------|---|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|----|
| | | | | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | | |
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | 22-6 | 27-31 | 32-6 | 37-41 | 42-6 | 47-51 | 52-6 | 57-61 | 62-6 | 67-71 | 72-6 | |
| <u>Assemblies</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 12 | 12.4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Bengal | 27 | 12.2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Bihar | 20 | 13.7 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Bombay | 161 | 97.0 | 7 | 21 | 27 | 36 | 20 | 20 | 14 | 13 | 1 | 0 | |
| C.P. | 24 | 22.0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Madras | 50 | 24.4 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| N.W.F.P. | 8 | 16.0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Orissa | 11 | 18.6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Punjab | 30 | 17.3 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| Sind | 8 | 13.8 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | |
| U.P. | 61 | 27.2 | 0 | 7 | 16 | 11 | 9 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Sub totals | 412 | 27.3 | 11 | 55 | 65 | 83 | 64 | 70 | 29 | 21 | 11 | 2 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 328. | |

| Table 4.5 (cont.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | |
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | 22-6 | 27-31 | 32-6 | 37-41 | 42-6 | 47-51 | 52-6 | 57-61 | 62-6 | 67-71 | 72-6 | |
| <u>Councils</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 12 | 21.4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Bihar | 4 | 14.3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bombay | 27 | 93.1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Madras | 13 | 24.1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0, | 0 |
| U.P. | 10 | 17.2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub totals | 66 | 26.9 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 12 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Overell totals | 478 | 27.3 | 13 | 58 | 74 | 95 | 73 | 35 | 30 | 14 | 5 | 2 | 2 |

Table 4.6

| <u>Assemblies</u> | 1 Total number of responses | 2 Column as percentage of adjusted total of seats | 3 Foreign Univers- ity | Education | | | | | | 10 No-response/ lawyer |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|---|------------------------------|
| | | | | 4 Matri- culation | 5 Nation- alist | 6 Trad- itional | 7 Private | 8 Element- ary | 9 | |
| Assam | 58 | 59.8 | 2 | 55 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 50 | 22.6 | 10 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| Bihar | 21 | 14.4 | 5 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Bombay | 125 | 75.3 | 10 | 74 | 27 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| C.P. | 53 | 48.6 | 6 | 22 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| Madras | 80 | 39.0 | 10 | 35 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 28 |
| N.W.F.P. | 20 | 40.0 | 6 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Orissa | 14. | 23.7 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Punjab | 61 | 35.3 | 18. | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Sind | 8 | 13.8 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| U.P. | 116 | 51.8 | 17 | 88 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Sub totals | 606 | 40.2 | 85 | 377 | 39 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 79 |

Table 4.6 (cont.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------|------------|--------------|--------|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | Foreign University | Matriculation | Nationalist | Traditional | Private | Elementary | No-response/ | lawyer |

Councils

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------|-----|-----|----|---|---|---|----|
| Assam | 6 | 30.0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 13 | 23.2 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Bihar | 6 | 21.4 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bombay | 22 | 75.9 | 3 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Madras | 24 | 44.4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| U.P. | 25 | 43.1 | 4 | 20 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub totals | 96 | 39.2 | 15 | 59 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 14 |
| Overall totals | 702 | 40.0 | 100 | 436 | 45 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 93 |

| Table 4.6 (cont.) | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------|------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------|------------|--------------|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | Foreign | University | Matriculation | Nationalist | Traditional | Private | Elementary | No-response/ | lawyer |
| <u>Totals as percentages</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall totals | | 14.2 | 62.1 | 6.4 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 13.2 | |
| Bombay Assembly totals | | 8.0 | 59.2 | 21.6 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 4.0 | 2.4 | 2.4 | |
| Overall totals less Bombay Assembly | | 15.6 | 62.7 | 3.1 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 15.6 | |
| Bombay Assembly Congress bloc | | 4.6 | 66.2 | 13.8 | 4.6 | 0.0 | 4.6 | 3.1 | 3.1 | |

Table 4.7

Occupation

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---------------------------|---|--------|------------|-------------|---------|----------------------|------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | Lawyer | Landholder | Businessman | Teacher | Medical Practitioner | Journalist | Social Worker | Government Servant | Agriculturist | Miscellaneous | Law degree holder |
| 47 | 48.5 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 32 |
| 51 | 23.1 | 27 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 26 | 17.8 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 165 | 99.4 | 47 | 26 | 33 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 18 | 14 | 3 | 8 | 1 |
| 57 | 52.3 | 38 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 105 | 51.2 | 48 | 15 | 23 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| 28 | 56.0 | 16 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 16 | 27.1 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 62 | 35.8 | 18 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 18 |
| 11 | 19.0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 114 | 50.9 | 54 | 26 | 6 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 682 | 45.2 | 279 | 104 | 84 | 32 | 17 | 17 | 32 | 25 | 4 | 17 | 71 |

334.

Assemblies

Table 4.7 (cont.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|---------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage | Lawyer | Land- holder | Business- man | Teacher | Medical Practitioner | Journal- ist | Social Worker | Govern- ment Servant | Agri- cultu- rist | Miscel- aneous | Law degree- holder |
| Councils | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 35.0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Bengal | 26.8 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bihar | 17.9 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bombay | 93.1 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Madras | 51.9 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| U.P. | 48.3 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Sub totals | 44.9 | 40 | 24 | 14 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Overall totals 792 | 45.2 | 319 | 128 | 98 | 44 | 21 | 17 | 34 | 26 | 4 | 17 | 84 |
| Totals as percentages | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall totals | | 40.3 | 16.2 | 12.4 | 5.5 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 4.3 | 3.3 | 0.5 | 2.1 | 10.6 |
| Bombay Assembly totals | | 28.5 | 15.8 | 20.0 | 3.6 | 1.8 | 3.6 | 10.9 | 8.5 | 1.8 | 4.8 | 0.6 |
| Overall totals less Bombay Assembly | | 43.4 | 16.3 | 10.4 | 6.0 | 2.9 | 1.8 | 2.6 | 1.9 | 0.2 | 1.4 | 13.2 |
| Bombay Assembly Congress bloc totals | | 31.7 | 20.7 | 15.9 | 4.9 | 3.7 | 2.4 | 13.4 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 4.9 | 0.0 |
| Secondary Occupations | | 18 | 41 | 23 | 17 | 0 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 5 |

335.

Table 4.8

Date of Joining Political Party

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---------------------------|--|---|-------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|------------|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total seats | Column 1 as percentage of total Congress-held seats | Before 1916 | 1916-18 | 1919-22 | 1923-8 | 1929-34 | 1935-7 | Unspecific |
| <u>Assemblies</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 8 | 8.2 | 22.9 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 4 | 1.8 | 6.6 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bihar | 12 | 8.2 | 13.2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Bombay | 76 | 45.8 | 88.4 | 7 | 7 | 22 | 6 | 19 | 2 |
| C.P. | 12 | 11.0 | 17.1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Madras | 31 | 15.1 | 19.5 | 1 | 2 | 15 | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| N.W.F.P. | 3 | 6.0 | 15.8 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Orissa | 8 | 13.5 | 22.2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Punjab | 8 | 4.6 | 44.4 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Sind | 2 | 3.4 | 25.0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| U.P. | 31 | 13.8 | 23.1 | 6 | 1 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Sub totals | 195 | 12.9 | 27.2 | 18 | 15 | 82 | 13 | 31 | 3 |

Table 4.8 (cont.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|-------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|------------|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total seats | Column 1 as percentage of total Congress-held seats | Before 1916 | 1916-18 | 1919-22 | 1923-8 | 1929-34 | 1935-7 | Unspecific |
| <u>Councils</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Assam | - | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 1.8 | 33.3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bihar | 7.1 | 25.0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bombay | 48.3 | 100.0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Madras | 3.7 | 7.7 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| U.P. | 6.9 | 50.0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Sub totals | 23 | 39.0 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Overall totals | 218 | 28.1 | 25 | 15 | 89 | 15 | 33 | 3 | 38 |
| <u>Totals as percentages</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall totals | | | 11.5 | 6.9 | 40.8 | 6.9 | 15.1 | 1.4 | 17.4 |
| Bombay Assembly totals | | | 9.2 | 9.2 | 29.0 | 7.9 | 25.0 | 2.6 | 17.1 |
| Overall totals less Bombay Assembly | | | 12.7 | 5.6 | 47.2 | 6.3 | 9.9 | 0.7 | 17.6 |

Table 4.9

| 1 | 2 | 3 | Party Offices Held | | | | | 8 |
|---------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---|
| | | | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | |
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | Column 1 as percentage of total Congress-held seats | Member of Working Committee | Member of AICC | Holder of provincial office | Member of PCC | Holder of district office | |
| <u>Assemblies</u> | | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 7 | 7.2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | |
| Bengal | 15 | 6.8 | 2 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Bihar | 7 | 4.8 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Bombay | 74 | 44.6 | 2 | 24 | 16 | 6 | 26 | |
| C.P. | 20 | 18.3 | 0 | 13 | 2 | 0 | 5 | |
| Madras | 30 | 14.6 | 5 | 14 | 8 | 2 | 1 | |
| N.W.F.P. | 4 | 8.0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | |
| Orissa | 4 | 6.8 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| Punjab | 8 | 4.6 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | |
| Sind | 2 | 3.4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| U.P. | 32 | 14.3 | 2 | 16 | 5 | 5 | 4 | |
| Sub totals | 203 | 13.5 | 16 | 90 | 40 | 15 | 42 | |

Table 4.9 (cont.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | Column 1 as percentage of total Congress-held seats | Member of Working Committee | Member of AICC | Holder of provincial office | Member of PCC | Holder of district office |
| <u>Councils</u> | | | | | | | |
| Assam | - | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 3.6 | 66.7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bihar | 3.6 | 12.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Bombay | 34.5 | 71.4 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Madras | 7.4 | 15.4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| U.P. | 3.4 | 25.0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sub totals | 7.6 | 32.2 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Overall totals | 12.7 | 28.6 | 16 | 97 | 44 | 18 | 47 |
| <u>Totals as percentages</u> | | | | | | | |
| Overall totals | | | 7.2 | 43.7 | 19.8 | 8.1 | 21.2 |
| Bombay Assembly totals | | | 2.7 | 32.4 | 21.6 | 8.1 | 35.1 |
| Overall totals less Bombay Assembly | | | 9.5 | 49.3 | 18.9 | 8.1 | 14.2 |

Table 4.10

Imprisonment for Political Reasons

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|----|-----|---|---|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | Total number of Congress responses | Column 3 as percentage of total Congress-held seats | a | b | c | d |
| <u>Assemblies</u> | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 6.2 | 5 | 20.0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 1.8 | 2 | 3.3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Bihar | 6.8 | 10 | 11.1 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Bombay | 37.3 | 54 | 62.8 | 9 | 48 | 2 | 3 |
| C.P. | 10.1 | 11 | 15.7 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Madras | 12.2 | 25 | 15.7 | 10 | 14 | 1 | 0 |
| N.W.F.P. | 10.0 | 5 | 26.3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Orissa | 6.8 | 4 | 11.1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Punjab | 5.2 | 2 | 11.1 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Sind | - | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| U.P. | 13.8 | 31 | 23.1 | 8 | 20 | 3 | 0 |
| Sub totals | 11.1 | 149 | 20.8 | 45 | 109 | 8 | 5 |

Table 4.10 (cont.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|------|------|-----|-----|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | Total number of Congress responses | Column 3 as percentage of total Congress-held seats | a | b | c | d |
| <u>Councils</u> | | | | | | | |
| Assam | - | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 1.8 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Bihar | 3.6 | 1 | 12.5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Bombay | 20.7 | 5 | 35.7 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Madras | 3.7 | 2 | 7.7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| U.P. | 1.7 | 1 | 12.5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Sub totals | 4.5 | 9 | 15.3 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Overall totals | 10.2 | 158 | 20.4 | 48 | 115 | 10 | 5 |
| <u>Totals as percentages</u> | | | | | | | |
| Overall totals | | | | 27.0 | 64.6 | 5.6 | 2.8 |
| Bombay Assembly totals | | | | 14.5 | 77.4 | 3.2 | 4.8 |
| Overall totals less Bombay Assembly | | | | 33.6 | 57.8 | 6.9 | 1.7 |

Table 4.10 (cont.)

- a Imprisoned at least once during the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements.
- b Imprisoned several times during the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements.
- c Imprisoned during the non-co-operation or civil disobedience movements and at other times.
- d Imprisoned only at times other than the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements.

Table 4.11

Public Offices or Positions Held

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|--|--------------------------------|
| | Total number of reponses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | MLA (Central) | Holder of provincial office | of MLC | Holder of office in local board | Member of local board |
| <u>Assemblies</u> | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 9 | 9.3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Bengal | 29 | 13.1 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 2 |
| Bihar | 16 | 11.0 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 1 |
| Bombay | 103 | 62.0 | 4 | 3 | 14 | 50 | 32 |
| C.P. | 26 | 23.9 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 2 |
| Madras | 45 | 22.0 | 6 | 2 | 13 | 13 | 11 |
| N.W.F.P. | 14 | 28.0 | 2 | 0 | 11 | 1 | 0 |
| Orissa | 5 | 8.5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Punjab | 29. | 16.8 | 8 | 4 | 12 | 4 | 1 |
| Sind | 11 | 19.0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| U.P. | 47. | 21.0 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 12 | 12 |
| Sub totals | 334 | 22.1 | 40 | 27 | 99 | 102 | 66 |
| <u>Councils</u> | | | | | | | |
| Assam | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengal | 8 | 14.3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Bihar | 6 | 21.4 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Bombay | 20 | 63.0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 3 |
| Madras | 17 | 31.5 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| U.P. | 4 | 6.9 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Sub totals | 55 | 22.4 | 4 | 5 | 24 | 16 | 6 |
| Overall totals | 389 | 22.2 | 44 | 32 | 123 | 118 | 72 |

Table 4.11 (cont.)

344.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Total number of responses | Column 1 as percentage of adjusted total of seats | MLA (Central) | Holder of provincial office | Holder of MLC | Holder of office in local board | Member of local board |
| <u>Totals as percentages</u> | | | | | | |
| Overall totals | | 11.3 | 8.2 | 31.6 | 30.3 | 18.5 |
| Bombay Assembly totals | | 3.9 | 2.9 | 13.6 | 48.5 | 31.1 |
| Overall totals less Bombay Assembly | | 14.0 | 10.1 | 38.1 | 23.8 | 14.0 |

List of Sources

A. Published

Biographical Sketch of MLCs in U.P. (1957)
Congress Delegates' Directory, 1956.
Directory and Year Book, 1965-6.
The 1938 Haripura Congress Souvenir.
India and Pakistan Year Book, 1948.
India and Pakistan Year Book, 1952.
Indian Parliament, 1952-7.
Indian Who's Who, 1937-8.
Indian Year Book, 1940-1.
Indian Year Book, 1942-3.
The Legislative Directory for Bombay, 1938.
Lok Sabha Who's Who, 1956.
Mavalankar, G.V., Speeches and Writings, 1957.
Muslim Who's Who, 1949.
Punjab Legislative Council Who's Who, 1964.
Sen, N.S., Punjab's Eminent Hindus, 2nd ed., 1944.
Singh Roy, P.N., Chronicle of the British Indian Association
(1851-1952), n.d.
West Bengal Legislative Council Who's Who (1959).
Who's Who in India, 1936.
Who's Who in India, Burma, and Ceylon, 1939.
Who's Who in the Legislature, 1956.
Who's Who in Western India, 1934.
Year Book and Who's Who in Kerala, 1958.

B. Unpublished

AICC E23/1937.
PR C.P. 7/3/37.
PR N.W.F.P. 22/2/37.
PR Orissa 9/3/37.
RO 20/III/1936-F.
RO 20/36-F.
RO 25/1/35-F
Times of India obituary files (in Bombay).

Chapter Five

THE ELECTION RESULTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN POLITICS

An adequate analysis of the election results of 1937 has to overcome two major difficulties. The first is the inadequacy of the data. Details of election results are given in official and non-official sources. The primary official source is the published return of election results, but this is needlessly incomplete.¹ Although their party affiliations are printed, the names of the successful candidates are not given. Only the number of votes secured by the successful candidates and their nearest rivals are given. Further figures, varying in completeness from province to province, are available in Reforms Office files.² Summary statements of party positions are also included in these files and in official reports.³ In most cases discrepancies exist between the various sources. Non-official statements of the results are to be found in the newspapers, for certain provinces in secondary sources, and in a Congress report that was partly based on newspaper reports and partly on special knowledge.⁴ Except for

¹ Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1937, Cmd. 5589 (1937). There is a serious internal inconsistency in the measurement of turnout rates. In the summary of results, the relevant column is headed 'No. of Votes Polled' and an explanatory note states that the existence of plural-member constituencies distorts the turnout figures given. In the detailed statement of results, however, the corresponding column is headed 'Total Number of Electors who Voted'. Except in U.P., the latter is the correct description of the figures given.

² RO 20/III/36-F.

³ Ibid., RO 20/36-F, PR, and FR.

⁴ IAR 1937 I, between pp. 168 and 169.

a few of the newspaper reports, all non-official sources give only summary statements. The categories used are often different from those in the official sources and usually ignore minor groupings. The second difficulty to be overcome is the sometimes hazy nature of party affiliations. Although this is itself a fact of great significance, it means that there can be no one 'correct' set of elections results.

In this chapter an attempt will be made to reconstruct as accurately as possible the state of the parties immediately after the elections. Summary totals and a breakdown of the results by class of constituency are given. In each province discrepancies exist between the various sources. Some can easily be reconciled by knowledge of the political situation in the province or by a rearrangement of some of the categories (especially those relating to various types of independent). In other cases, however, intuitive or arbitrary allocations have had to be made. Other things being equal, official sources have been preferred. Although officials may have been ignorant of some of the nuances of party groupings, they were less likely than newspapers to have relied on hearsay accounts of party affiliations and post-election manoeuvres. It cannot be assumed that two superficially similar sets of summary figures drawn from different sources necessarily include the same people in each category, although the various official figures are presumably based on the same original source. The detailed analysis of the party position in each province is drawn, with modifications, from official sources. For each province, as far as possible, the changes that took place in the

months after the elections are listed. After the statement of party positions, the distribution of the vote is examined. Because the information on votes cast is in most provinces incomplete, however, only a limited number of calculations are possible.

The following abbreviations are used in the tables:

General Urban, GU; General Rural, GR; Muhammadan Urban, MU; Muhammadan Rural, MR; Women (General Urban etc.), W (GU etc.); Indian Christian, IC; Anglo-Indian, AI; European, E; Commerce, C; Landholders, LH; Labour, LB; University, U; Sikh Urban, SU; Sikh Rural, SR; Backward Tribes, BT; General, G; Muhammadan, M; Sikh, S; Scheduled Caste, SC; Independent Hindu, IH; Independent Muslim, IM. In official reports and elsewhere, the terms 'independent', 'no party', and 'others' are used interchangeably and inconsistently. The practice here will be to describe as independent all MLAs and MLCs without specific party affiliation, except those elected from Indian Christian, Anglo-Indian, and European constituencies, together with Europeans elected from Commerce constituencies, who will be described as 'others'.¹

¹ MLAs in these latter categories of constituency sometimes belonged to one of the parties and are so treated. In general, the support of the European bloc was given to non-Congress ministries or groupings but no formal links were established.

Assam

| <u>Assembly</u> | Total | G (SC) | M BT ^a | W | IC | E | C ^b | LB |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-------------------|----|----|---|----------------|------|
| Congress | 33 | 33 | (2) | | | | | |
| Muslim League | 10 | | 10 | | | | | |
| Muslim Party | 24 | | 24 | | | | | |
| IH | 21 | 14 | (5) | | | | 3 | 4 |
| Other Independents | 9 | | 9 | | | | | |
| Others | 11 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Totals | 108 | 47 | (7) | 34 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 11 4 |

^aIncludes Backward Areas.

^bIncludes Planters seats.

| <u>Council</u> | Total | G | M | E |
|----------------|-------|----|---|---|
| Muslim Party | 6 | | 6 | |
| IH | 10 | 10 | | |
| Others | 2 | | | 2 |
| Totals | 18 | 10 | 6 | 2 |

In several sources the Congress strength in the Assembly is given as 35. This figure may include MLAs from Labour or Backward Tribes and Areas constituencies who decided to join the Congress group in the legislature. In one of the later official summaries and in a Times of India report,¹ the Muslim Party group in the Assembly is divided as follows: Assam Valley Muslim Party, 5; Surma Valley Muslim Party, 5; United Peoples Party, 3; Proja Party, 1; IM, 10. The first three

¹Times of India, 27/2/37.

probably existed before the elections, perhaps centred on associations that were formally above politics;¹ the Proja Party was either an offshoot of the Bengali party, or more probably a title chosen by an opportunist independent. Neither the Muslim Party nor the other Muslim groupings could have had more than a shadowy existence.

Bengal

| | Total | GU | GR | (SC) | MU | MR | WGU | WMU | IC | AI | E | C | LH | LB | U |
|----------------------|-------|----|----|------|----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| <u>Assembly</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Congress | 54 | 11 | 37 | (7) | | | 2 | | | | | | | | 4 |
| Independent Congress | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hindu Nationalist | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Hindu Sabha | 2 | | 2 | (2) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Muslim League | 40 | | | | 6 | 30 | | 2 | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Proja Party | 36 | | | | | 36 | | | | | | | | | |
| TKK ^a | 5 | | | | | 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| IH | 37 | | 26 | (21) | | | | | | | | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| IM | 42 | | | | | 40 | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Others | 31 | | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 11 | 14 | | | |
| Total | 250 | 12 | 66 | (30) | 6 | 111 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 19 | 5 | 8 | 2 |

^aTipperah Krishak Samiti

¹FR Assam, September 1936 I refers in passing to the United Peoples Party, and FR Assam, November 1936 II to the Assam Valley Muslim Party.

| | Total | GU | GR | MU | MR | E | Elected by Assembly |
|-------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|---|------------------------|
| <u>Council</u> | | | | | | | |
| Congress | 9 | 1 | 2 | | | | 6 |
| Independent Congress | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| Hindu Nationalist | 1 | | 1 | | | | |
| Hindu Sabha | 1 | | 1 | | | | |
| Muslim League | 14 | | | 1 | 9 | | 4 |
| Proja Party | 8 | | | | 6 | | 2 |
| IH | 12 | 1 | 4 | | | | 7 |
| IM | 5 | | | | 1 | | 4 |
| Others | 6 | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 57 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 16 | 3 | 27 |

The exact proportions of the Muslim League, Proja Party, and independent Muslim groups are doubtful. Two reports gave the Proja Party 40 by including the Tipperah Krishak Samiti, which in fact eventually gave its support to Congress. Likewise the status of one member of the Hindu Nationalist group and of two members of the Congress group seems to have been uncertain. The independent Congressmen were products of the factional differences within the Bengal Congress.

Bihar

| | Total | GU | GR (SC) | MU | MR | WGU | WMU | IC | LI | E | C | LH | LB | U |
|-------------------|-------|----|---------|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|---|---|----|----|---|
| <u>Assembly</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Congress | 92 | 5 | 79 (11) | | 4 | 3 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| DCL ^a | 3 | | 3 (3) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Independent Party | 16 | | | 2 | 14 | | | | | | | | | |
| United Party | 6 | | | 1 | 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| Ahrar Party | 3 | | | | 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| IH | 15 | | 6 (1) | | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| IM | 11 | | | 2 | 8 | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Others | 6 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | |
| Totals | 152 | 5 | 88 (15) | 5 | 34 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

^aDepressed Classes League

| | Total | G | M | E | Elected by Assembly |
|-------------------|-------|---|---|---|------------------------|
| <u>Council</u> | | | | | |
| Congress | 8 | | | | 8 |
| Independent Party | 3 | | 1 | | 2 |
| United Party | 3 | | 2 | | 1 |
| IH | 11 | 9 | | | 2 |
| IM | 2 | | 1 | | 1 |
| Others | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Totals | 28 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 14 |

The DCL very soon merged completely with Congress. Congress claimed in its own report to have the support of three more MLAs, one each from the Labour, Landholder, and Muslim constituencies.

Bombay

| | Total | GU | GR | (SC) | MU | MR | WGU | WGR | WMU | ICU | ICR | AI | E | C | LH | LB | U |
|------------------|-------|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|---|---|----|----|---|
| <u>Assembly</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Congress | 85 | 13 | 61 | (4) | | | 4 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| ILP | 13 | 1 | 12 | (10) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DSP | 3 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| National- ist | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Khoti Sabha | 2 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Non- Brahmans | 10 | | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Muslim League | 18 | | | | 4 | 13 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| IH | 18 | | 14 | (1) | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 3 | |
| IM | 13 | | | | 2 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Others | 12 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | | |
| Totals | 175 | 14 | 101 | (15) | 6 | 23 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 1 |

| <u>Council</u> | Total | G | M | E |
|------------------|-------|----|---|---|
| Congress | 13 | 13 | | |
| DSP | 2 | 2 | | |
| Liberal | 1 | 1 | | |
| Muslim League | 2 | | 2 | |
| IH | 4 | 4 | | |
| IM | 3 | | 3 | |
| Others | 1 | | | 1 |
| Totals | 26 | 20 | 5 | 1 |

Largely as a result of its relatively poor showing in the general constituencies in the Marathi-speaking areas, Congress was three short of an absolute majority in the Assembly. Two previously independent MLAs joined the legislative party after the elections. The first, B. B. Chakranarayan, who sat for an Indian Christian constituency, did so almost immediately. The second, M. Y. Nurie, who had had previous links with Congress, joined as part of the deal whereby he became the Muslim member of the ministry in July 1937. At least two of the members from the Labour constituencies, S. H. Jhabwala and R. A. Khedgikar, had Congress sympathies. The two non-reserved seats gained by the ILP were both in Ratnagiri district, and were won largely as a result of the ILP espousal of the cause of the tenants against the Khots.

C.P.

| | Total | GU | GR | (SC) | MU | MR | W | AI | E | BT | C | IH | LB | U |
|-----------------------|-------|----|----|------|----|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|---|
| <u>Assembly</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Congress | 70 | 9 | 54 | (7) | | 3 | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | |
| ILP ^a | 3 | 1 | 2 | (3) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Non-Brahmans | 3 | | | (1) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nationalist | 2 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Hindu Sabha | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NRP ^b | 1 | | 1 | (1) | | | | | | | | | | |
| ML(SC) ^c | 5 | | | | | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| MPB(RSG) ^d | 8 | | | | | 2 | 6 | | | | | | | |
| IH | 16 | | 12 | (8) | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| IM | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Others | 3 | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | | |
| Totals | 113 | 10 | 74 | (20) | 2 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

^aIndependent Labour Party

^bNational Raja Party

^cMuslim League (Shareef Group)

^dMuslim Parliamentary Board (Rauf Shah Group)

The NRP MLA was G.A. Gavai, a well-known Scheduled Caste leader, who may simply have adopted the label for the purposes of his individual campaign.

Madras

| | Total | GR | GR (SC) | MU | MR | WGU | WGR | WMU | WICU | IC | AI | |
|------------------|-------|----|---------|------|----|-----|-----|-----|------|----|----|---|
| <u>Assembly</u> | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | : | |
| Congress | 159 | 14 | 123 | (26) | 4 | 3 | 3 | | 1 | 3 | | |
| Justice Party | 21 | 1 | 4 | (2) | 8 | | | | | 4 | | |
| People's Party | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Muslim League | 9 | | | | 1 | 8 | | | | | | |
| MPP ^a | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| IH | 7 | | 4 | (2) | | | | | | | | |
| IM | 7 | | | | 1 | 5 | | 1 | | | | |
| Others | 10 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | |
| Totals | 215 | 15 | 131 | (30) | 2 | 26 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 2 |

Continuation

| | E | BT | C | LH | LB | U |
|----------------|---|----|---|----|----|---|
| Congress | | 1 | | | 6 | 1 |
| Justice Party | | | 1 | 3 | | |
| People's Party | | | | 1 | | |
| IH | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| Others | | 3 | 4 | | | |
| Totals | | 3 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 1 |

^aMuslim Progressive Party

| | Total | G | M | IC | E |
|-------------------|-------|----|---|----|---|
| <u>Council</u> | | | | | |
| Congress | 26 | 26 | | | |
| Justice Party | 5 | 3 | 2 | | |
| Muslim League | 3 | | 3 | | |
| People's Party | 1 | | | 1 | |
| IH | 6 | 6 | | | |
| IM | 2 | | 2 | | |
| Others | 3 | | | 2 | 1 |
| Totals | 46 | 35 | 7 | 3 | 1 |

The only major discrepancy between the sources concerns the figures for the Justice Party and the Muslim League in the Assembly. In the Congress report the Justice Party is stated to have had 17 seats and the League 11.

N.W.F.P.

| | Total | GU | GR | MU | MR | S | LH |
|-------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|---|----|
| <u>Assembly</u> | | | | | | | |
| Congress | 19 | 1 | 3 | | 15 | | |
| 'No Party' | 21 | | | 1 | 18 | | 2 |
| HSNP ^a | 7 | 1 | 3 | | | 3 | |
| IM | 2 | | | 2 | | | |
| IH | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| Totals | 50 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 33 | 3 | 2 |

^aHindu-Sikh Nationalist Party

According to an official report, one of the HSNP MLAs in fact

joined the party immediately after the elections. In the Congress report, two of the 'No Party' Muslims are said to form the Muslim Independent Party.

Orissa

| <u>Assembly</u> | Total | G | (SC) | M | W | IC | C | LH | LB | Nominated |
|-----------------|-------|----|------|---|---|----|---|----|----|-----------|
| Congress | 36 | 33 | (4) | | 2 | | | | 1 | |
| United Party | 6 | 5 | (1) | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | | |
| National Party | 4 | 3 | (1) | | | | | | | |
| IH | 6 | 4 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| IM | 3 | | | 3 | | | | | | |
| Others | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Nominated | 4 | | | | | | | | | 4 |
| Totals | 60 | 45 | (6) | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |

The United Party lost one of its members shortly after the elections when Rajendra Narayan Bhanj Deo, who sat for a Landholders constituency, left the legislature. There is some doubt about the allegiance of the Muslim members of the United Party, Latifur Rahaman, who in one official report is stated to belong to the National Party.

Punjab

| <u>Assembly</u> | Total | GU | GR (SC) | MU | MR | SU | SR | WGU | WMU | WS |
|-----------------------|-------|----|---------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|----|
| Unionist Party | 94 | | 13 (4) | 2 | 70 | | | | 1 | |
| Muslim League | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| Ahrar Party | 2 | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| Ittihad-i Millat | 2 | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| Congress | 18 | 7 | 3 | | 2 | | 4 | 1 | | 1 |
| Congress Nationalist | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Hindu Election Board | 11 | 1 | 8 | | | | | | | |
| Akali | 10 | | | | | | 10 | | | |
| Khalsa National Party | 14 | | | | | 2 | 11 | | | |
| PLB ^a | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Socialist | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| IM | 5 | | | 2 | 2 | | | | | 1 |
| IH | 11 | | 9 (4) | | | | | | | |
| IS | 3 | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| Totals | 175 | 8 | 34 (8) | 9 | 75 | 2 | 29 | 1 | 2 | 1 |

Continuation

| | IC | AI | E | C | LH | LB | U |
|-----------------------|----|----|---|---|----|----|---|
| Unionist Party | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | |
| Hindu Election Board | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Khalsa National Party | | | | | 1 | | |
| PLB | | | | | | 1 | |
| IH | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Totals | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 |

^aParliamentary Labour Board

Although the Unionist Party was clearly identifiable at the provincial level, membership at the local level was very vague. Immediately after the elections, for which the party did not select specific candidates, some six nominally independent Muslims joined the Unionist bloc in the legislature, but it is impossible to say whether they were any less 'Unionist' than their colleagues. They have therefore been included as part of the Unionist group.

Sind

| | First Second | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|-------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|---|---|----|----|
| | Total | Total | GU | GR | MU | MR | WGU | WMU | E | C | LH | LB |
| <u>Assembly</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Congress | 7 | 7 | 2 | 3 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| Hindu Sabha | 12 | 12 | 1 | 10 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| United Party | 18 | 17 | | | 1 | 16 | | | | | | |
| GHHP ^a | | 16 | | | 1 | 13 | | 1 | | | | |
| Azad Muslim Party | 3 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Muslim Party | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IH | 3 | 3 | | 2 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| IM | 10 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Others | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | | |
| Totals | 60 | 60 | 3 | 15 | 2 | 31 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |

^aSir Ghulam Husain Hidayatullah's Party

The landlord parties were nowhere as fluid and insubstantial as in Sind. GHHP was constructed entirely as a legislative grouping among elected MLAs. It is known that the United Party had

been split into three groups immediately before the elections,¹ and it is very possible that the Muslim Party represents one of these. It is probable that GHHP was largely made up of the independent Muslim MLAs, the Muslim Party, two of the Azad Muslim Party, and one of the United Party, but the possibility of a more complicated pattern must not be ruled out. The breakdown of results by class of constituency refers to the period after the reshuffling of the Muslim groups. Early reports credited Congress with an additional seat, probably at the expense of the Hindu Sabha.

U.P.

| <u>Assembly</u> | Total | GU | GR (SC) | MU | MR | WGU | WGR | WMU | WMR | IC | AI | E | C | LH | LB | U |
|-----------------|-------|----|----------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|---|---|----|----|---|
| Congress | 133 | 17 | 108 (15) | | | 1 | 3 | | | | | | | | 3 | 1 |
| NAP | 22 | | 7 (4) | | 9 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | |
| Liberal | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Muslim League | 27 | | | | 7 | 20 | | | | | | | | | | |
| IH | 10 | | 8 (1) | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| IM | 30 | | | | 6 | 22 | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Others | 5 | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | |
| Totals | 228 | 17 | 123 (20) | 13 | 51 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 1 |

¹See above, p.213.

| | Total | GU | GR | MU | MR | E |
|----------------|-------|----|----|----|----|---|
| <u>Council</u> | | | | | | |
| Congress | 8 | 3 | 5 | | | |
| NAP | 4 | | 3 | | 1 | |
| Liberal | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| IH | 22 | 2 | 20 | | | |
| IM | 16 | | | 5 | 11 | |
| Others | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Totals | 52 | 5 | 29 | 5 | 12 | 1 |

As with other provinces, the allocation of MLAs between the independent and other vaguely defined categories is difficult. P. D. Reeves's work on the U.P. election results has produced figures which broadly agree with those in the table but differ in certain particulars.¹ The table describes two of the MLAs which Reeves allocates to the NAP group as independent Hindus, and three Muslim League MLAs and one NAP MLA as independent Muslims. This may simply reflect the tendency of MLAs to attach themselves to party groups after the elections. It should also be noted that Congress acquired two Muslim seats shortly after the elections, the first when Rafi Ahmad Kidwai succeeded a Muslim Leaguer, and the second when Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim was re-elected as a Congressman. The Muslim League gained one seat when its candidate, Rafiuddin, succeeded an independent in the Jhansi by-election.

¹ 'Changing Patterns of Political Alignment in the General Elections to the United Provinces Legislative Assembly, 1937 and 1946', Modern Asian Studies, vol. v no. 2 (April 1971), pp. 111-42.

Congress was able to secure absolute majorities in only five of the eleven provinces, and gained 44.6% of the total number of seats in the Legislative Assemblies. More detailed analysis of the distribution of seats and votes shows, however, that except in Muslim constituencies the position of Congress was very strong. Table 5.1 sets out the percentage of seats secured by Congress in various categories of constituency. It demonstrates that General constituencies, except in Punjab, Sind, and N.W.F.P. where Hindus felt oppressed by Muslim majorities, overwhelmingly preferred Congress candidates. The main gap in Congress support was in Maharashtra. Congress success in seats reserved for Scheduled Castes was more localized. Except in Maharashtra, however, it usually lost to isolated independents. It is also important to note that although General seats (including seats reserved for Scheduled Castes) formed only 53.3% of the total, they included 67.5% of the electorate. 74.5% of those who actually voted did so in general constituencies.

As full voting figures by party are not available, it is not possible to say finally whether Congress gained a greater or less proportion of seats than of votes. In U.P. and Madras official calculations were made, in U.P. by class of constituency and in Madras for the aggregate totals.¹ The Congress report gives percentages of the aggregate vote for certain provinces, but no actual figures are given. Figures based on

¹For U.P. these are broadly confirmed by the work of P.D.Reeves, loc. cit.

Table 5.1

Percentage of Seats Won by Congress in
Selected Classes of Constituency

| | All classes | GU & GR | GU | GU & GR minus SC seats | SC seats |
|----------|-------------|---------|------|------------------------------|----------|
| Assam | 30.6 | 70.2 | | 77.5 | 28.6 |
| Bengal | 21.6 | 61.5 | 91.7 | 85.4 | 23.3 |
| Bihar | 60.5 | 90.3 | 100 | 93.6 | 73.3 |
| Bombay | 48.6 | 64.3 | 92.9 | 70.0 | 26.7 |
| C.P. | 62.5 | 75.0 | 90.0 | 87.5 | 35.0 |
| Madras | 74.0 | 93.8 | 93.3 | 95.7 | 86.7 |
| N.W.F.P. | 38.0 | 44.4 | 33.3 | | |
| Orissa | 60.0 | 73.3 | | 74.4 | 66.7 |
| Punjab | 10.3 | 23.8 | 87.5 | 29.4 | 0.0 |
| Sind | 11.7 | 27.8 | 66.7 | | |
| U.P. | 58.8 | 89.3 | 100 | 91.7 | 75.0 |
| Totals | 44.6 | 72.9 | 90.8 | 83.1 | 50.3 |

Source: calculated from tables of provincial results.

aggregate totals are, however, misleading, in that the electorate per seat was higher in the general constituencies, from which Congress drew its support. To avoid this problem and to provide additional figures, calculations have been made for the general constituencies in Orissa and Bengal. The figures from these various sources are presented in Table 5.2¹ It is clear

¹Other calculations were also made, but all of them appear to have been based on inaccurate data. See B. R. Ambedkar, What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables (2nd ed. 1946), p. 148, P.R.Society Pamphlet 81, and AICC E 23(i)/1937, reports of election results.

that Congress sometimes gained and sometimes lost. Which happened was related not so much to the size of Congress's share of the vote as to local circumstances such as the number of candidates.

Table 5.2

Comparative Percentages of Votes and
Seats Gained by Congress

| | Aggregate votes and seats in all con- stituencies | | Aggregate votes and seats in general constituencies | | | | | |
|--------|---|-------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | | GU | | GR | | G | |
| | Votes | Seats | Votes | Seats | Votes | Seats | Votes | Seats |
| Bengal | 25 | 22 | 76 | 92 | 71 | 55 | | |
| Bihar | 65 | 61 | | | | | | |
| Bombay | 56 | 49 | | | | | | |
| C.P. | 61 | 63 | | | | | | |
| Madras | 65 | 74 | | | | | | |
| Orissa | | | | | | | 74 | 71 |
| Punjab | 13 | 10 | | | | | | |
| U.P. | | | 79 | 100 | 67 | 88 | | |

Source: IAR, loc.cit. (column 1 except Madras); official reports in RO 20/III/36-F (Madras and U.P.); calculations from election results in ibid. (Bengal column 2 and Orissa). The figures for Bengal and Orissa are only approximate.

Another point of interest in the voting figures is the extent of the difference in votes secured by Congress candidates in the same constituency. In each province multi-member constituencies existed for the Scheduled Castes, but these were

special cases, and almost always caste Hindu candidates secured many more votes than their Scheduled Caste running mates. In Bombay, however, multi-member constituencies were used more generally. Table 5.3 shows the votes secured by successful Congress candidates, expressed as ratios, in constituencies where all the successful candidates were Congressmen, and in four-member constituencies where the top three were Congressmen (the fourth usually being a Scheduled Caste candidate). Although

Table 5.3

Comparative Votes Secured by Successful Congress
Candidates in Selected Bombay Constituencies

| Constituency | Number of seats | First Candidate | Second Candidate | Third Candidate |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Bombay City (Fort ...) | 3 | 100 | 91.2 | 85.4 |
| Ahmedabad City | 2 | 100 | 78.4 | |
| Panch Mahals West | 2 | 100 | 93.0 | |
| Broach | 2 | 100 | 86.2 | |
| Dharwar South | 2 | 100 | 96.4 | |
| Kanara | 3 | 100 | 85.0 | 81.7 |
| Kaira | 4 | 100 | 68.4 | 60.0 |
| Surat | 4 | 100 | 81.9 | 81.8 |
| Ahmednagar North | 4 | 100 | 95.6 | 88.1 |
| East Khandesh West | 4 | 100 | 88.8 | 78.3 |
| Nasik West | 4 | 100 | 97.2 | 90.4 |
| Belgaum North | 4 | 100 | 97.5 | 88.0 |

the degree of difference is more noticeable than in some other political systems, the votes gained by Congress candidates were given to them both as Congressmen and as individuals. Bombay operated the cumulative system of voting, so that the discipline of the voters is the more significant.

As soon as the elections were over, the political system began to adjust to the situation created by the Congress successes. It soon became clear that Congress would not accept office without receiving assurance that the governors would not make use of their special powers under the 1935 Act. To break the immediate deadlock the government decided that the summoning of the assemblies should be delayed, and it invited prominent politicians from the non-Congress groups to form minority ministries. After a period in which each side maintained its formal position, mounting pressure from the Congress grassroots and concern on the government side that the whole constitution might collapse led to the evolution of a formula that both sides felt able to accept. In July 1937 Congress ministries took office in Madras, Bombay, U.P., C.P., Bihar, and Orissa. Shortly afterwards a Congress ministry was formed in N.W.F.P. and at a later stage Congress formed a coalition ministry in Assam. Although much work remains to be done on it, the period of the first Congress ministries has often been seen as of great importance for the development of Indian democratic traditions.¹

The eclipse of the minority ministries and the success of their Congress replacements round off two of the major themes of this study. Congress took another step in its evolution from

¹W. H. Morris-Jones, Parliament in India (1957), pp. 63-71

agitational movement to dominant ruling party. It became an articulated party whose leadership was able to maintain control over a wide range of activities. Despite comments by several governors that some MLAs had only stood on the Congress ticket to get elected and might well defect,¹ the cohesion of Congress assembly parties was striking. The delayed decision to accept office produced grumbling rather than defections. A few non-Congressmen joined the assembly parties after the elections, sometimes as part of specific bargains to get Muslim ministers, but until the incidents in C.P. and Bengal, party discipline remained strong.² During the 1930s the ideological bases of nationalism were being explored, while from 1937 to 1939 the Congress ministers began to learn the art of the possible. There were, of course, features of the post-independence situation which had not yet emerged. Centre-state conflict was pre-figured by occasional disputes with the provincial governors, especially over the question of restraining radical agitators or preachers of violence. The overall authority of the Working Committee masked the incipient divergence between the organizational and governmental wings of the party. Congress had widened the basis of its support in this period and the process had already begun whereby it was regarded as a vehicle for group mobility. At the same time pressure from newly recruited groups to share in power at the district and provincial levels was still manageable by the existing elite.

¹PR Orissa, 30/3/37, GR U.P., April 1937 I.

²The Nariman episode in Bombay involved only one individual.

For many of those who took part in the minority ministries, however, the 1937 election marked the end of the period of their political influence. The numerous local parties that were formed were not genuine adaptations to the changing environment but desperate attempts to shore up the politics of collaboration. The personal standing of politicians continued to be of vital importance in their chances of electoral success; but as the electorate had changed, so had the criteria of personal position widened. Work within the national movement itself provided a means of establishing a reputation.

Other parties also managed to extend their support and activities during the mid-1930s. The most important was the Muslim League. Although it only secured 105 of the ordinary Muslim seats (and 3 women's and 2 special seats), it nevertheless became the largest Muslim party and except in Bengal and the Punjab the only one with any real organization and structure. Above all, Jinnah was able to assert his authority at the all-India level. The beginnings of organized Scheduled Caste activity are to be found in the ILP in Maharashtra. Outside the Muslim community, however, Congress as the expression of the nationalist movement was more powerful than Congress as a sectional movement. It was only after independence that the party system developed to reflect more adequately the numerous cleavages within Indian society.

BIBLIOGRAPHYA. Private and Party PapersNational Archives of India, New Delhi

Jayakar Papers

Sastri Papers

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

All-India Congress Committee Papers

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers

Mahakoshal Congress Committee Papers

Paranjpye Papers

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Papers

Rao Papers

Gandhi Museum, Delhi

Gandhi Papers

B. Government RecordsIndia Office Library, London

Governors' Reports

Provincial Reports

Public and Judicial files

Public and Judicial, Reforms Department files

National Archives of India, New Delhi

Home Political files (including Fortnightly Reports)

Home Public files

Reform Office files

C. Newspapers and Periodicals

Bombay Chronicle, Bombay.

Capital, Calcutta.

Hindu, Madras.

Indian Review, Madras.

Leader, Allahabad.

Madras Mail, Madras.

Modern Review, Calcutta.

Pioneer, Lucknow.

Star of India, Calcutta.

Statesman, Calcutta.

Times of India, Bombay.

Tribune, Lahore.

Official Publications

British

Communal Decision, Cmd. 4147, 1932.

The Government of India Act, 1935, 25 & 26 Geo. 5, c.42.

House of Commons Debates.

Indian Delimitation Committee (Hammond Committee)

vol. i, Report, Cmd. 5099, 1936.

vol. ii, Proposals for the Delimitation of Constituencies, Cmd. 5100, 1936.

vol. iii, Selections from Evidence, 1936.

Indian Franchise Committee (Lothian Committee)

vol. i, Report, Cmd. 4086, 1932.

vols. ii-iii, Memoranda Submitted by the Local Governments and the Provincial Franchise Committees, 1932.

vols. iv-v, Selections from Memoranda Submitted by Individuals and Oral Evidence, 1932.

(Report of the) Indian Statutory Commission
(Simon Commission)

vol. i, Survey, Cmd. 3568, 1930.

vol. ii, Recommendations, Cmd. 3569, 1930.

vol. iv, Memorandum by the Government of India
and the India Office Part I, 1930.

(Report of the) Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional
Reform (Session 1932-33)

vol. i, Report and Proceedings, H.C.112 (I), 1933.

vol. ii, Minutes of Evidence, H.C.112 (II), 1933.

vol. iii, Records, H.C.112 (III), 1933.

(Report of the) Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional
Reform (Session 1933-34).

vol. i, part i, Report, H.C. 5 (I Part I), 1934.

vol. i, part ii, Proceedings, H.C.5 (I Part II), 1934.

vol. ii, Records, H.C.5 (II), 1934.

Proceedings of the Indian Round Table Conference, First
Session, 12 November 1930 - 19 January 1931, Cmd.
 3778, 1931.

Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform (White Paper),
 Cmd. 4268, 1933.

Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms (Montford Report),
 Cd. 9109, 1918.

Report of the Committee Appointed by the Secretary of
State for India to Inquire into Questions Connected
with the Franchise and Other Matters Relating to
Constitutional Reform, Cmd. 141, 1919.

Return Showing the Results of Elections in India, 1937,
 Cmd. 5589, 1937.

Return Showing the Results of the General Election to the
Legislative Assembly in India, 1934, Cmd. 4939, 1935.

Views of the Government of India upon the Reports of
Lord Southborough's Committees, Cmd. 176, 1919.

IndianCensus of India, 1931.

Central Legislative Assembly Debates

Madras Legislative Assembly Debates

Madras Legislative Council Debates

Report on the First General Elections in India, 1951-52,
1955.E. Other Published WorksAhmad, Jamil-ud-Din, Some Recent Speeches and Writings of
Mr. Jinnah, 2 vols., Lahore, 1943.Ahmad, Kamruddin, The Social History of East Pakistan, Dacca,
2nd ed., 1967.Ahmad, Zainul Abedin, The Indian Federation, Allahabad,
1938 (Congress Political and Economic
Studies, no. 10).Alexander, H. G., Congress Rule in India, London, 1938.All-India Congress Socialist Party, Constitution & Programme,
Resolutions of the Third Conference of the
Party. Thesis. Report of the General
Secretary, Bombay, 1937.All-Parties Conference, Report of the Committee Appointed
by the Conference to Determine the Principles
of the Constitution for India (Nehru Report),
Allahabad, 1928.Ambedkar, B. R., What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the
Untouchables, Bombay, 2nd ed., 1946.Azad, Abul Kalam, India Wins Freedom, Calcutta, 1959.Bahadur, Lal, The Muslim League: Its History, Activities
and Achievement, Agra, 1954.Bailey, F. G., Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959,
Bombay, 1963.--- Stratagems and Spoils, Oxford, 1969.Baliga, B. S., Studies in Madras Administration, vol. i,
Madras, 1960.

- Bhatia, Krishan, 'India Adrift', Foreign Affairs, vol. xlv no. 4 (July 1967), pp. 652-61.
- Bose, Subhas Chandra, The Indian Struggle, 1920-1942, Calcutta, 1964.
- Brass, Paul, 'Uttar Pradesh' in Myron Weiner, ed., State Politics in India, Princeton, 1968.
- Brecher, Michael, Nehru: a Political Biography, London, 1959.
- Broomfield, J. H., Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal, Berkeley, 1968.
- Butler, D.E., The Electoral System in Britain Since 1918, Oxford, 2nd ed., 1963.
- Birla, G. D., In the Shadow of the Mahatma: A Personal Memoir, Bombay, 1953.
- Butler, J. R. M., Lord Lothian, London, 1960.
- Campbell, Angus et al., Elections and the Political Order, New York, 1966.
- Caroe, Olaf, The Pathans, 550 B.C.-A.D.1957, London, 1965.
- Caveeshar, Sardul Singh, Acceptance of Offices under the New Constitution, Lucknow, n.d.
- Chakravarti, D. and Bhattacharyya, C., Congress Policy on Communal Award: Bengal Forces a Change, Calcutta, 1939.
- Chakravarty, Tarini Sankar, Beware of the Cobweb, Calcutta, 1937.
- Chaudhuri, Binayendra Mohan, Muslim Politics in India, Calcutta, 1946.
- Chintamani, C. Y. and Masani, M. R., India's Constitution at Work, Bombay, 1940.
- Chopra, Pran Nath, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Agra, 1960.
- Cohn, Bernard S., 'Society and Social Change under the Raj', South Asian Review, vol. iv no. 1 (Oct. 1970), pp. 27-49.
- Coupland, R., Report on the Constitutional Problem in India, part ii, Indian Politics, 1936-1942, London, 1943.
- Desai, A. R., Social Background of Indian Nationalism, Bombay, 2nd ed., 1954.

- Deva, Narendra, Socialism and National Revolution, Bombay, 1946.
- Dumont, Louis, 'Nationalism and Communalism', Contributions to Indian Sociology, no. 7 (March 1964), pp. 30-70.
- Duverger, Maurice, Political Parties, London, 1964 ed.
- Faruqi, Ziya-ul-Hasan, The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan, London, 1963.
- Ghoshal, Kumudini Kanta, A.B.C. of Swaraj, Dacca, 1938.
- Gopal, Ram, Indian Muslims, A Political History, London, 1959.
- Haithcox, John Patrick, Communism and Nationalism in India, Princeton, 1971.
- Halappa, G.S., ed., History of Freedom Movement in Karnataka, vol. ii, Bangalore, 1964.
- Hardgrave, Jr, Robert L., 'The DMK and the Politics of Tamil Nationalism', Pacific Affairs, vol. xxxvii (Winter 1964-65), pp. 396-411.
- Hodgkin, Thomas, Nationalism in Colonial Africa, London, 1956.
- Husain, Azim, Sir Fazl-i-Husain, Bombay, 1946.
- The Indian Annual Register, Calcutta.
- Indian National Congress, The Indian National Congress, 1930-34, Allahabad, n.d.
- The Indian National Congress, 1934-36, Allahabad, 1936.
- Indian National Congress, 1936-37, Allahabad, n.d.
- Report of the General Secretary, April-December 1936, Allahabad, 1937.
- Report of the General Secretary, March 1938 - February 1939, Allahabad, 1938.
- Report of the 49th Session, Allahabad, 1936.

- Irschick, Eugene F., Politics and Social Conflict in South India, Berkeley, 1969.
- Ispahani, M.A.H., Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah As I Knew Him, Karachi, 1966.
- Jain, Ajit Prasad, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: A Memoir of his Life and Times, New York, 1965.
- Jennings, W. Ivor, The Approach to Self-Government, Cambridge, 1956.
- Kabir, Humayun, Muslim Politics, 1906-1942, Calcutta, 1943.
- Karnik, V.B., ed., Indian Communist Party Documents, 1930-1956, Bombay, 1957.
- Karve, D.D., ed., The New Brahmins, London, 1963.
- Katagade, N. T., 'Pundalik' in D. D. Karve, ed., The New Brahmins, London, 1963.
- Kaushik, P. D., The Congress Ideology and Programme, Bombay, 1964.
- Keer, Dhananjay, Dr. Ambedkar: His Life and Mission, Bombay, 1954.
- Khaliquzzaman, Choudhry, Pathway to Pakistan, Lahore, 1961.
- Khare, N. B., My Political Memoirs, Nagpur, 1959.
- Kothari, Rajni, ed., Caste in Indian Politics, New Delhi, 1970.
- Politics in India, Boston, 1970.
- Krishna, Gopal, 'The Development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Organization, 1918-1923', Journal of Asian Studies, vol. xxv no. 3 (May 1966), pp. 413-30.
- Lakeman, Enid and Lambert, James D., Voting in Democracies: A Study of Majority and Proportional Electoral Systems, London, 2nd ed. 1959.
- La Palombara, Joseph and Weiner, Myron, etc., Political Parties and Political Development, Princeton 1966.
- Low, D. A., ed., Soundings in South Asian History, London, 1968.
- Mackenzie, W. J. M., 'The Export of Electoral Systems', Political Studies, vol. v no. 3 (1957), pp. 240-57.

Mackenzie, W. J. M., Free Elections, London, 1958.

-- 'Representation in Plural Societies',
Political Studies, vol. ii no. 1 (1954), pp.
54-69.

McPherson, Kenneth, 'The Social Background and Politics of
the Muslims of Tamil Nad, 1901-1937',
Indian Economic and Social History Review,
vol. vi no. 4 (Dec. 1969), pp. 381-402.

Majumdar, A. K., Advent of Independence, Bombay, 1963.

Malaviya, H. D., Land Reforms in India, New Delhi, 2nd ed.
1955.

Masani, M. R., The Communist Party of India, London, 1954.

Matthews, Donald R., The Social Background of Political
Decision-Makers, New York, 1954.

Mehrotra, S. R., 'The Congress and the Partition of India',
in C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright,
eds., The Partition of India: Policies and
Perspectives, 1935-1947, London, 1970.

-- 'The Politics Behind the Montagu Declaration
of 1917', in C. H. Philips, ed., Politics
and Society in India, London, 1963.

Mehta, A. and Patwardhan, A., The Communal Triangle in
India, Allahabad, 1942.

Metcalf, Thomas R., The Aftermath of Revolt: India,
1857-1870, Princeton, 1965.

Moon, Penderel, The Future of India, London, 1945.

Moore, Jr., Barrington, Social Origins of Dictatorship and
Democracy, London, British ed., 1967.

Morris-Jones, W. H., The Government and Politics of India,
London, 2nd ed., 1967.

-- 'India's Political Idioms' in C. H. Philips
ed., Politics and Society in India, London,
1963.

-- Parliament in India, London, 1957.

Munshi, K. M., Indian Constitutional Documents, vol. i,
Pilgrimage to Freedom (1902-1950), Bombay,
1967.

Nanda, B. R., Mahatma Gandhi, London, 1958.

Narayan, Jay Prakash, Towards Struggle, Bombay, 1946.

Nehru, Jawaharlal, An Autobiography, London, new ed., 1942.

-- A Bunch of Old Letters, London, British ed., 1960.

-- The Discovery of India, London, 1946.

-- Eighteen months in India, 1936-37, Allahabad, 1938.

-- India and the World, London, 1936.

-- Nehru-Jinnah correspondence (including Gandhi-Jinnah and Nehru-Nawab Ismail correspondence), Allahabad, 1938.

-- Recent Essays and Writings, Allahabad, 2nd ed., 1937.

-- The Unity of India, London, 1941.

Nettl, J. P., Political Mobilization, London, 1967.

Overstreet, Gene D. and Windmiller, Marshall, Communism in India, Berkeley, 1959.

Parel, Anthony, 'Symbolism in Gandhian Politics', Canadian Journal of Political Science, vol. ii no 4 (Dec. 1969), pp. 513-27.

Parikh, Narhari D., Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, vol. ii, Ahmedabad, trans. from Gujarati, 1956.

Park, Richard L. and Tinker, Irene, eds., Leadership and Political Institutions in India, Princeton 1959.

Patterson, Maureen, 'Caste and Political Leadership in Maharashtra', Economic Weekly, vol. vi, 25 September 1954, pp. 1065-7.

Philips, C.H., ed., Politics and Society in India, London, 1963.

Philips, C.H. and Wainright, Mary Doreen, eds., The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935-1947, London, 1970.

Pirzada, S.S., Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947, vol. ii, Karachi, 1970.

Prakash, Indra, Hindu Mahasabha: Its Contribution to India's Politics, New Delhi, 1966.

Prasad, Rajendra, Autobiography, Bombay, 1957.

Proportional Representation Society Pamphlets, 81, Report for the Year May, 1936 - April, 1937. Fair Representation and Government: A Review of the Elections of the Year, London, 1937.

Rajput, A. B., Muslim League, Yesterday and Today, Lahore, 1948.

Ramana Rao, M. V., Development of the Congress Constitution, New Delhi, 1958.

Ranga, N. G., The Modern Indian Peasant, Madras, 1936.

-- Peasants and Congress, Madras, 1939.

Reeves, P. D., 'Changing Patterns of Political Alignment in the General Elections to the United Provinces Legislative Assembly, 1937 and 1946', Modern Asian Studies, vol. v no. 2 (April 1971), pp. 111-42.

Reid, Robert, Years of Change in Bengal and Assam, London, 1966.

Rosenthal, Donald B., The Limited Elite, Chicago, 1970.

Rothermund, Dietmar, 'Constitutional Reforms versus National Agitation in India, 1900-1950', Journal of Asian Studies, vol. xxi no. 4 (August 1962), pp. 505-522.

-- 'Nehru and Early Indian Socialism', in S. N. Mukherjee, ed., St. Antony's Papers no. 18, South Asian Affairs no. 2, London, 1966.

Roy, M. N., Letters to the Congress Socialist Party, Bombay, 1937.

-- On the Congress Constitution, Calcutta, 1939.

Roy, Ramashray, 'Caste and Political Recruitment in Bihar', in Rajni Kothari, ed., Caste in Indian Politics, New Delhi, 1970.

-- 'Selection of Congress Candidates', Economic and Political Weekly, vol. i, 31 December 1966, pp. 833-40, vol. ii, 7 January 1967, pp. 17-24, 14 January 1967, pp. 61-76, 11 February 1967, pp. 371-6, and 18 February 1967, pp. 407-16.

Rudolph, Lloyd I. and Rudolph, Susanne Hoeber,
The Modernity of Tradition, Chicago, 1967.

Saiyid, M. H., Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Lahore, 1945.

Sampurnanand, Indian Socialism, London, 1961.

-- Memories and Reflections, Bombay, 1961.

Samra, Chattar Singh, 'Subhas Chandra Bose: an Indian National Hero', in Richard L. Park and Irene Tinker, eds., Leadership and Political Institutions in India, Princeton, 1959.

Satyamurti, S. and Das, Nilakantha, A Statement of the Work of the Congress Party in the Assembly: Delhi Session 1935, Madras, 1935.

Sayeed, Khalid bin, Pakistan, the formative phase, Karachi, 1960.

Schaffer, B. B., 'The Concept of Preparation: Some Questions about the Transfer of Systems of Government', World Politics, xvii, no. 1 (October 1965), pp. 42-67.

Schuster, Sir George and Wint, Guy, India and Democracy, London, 1941.

Shukla, B. D., A History of the Indian Liberal Party, Allahabad, 1960.

Singh, Hari Kishore, A History of the Praja Socialist Party, 1934-59, Lucknow, 1959.

-- 'The Rise and Secession of the Congress Socialist Party of India, 1934-1948' in Raghavan Iyer, ed., St. Antony's Papers, no. 3, South Asian Affairs no. 1, London, 1960.

Singh, Khushwant, A History of the Sikhs, vol. ii, Princeton, 1966.

Singh Roy, Bijoy Prasad, Parliamentary Government in India, Calcutta, 1943.

Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, History of the Indian National Congress, 2 vols., Bombay, 1946-7.

Smith, Donald E., ed., South Asian Politics and Religion, Princeton, 1966.

Smith, T. E., Elections in Developing Countries, London, 1960.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell, Modern Islam in India, Lahore, 2nd ed., 1947.

Stocks, Mary, Eleanor Rathbone, London, 1949.

Tendulkar, D. G., Mahatma, vols. ii-iv, Bombay, 1951-2.

Thomas, K.P., Dr. B. C. Roy, Calcutta, 1955.

Tinker, Hugh, Ballot Box and Bayonet, London, 1964.

-- The Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma, London, 1954.

U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report, Benares, 1936.

Vidhyalankar, Satyadev, Jivan-sangharsh (Hindi), Delhi, 1964.

Weiner, Myron, Party Building in a New Nation, Chicago, 1967.

-- ed., State Politics in India, Princeton, 1968.

Woodruff (Mason), Philip, The Men who ruled India, vol. ii, London, 1954.

Young, G. M., Stanley Baldwin, London, 1952.

Zaidi, Z. H., 'Aspects of the Development of Muslim League Policy, 1935-47', in C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainwright, eds., The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935-1947, London, 1970.

Zelliott, Eleanor, 'Learning the Use of Political Means: the Mahars of Maharashtra' in Rajni Kothari, ed., Caste in Indian Politics, New Delhi, 1970.

Zetland, Lord, 'Essayez', London, 1956.