CHAPTER - II
What is Poorna Swaraj? It is the 'Sachcha Swaraj' that gives us strength to forget the internal quarrels among different castes and communities and have one aim, i.e., one nation - 'Bharat', one religion - 'Hindustani', and one goal - nobody will be left in hunger in independent India.

Thus said SHAKTI, a weekly Hindi newspaper, being published from Almora, a remote hill district of UP, in its editorial on 18 January, 1930.

The journey of the Congress from Swaraj to Poorna Swaraj had not been an easy and smooth one. It all started with the return of Jawaharlal Nehru from Europe in 1927 after representing the Indian National Congress at the Brussels Congress of the League Against Imperialism and a visit to the Soviet Union which had left him deeply impressed by socialist ideas. On his return he found some like minded persons like Subhas Chandra Bose and Satyamurthi and they automatically formed a group. Itching for action the first step seemed to this group to be the acceptance of complete independence as the objective of the Congress. They could not accept the usual argument that there was no real difference between Dominion Status and Independence because the former carried with it the right to secede. They believed that while this may be true in theory, in fact Dominion Status implied the
maintenance of a connection with Britain and allowing her dominance in every major field. Moreover, they believed that the goal of independence would shake off the defeatism and weariness that had followed the Non-Cooperation Movement, sweep away the Swarajists' temporizings, gain a new strength and again pull in the masses. However at Madras, with all their efforts, they could get their party to accept only a general adherence to the goal of complete national independence.

The issue came up again at the All Parties Conference and at the proceedings of the Committee set up by it (with Motilal Nehru as the Chairman) to draw up a constitution for India as an answer to the challenge of Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State, that Indian politicians were not capable of any constructive suggestions. Though Jawaharlal Nehru was not a member of this Committee, he suggested that the constitution should establish a democratic socialist republic. But his suggestions were not given a moment's consideration. The committee favoured Dominion Status and attention was given mostly to finding a possible solution of the communal problem. Seeing that there was no chance of getting the decision reversed, Jawaharlal fell back upon keeping alive the commitment of the Congress to independence. It was for this purpose that he organized the Independence of India League, in the first instance as a pressure group within the Congress. The object of the League was both to achieve independence and to reconstruct Indian society by changing its capitalist and feudal basis. For the work of
organization, Jawaharlal looked to the young men and women of India. Throughout the year 1928 he concentrated on the Youth Leagues and conferences. But the general run of Congressmen attached little importance to Jawaharlal's efforts. To them the only value which the demand for independence now had was that it enabled them to bargain for Dominion Status. Jawaharlal himself was not satisfied with the League but he was pacified a little bit at the Calcutta session of the Congress in December 1928 where Gandhiji recommended that if the Government did not accept and act upon the Nehru Report within one year, the Congress would not only revert to the demand of full independence but it would also launch a civil disobedience movement to attain that goal.

Meanwhile, as with the Rowlatt Bills in 1919, the Government again proved to be a catalyst and provided a rallying ground for the nation. It announced on 8 November, 1927, an all-white 'Indian Statutory Commission', popularly known as 'Simon Commission' after its chairman, to recommend whether India was ready for further constitutional progress and on which lines. That not a single Indian was considered fit to serve on a body that claimed the right to decide the political future of India, was an insult no Indian, even of the most moderate political opinion, was willing to swallow.

The Indian National Congress, waiting for such a break, gave a call for the boycott of the Commission. This boycott call was endorsed by almost all the political parties including the Liberal Federation, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League. The Congress led this boycott and turned it into a popular movement. The action began as soon as the Commission landed at Bombay on 3 February, 1928. That day, all the major cities and towns observed a complete hartal, and people were out on the streets participating in mass rallies, processions and black flag demonstrations. Wherever the Commission went, it was greeted by a sea of black flags. The Government, determined to curb the protest, let loose severe repression. Lathi charges were becoming all too frequent, and even respected and senior leaders were not spared the blows. In Lucknow, Jawaharlal Nehru and G.B. Pant were beaten by the police. But the worst incident happened in Lahore where Lala Lajpat Rai, the most revered leader of Punjab, was so severely beaten that he died after few days.

The Simon boycott agitation provided the first experience of political action to a new generation of Youth. It provided a great filip to the formation of Youth Leagues and associations all over the country. These politically aware youth came into contact with the new radical ideas of socialism and Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose became their natural leaders.

There was little likelihood that the Government would respond to the resolutions passed by the Congress at Calcutta in December 1928. So for the Congress, 1929, the year of
probation and grace as Gandhiji termed it, was clearly to be a year of preparation. Efforts were made to reorganise 'the unbusinesslike way' of the Congress. Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs) were compelled to follow the instructions of the Working Committee and implement fully the constructive programme. The All India Congress Committee (AICC) directed Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose to prepare a scheme to train volunteers to work in the villages and among the city labourers. Special attention was given to the Congress Volunteer Corps, the Hindustani Seva Dal, Youth Leagues and Student Organisations. What the Congress wanted was dedicated young men and women who would organise the peasants and workers and create a mass consciousness in preparation for the coming struggle.

Gandhiji, on his part, had been preparing the people for the future struggle in many ways. He had been travelling incessantly throughout the country right since his release from jail in 1924. While his pre-1929 speeches laid emphasis mainly on the constructive programme — khadi, Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability — now he began to prepare the people for direct political action. It was at Gandhiji's instance that the Congress Working Committee constituted a Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee to promote an aggressive programme of boycott and public burning of foreign cloth. He also took the lead in initiating the campaign of public burning of foreign cloth by lighting a bonfire in a public park in Calcutta on 4 March 1929, before a crowd of thousands.
Besides the preparations which the Congress carried on at various levels, there were a number of other developments that kept political excitement in 1929 at fever pitch. In March 1929, in a major swoop, the Government arrested 31 labour leaders (most of them, but by no means all, communists) and marched them off to Meerut, in UP, for trial. The entire national movement condemned the Meerut prosecution, which incidentally involved no less than eight members of the AICC. In April 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA) threw harmless bombs in the Central Legislative Assembly to protest against the passing of the Public Safety Bill and were arrested.

However, the lines of battle were suddenly blurred by the Viceroy’s statement, at the end of October 1929, that the British Government would meet representatives of British India and the Indian states. The objective of the meeting was to secure the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposal to be submitted to Parliament and to get the idea accepted that the natural issue of India’s constitutional progress was the attainment of Dominion Status. Two days later, a conference of major national leaders met and issued what came to be known as ‘the Delhi manifesto’. This offered cooperation to the British, provided the Government adopted a policy of general conciliation, political prisoners were granted a general amnesty, and progressive political organisations were adequately represented at the conference with the Congress being given
predominance. It was understood that the conference was not to discuss when Dominion Status was to be established but to frame a scheme of Dominion Constitution suitable for India’s needs. Despite these provisions, the manifesto marked a retreat by the Congress and evoked a dissent from the younger leaders of the party. They were in no mood to retreat from the goal of independence. They did not have to wait for long as the Viceroy refused to give any assurance on the demands. This marked the end of all sorts of negotiations and the stage was set, now, for the confrontation to begin.

Lahore, the capital city of Punjab, was selected to host the most memorable of the Congress annual sessions. The honour of declaring ‘Poorna-swaraj’ as the only honourable goal for Indians went to Jawaharlal Nehru who had done a lot to popularize the idea. Initially he was reluctant to accept the Presidency, and, moreover, he had the support of only 3 PCCs out of 18, but Gandhiji and had him elected the President.

Jawaharlal Nehru’s Presidential Address was a stirring call to action: "we have now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule and you, comrades, and all our countrymen and countrywomen are invited to join it". Nehru also made it known that in his view liberation did not mean only throwing off the foreign yoke: "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican and am no believer in Kings and Princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, ...." He also spelt out the methods of
struggle: - "Any great movement for liberation today must necessarily be a mass movement, and mass movements must essentially be peaceful, except in times of organised revolt... And if the principal movement is a peaceful one contemporaneous attempts at spreading violence can only distract attention and weaken it".2

So, at the midnight of New Year's Eve, with the river Ravi as a witness, the Congress adopted the creed of 'Poorna Swaraj' and the national tricolour was unfurled amidst cheers and jubilation.

The Congress now urged its members to work exclusively towards attainment of independence. It also authorised the AICC, whenever it deemed fit, to start a programme of civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes in selected areas or all over the country and under whatever safeguards it considered necessary; but in fact this meant that full direction in the tactics of struggle was left to Gandhiji.

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The people of United Provinces, with their top ranking leaders away in Lahore, were keeping themselves abreast with the proceedings of the Congress through the reports in the newspapers. The vernacular newspapers of the province

kept themselves busy in reporting and commenting on the proceedings of the Congress. The Presidential Speech of Jawaharlal Nehru was published by almost all the newspapers of UP. *Ai*, a Hindi daily from Banaras, in its editorials on 19 and 20 January, 1930, congratulated the leaders of the Congress for the shift from Swaraj to Poorna Swaraj. *Shakti* welcomed the proposal of Jawaharlal Nehru that the Congress should work in the villages and that independence will not come merely through speeches at Conferences.

One of the decisions taken by the Working Committee at the Lahore Congress was on the issue of the boycott of the Legislative Councils. It had called upon all the Legislators to immediately resign from their respective councils. It seems that the UPPCC initially faced some opposition in enforcing this part of the programme. The Government reports stated: "it has caused much dissent if not schism in the ranks of the Congress Legislators". The deputy leader of the party in the legislature publicly ridiculed this part of the programme as 'an audacious and useless venture'. Till 9 January 1930, only 8 out of 22 members of the Swaraj Party had resigned.

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The general Government opinion about the ensuing confrontation was one of scepticism. The fortnightly reports for January 1930 says, "It is a matter of speculation whether Congress leaders can discover a new battle cry with which to make an effective emotional appeal to the people and this programme is at present wanting in the element of novelty. The distinction between Swaraj and Poorna Swaraj is too subtle to excite general fervor and it would seem likely that they will have to make up by the violence of their agitation what the programme lacks in popular appeal". Still the Government was in no mood to strengthen itself by promulgating new stricter laws. The Government at the centre was confident enough to meet "any situation likely to develop... by a vigilant and firm administration of the existing law". The Government was emboldened in its wait and watch policy by the activities of its traditional supporters. Many prominent 'Hindu' politicians, not happy with the new Congress creed, were devising means to combat it. The landlords of the Province were also conceiving plans to denounce 'the communistic doctrines' of Jawaharlal Nehru and his youthful followers.

6. Ibid.
7. Government of India (GOI) to Local Governments (LG), Jan. 21 and June 24, 1929, FN. 179/1929, Hom. Poll., NAI.
The first task that the Congress had set for itself was that of organising 'Independence Day' as *Poorna Swaraj* Day on 26 January. For this, preparations had to be made beforehand and the Working Committee had advised the PCCs as to how this was to be done. The towns of UP witnessed the revival of political activities with the return of visitors to the Lahore Congress. Everywhere these leaders found an eager audience to listen to their first-hand experiences of Lahore. So, meetings were organised to explain the decisions of the Lahore Congress. In Benaras, a meeting of around 400 persons was held at Ahilyabai Ghat on 7 January to explain the resolutions of Lahore Congress. Bipin Behari Ganguli, a local Congress leader, reiterated that there could be no hope of *Swaraj* without getting complete independence.9 A similar meeting was addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru at Allahabad on 12 January. He explained to the audience how it had become inevitable for the Congress to pass a resolution for complete independence after the failure of the Government to come to terms with the Congress leaders. He asked the people to join and help the Congress in the coming struggle.10

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9. *WRPA*, January 11, 1930, UPID.

10. Ibid., Jan. 25, 1930.
In Allahabad, political activities in this period were generally concentrated in the Kumbha Mela area. This religious fair provided the Town Congress Committee an ideal ground for its propaganda work. In their endeavour, the Congressmen received constant support from the sadhus and sanyasis camping in that area. From their activities it appeared that the sadhus and sanyasis were quite conversant with nationalist ideas. Most of the time, they themselves took the initiative in organising processions and meetings for the nationalist cause. On 13 January, the Makar-sankranti day and an important bathing day in the month long fair, some 16 sanyasis of the Parivrajak Maha Mandal of Kashi took out a procession with national flags and placards saying 'Long live revolution' and 'Down with imperialism'. On their way they sang national songs and delivered short speeches. In a meeting held at the Punjab Sanatan Dharma Sabha compound in the Kumbha Mela area, one Mr Radheyshyam Tripathi compared Gandhiji's charkha with Lord Krishna's chakra. Other speakers urged the listeners to boycott foreign cloth and take a vow at the time of bathing in the holy Sangam to adopt Charkha and Swadeshi.

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11. A great twelve yearly bathing festival held in the Hindu month of Magh (falls in the christian months of January and February) considered by the Hindus as the greatest religious fair.

12. WRPA, Jan. 18, 1930, UPID.

13. Ibid.
British rule. On one occasion Swami Jagdishwaranand, speaking on 'cow protection', stated that there were 96 crores of cows under Muslim rule while under British rule this number has come down to only 2.5 to 3 crores and that 75,000 cows were being slaughtered everyday.14

Organised preparation for the celebration of 'Independence Day' on 26 January started around 20 January. Processions were taken out daily in different parts of the towns in the morning hours besides the regular Prabhat Pheris. Carrying national flags and posters, these processionists used to sing national songs and deliver short speeches on their way. From 2 PM till dark, these Congressmen used to visit different residential and market areas in small batches either for selling khadi or enrolling new members.15

During the preparations, members of the Kanpur Youth League came out with the idea of organizing a sahbhoj (a feast for all communities) on 23 January. They invited people from all castes and communities to dine together to show the world that they are united. Some of the important leaders who attended this sahbhoj were J.L. Nehru, P.D. Tandon, Sri Prakash, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Bal Krishna Sharma, Mohan Lal Saksena, Mohan Mehta and Maulana Muhammad Usmani.16 Attempts were also made to mobilize the Muslims to

16. Ibid.
take part in the celebrations of Independence Day. In Meerut, Basir Ahmed, Hakim Muhammad Mian, Abbas Samad, Rafiq Ahmed, Ghulam Siddiqui, Riyazuddin and Md. Asfaq Ilahi issued a printed appeal to the Muslims of India and particularly of Meerut district to take part in the celebrations. The appeal stated that the Congress had cast aside the Nehru Report and had declared in favour of complete independence and that as Muslims could never tolerate a life of servitude, they should unite and support Congress. Basir Ahmed and Pirji Nasir also delivered speeches at Juma Mosque on 24 January, requesting local Muslims to participate in Independence day celebrations. But their appeal could get hardly any favourable response from the Muslim masses.17

Jawaharlal Nehru, as the President of Indian National Congress, had directed the PCCs that celebrations on 26 January should start in the morning with the unfurling of the national flag and taking of the 'independence pledge' and a procession and meeting should be organised later in the day.18 The text of the independence pledge, drafted by Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, bears quoting in full:19

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights

17. WRPA, Feb. 1, 1930, UPID.
18. The Leader, Allahabad, Jan. 8, 1930.
and oppress them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Poorna Swaraj or complete independence.

India has been ruined economically. Revenue derived from our people is out of all proportion to our income. Our average income is seven pice, less than two pence, per day and of the heavy taxes we pay, twenty per cent are raised from the land revenue derived from the peasantry and three per cent from salt tax, which falls most heavily on the poor.

Village industries, such as hand spinning, have been destroyed, leaving the peasantry idle for at least four months in the year, and dulling their intellect for want of handicrafts, and nothing has been substituted, as in other countries, for the crafts thus destroyed.

Customs and currency have been so manipulated as to heap further burdens on the peasantry. The British manufactured goods constitute the bulk of our imports. Custom duties betray clear partiality for British manufacturers, and revenue from them is used not to lessen the burden on the masses, but for sustaining a highly extravagant administration. Still more arbitrary has been the manipulation of the exchange ratio which has resulted in millions being drained away from the country.

Politically, India's status has never been so reduced, as under the British regime. No reform has given real political powers to the people. The tallest of us have to bend before foreign authority. The rights of free expression of opinion and free association have been denied to us, and many of our countrymen are compelled to live in exile abroad and they cannot return to their homes. All administrative talent is killed, and the masses have to be satisfied with petty village offices.

Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings, our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us.
Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly, and the presence of an alien army of occupation, employed with deadly effect to crush in us the spirit of resistance, has made us think that we cannot look after ourselves or put up a defence against foreign aggression, and defend our homes and families from the attack of thieves, robbers and miscreants.

We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused us this four-fold disaster to our country. We recognise, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will prepare ourselves, by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help, stop payment of taxes without doing violence, even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured. We, therefore, hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing Poorna Swaraj.

This programme was a huge success in the towns of UP as it was in the rest of the country. The response of the masses everywhere was spectacular. This can easily be seen from the number of people participating in the processions and meetings organised on Independence Day. In smaller towns, the number of participants varied from 5000 to 10,000 but in larger towns their number was much larger.20 In Agra, around 20,000 people including many women participated in a procession and later in a meeting took the independence pledge.21 The reports in the newspapers say that everywhere people hoisted national flags upon their

21. The Leader, Jan. 29, 1930.
houses and shops and in the evening illuminated their residences and business premises, though there was no instruction of this sort from the Congressmen. At some places, the processionists were greeted with traditional Hindu rites and Aarti and Tilak was done to the national flags. Even in the remote hill towns of Almora, Ranikhet, Tarikhet, etc., people displayed tremendous enthusiasm towards independence day celebrations. At Tarikhet, Congress workers succeeded in selling around 80 pictures of Gandhiji apart from numerous national flags and Gandhi caps.

In most of the towns students were the most active participants of the celebrations. In Allahabad, long before 8 AM, the national flag was seen flying over most of the hostels of the university. The university students, undeterred by the prohibitory notice of the Vice-Chancellor, came out in a procession with a national flag and after marching through the city met the main procession originating from the Kumbha Mela under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. The students of Lucknow University, too, had plans to hoist the national flag on the Union Office and other buildings but the university authorities in collaboration with the city administration prevented them from doing so.

25. The Leader, Jan. 29, 1930.
Their second attempt on 7 February was also frustrated by the university authorities.\textsuperscript{26}

While there is no doubt that this programme was a great success, it failed to enthuse the Muslim masses. Although at some places Muslims were active in the celebrations (for example Maulana Ahmed Jame Khan and his wife were the main architects of the celebrations in Gonda and Balrampur, and in Agra Yakub Ali Vakil and Hakim Abdul Sattar took an active part in the celebrations),\textsuperscript{27} in general, they kept themselves away from the Congress programme. Nevertheless, the response it received from other sections greatly boosted the morale of the Congressmen.

Generally speaking, the Government did not interfere with the celebrations and there was no reported conflict with the police. But in Benaras, the police arrested the Secretary and a member of Benaras Youth League on the charge of distributing a revolutionary pamphlet called 'The Philosophy of Bomb', published by Hindustan Republican Association. This pamphlet was also circulated in Allahabad, Kanpur, Agra, Jhansi and Mathura.\textsuperscript{28} Government's crusade against revolutionary pamphlets and books continued even after independence day. In Allahabad, the police carried out a search in the shops of the Indian Press on 12 February and

\textsuperscript{26} Ai, Feb. 10, 1930.
\textsuperscript{27} Ai, Jan. 30, \textit{The Leader}, Jan 29, 1930.
\textsuperscript{28} Telegram to the Home Department (Dept.), Delhi by UPAO, Lucknow, Feb. 1, 1930, FN - 88/1930, \textit{Hom. Poll.}, NAI.
seized the copies of the proscribed book *Azadi Ke Diwane*. The author and publisher of this book, Pt. Vidya Bhusan Shukla and Bankey Lal Sharma, were also arrested.\(^{29}\) In a similar raid, in Benaras, police arrested Mr. Brahmachari Indra, Master Indra Dev Sinha and Kunwar Pratap Singh and seized a book called *Kranti Ke Maidan Ke*.\(^{30}\) Sometimes these searches and raids evoked protest from the people. For example, in Allahabad, students of Sanatan Dharma College hoisted the national flag on their hostel in protest against the police search of the room of Chhail Behari Kantak for a banned poster.\(^{31}\)

Celebration of independence day was followed by a comparative lull in the activities of the Congress. While waiting for Gandhiji to decide on the precise methods of non-violent struggle for *Poorna Swaraj*, the Congress continued its regular activities like *Prabhat Pheras*, propagation of khadi and propaganda against foreign cloth. Important Congress leaders of the province like Jawaharlal Nehru, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi of Kanpur and Sri Krishna Datt Paliwal of Agra advised the Congressmen to use this time in popularizing the decisions of the Lahore Congress and mobilize people especially in rural areas for the coming struggle. Jawaharlal Nehru himself took advantage of the *Kumbha Mela* and twice addressed the pilgrims on independence.

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30. Ibid. and *Ai*, Feb. 10, 1930.

where he stressed the duty of the public in respect of any
instruction that Gandhiji might issue about non-payment of
tax. 32 He also visited Rae Bareli and addressed many
meetings in the rural areas. Other leaders were also engaged
in mobilizing peasants and organising Kisan Sabhas. In other
towns of UP, viz., Agra, Jhansi and Mathura, the strike by
the employees of the GIP Railway had maintained the
enthusiasm in Congress circles. The strikers were getting
all kinds of support from Congressmen and especially from
Youth Leagues. Students of Prem Mahavidyalaya, Mathura,
collected money to support the striking employees. The
Jhansi Youth League organised public meetings to solicit
support in favour of the strikers. The Secretary of the Agra
District Congress Committee issued a notice in the local
newspapers, requesting people to help the poor employees of
the GIP Railway. But it seems all these efforts of Congress
and Youth Leagues could not convert these strikers into their
permanent supporters, as the intelligence reports say that
'the workers generally' were 'not favourably inclined towards
satyagraha'. 33

Efforts to solicit the support of the minorities,
especially the Muslims, were also made. Leading Muslim
Congressmen, including M.A. Ansari, T.A.K. Sherwani and
Khaliquzzaman were unhappy about another round of national
struggle without some kind of communal pact. In the working

32. WRPA, Feb. 8, 1930, UPID.

33. Ibid., Feb. 15, March 1, 8 & 15, 1930.
committee, which met on 15 February, Syed Mahmud asserted that the Muslims as a whole were indifferent to the struggle and he feared that civil disobedience would rapidly degenerate into Hindu-Muslim riots, with official encouragement. Gandhiji and other Congress leaders did realise this danger but decided to march ahead as, according to them, there was no alternative.34 At lower levels most of the Muslim leaders were engaged in mobilizing their fellow religionists against 'SARDA ACT' and seldom expressed any sympathy towards Congress activities. The attendance in their meetings far outnumbered that in the ones organized by the nationalist Muslims.

Meanwhile, the Congress Working Committee, in February 1930, invested Gandhiji with full powers to launch the civil disobedience movement at a time and place of his choice. The turning down of Gandhiji's 11 point ultimatum, sent by him to the Viceroy on 31 January 1930 (which had seemed to many a sad climb down from the Poorna Swaraj resolution), left no other way except civil disobedience. By the end of February 1930, Gandhiji decided in favour of opposing the salt tax which constituted 'the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise'. On 2 March, he addressed his historic letter to the Viceroy in which he first explained at great length why he regarded British rule as a curse and then informed him of his plan of action. On 12 March, Gandhiji

34. Syed Mahmud to M.A. Ansari, undated letter, Ansari Papers, as quoted in S. Gopal, op cit., p. 139.
started with a band of 71 members of his Sabarmati Ashram for Dandi at the sea coast, to break the salt law. Before leaving, Gandhiji gave directions for further action, impressed on the people the necessity for non-violence and prepared them for the Government’s response: "wherever possible, civil disobedience of salt law shall be started ... Liquor and foreign cloth shops can be picketed. We can refuse taxes if we have the requisite strength. The lawyers can give up practice. The public can boycott the courts by refraining from litigation. Government servants can resign their posts.... I prescribe only one condition, viz., let our pledge of truth and non-violence as the only means for the attainment of Swaraj be faithfully kept". 35

12 March, the day on which Gandhiji set out for Dandi to break the salt law, was celebrated in the towns of UP as Satyagraha Divas. Preparation for the satyagraha started on a war footing. The Congress in UP had been gearing itself up for the present movement since early 1929. It had reorganised the PCC office. A full time Assistant Secretary and Inspectors had been appointed to visit different districts and set up Congress Committees. The Provincial Political Conference held at Farrukhabad from 30 March to 1 April, 1929, had called for the enrolment of 100,000 new members and 10,000 volunteers during the year. It had also appointed a Committee to raise a Satyagraha Fund for the payment of volunteers and decided that a monthly bulletin


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should be issued to all Congress Committees and members. With this there was a distinct spurt in organizational activity. By early September 1929, the districts of Allahabad, Benaras, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Bareilly, Almora and Agra were said to have enrolled the quota of members laid down for them by the PCC. In mid-September the General Secretary of the UPPCC reported the enrolment of 65,000 new members from only 35 districts.36 A PCC meeting at Kanpur on 8 December, 1929, appointed sub-committees for prohibition, the boycott of foreign cloth, *Khadi* and *acchutoddhar* work. In another PCC meeting at Kanpur on 19 January 1930, a sub-committee was appointed to report on the localities in the province suitable for civil disobedience. Working on the report of this Committee, the PCC which met in Rae Bareli in February decided to launch *satyagraha* in five districts. In Agra, Sri Krishna Datt Paliwal was made the dictator of the Satyagraha Committee; in Allahabad Jawaharlal Nehru was the dictator; Kanpur had Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi as dictator; Benaras had Sampurnanand as dictator and for Rae Bareli there was a Committee of Mohanlal Saxena, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Satyanarayan, Mahesh Narayan Singh, etc., to supervise the *satyagraha*. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, the President of the UPPCC was made the dictator of the Provincial Satyagraha Committee and was invested with powers to

give orders to any district to start satyagraha.37

These newly established Satyagraha Committees started chalking out plans to launch the satyagraha. Publication of Satyagraha Samachar was started in different towns to propagate Satyagraha. Through the pages of Satyagraha Samachar and other vernacular newspapers, appeals were made to all and sundry to come forth and join Congress either as a member or a volunteer. Ordinary members as well as senior leaders of the party started touring the rural areas with a view to preparing the rural masses for a possible no-rent campaign. All this resulted in the formation of grassroot Congress Committees and a more elaborate and efficient organization than had existed a few years ago or even during non-cooperation days. In Allahabad city, the Congress organised Mohalla committees in every quarter. In Saharanpur, it was noticed that most villages of any size had their own Congress Committees.38

Meanwhile, Holi (on 17 March) was celebrated in the towns of UP in an unconventional style. In place of the traditional holika-dahan, bonfires of foreign cloth were organised. In Allahabad city, volunteers were collecting foreign clothes from different localities for a week and in the course of doing that they were also persuading people to

37. FN - G-40(i)/1929, All India Congress Committee (AICC) Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML); The Leader, Dec 13, 1929; WRPA, Jan. 25, 1929, UPID.

give up foreign cloth for **khadi**. This boycott movement was also going on in the Allahabad High Court where lawyers, according to the newspaper reports, were readily signing the boycott pledge.\(^{39}\) Religious organizations like the Ram Krishna Mission and the Arya Samaj also came out in support of the Satyagraha. Ram Krishna Ashram of Kanpur issued two leaflets 'A Message for the Young' and 'Lion Roar' with the object of arousing patriotism of the young men of India.\(^{40}\) Arya Samajists were a little more overt in their support. At a conference of 'Aryan Youths' held at Gurukul Kangdi, Haridwar, on 16 March, they passed resolutions in favour of khaddar and boycott of foreign cloth. Another unanimously passed resolution asked young men to keep themselves ready to start Satyagraha by peaceful means. One of the speakers at the conference exhorted the audience that if the Arya Samajists failed to respond to Gandhiji's appeal in the present war of independence, they would sully the fair name of the Samaj.\(^{41}\)

And by the end of March, Congressmen appeared to be quite satisfied with their preparation for the **Satyagraha**. Writing to a friend on 4 April, Jawaharlal Nehru seemed quite confident:\(^{42}\)

\(^{39}\) *Ai*, March 14, 19, 1930.

\(^{40}\) *WRPA*, March 1, 1930, UPID.


\(^{42}\) To Roger Baldwin, April 4, 1930, *Jawaharlal Nehru Papers*, NMML.
There is no doubt that India is awake and astir and we are going to give a good fight to the British Government. The Government will no doubt try its utmost to break us. But it is quite likely that in attempting to crack the nut the cracker itself may break. Somehow I cannot help thinking that the days of British Empire are numbered now and it is going to be our privilege and good fortune to help to end it.

The Government, on the other hand, was cautiously watching the growing support of the Congress. On its part, it had succeeded in consolidating the loyalty of its traditional supporters. The zamindars of UP met in Lucknow on 6 February and criticised the new Congress creed of independence. And till the end of March, there was no report of any resignations by the government servants in favour of Satyagraha. But the intensified Congress activities in the second half of March compelled the Government to send confidential instructions to District Officers as to how they should deal with the local offenders against the Salt Act. The main point emphasised was that Government did not desire to take action against the followers but actions should be directed against the leaders.

News of Gandhiji’s progress, of his speeches, of the teeming crowds that greeted and followed the marchers, of the 300 village officials in Gujrat who resigned their posts in answer to his appeal, was carried day after day by newspapers to readers across the country and broadcast live.

43. FR, Feb 1, FN-18/III/1930; Hom. Poll., NAI.
44. FR, March II, FN-18/IV/1930 Hom. Poll., NAI.
by thousands of Congress workers to eager listeners. The newspapers of UP, especially the vernacular ones, viz., Ai, Vartaman, Pratap, Shakti, Medina, etc. not only carried these news but also published special editorials to commemorate this great march of the Mahatama. Ai brought out a special edition in the afternoon of 6 March, carrying the news that Gandhiji had begun his march. So, by the time Gandhiji reached Dandi, he had the whole nation aroused and expectant waiting restlessly for the final signal. On 6 April, by picking up a handful of salt, Gandhiji inaugurated the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Once the way was cleared by Gandhiji's ritual beginning, the defiance of the salt law started all over the country. "It seemed", to Jawaharlal Nehru, "as though a spring had been suddenly released" and all over the country, in towns and villages, salt manufacture was the topic of the day.45 In Tamil Nadu, Malabar, Andhra, Orissa and even in Assam, similar marches to the sea coast were organised by the respective provincial leaders to defy the salt law.

But in UP, due to the handicap of being a landlocked province, only technical breaches could be organised. Here salt was manufactured by boiling some kind of earth. Satyagraha started on 7 April at five selected places, viz., Allahabad, Benaras, Kanpur, Agra and Rae Bareli. In Agra, volunteers were taken out in a procession accompanied by a band party, playing national songs and an ambulance with a


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doctor and a nurse. The 'satyagrahis' were received at many places with garlands and sherbat was served to them. Salt making started around 8 O' clock in the morning and continued unhindered till 2 PM when the police intervened and arrested Sri Krishna Datt Paliwal, who was leading the satyagraha, for breach of the Salt Act.46 In Benaras, satyagraha was offered at the Kashi Vidyapith. Volunteers led by Sri Baijnath Singh reached the designated spot in a procession and, after fixing a signboard saying 'Bina License Namak Banane Ka Karkhana' (unlicensed salt factory), started making salt. There was no interference from the police and salt preparation continued peacefully.47 At Kanpur, the salt law was broken on 7 April at about 5 PM in the City Congress Committee's Tilak Bhavan, under the leadership of Mrs Gangadhar Ganesh Jog and Pyarelal Agarwal. When no arrest was made till the evening, a public meeting was organised where Pt Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi made an appeal to the people to break the salt law either in a group or individually.48 In Allahabad, Jawaharlal Nehru, assisted by some volunteers and the ladies of his family, prepared salt with much fanfare. Surprisingly, the administration took no action against him. The failure of the Government to take action against Jawaharlal emboldened the masses as they

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46. Ai, April 9, 1930 and Chintamani Shukla, Agra Janpad Ka Rajnaitik Itihas.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.

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thought that the Government was afraid to arrest him. From the next day, satyagraha was offered in the city on a much larger scale. Preparation of salt started in various parts of the city and once it was even manufactured on a vehicle that was taken in a procession.49 The Government on its part came out with what Jawaharlal Nehru termed 'an amazingly idiotic' communiqué which concluded that salt had not been manufactured as the mixture which was boiled to get salt, was brought in bottles and already contained salt.50

In Rae Bareli, from the very beginning, the activities of the Congress workers, and especially of Jawaharlal Nehru, among the tenants of the district for non-payment of rent, were causing some sleepless nights to the Government.51 The government was afraid that by successfully breaking the salt law, Congress would gain some more popularity and infiltrate into some more areas. Determined not to allow this to happen, it took every precaution to make satyagraha a failure. Contrary to the policy adopted in the rest of the province, the police in Rae Bareli arrested around 40 volunteers, well before 8 April, thus severely reducing the strength of the Congress in the district. In this situation, volunteers were summoned from other districts and

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49. Ai, April 12, 1930.

50. Letter to Syed Mahmud, April 11, 1930, JN Papers NMML.

fresh recruitment was done in rural areas to meet this crisis. Finally, satyagraha started at three places on 8 April under the supervision of Pt Motilal Nehru.

In addition to the arrests, the Government had applied a strict censor on any news going out of the district and especially on the reports of the Prakashan Vibhag (Publication Division) of the DCC to different newspapers of the province. The news of satyagraha in Rae Bareli could only be published in newspapers on 27 April when a messenger of the DCC personally handed over the reports to Ai office in Benaras.52

The districts other than these five were permitted to hold satyagraha on 10 April. In Lucknow, satyagraha started on 13 April. Volunteers led by the editor of Hamdam, Mr Intiaz Ahmed, reached Gangu Nawab’s Bagh to manufacture salt but the police intervened and seized their utensils. Undeterred, the volunteers then prepared salt in Aminudaula Park. Next day, the police arrested eight important leaders of Lucknow - Mr Mohanlal Saxena, Mr Intiaz Ahmed, Mr C.B. Gupta, Mr Harish Chandra Bajpai, Mr Jaydayal Awasthi, Dr Lakshmi Sahay, Mr Shyam Sunder Kauser and Mr S.S. Nigam.53 Some other places where salt law was successfully broken were Gorakhpur, Basti, Mirzapur, Deoria, Azamgarh, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri, and Aligarh.

52. Ai, April 27, 1930.
53. Ai, April 16, 1930.
Agitation against the salt law was continued, in most of the towns, till the end of April. After that, it was dropped in favour of boycott and swadeshi. In towns where it had started a little later, it was continued even after April. In Allahabad, after a successful violation of the law, it was terminated on 27 April. On 28 April a huge procession was taken out which after marching through the streets of the city, ended with the burning an effigy of the salt law. P.D. Tandon, the current dictator of the satyagraha, formally announced the termination of satyagraha though he permitted individuals to prepare salt in their home if they so desired.54

The way people responded to the salt satyagraha proved 'the amazing knack' of Gandhiji 'to impress the multitude' and compelled people like Jawaharlal Nehru 'to feel abashed and ashamed for having questioned the efficacy of this method'.55 Thousands participated and lacks of people witnessed the preparation of salt. In Allahabad, on the day of its inauguration, more than one thousand people witnessed it. In Benaras, around 50,000 people from nearby villages visited the satyagraha site from 7 to 10 April and the Ai reports that they returned with the determination to make salt in their own villages.56 This abounding enthusiasm of the people helped salt-making spread 'like a prairie...

54. The Leader, April 28, 1930.
56. Ai, April 10 & 12, 1930.
fire'. In the Rae Bareli district, despite an alert administration ready to suppress any violation of law, salt was being manufactured openly in many villages around 25 April.\(^{57}\) It seems that satyagraha had removed the fear of the Government and for the masses breaking of salt law became the synonym of destroying the British empire.\(^{58}\)

Purchasing illicit salt became a craze. Everywhere volunteers used to auction the illegally prepared salt and collect, sometimes, unbelievable amounts. In Allahabad, it fetched the highest amount of Rs.175 for a few grams of illicit salt. At Lucknow, one bidder sold his gold chain to buy a packet of salt being sold for Rs.40. In Benaras, even a Daroga, on duty near a satyagraha site, accepted the salt presented to him by the volunteers. He even asked for some more for his family members. Generally, batches of women were sent to markets to sell packets of contraband salt and in most of the places they succeeded in collecting considerable amounts. In Kanpur, the Town Congress Committee earned Rs.99 by the sale of contraband salt.\(^{59}\)

Students again turned out to be the main participants of the movement. Oozing with enthusiasm, they formed the main

\(^{57}\) Ai., April 27, 1930.

\(^{58}\) This is proved by the most famous 'slogan' of that time 'Namak Kanun Tod Diya, British Samrajya Phod Diya' (We have violated the salt law and destroyed the British empire), Ai, April 16, 1930.

\(^{59}\) Ai, April 13, 14 & 19, 1930 and FN-P21/1931, AICC, NHML.
constituents of the volunteer corps. More often than not it was their courage and determination that enabled other volunteers to face the police attack. On 7 April, the day satyagraha started, most of the schools and colleges in the towns of UP observed a strike. In Benaras, for example, students of Dayanand High School boycotted their classes, hoisted the national flag in their campus and marched in a procession to the Satyagraha site to encourage the volunteers.60

Businessmen, all over the province, were another community which took great interest in the satyagraha. Although they were not very active participants of the movement, they provided all kinds of help (especially in fund raising) to the Congress. If we leave aside the aspect of active physical participation, they could certainly be counted among the greatest supporters of the Congress. To quote Lala Chiranjee Mal of Almora: 'Lashen Nahin to Aahen to Main Maidan Me' (Even if lives are not laid down on the battle ground the cries of support exist).61 In a meeting held at Kanpur on 7 April, the businessmen of the city decided to support the movement with money as, according to them, this was the only way they could show their patriotism to the nation. In the same meeting, they decided to start a fund for the welfare of the family members of the imprisoned volunteers. Pursuing this decision, they formed a

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60. Aj, April, 9, 1930.
61. Shakti, April 19, 1930.
satyagraha sahayak sabha on 11 April consisting of 11 members (all businessmen) under the leadership of Sri Ram Rattan Gupta, to collect and look after the fund. In addition, they also conceded the request of the Congressmen to pay fifty percent salary to their own employees who got arrested as Congress volunteers.62 These activities of the businessmen of Kanpur are not at all an isolated example, similar trends were witnessed in other towns also, especially in Benaras, Allahabad and Agra. Another form of support was their positive and quick response to the calls for hartal or strike. Seldom did Congress workers face any kind of protest in getting their strike calls implemented. But this kind of support was limited to Hindu businessmen only. Very few Muslim businessmen came out in support of the movement. Rather they often created very awkward situations for the Congress. Making them comply with the strike calls often led to minor skirmishes.

Another section which played an important role during the Satyagraha was that of women. In fact, salt satyagraha provided a much desired opportunity to the women of India to break the age old servitude imposed on them. In a rather socially conservative province like UP, their participation in the agitations along with their menfolk can be called a movement in itself. The ladies of the upper class, who had some little exposure to the world outside the walls of their houses and the middle class women, persuaded by their upper

class sisters, snatched this opportunity and came out on the roads, in support of the movement. However, regular participation of women was limited to some larger towns only. Perhaps this was because the senior leaders of the party were the residents of these towns and it was the ladies of their families who were the main mobilizers. In Allahabad, for example, the women of the Nehru family succeeded in persuading many middle class women to join the Congress either as a member or a volunteer. In Benaras, the presence of a large Bengali community made the task of the upper class women a little easier. In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the AICC, seventy-nine Bengali women 'and many more who could not sign' expressed their willingness 'to stand under the Congress flag and follow the command of Mahatama Gandhi' as it had become difficult for them to remain just the 'idle spectators in this national struggle for complete independence'. So, these women had decided 'to follow the Puranic custom of Goddess Ranchandi to shower blessings on the brave soldiers for their victory'.

During the salt satyagraha, women were not generally engaged in the illegal manufacture of salt but were mainly entrusted with the job of selling the contraband salt. As a matter of fact, this was not the optimum utilization of their capacities which were realised fully a little later, during the boycott and picketing programme.

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63. FN-G-44(i)/1930, AICC, NMML.
Meanwhile, following the directives of the Provincial Government, the District Officers concentrated mainly on prosecuting the leading offenders under the salt act. Upto 16 April, around 71 persons had been prosecuted, and the leading offenders were Jawaharlal Nehru and Sri Krishna Datt Paliwal who were arrested on 14 and 7 April respectively. Others included Babu Sampurnanand, Hariharnath Shastri, Mohanlal Saxena, and Chaudhry Raghbir Narayan Singh of Meerut. This policy of 'picking out dangerous local leaders' did not immediately bear much fruit as the satyagraha continued even after their arrests. But in the course of time it did succeed, to some extent, in disrupting the movement.

Further, to counter the movement, the Government had invested 27 out of the 48 District Officers of the Province with the special powers of Assistant Commissioner under the Salt Act. The officials believed that in these 27 districts the instances of 'demonstration of manufacture of illicit salt' were 'serious' though they claimed that in most of the cases no illicit salt was manufactured. This initial

65. Ibid.
66. FR, April II, FN.18/V/1930, Hom. Poll., NAI.
67. See 64
denial of any breach in salt law was immediately followed by the directives to the district officials to confiscate the illegally prepared salt and to prevent the volunteers from manufacturing the same. The method adopted by the police was to attack the satyagraha site and confiscate the illicit salt as well as the utensils being used by the volunteers. But the indomitable volunteers used to acquire another set of utensils to start afresh, forcing the police to repeat its action. This cat and mouse play generally culminated in the arrest of the volunteers.68 Thus, preventing the volunteers from breaking the salt law did not prove to be an easy task for the police. Sometimes the peaceful and determined volunteers inflicted many a retreat on the police which, out of frustration, resorted to lathi charge and other coercive methods. At Mainpuri, for example, the frustrated officers poured boiling water on the volunteers and ordered lathi charge on the crowd in order to confiscate the illicit salt.69 But on some occasions these coercive methods only made the volunteers more determined, as it was seen in Badaun, where volunteers, after facing lathi charge the previous day, organised salt manufacture right in front of the police station.70 The Government reports claimed that the demonstrations at Agra, Allahabad, Benaras, Rae


Bareli, Rampur, Lucknow and Meerut were 'most serious' while at other places they were just 'petty'. The official reports also contradict the newspaper reports that the movement had penetrated the rural areas. It gives us an impression that the demonstrations were mostly confined to the headquarters of the district, Handia Tehsil of Allahabad being the only exception where the Congressmen succeeded in staging the satyagraha.

By the end of April, the major centres of satyagraha, after successfully breaking the salt law, were preparing to drop the salt agitation. In Allahabad, it was dropped on 28 April and in Lucknow, the next programme of the movement, i.e., boycott and picketing, had already started on 25 April. Picketing started in Allahabad on 1 May and none other than Motilal Nehru, the acting President of AICC, led the volunteers. Next day the women of his family, Mrs Uma Nehru and Mrs. Kamla Nehru, wife of Jawaharlal, joined in the picketing and persuaded many Muslim women against buying foreign cloth on the occasion of Id-ul-fitr. In Lucknow, volunteers of Nav Yuvak Dal were led by Dr Ram Narayan Khanna and Mr Bannerjee on 25 April. Around twenty per cent of the shopkeepers closed their shops on their arrival and in other shops no sale could take place due to intense picketing. On


72. Ibid.

73. The Leader, May 3 & 4, 1930.
28 April, students of Shia College came out and selected the shop of Hazi Abdul Razzaq for picketing. Within just a couple of days of the start of the picketing, the majority of Hindu cloth leaders of Kanpur and Benaras came to terms with the local Congress Committees. They signed a pledge not to sell foreign cloth without the permission of the Congress. Along with the boycott of foreign goods, a call was also given by the Allahabad Students Association, on 12 May, to boycott Anglo-Indian and pro-Government newspapers.

The arrest of Mahatama Gandhi on 5 May created a sensation in the towns of UP and massive protest demonstrations were organized. Almost all the towns observed complete hartal on 8 May. But unlike Sholapur and some other places, demonstrations in UP were peaceful and not a single 'untoward incident' was reported from anywhere, though the Government had taken every precaution and even sought the help of military authorities to deal with any eventuality of violence.

Repeated hartals, processions and meetings helped to keep the enthusiasm of the common man intact. The Government officials feared that this 'explosive atmosphere' could lead to violence. Their fear did come true, but it was they who were responsible for violence and not the Congressmen. In

74. Ai, April 28 & May 2, 1930.
75. FR, May I & II, FN-18/6/1930, Hom.Poll., NAI.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid. and The Leader, May 10, 1930.
Lucknow, a procession of 150 volunteers including 24 women, led by Mrs Mitra, started for Aminuddaula Park on 26 May. Followed by an orderly crowd of thousands, when this procession reached the Royal Hotel crossing and was to proceed towards Hazratganj, it found its way blocked by mounted police. Despite knowing the fact that Hazratganj was restricted for processions, the volunteers insisted on taking that route. The police, on the other hand, was adamant in not allowing this procession to pass that route. A few hours of demonstration saw the arrest of the female volunteers and an attack on the crowd. Even the women and children among the crowd were not spared. Around 220 injuries were reported in the Congress office. Next day, on 27 May, police had to open fire on the crowd which had collected at the same spot in protest against the lathi charge of the previous day and insisted on going through the same restricted route. This incident resulted in serious protests in many other towns and a general strike was observed on 27 and 28 May.78

Muslims, again, by and large, kept themselves away from the activities of the Congress. The Jamait-ul-Ulema and the counter organisation Jamait Tausi-ul-Ulema held simultaneous meetings at Amroha. The former, after a long discussion, passed a resolution in favour of the Congress programme while the latter resolved against it.79 The "Peshawar massacre", however, did result in some protests by Muslim

78. Ibid. and The Leader, May 29 & 30, 1930.
79. Ibid.
masses. In Saharanpur, a special prayer was offered in the mosque 'for the martyrs of Peshawar and for the destruction of the enemies of Islam'.

A relative decline was observed in the activities of the Congress in the month of June. However, regular picketing at foreign cloth and liquor shops continued with varying intensity. In Lucknow, Congress activities resumed on 3 June after a week's suspension when a batch of six volunteers, led by Mr J.K. Bannerjee, went to defy the orders under Sec.144. It had been decided by the Lucknow City Congress Committee to send a batch of volunteers everyday to defy the orders.

The month of July began with processions and meetings organised in protest against the arrest of Pt. Motilal Nehru and Dr Syed Mahmud on 30 June. Picketing of foreign cloth shops started losing its importance in some bigger towns as the majority of cloth merchants had got their stock of foreign cloth sealed by the Congress officials. A report from Kanpur suggests that on 27 July not a single yard of foreign cloth was available in the market. But Congressmen were not satisfied by just reduction of sale in foreign cloth. They had aimed at the complete boycott of foreign cloth by the masses. So, preaching against foreign cloth and in favour of swadeshi and khadi was continued by

80. WRPA, May 17, 1930, UPID
81. The Leader, June 6, 1930.
82. The Leader, June 30, 1930.
almost all the DCCs. For this, meetings were organised at Benaras, Allahabad, Kanpur, Agra and a few other towns. The main speaker was the former Speaker of Central Legislative Assembly, Mr V.J. Patel, who spoke at length in favour of the Civil Disobedience Movement and preached a complete boycott of British goods.83

The education department of the Government of U.P. issued a circular in July to its affiliated institutions, containing instructions to prevent the institutions from becoming a recruitment ground for Congress volunteers. Publication of this circular resulted in the revival of agitation. A protest meeting was organised in Allahabad, on 17 July, by the Students' Association with Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit in the chair. This meeting decided to plant national flags in every school ground and advised students to sing the national song at the time of hoisting.84 Following this decision, members of Students' Association picketed the Government Inter College at Allahabad and despite the presence of police succeeded in planting the national flag in the college ground. In Kanpur, the national flag was hoisted on Government High School on 18 July and it could not be removed without the intervention of police. On 27 July, students of Christchurch College, Kanpur, encouraged by the members of the Youth League and Congress, planted the national flag on their college building which resulted in the

84. The Leader, July 19, 1930.
expulsion of six students from college rolls. The Government officials had a tough time in getting these flags removed. Their efforts received a further jolt when most of the District Boards started passing resolutions in favour of placing not only the national flags but also the photographs of Mahatama Gandhi in its primary and middle school buildings. According to intelligence reports, the members of Kanpur Youth League, working independently, decided to request the principals and headmasters of different schools and colleges to allow the students to hoist national flags on their college and school buildings. They also had plans to urge the students to wear only khadi as their school uniform.

Muslims by and large continued their apathy towards Congress activities. A section of the Muslims held a 'large and successful' anti-Congress meeting at Allahabad under the chairmanship of Mr Shaukat Ali. A counter meeting of the nationalist Muslims was organised at Lucknow by the Maharaja of Mahmudabad and Dr M.A. Ansari. The 200 delegates attending the conference at Lucknow passed three resolutions, drafted by M.A. Ansari and T.A.K. Sherwani, demanding the boycott of the Simon Commission report, making the attendance of Muslims at the Round Table Conference conditional on the release of Gandhiji and others expressing sympathy with the

85. This account is based on FR, July I, FN-18/VIII/1930, Hom. Poll., NAI; The Leader, July 18, 19, 21 & 31, 1931.

86. WRPA, July 12, 1930, UPID.
victims of the Peshawar massacre. The anti-Congress conference at Allahabad concentrated mainly on 'safeguarding the interests of Muslims'. This conference was attended by 5000 delegates. 87 Pro-Congress meetings were held at some other places also but, as the official report says, 'without producing any appreciable impression'. 88 However, the intelligence reports accept that Muslims were dissatisfied with the report of the Simon Commission and the Muslim Congress Leaders were trying to win them over to the movement. 89

A new kind of development which is witnessed in these months is the propaganda against the police force. It had started with the request to the policemen to give up their jobs and support the Congress movement. Posters arguing this were regularly found pasted near the police stations or sent directly to the police personnel by post. When they showed no response to these requests, a kind of social boycott started against them. At many places, shopkeepers refused to sell goods to them and menial workers declined to work for them. At Kanpur, members of the Youth League started persuading the houseowners to evict police, C.I.D. and District intelligence staff from their houses. Intelligence reports also say that in a number of Districts, anti-police feeling had been 'confined to abuse, pure and

87. WRPA, July 19, 1930, UPID.
89. WRPA, July 12, 1930, UPID.
simple', but in others, agitators had worked up crowds to the point of direct action. At many places and especially at Kanpur, Bijnor, Haridwar, Jhansi and Mirzapur, police had to face 'showers of brickbats' and angry demonstrations.90

By the end of July, 1150 persons had been convicted by the police under different acts.91

With the beginning of August, picketing of foreign cloth shops had become less frequent, as in most of the towns, almost all the foreign cloth dealers, barring a few Muslims, had signed the pledge not to import foreign cloth for six months. Now picketing was largely concentrated at liquor, ganja and bhang shops. Due to this picketing, the liquor consumption in Meerut was reported to have reduced by 35%.92 In Benaras, the Youth League had decided to start a shivir under the name of Swadeshi Police Camp to provide proper training to volunteers in picketing. Apart from training the volunteers in picketing, the shivir also intended to prepare them for other Congress duties and work against the C.I.D. and policemen who used to obstruct the

90. WRPA, July 12 & 19, 1930, UPID.
92. WRPA, July 19, 1930, UPID.
Picketing activities. Schools and colleges continued to be picketed in this month also but concentration had now shifted to the Universities of Allahabad, Lucknow and Benaras.

The arrests of Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya and V.J. Patel in Bombay led to large scale demonstrations at many places and especially at Benaras. A batch of students from Benaras Hindu University left for Bombay to offer satyagraha against the arrest of Pt. Malviya. On their way, they 'incited' the students at Allahabad, Agra, Lucknow and Aligarh.

The intensity of Congress activities showed some decline in the beginning of September, but the arrest of the five members of the Congress Working Committee at Delhi and the observing of 'National' and 'Boycott' weeks led to an increase in the number of meetings and processions. The picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops continued as usual. A new dimension was added to the boycott of liquor in Benaras where a notice was found pasted, warning the public that the detectives of 'Kranti Dal' were present everywhere and that the Dal would deal severely with any person taking intoxicating drugs.

93. WRPA, August 9, 1930, UPID.
94. FR, August I & II, FN-18/9/1930, Hom. Poll., NAI.
95. Ibid. and The Leader, August 7, 1930.
96. WRPA, September 20, 1930, UPID.
Sporadic picketing at educational institutions still continued, though at universities it had almost ceased. While the authorities of Allahabad University had come to an agreement with the Congress, at Lucknow the Congress faced a defeat mainly due to the resistance of Muslim students and the efforts of the local 'Tanzim' organisations.

A new feature which had emerged in this period was the growing tendency towards violence. At Ballia, a Sub-Inspector was attacked by a crowd of villagers and at Benaras, a bomb exploded near a police outpost, resulting in the death of an old woman. There were some more similar incidents in the Province but they were mostly confined to rural areas.97

Propaganda against the police still continued though open abuse and social boycott was not so frequently mentioned. But insidious suggestions of resignation from government service in order to help Congress coupled in some instances with veiled threats, were common. In Kanpur, there was an attack on the rural police on the arrest of volunteers and at Kanpur city, a Sub-Inspector, Asghar Hussaini, was handed a threatening letter while he was taking notes at a meeting, warning him that he would be shot if he persisted in taking notes in future. The letter bore the writer's name as Chandra Shekhar Azad. However, the police believed this to be a handiwork of some local students. In Benaras, a bomb was thrown on the house of a Police Inspector. Bomb

explosions by this time had become a common feature in some bigger towns and nobody, not even the police, was very sure about the source of these bombs, though on some occasions it did blame the members of the Youth League. 98

How far these acts of violence influenced the minds of the public is very difficult to know, nevertheless, sympathy towards militants or revolutionary nationalism was apparent. Following the publication of the judgement of the Lahore Conspiracy Case, practically every district of the province had one or more meetings to express sympathy with the 'convicts' and disapproval of the sentences. In the meetings, Bhagat Singh was hailed as a 'national hero' and his patriotism was extolled. Addressing one of the meetings at Allahabad, Pt. Govind Malviya not only referred to Bhagat Singh in the most eulogistic terms but also prayed that, if non-violence should fail, God would give them strength to take up arms to free their country. This 'universal sympathy' towards the revolutionaries had left the officials very jittery. They were even worried about the sale of Bhagat Singh's photograph which, according to them, had far outsold the photograph of any film star. 99

While the regular activities of the Congress continued through October, the picketing at educational institutions had practically ceased and liquor shops were being picketed in a languid way. At some places, Congress seals on foreign

98. WRPA, Oct. 11, 18 & Nov. 1, 1930, UPID.

cloth had been broken by a few merchants but the Merchants Committees looked into these cases and got them resealed with a fine on those merchants. However, the release of Congressmen from prison which occurred at this time became the occasion for large processions and meetings, and was also used to revive the movement.100

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, after the completion of his term, was released on 11 October. His father had already been released a few days earlier on health grounds. Jawaharlal promptly resumed his Presidency of the outlawed Congress, thereby, rendering himself liable to arrest. He directed all the Provincial Committees to launch a fresh offensive. He was in favour of the revival of the manufacture of salt and the boycott of British goods, especially cloth, and, in addition, wanted efforts to be made to initiate no-tax campaigns.101 In UP, where agricultural prices had been on a steep decline throughout the year and a no-tax campaign was likely to be a sure success, Jawaharlal Nehru succeeded in getting the PCC to sanction the no-tax no-rent campaign. Apart from realising the distress being faced by the peasantry, he was also aware that 'the cities and the middle classes were a bit tired of the hartals and processions' and the 'fresh infusion of blood' could only come 'from the peasantry'.102 So, with this end in view, he announced

101. Circular to PCCs, Oct. 14, 1930, JN Papers, NMML.
in Lucknow on 18 October that the district and town Congress Committees would shortly organise non-payment of land revenue, rent and income-tax.\textsuperscript{103} Even before this speech, he had delivered a fiery speech at Allahabad on 12 October, calling the Congressmen to move towards the villages and start no-rent movements.\textsuperscript{104} He had also made it clear to the audience that

\begin{quote}
...India, big as it is, is not big enough to contain both the Indian people and the British Government. One of the two has to go and there can be little doubt as to which this is going to be... We are in deadly earnest, we have burnt our boats, we have taken the great resolve and there is no going back for us.
\end{quote}

It was for this speech that he was arrested on 19 October for sedition and sentenced to two year's rigorous imprisonment.\textsuperscript{105} Even before his release, the Government of UP was in no mood to leave him at large for long as he was expected 'to set the whole India on fire'.\textsuperscript{106} His arrest resulted in large scale protests in the towns of UP and the rest of the country.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{103} The Leader, Oct. 20, 1930.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, Oct. 14, 1930.
\textsuperscript{106} Hailey, Governor to Crerar, Home Member, Oct 2,1930, FN - 257/1930, Hom.Poll. and Miss Krishna Nehru to Mrs Eleanor, Sydney (Australia) undated, FN - 513/1930, Hom. Poll., NAI.
\end{flushright}
His arrest also made Congressmen in UP realise that the imprisonment of their leaders disrupts the movement. To overcome this, they decided that the leading men should keep themselves out of prison, leaving the open defiance of the laws largely to volunteers and ordinary members of the party.¹⁰⁷

During November, agitations in urban centres further declined, though, as the fortnightly reports of the month affirm, 'there was still a good deal of sympathy with the Congress among the Hindu urban population'. The intelligence reports suggest that there was a remarkable decline in the number of meetings. In comparison to the 15 large meetings in the last week of October, there were only 9 large meetings in the first week of November. This ebb in the activities was seen by the Government as 'an appreciable decline in popular interest in agitations'. Nevertheless, the Congress leaders were busy devising ways and means to create occasions for popular demonstrations. The inauguration of 'Jawahar Day' and 'Jawahar Week' to celebrate Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday were instances in point. Meetings were organised in most of the towns and the speech of Jawaharlal, that landed him in jail, was publically read out.¹⁰⁸

Picketing of foreign cloth shops resumed in this month with a new vigour, as at some places the foreign cloth

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¹⁰⁸. Ibid. Nov. I & II, FN - 18/XII/1930, and WRPA, Nov. 8, 15 & 22, 1930, UPID.
dealers, with the expiry of their agreement of six months, had broken the Congress seal. Efforts to get their stocks resealed was going on everywhere and Mohanlal Saxena, the Lucknow Congress leader, was successful in persuading the dealers of Shahjehanpur and Hardoi to get their stocks resealed. The Central Boycott Committee of the Indian National Congress, with a view to enlist the support of the swadeshi mills and to prevent non-swadeshi cloth being passed as swadeshi, had now divided the mills into three classes: (a) swadeshi mills, (b) non-swadeshi mills agreeing to the terms imposed by the Congress, and (c) mills which did not agree to the Congress terms. The produce of the last named was to be boycotted. This list was made available to all the PCCs and they were advised to follow the instructions strictly.

Congress activities remained at a low ebb even in December. District Congress Committees finally launched no-rent campaigns in December and were registering remarkable successes. In the urban centres the revival of picketing at foreign cloth shops forced many shopkeepers to get their stocks resealed. At some places, the defaulter merchants were fined by the merchant committees. In Lucknow, for example, some merchants were fined between Rs.21 to Rs.51 for breaking the Congress seal. In Kanpur, a bomb of

109. The Leader, Nov. 3 & 6, 1930.
110. WRPA, Nov. 8, 1930, UPID.
111. The Leader, Dec. 28, 1930.
crude manufacture was thrown on three cloth merchants. The intelligence report claims that the bomb was thrown by some Congressmen as these merchants had disobeyed the Congress mandate by dispatching two bales of foreign cloth to Jalandhar and this bomb could have been a threat to induce them to adhere more strictly to boycott conditions imposed by Congress. 112

In Allahabad, the City Congress Committee had proposed to establish Ashrams in different mohallas (localities) in order to raise money and recruit volunteers. The Government of UP, acting on the suggestion of the District Magistrate (DM) of Allahabad, declared all the Congress Committees and its sister organisations of Allahabad illegal. 113 In similar notifications issued on 2 and 23 December, the Congress Committees of Meerut and Lucknow were also declared illegal. 114

At Kanpur, the controversy over the removal of the national flag from the Queen's Park revived the enthusiasm of the people for some time. In November, following the Kanpur Municipality's decision, a national flag was planted in the Queen's Park by Congressmen. The senior British officials of Kanpur could not digest the placing of a Congress flag besides the statue of their Queen and ordered the

112. WRPA, Dec. 13, 1930, UPID.
113. DM, Allahabad, to Commissioner, Allahabad, FN 1077/1930, Files of various Departments, Police, UPSA.
114. Ibid.
Municipality to arrange for its removal. The Municipality, dominated by Congressmen and their sympathisers, refused to oblige the officials. The DM, obeying the orders of the Provincial Government, then took over the Park from the jurisdiction of the Municipality and using the police, got the flag removed. But this provided the local Congressmen a much desired occasion and topic for agitation. They made the removal of the flag as a prestige issue and started satyagraha for replacing the flag. Batches of volunteers were sent everyday to the Queen's Park which had been placed under police surveillance. Although the flag could not be hoisted again in the park, the satyagraha revived the enthusiasm of the people.\textsuperscript{115}

Meanwhile, on 1 December, the Kanpur police killed a revolutionary suspect, Mr Salig Ram Shukla, in an encounter. Before being shot, he too had killed a constable and wounded an Assistant Superintendent and a head constable. Again, on 4 December, 'a revolutionary', Nand Kishore of Delhi was arrested by the police with a loaded revolver.\textsuperscript{116} The threatening and boycott of the police was still continuing. The police officers of Kanpur and Muzaffarnagar had been regularly receiving threatening letters, believed to have been sent by Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA). Even the I.G. of Prisons was threatened, in a letter

\textsuperscript{115} The Leader, Nov. 1 to 20, 1930; FR, Nov. I & II and Dec I, 1930, FN. 18/XIII/1930, Hom. Poll., NAI, and WRPA, Nov. 15, 22 and Dec. 6, 1930, UPID.

\textsuperscript{116} WRPA, Dec. 13 and Jan. 10, 1930, UPID.
from the military department of HSRA, with the same fate as that of his counterpart in Bengal unless he changed his treatment of political prisoners. 117 According to the intelligence reports, some revolutionaries held a secret meeting in Kanpur on 3 and 4 January and decided to kill certain police officers, to cut all telegraph and telephone lines, to bomb government offices and to murder the Europeans. But these reports were probably a hoax since none of what was said in them was ever executed. 118

In January 1931, barring the celebrations of Independence Day, the urban areas saw no spurt in Congress activities. Even the Independence Day celebrations were nowhere near the ones organised in the previous year. In rural areas, however, representatives of the Congress, taking advantage of the prevailing low prices of the foodgrains, were achieving major successes in mobilising the tenants for withholding rent. By the end of February, the Government officials confessed that the rural masses had been so mobilised that even the Congress would find it hard to stop them. 119

The fortnightly reports for January 1931 observed that there was a growing desire among the moderate Indians that Congress should suspend its activities and

117. Ibid., Dec. 20, 1930.

118. Ibid, Jan. 17, 1931.

cooperate in evolving a workable constitution. It was also felt that the political interest of the masses had shifted from agitation to the `momentous deliberations of the Round Table Conference'. However, these reports are not substantiated by other sources.

The repromulgation of the Press Ordinance once again restricted the vernacular newspapers. But this time the newspapers did not come into direct confrontation with the Ordinance and simply followed the guidelines. Most of the newspapers dropped their editorials while some of them carried symbolic one liners as editorials. Ai, for example, was publishing as its editorials the following statement: `Aise Raainetik Haalat Mein Jo Vichaar Ek Deshbachat Ke Mun Mein Uthate Hain Wohi Hamaara Sampadkiya Ha' (our editorial is nothing but the thoughts that emerge in a nationalist in the present political scenario)

The month of February 1931 began on a gloomy note. Motilal Nehru died after a prolonged illness on 6 February. Before his death almost all the prominent leaders of the country including Mahatama Gandhi were camping in Allahabad. The death of Motilal Nehru was followed by condolence meetings and strikes. In Allahabad, Mahatma Gandhi, Madan Mohan Malviya and other leaders addressed the condolence meeting and exhorted their audience to follow the

120. Mahatma Gandhi and the members of Congress Working Committee were released on 26 Jan. 1931 - for possible talks with the Government. They all had collected in Allahabad to discuss the proposal of the Government for talks.
path of Motilaljee. Even before the death of Motilal Nehru, Gandhiji was addressing meetings in and around Allahabad. Addressing a meeting of 50,000 people in Allahabad on 1 February, he congratulated his audience, especially women, for the role they had played in satyagraha and also made an appeal for non-violence and khadi. In other towns as well, the release of Congress leaders had given a considerable impetus to agitational activities. 16 February, the tenth day of Motilal Nehru's death, was observed as 'Motilal day' and a complete strike was observed in 'the Hindu areas' of Allahabad, Benaras and Kanpur. Students in the hostels of Allahabad University observed a fast (upavaas) and their mess was closed for the day.

Meanwhile, the Round Table Conference (RTC) in London had come to an end, and it became clear to the Government that a constitutional discussion without the Congress being a party to it, was a meaningless exercise. The British Prime Minister in his statement at the conclusion of the RTC had expressed the hope that the Congress would participate in the next round of deliberations to be held later in the year. A olive branch was shown to the Congress when the Viceroy, on 25 January, announced the unconditional release of Gandhiji and all the other members of the Congress Working Committee. After deliberating almost for three weeks, and after discussions with other leaders representing a cross

121. Aj, Feb. 4, 1931.
122. Aj, Feb 18, 1931.
section of political opinion, the Congress Working Committee authorised Gandhiji to initiate a dialogue with the Viceroy. The fortnight-long discussions that followed culminated on 5 March, 1931 in a 'truce' or a 'provisional settlement'. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact, as it was popularly known, was signed by Gandhiji on behalf of the Congress and Lord Irwin on behalf of the Government. The terms of the agreement included the immediate release of political prisoners not convicted for violence, the remission of all fines not yet collected, the return of confiscated lands not yet sold to third parties, and lenient treatment for those government employees who had resigned. The government also conceded the right to make salt for consumption to villages along the coast, as also the right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing. The Congress, on its part, agreed to discontinue the Civil Disobedience Movement. 123

Immediately after the signing of the Pact, Jawaharlal Nehru sent a circular to all PCCs advising them to consolidate the gains of 1930. They were asked to act according to the terms of the agreement. It was also suggested that they send out volunteers, ex-prisoners and others, to the rural areas to explain the truce and to see that there was no oppression of any kind by police or

landlords. They should carry on peaceful picketing and treat the Delhi Settlement as just a truce and not a permanent settlement.124

There was an air of expectancy in the towns of UP during the talks. The peace negotiations were being closely followed, with the newspapers of the Province reporting every bit of news from Delhi. There was a growing feeling, at least among sections of the moderates, that if the peace negotiations failed, there was a likelihood of more frequent outbreaks of violence in the villages and of communal riots in the cities which would automatically be followed by sterner measures of repression by the Government. The official reports also suggest that a large section of the population was tired of struggle and eager to welcome a cessation of strife.125

Given this background, the conclusion of peace was received with great relief by large sections of the people. Processions and meetings were organised at many places to celebrate the signing of the Pact and also to mark the end of the movement.

In Allahabad, Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a meeting on 10 March to elucidate the terms of the Pact to the people. He told the audience to continue with peaceful picketing and make efforts to convince the prospective customer against buying foreign cloth. He also addressed a public meeting of

124. WRPA, March 21, 1931, UPID.
125. Ibid.
5000 in a village near Allahabad to explain the Pact to the peasants. He advised them to refrain from paying rent and asked for their cooperation in future struggles. Many more meetings of this nature were organised in the rural areas. The main speakers were Narmada Prasad Singh, Mrs Uma Nehru, K.K. Malviya and Sham Lal Nehru. The general feeling about the Pact among the lower ranks of Congressmen and their supporters was one of victory while in some rural areas people believed that the Congress had won complete independence and become the Government.126

There was almost complete acceptance of the Pact and we do not find any resentment expressed from any quarter. However, the refusal of Gandhiji to make the Pact conditional on the commutation of death sentences of Bhagat Singh and his comrades disappointed many sections of the youth. This disappointment was further augmented by the execution of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on 23 March, 1931.

About one month before the hanging of Bhagat Singh and his comrades, Chandra Shekhar Azad had been killed in an encounter at Allahabad on 27 February. The administration, in an attempt to prevent any escalation of violence, did not permit Youth Leagues to stage protest demonstrations. The dead body of Azad was surreptitiously cremated by the police and Section 144 was clamped in Allahabad to prevent any condolence meeting. Even then a complete strike was enforced

126. Ai, March 7, 11, 12, 14, 1931 and WRPA, March 21 & 28, 1931, UPID.
in the city by the Youth League. The place in Alfred Park where Azad was killed became a sacred place for the youth and the Allahabad Youth League renamed the Park as Azad Park. The news of the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev broke the patience of the youth and they came out openly against the Government. Protests and strikes were organised on a large scale in almost all the towns. At some places, these protests turned violent and the students out of excitement damaged shops and offices.

Incidentally, one of these protests led to a serious communal riot at Kanpur. These protest meetings were being organised even before 23 March, the day Bhagat Singh and others were hanged. On the morning of 24 March, news of Bhagat Singh's execution was received. Congress messengers went out at once to proclaim a hartal. There was much excitement. Students broke windows in shops and offices and the police intervened. At about 2 PM a quarrel arose between some Hindu Congressmen who urged a hartal and some Muslim shopkeepers who objected to closing their shops. The quarrel led to a fight and the congregation of a large crowd of Muslims and Hindus on the spot. Lathis and brickbats appeared and general rioting broke out which raged on for several days in different parts of the city. Its spread was so swift that by 26 March around 150 people were reported

127. Ai, March 1, 4 & 13, 1931.
128. WRPA, April 11, 1931, UPID.
129. Ai, March 26 & 28, 1931.
killed and more than 300 injured. The Pradesh and District Congress Chief, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, was killed in the riots. He had been working for conciliation in a Muslim area. The overall losses resulting from the riot were severe. The Government estimated the number of killed and injured as 290 and 965 respectively, while the Congress put it higher at 400 and 1200. In addition, the latter reported 500 buildings gutted, including 23 mosques and 37 temples; the loss of moveable property worth at least Rs.20 lakhs by loot and destruction; and a 'general exodus' and 'the utter distortion' of business and normal life. The mills at Kanpur could be reopened only on 29 March and the situation came to be normal only by 8 April.130 Even before the Kanpur incident, riots had broken out at Agra from 15 to 17 March, Benaras from 10 to 14 February and in the Mirzapur district from 14 to 16 March.131

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March 1931 brought the first phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement to an end. As in other parts of the country, the movement in the urban areas of UP passed through various phases. It started


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on 12 April, 1930 but the preparation had been going on
right from January. 26 January was celebrated in each town
as the first independence day. It was a tremendous success and
received massive popular support. But after that the Congress
activities remained at a low ebb until the preparations for
the salt satyagraha started in the last week of March.
However, this period was utilised by the Congressmen for the
registration of volunteers and collection of funds.

The months of April and May were full of activity and
public enthusiasm towards satyagraha was at its peak. In the
last week of April, most of the bigger centres after
successfully breaking the salt law shifted to boycott of
foreign goods and liquor. Thus, the picketing of foreign
cloth and liquor shops and later of educational institutions
became the major activities of Congressmen. By June,
picketing of foreign cloth shops started declining not
because it had lost its attraction but because it had
achieved its objectives. Though picketing continued
sporadically even after that right upto the end of February
1931, it was concentrated only on those shops whose owners
had broken the Congress seal on their foreign cloth stock and
resumed the sale of foreign cloth. It was a remarkable
success for the Congress that a larger chunk of the traders,
merchants, and shopkeepers remained supportive till the
conclusion of the Pact.

By the end of June, almost all the important leaders of
the province were arrested. Initially their arrests did not
have any major impact on the conduct of the movement,
but in the course of time the effect was quite visible. The lower-level leaders who replaced them in different places could not be expected to provide the same inspiration and have the same degree of organizational skills. Moreover, the people in the urban centres seemed to be tired of regular strikes and processions. Further, with many of the objectives of the programmes more or less achieved, the movement started showing signs of decline around September and October.

After October, Congress Committees concentrated their attention on the rural areas. Jawaharlal Nehru had summed it up neatly in a comment made during a brief spell out of jail in mid-October 1930: "The cities and the middle classes were a bit tired of the hartals and processions but a 'fresh infusion of blood' could still come from the peasantry where the reserve stocks ... were enormous".132 With the shifting of the movement to the rural areas, the political activities in the urban centres reached a further low. Most of the Congress workers from the urban areas who were out of jail were sent to villages to mobilize the tenants against payment of rent.

Except for the first half of November, when 'Jawahar Week' or 'Jawahar Day' was celebrated, urban centres remained quiet. Independence Day was celebrated on 26 January, but it was no match for the one celebrated the year before. The trial and hanging of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev and

the death of Chandra Shekhar Azad in a police encounter provided a new vigour among the youth. The anger among them against these killings led them to stage large scale protests, though most of the time their attempts were foiled by the authorities. Sometimes their protests turned violent. In Kanpur, this strike call led to a serious communal riot.

The signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact on 5 March, 1931, established a peace between the warring parties, but this peace proved only temporary as the circumstances in the rest of 1931 forced the Congress to resume the movement on 31 December.

The terms of the Pact, its timing and Gandhi's refusal to make the Pact conditional on the commutation of the death sentences of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev have been criticised by many contemporaries and historians. Even Jawaharlal Nehru was not very happy with the Pact and he saw this as 'the end of the world' and that too, with just a whimper and not a bang. The Pact is regarded by many as a betrayal, as proof of the vacillating nature of the bourgeoisie and of Gandhiji succumbing to bourgeois pressure. It is also seen as a betrayal of peasants' interest because it did not immediately restore confiscated land sold to a third party.

On the basis of the evidence one gets from the study of the movement in the urban centres of UP, one can very easily say that the signing of the Pact by Gandhiji, on behalf of the Congress, was a wise step. The Pact had become the need of the hour. The movement had started declining right from
September 1930 and it was just lingering on. People's response had decreased and even Jawaharlal himself had accepted that the people in the urban centres were tired of the agitations. All these things only highlight the fact that mass movements are necessarily short-lived, they cannot go on for ever as the people's capacity to sacrifice, unlike that of activists, is not endless. In this condition had the movement been continued, it would have certainly died a natural death. So, Gandhiji and the Congress took a wise decision in shelving the movement for the time being.

There was no question of any bourgeois pressure on Gandhiji to withdraw the movement. In this study, we do not find any section of the population which could have pressurised the Congress for reaching some sort of agreement with the Government. Even the businessmen who were the main losers in this movement never made any representation to the Congress leaders of this province for any agreement. The only section which did express its unhappiness was the youth who were expecting that Gandhiji would make the Pact conditional on the commutation of the death sentences of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. Though they never blamed Gandhiji and the Congress publicly, the resentment was prevalent among them.133

In the end the success of the Civil Disobedience Movement, in the first phase, in mobilizing different

133. Detailed discussion of the question of betrayal of the peasants has been done in the second chapter.
sections and classes of people in the urban areas of UP may be briefly reviewed. Before the movement was three months old, the Governor of UP had remarked on how it had succeeded: 134

... beyond our expectations in arousing deep sympathy among every class of Hindus ... Every district officer with whom I have talked has been much impressed with the fact that even those whose interests are affected by the agitation, such as land owners or government servants, have some kind of sympathy with the object of the agitation though not necessarily with its precise manifestations or methods. There is even among very well-meaning people a kind of pride in the persistence and sense of solidarity it has shown.

Among its supporters, students proved themselves to be the most assertive section. They used to be the first to come forward in response to the calls of the Congress. A large number of them had joined the Volunteer Corps to take a more active part in the movement. Although we do not find much evidence of revolutionary terrorist activities in the towns of UP, reports from different sources make us believe that the revolutionary nationalists had a large support and many sympathisers among the students. Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev and Chandra Shekhar Azad were their natural heroes and their portraits were very common in the rooms of university hostels. Moreover, the kind of protest they expressed after their execution was unprecedented.

134. Hailey, the Governor of UP to Verney Lovett, 3 July 1930. Hailey Collection, as quoted in Gyanendra Pandey, op. cit., P. 107, emphasis mine.
Another section which participated actively in the movement was of women. They played a commendable role in almost every programme of the Congress. In some of the bigger cities like Allahabad, Benaras and Kanpur, they proved to be the mainstay of the boycott and picketing programmes. However, their large scale participation was limited to the bigger cities only. In smaller towns only upper class women dared to participate. Nevertheless, this movement was certainly the most liberalising experience for them.

A very common saying about the businessmen is that 'nothing is more important to him than profit and money'. But the kind of evidence one gets from the study of the movement in UP, questions this assumption. In fact, it was the businessmen, and especially the Hindu businessmen, who sustained the movement financially. Most of them who supported the movement were ordinary merchants and not big and enlightened industrialists who could foresee the benefits for their industries under Swaraj. The motivating factor thus appears to be the Congress appeal to their nationalism. It is true that there were dissenters among them, but they formed a small minority. However, while their support to the movement remained unquestionable throughout this period, it seems that towards the end the patience of some of them had given way and we hear of frequent breaking of Congress seals. Nevertheless, their Associations took up these cases as earnestly as they used to in the beginning and never made any representation to the Congress for any kind of truce or end of struggle. However, their restlessness had brought the
point home to the Congressmen that they were in no position to bear any more financial loss, thus making a truce or some sort of breathing time imperative.

Active work in the organisation, and volunteering for satyagraha constituted the highest level of commitment to Congress programmes. But there were many people who did not or could not participate as actively as the most committed ones, but who were sufficiently influenced by Congress ideology and activities to demonstrate their support in other ways. Numerous municipal and district board offices controlled by commercial and landed groups flew the Congress flag, closed their offices and schools to support nationalist demonstrations and promoted the campaign for the boycott of foreign cloth. In Allahabad, where local networks and connections had caused the defeat of Jawaharlal Nehru when he sought election to the Chairmanship of the Municipality in 1928, the board reminded its teachers in April 1930 of the pledge they had taken in 1924 to wear nothing but khaddar.135 In towns throughout UP, Bar and Mukhtar Associations resolved to wear swadeshi cloth (as far as possible khadi) and to boycott British goods including, in one instance, 'British' newspapers that opposed the nationalist movement.136 Even the Liberals, consisting mainly of prosperous professionals like landlords, businessmen and advocates, provided whole-

hearted support to the Congress campaign against foreign cloth. Besides, the Liberal papers, The Leader and Bharat, lent strong support to the Congress throughout this period, speaking out against Government repression and highlighting civil disobedience activities.

The only area where Congress faced a setback was that of mobilisation of Muslims. Combined with the active government encouragement to communal propaganda which countered the forces of nationalism, the appeals of Muslim communal leaders succeeded in restraining the larger part of the Muslim masses from joining hands with the Congressmen. 'Muslims continue, for the most part, to hold aloof from the Congress', the UP Government reported in August 1930. 'The Aligarh Muslim University and Muslim educational institutions could not get affected by the Congress agitations'.137 A list of civil disobedience prisoners in Allahabad during 1930-31 illustrates that out of a list of 679 political prisoners, the total number of Muslim names found is just nine.138

Notwithstanding this weakness, the kind of challenge the Congress posed to the Government in UP was the result of the support it obtained from different classes and groups. One example is illustrative of the popularity and hold of the Congress over the people. It had boycotted the UP Legislative Council elections in October 1930, but set up low

138. Svatantrata Sangram Ke Sainik, Volumes for the UP Districts.
caste 'dummy' candidates, including a sweeper, two domas and two gadariyas who won the election.139