THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND POLITICAL MOBILISATION IN THE UNITED PROVINCES 1926-1934

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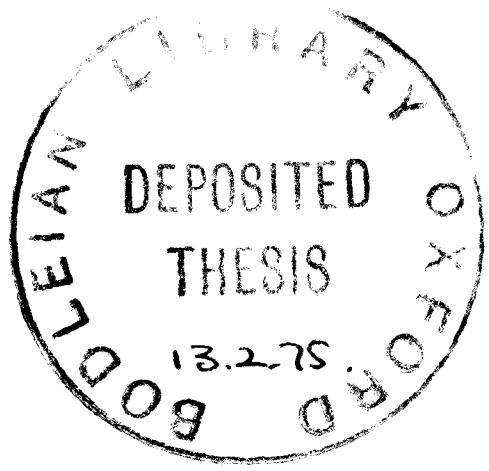

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies of the development of Indian politics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have contested the notion of a giant clash between imperialism and nationalism in the sub-continent. Increasingly, these studies have focused on the regional variations of the Indian national movement, and high-lighted the contradictions within it. Not only has the earlier vision of the unity of the movement tended to break down as a result. The very continuity and indeed existence of the movement has apparently been brought into question.

Yet the strength of something perceived as a nationalist movement by large numbers of contemporary observers, official and non-official, has been undoubted. To meet this difficulty, historians have sought to re-introduce by new methods some element of continuity and permanence into their concept of the Indian nationalist movement. An important suggestion has been that the links between different levels of politics, different regions and different interests were provided by the formal political structure imposed on the country by the British. Constitutional development, then, accounts for an on-going national movement, and changes in the constitutional set-up explain changes in the intensity, scale and form of the nationalist struggle.

One problem with these studies has been the almost invariable concentration on 'elites' and the leadership. Differences among nationalist leaders have been taken as indicative of the contradictions within the nationalist movement. Links between leaders have appeared as nationalist links. 'Followers', it has generally been assumed, acted simply in accordance with the wishes of their leaders.

The present thesis concentrates much more on the relationship between leaders and followers in the national movement. It investigates the means of communication between them, the barriers and the contradictions, and tries to assess the way in which leaders and followers influenced one another and 'followers' occasionally became leaders in their own right. An attempt is also made to explain the continuity of the national movement, in terms not only of the changing constitutional structure, but also of the permanent organisational base of the movement and the independent power that nationalist propaganda, symbols and slogans - broadly speaking, the nationalist 'ideology' - came to have. Finally, the thesis examines how the method and manner of nationalist propaganda, as well as the institutions and style of British rule, tended to divide sections of the Indian 'nation' from one another, and how the Congress leadership responded when these divisions assumed dangerous proportions. The striking fact is that as the Congress-led movement for freedom advanced to a position of enormous strength, its weaknesses also became more obvious.

The Introduction sets out this problem in the case of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, (U.P.), an area noted for its prominence in the national movement after the First World War. It shows how by the early 1930's the Congress was recognised as the strongest and most organised party in the province, and one that constituted a real threat to the position of the Government. Yet this party had the active support neither of the Muslim community in general nor of the mass of the poor in town and country. The chapters that follow seek to explain the genesis of this apparently paradoxical position.

Chapter 2 examines the organisational base of the Congress movement in the 1920's and early 1930's. It is suggested that in the years immediately after World War I a sound base was secured, through the presence of a hard core of permanent workers in the organisation, financial support from business, industrial and other sympathetic groups, and the work of 'national'

educational and other institutions which provided new recruits for nationalist activity. The weakness of the organisation is seen in its failure to make any direct provision for the poorer sections of Indian society. Some attempt was made to remedy this situation in the last years of the period under study, but it is argued that these were piecemeal and limited efforts which did not go very far.

Chapter 3 elaborates the very broad, nationalist appeal made by the Congress, the agencies it used and the effects of its endeavours. It is shown that personal contact, acts of 'revolutionary terrorism' and the press, all performed valuable propaganda for the nationalist cause. Racial and religious elements in the Congress' propaganda had widespread influence. There was room also for appeals on specific economic issues within the general,nationalist approach of the Congress. Where the Congress approach confronted major problems was at points where parts of its appeal brought different sections of the society into clash with one another. The remaining chapters examine the limitations that this, and the Congress' refusal to face the problem squarely, imposed on the movement as a whole.

Chapter 4 makes a case-study of popular agitation during the civil disobedience campaign in two very different U.P. districts, one in Agra and the other in Oudh. This indicates how the Congress encouraged popular agitation and yet tried to keep it under strict control. The chapter argues that the Congress attempt to maintain the broadest possible front in its anti-imperialist struggle misfired at this point. Large numbers of peasants, extremely distressed on account of the conditions created by the Depression and agitated at the relentless efforts of the Government and the landlords to extract their dues, strained at the leash that Congress leaders had tied on them regarding the manner of their protest. Friction between the two was especially marked when the Congress withdrew the 'no-tax'/'no-rent' campaign after the Gandhi-Irwin agreement of

March 1931. Ultimately, the chapter suggests, the obvious distress of large sections of the peasantry and the independent actions of angry tenants led the Congress to adopt a more militant position, but before then the hesitations of the leadership had caused a substantial loss of support for civil disobedience.

Chapter 5 turns to the problem of the alienation of the Muslims from the national movement, a fact that was clear at least in the U.P. by the time of the civil disobedience movement. The importance of the style of British rule, and of the nature of electoral arrangements, is noted. But the chapter is concerned more with the manner in which sectional appeals, adopted for short-term electoral or agitational purposes, contributed to the growth of communal antagonism. The importance of communal tension on the ground in the development of a separate Muslim politics is emphasized. By the end of the 1920's, it is suggested, general communal suspicion had made it difficult for Hindu and Muslim leaders to work together, and subsequent attempts by Congress (Hindu) leaders to appeal to the Muslim 'masses' over the heads of Muslim leaders only tended to close Muslim ranks further.

A central theme of the thesis is that the general nationalist appeal of the Congress proved a source both of strength and of weakness for the movement. Aggressive anti-British propaganda gave rise to the widespread view of the Raj as enemy and oppressor. Racial clashes between Government forces and nationalist demonstrators proved particularly important in arousing anti-British feeling among very diverse groups and people. In addition, the Congress after 1920 acquired the image of the 'poor man's party'.

It is seen, however, that nationalist symbols and slogans, which were widely accepted, had very different meanings for different people. The extension of a 'national', or at least an anti-British consciousness to social groups which had been unaffected earlier led to increasing conflicts of interest within

the nationalist camp. It was at this point that the Congress' broad, nationalist platform proved a stumbling block. The leadership was reluctant to make any clear choices. Instead, there was a piecemeal and hesitant response to each new situation of crisis.

One important reason for this, it is argued, was the class composition of the Congress leadership and cadres which prevented the adoption of any very radical position. Another contributory factor was that, while there was a clear notion in the Congress camp about the ultimate political goal, there was a complete lack of clear thinking on the major social and economic questions that might be confronted on the way to that goal, or after its attainment. It was only on account of the building up of a variety of pressures during the period under study - the extreme demands of distressed peasant groups, the militancy of students and other young men and women, the sullen resentment of Muslim leaders and 'masses', and the constitutional initiatives of the British - that the Congress leadership began to spell out its programme more fully. In the process, both the areas of strength and the areas of weakness of the national movement increased. The concluding chapter draws together these arguments.

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Note on Abbreviations and Spellings

The following abbreviations have been used in the footnotes:

IOL	-	India Office Library, London
KNPS	-	Kashi Nagri Pracharni Sabha, Benares
NAI	-	National Archives of India, New Delhi
NML	-	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
SRR	-	Secretariat Record Room, Lucknow
UPSA	-	Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow
IESHR	-	The Indian Economic and Social History Review
JAS	-	The Journal of Asian Studies
MAS	-	Modern Asian Studies
AICC	-	All-India Congress Committee
CWMG	-	Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi
FR	-	Fortnightly Report for the United Provinces
GOI	-	Government of India
Home Poll.	-	Home Department, Political Branch
JN	-	Jawaharlal Nehru
MN	-	Motilal Nehru
NOP	-	Note on the Press (weekly summary of newspaper reports in the United Provinces)
PAI	-	Police Abstracts of Intelligence for the United Provinces (weekly)
Ps	-	Papers

The location of all Government files and collections of private papers is indicated in the bibliography. Only in the case of U.P. Government files, which I consulted at three different places, is the location given in the footnotes.

The numbers of files of the Fortnightly Reports for the United Provinces, and of private collections held in the India Office Library, will also be found in the bibliography. In the footnotes, I have simply indicated the name of the relevant collection, (e.g. Hailey Colln.) or the date of the relevant Fortnightly Report (e.g. FR August 1930, 1 /or 2/, the last figure indicating the first or the second half of the given month).

Throughout this thesis, I have used the modern spellings of place names, e.g. Kanpur for Cawnpore, Mathura for Muttra and Pratapgarh for Partabgarh.



MAP 1 U.P. Administrative Divisions

■ Indian States

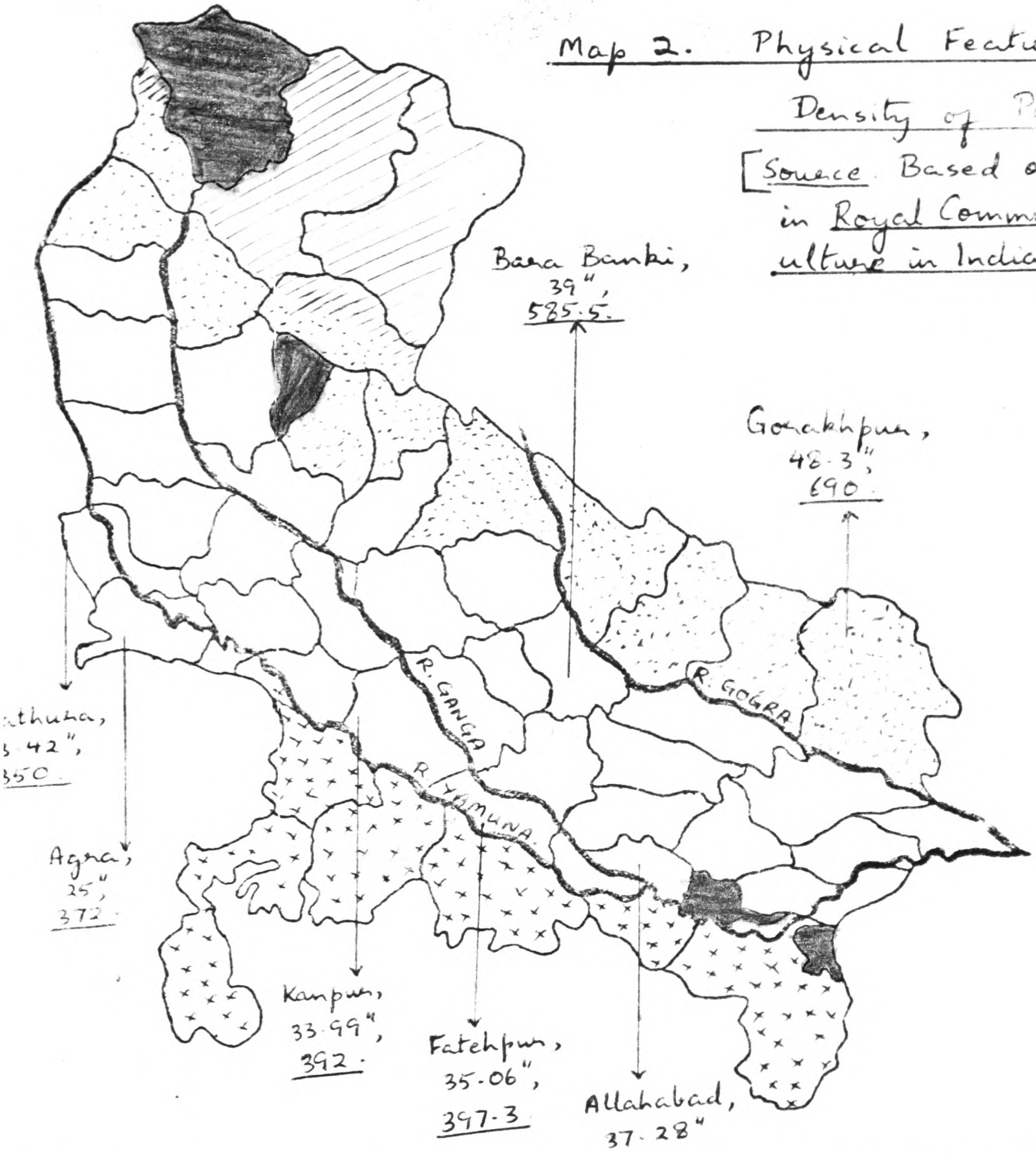
Bold lines indicate Divisional boundaries

Capital letters indicate Divisional headquarters

(Oudh comprises LUCKNOW and FYZABAD Divisions)

Map 2. Physical Feature & Density of Population

[Source: Based on information in Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, XIV (1928)]



U.P. British territory. Area: 68-3 million acres. Population: 45·4 million (1921)

▨ Montane. 14% of the area, 3% of the population of U.P.

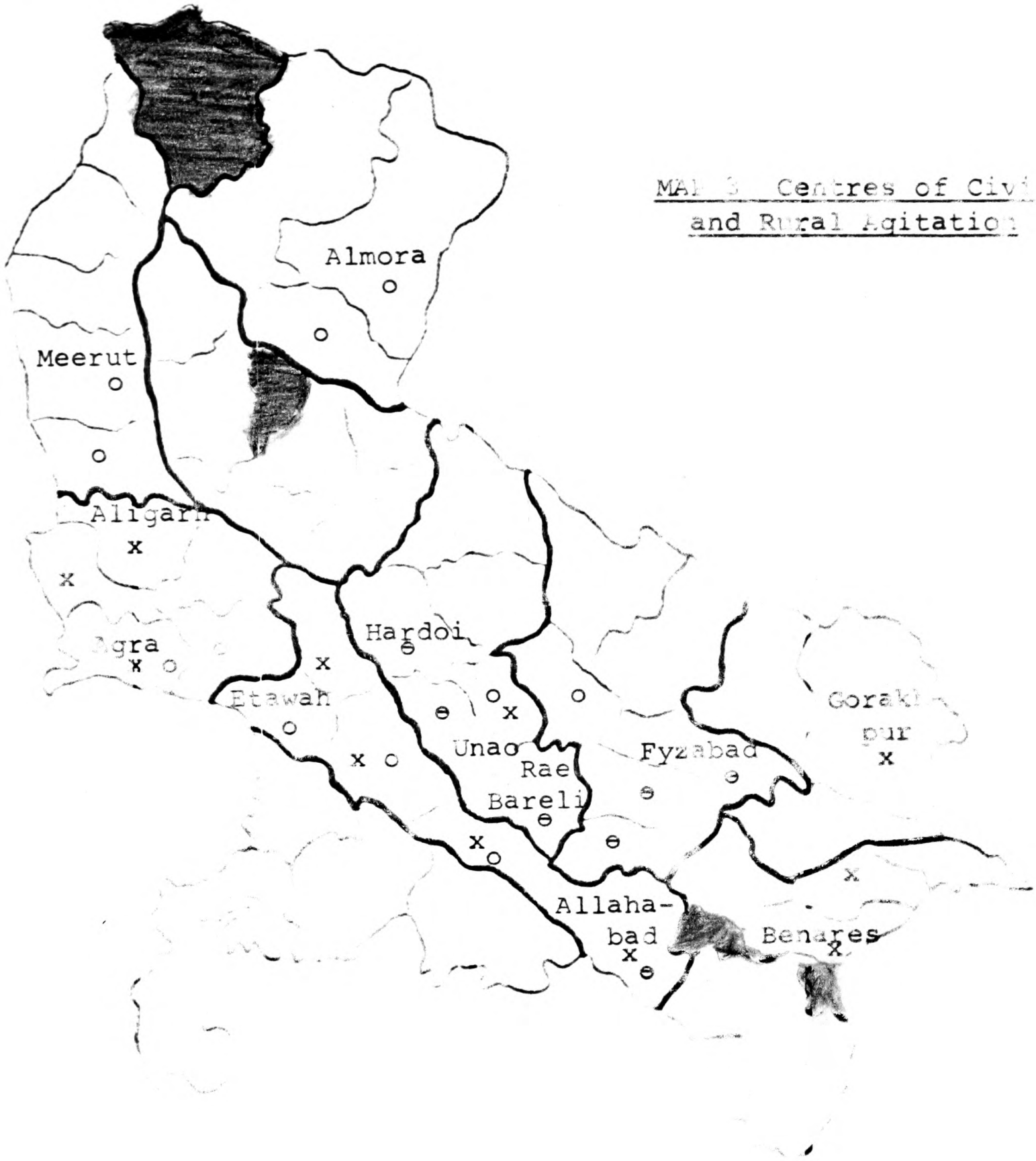
▭ Sub-montane, heavily forested, disease-ridden. 21% area, 25% population of U.P.

▭ Indo-Gangetic plain (Hindustan), fertile tract. 51% area, 65% population of U.P.

▭ Trans Yamuna tract of Meerut division, stony, ravine-ridden, partly forested. 14% area, 6% population of U.P.

Density of rural population and incidence of rainfall increase from west to east. (Figures indicate normal rainfall in inches, and number of persons per square mile). However, in the Ganga-Yamuna doab, fertility of soil declines from west to east.

MAP 3 Centres of Civil [illegible]
and Rural Agitation



e [illegible] 1921-22 and 1930-32

[illegible] 930-32

A [illegible] ces of civil [illegible] ary 193[illegible] 193[illegible]

The [illegible] es from [illegible] s map of 'Aq[illegible]
Disturbances [illegible] 'Non-Pe[illegible] 32)', Ch. [illegible]
'Peasant Move[illegible] Sussex D. Phil. thesis, 1973.]

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

It is generally recognised that the Indian national movement, led by the Indian National Congress, entered a 'mass' or 'popular' phase in the years immediately after the First World War. The post-War economic crisis had a good deal to do with this development. The great price rise of the years 1918-1921 caused widespread hardship. Urban and rural wage labourers, smallholding tenants and landowners, petty shop-keepers and vendors, and the poorer lawyers, journalists, clerks and students were especially hard hit by the terrible influenza epidemic of 1918 - in one province, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (or U.P.), this took as many as two million lives, 4 per cent of the province's population -, by poor crops and the 'unprecedented height attained by the prices of cheaper food grains' in some areas.[1] In many parts of the country the very large number of returning soldiers added their own grievances, regarding hasty demobilisation and other matters, to the general discontent.[2] At the other end of the economic scale, Indian business and industry suffered severely from the cut-back after the War.[3]

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1 Report on the Administration of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1918-19 (Allahabad, 1920), pp. i-ii. (Herafter, U.P. Admin. Report, with dates); East India (Non-Co-operation). Telegraphic Correspondence Regarding the Situation in India (London 1922), Cmd. 1586, Telegram no. 1, Viceroy-Secy of State for India, 9 February 1922; and V. V. Balabushevich and A. M. Dyakov: A Contemporary History of India (New Delhi 1964), pp. 19-33

2 Cf. P. D. Reeves: 'The Politics of Order. "Anti-non-co-operation in the United Provinces, 1921' (JAS, XXV, 2, February 1966). There were nearly half a million demobilised soldiers from the U.P. alone.

3 A. K. Bagchi: Private Investments in India 1900-1939 (CUP 1972) pp. 237-9, 434, etc.; M. Kidron: Foreign Investments in India (OUP 1965) pp. 13-14; U.P. Admin. Report, 1921-22, pp. xxxvii-xli

Added to these factors were political frustrations, partly born out of unfulfilled promises made during the War, the 'insults' of the Rowlatt Acts and the treatment of the Turkish Khalifa, and racial clashes. Of the worst example of the latter, Valentine Chirol had this to say:

> '. . . upon Indians of all classes and creeds and races with exceptions too rare to signify, Jalianwala Bagh and the Punjab events produced only one feeling, a feeling of horror and indignation which, amongst the masses, found vent in a great outburst of racial hatred . . . "the shadow of Amritsar lengthened over the whole of India".'[1]

Marked out by their race, uncertain of the loyalty of Indian colleagues and subordinates[2], and opposed by symbols and slogans of tremendous emotive power (such as OM and Bande Mataram) and the "persuasive oratory" of nationalist leaders[3] appealing, inter alia, to what the British considered "deep forces in Hinduism of which we know little"[4], the British in India found themselves in a tight corner. To the rising awareness of the inadmissibility of claims of 'white supremacy' was added the spreading conviction that the shaitan Raj was responsible for the present fallen state of a once glorious India. Gandhi's party and Gandhi's movement aroused tremendous enthusiasm.

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1 V. Chirol: India (London 1926), p. 220

2 Notice the junior civil servant, A. P. Hume's comment on Government's firmness in putting down civil disobedience in 1932 compared with its leniency in 1930. Ignoring the fact that the policy was changed at the national level, Hume wrote: 'I cannot help thinking our slippery pal Jagdish [Prasad, Chief Secretary to the U.P. Government in 1930] had a good deal to do with those impossible milk wash apologies for orders which used to ooze through to us during the bad days of 1929-30,' Hume Colln., IV, letter to his parents, Rae Bareli 31 January 1932. For the sympathy among Indian government officials for the Congress movement, see Ch. II.

3 Earl of Ronaldshay: The Heart of Aryavarta. A Study of the Psychology of Indian Unrest. (London, 1925) pp. 102-4

4 Hailey Colln., 24A, Irwin's Massey Lecture at Toronto University, 1932

Beginning as primarily an urban movement, it rapidly spread out from the lawyers, students and small shopkeepers, who initiated the agitation, to encompass wider social groups. The Government of India reported that

> 'The lower classes in the towns have been seriously affected by the non-co-operation movement, . . . and although the influence of the movement has been much smaller in the rural tracts generally, in certain areas the peasantry have been affected . . .'[1]

After 1920, it is acknowledged, there was an almost continuous involvement, direct or indirect, of broad sections of Indian society in the progress of the national movement. But it was only at the end of the 1920's that popular nationalist agitation was renewed. This followed another major political disappointment: the appointment of an 'all white' Statutory Commission (popularly known as the Simon Commission) to review the progress of the reforms in India. It was heralded by another racial clash, during the boycott of the Simon Commission in 1928. And it was conducted under the shadow of another overwhelming economic disaster, brought on by the World Depression (1929-33).

By this time, it has been argued, the Indian national movement had become stronger: that 60,000 satyagrahis were arrested in the nine months of civil disobedience in 1930, and 120,000 during the fifteen months January 1932 to March 1933, compared to only 30,000 during the non-co-operation movement of 1920-22[2], supposedly testifies to this. 'The basis of the Congress was incomparably wider in 1930 than it was in 1920-22', writes the Soviet historian, L. R. Gordon-Polonskaya.[3] Dr Zafar Imam similarly speaks of the 'growing tempo and the radicalization of the Indian nationalist movement' during this period. To him

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1 East India (Non-Co-operation). Cmd. 1586, Telegram no. 1, Viceroy-Secy of State for India, 9 February 1922

2 R. C. Majumdar, et al: The Advanced History of India (London 1950), pp. 984, 987-8. See also Balabushevich and Dyakov: A Contemporary History of India, pp.87 and 232

3 Ibid., p. 229

the year 1928 appears as 'a milestone in the history of the Indian freedom movement', for in 1928-9 and thereafter the social basis of the struggle was greatly extended as its anti-imperialist nature became more sharply defined.[1] For the period between the two World Wars, then, the graph of the extent and scale of support for the Congress-led movement has been drawn as a steadily rising one, with perhaps slight ups and downs.

A corollary to this is the argument that when militant nationalist agitation broke out, as in the years 1920-22 and again in 1930-33, severe Governmental repression or unwise leadership was responsible for its decline. Gandhi's sudden turn to the 'side issue' of the untouchables in 1932, when civil disobedience was reportedly achieving grand successes, is quoted as a classic example of the latter. Of the former, Indian nationalist historians have drawn up examples in abundance, arguing, especially about 1932, that it was police throttling that suppressed the Congress' agitational campaign.[2]

An alternative approach, which also emphasizes the strength of Indian nationalism, argues that the development of the national movement was conditioned by the leadership's

> 'basic strategy of pressure-compromise-pressure leading to political advance that would be brought about through the actions of "the duly constituted authorities".'

The objective, in this view, was a step by step advance through 'negotiations backed by controlled mass action'.[3] The view pre-supposes the presence of large-scale mass support which the nationalist leadership could draw upon, as well as a long-term

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1 B. R. Nanda (ed.): Socialism in India (New Delhi 1972), pp.62-3 66 and 68; also J. Nehru: An Autobiography (London 1936, 1947 reprint), p. 281

2 Ibid., p. 338; R. C. Majumdar (ed.): Struggle for Freedom (Vol XI of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan's History and Culture of the Indian People, Bombay 1969), pp. 520-526

3 Bipan Chandra: 'Elements of Continuity and Change in Early Nationalist Activity' in The Proceedings of the Indian History Congress (Muzaffarpur session, 1972)

strategy consciously worked out by the leaders. Though referring to early nationalist activity, the view seems to be applicable, perhaps more than for the early period, to the nationalist politics of the 1920's and 1930's. By this time the nationalist leadership was assured at least of widespread popular support. But even for this period, as we shall see, there are certain problems in accepting this interpretation in its entirety.

Another recent interpretation of the development of Indian nationalism and Indian politics suggests that nationalist strength increased from 1919-20 onwards largely because of the constitutional changes made by the British in India. In this view, the steadily widening basis of Indian constitutional government made for an increasingly broad-based 'nationalist' movement. 'Nationalist' agitations arose on the occasion of expected constitutional changes, and declined when the nature of the changes became clear and no further concessions could be gained by agitation. At that point, Indian 'nationalists' returned to the field of politics they really preferred, the politics of transaction and patronage, aimed at establishing or maintaining social position, rewarding kith and kin and associates, and pursuing old (caste and other) battles.[1]

The present thesis makes a case-study of the nature and extent of nationalist activities and agitations in one major Indian province, the U.P. It concentrates especially on the second period of popular nationalist agitation mentioned above. By that time, the Government in the U.P. frankly acknowledged the strength of the Congress-led movement. In 1928, when the country was not especially troubled by extended 'mass' agitations, nationalist organisation was in a poor way, and the nationalist leadership was badly divided on the question of the programme

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1 J. A. Gallagher, et al. (eds): Locality, Province and Nation. Essays in Indian Politics, 1870 to 1940. (CUP 1973) passim; C. J. Baker: 'Political Change in South India, 1919-37' (Cambridge Fellowship Dissertation 1971), esp. Ch. VI, 'Non-Co-operation'.

to be followed, the acting-Governor of the U.P., George Lambert, could write to a prominent Congress leader of the Province:

> 'You have . . . undertaken a tall order. We are keeping a close eye on agricultural developments, and can compete with you by having our own staff not only in every district but in every tahsil and parganah . . .'[1]

Malcolm Hailey, transferred from the Governorship of the Punjab to that of the U.P. in August 1928, agreed with this assessment of the Congress' position. In the U.P. unlike in the Punjab, he recalled later, the task had been "to maintain the position of Government in view of the growing influence of the Congress".[2]

Congress leaders, for their part, were better prepared for popular struggle in 1930 than they had been a decade earlier. Satyagraha was no longer an untested weapon. Nor was peasant agitation a journey into the unknown.[3] During the non-co-operation movement itself, a leading Congress journal had recognized that peasants must form 'the bulwark of the nationalist movement'[4]. Yet, in 1932, the U.P. Government reported that

> 'the student and teacher class; the petty intelligentsia of the towns; the Hindu shopkeepers, moneylenders and businessmen; the better educated middle class population, such as lawyers and politicians (sic); and the unemployed and loafer class both in town and country'

were the main sympathisers of the civil disobedience movement.[5]

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1 Sri Prakasa Ps., File 'From G. B. Lambert', Lambert-Sri Prakasa, 12-12-28. (Emphasis added. The 'tall order' refers to the Congress' renewed organisation and mobilisation efforts, for which see Chs. II and III below)

2 Hailey Ps., 51, Hailey-D. A. Low, 10-1-61. See also Ibid., 13B, Hailey-Irwin, 26 August 1928

3 See esp. Nehru: An Autobiography, pp. 49 ff, for the lack of knowledge of peasant conditions among the political leadership in 1920

4 The Independent, 13 January 1921, cited in P. D. Reeves: 'The Landlords' Response to Political Change in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, India, 1921-37' (A.N.U. D.Phil. 1963) p. 117

5 GOI Home-Poll. 1428/1932, Express letter No. 233/C.X., Chief Secy., U.P. Government-Home Secy., GOI, Naini Tal, 16 May 1932

This report certainly underplayed the role of various rural classes, notably the rich peasants,[1] in the nationalist struggle. But the evidence does clearly point to the very limited involvement of the 'masses' of Indian society - urban and rural labourers, and even poor peasants - in the Congress movement at this time.[2] Equally, to turn to a slightly different area, it indicates the almost complete alienation of Muslims in general from the nationalist campaigns of the early 1930's[3]: surely an unenviable position for any party claiming to represent the country at large.

It is the purpose of this study to examine how the Congress attained this unique position, of undoubted strength coupled with very obvious weaknesses, in the late 1920's and early 1930's. In the process, the study tests the validity of the different interpretations of the development of the national movement mentioned above. To begin with, it appears necessary to re-examine the view of a nationalist movement growing ever-stronger and more broad-based after the First World War. More generally, the thesis examines the methods by which, and the programme on which, the Congress leadership sought to mobilise

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1 Throughout this thesis, the terms 'zamindar', 'patidar' and 'tenant' are used as legal categories, 'landlord' and 'peasant' as class categories. 'Landlords' is used for men who possessed a good deal of land and lived almost completely on rent, other cesses and usury. Function in the processes of production is the crucial test, and it is here that the caste of men may have some importance. Generally speaking, the 'landlord' class in the U.P. included the 30,142 persons who in 1946-7 each paid Rs. 250 or more annually as land revenue and together met 58 per cent of the revenue demand. 'Peasants' is used for all those in rural society above the level of landless or near landless labourers and below the level of landlords. 'Middle peasants' are those who live primarily on the produce of their own land and family labour, which gives an idea of how the terms 'rich' and 'poor peasant' have been used.

2 See below, esp. Ch. IV; also Report of the 49th Session of the Indian National Congress, Lucknow, April 1936 (Allahabad, n.d.), p. 17; and GOI Home-Poll, 1428-1932

3 Loc. cit., and Ch. V below.

support for the movement, and the response it received from different sections of Indian society. It investigates also the importance of Government actions and policies, whether repressive or reformative, the conscious policies and decisions of the Congress leadership, and the internal, structural weaknesses of the Congress-led movement, in the decline of nationalist agitation. The importance of such factors in the rise of nationalist agitation is also touched upon, though the finer details of the decision-making process, and the discussions on these in the Congress councils, are peripheral to this study.

The choice of the U.P. as the area of this study has certain advantages. It was one of the most prominent areas in the popular nationalist agitations of both the early 1920's and the early 1930's. As a zamindari area where the bigger landlords were propped up by the Government, and as one of the provinces most affected by the catastrophic fall in grain prices brought by the Depression, it provided special opportunities in the early 1930's for peasant agitation, as well as special problems if the 'nationalist' aspect of such agitation was to remain foremost. Again, as the province with the largest Muslim population outside the Muslim-majority areas, and as one where fairly well-established Muslim landed and service classes felt threatened in various ways, it presented particularly ticklish communal problems in the inter-War period.

In a word, the U.P. of the late 1920's and the early 1930's mirrored in a particularly acute form the opportunities and the problems facing the national movement in the country as a whole. This fact lends special interest to an examination in this area and period, of both the points of strength and the points of weakness of the Indian national movement for freedom from the British.

Chapter 2

THE CONGRESS ORGANISATION, 1920-1934

Any political movement to be lasting, and effective, needs a vanguard, a party with an established organisation. In this, as in so many other respects, the years 1919-22 proved a turning-point for the Indian national movement. If the Government of India Act, 1919, had much to do with the sort of nationalist party organisation that now emerged, so did the popular agitations of the next three years. The one gave a special significance to the provincial level of the Congress organisation and to the direct links between different levels of that organisation. The other gave to the Congress a core of committed workers and a whole range of branch organisations and activities which proved invaluable to it in the following decades.

1920 was perhaps the crucial year in the development of a broad-based and more or less permanent Congress organisation. The new constitution adopted at the Nagpur Congress that year pronounced 'Swarajya . . . by all legitimate and peaceful means' as the goal of the Congress. A Congress Working Committee (CWC) was created, making the national Congress an active and functioning body throughout the year. The introduction of linguistic provinces, a many-tiered organisation from village-level upwards, an open membership with a fee of four annas per annum, which ensured a regular income and enabled a minimum of Congress work, all helped in the establishment of a popular base. The Congress (linguistic) provinces, and the national body itself, were encouraged to use the local language and Hindustani respectively for Congress business.[1]

This remained the basis of the Congress organisation for

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1 See N. V. Rajkumar: Development of the Congress Constitution (New Delhi 1949)

the following fifteen years, except for a small but significant change in 1929 when the Lahore Congress defined Swarajya as 'complete independence'. Organisation on this basis had two major, and related weaknesses. First, a completely open organisation, relying on a general nationalist appeal and disapproved of by the Government of the time, could maintain its strength only when nationalist feeling was at a high pitch. Rapid disintegration followed the decline of the non-co-operation and the civil disobedience movements. In March 1923, the Congress claimed a membership of 106,046 for 16 of its 20 provinces. Less than two years earlier, the U.P. alone had claimed over three times that number.[1] In 1929, the General Secretary of the U.P. PCC wrote that, after the suspension of the non-co-operation movement,

> 'propaganda and work in the villages was more or less given up; and as the natural result of this the Congress machinery could not function effectively . . . Once in a while when the elections of the PCC or for the official Councils approached, interested persons enrolled some members and set up some sort of Congress committees. During the last year or two even this was not done: in more than half of the districts, the district committees have either disappeared or have existed only nominally on paper. Even the provincial office suffered from the prevailing reaction and remained only in name.'[2]

In November 1933, likewise, a Congress worker could write about Karchana Tahsil in Allahabad district, one of the most highly organised districts for civil disobedience:

> '. . . from what I saw during this tour I have come to the one conclusion that the Congress organisation <u>if it ever existed</u> in this area, has not only collapsed but all traces of it have been wiped out.'[3]

The other weakness with the organisation was that it made no specific provision for the different sections of the Indian

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1 Gopal Krishna: 'The Development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Organisation, 1918-23' (<u>JAS</u>, XXV, 3 May 1966)

2 AICC Ps. P24/1929, Sri Prakasa-JN, Benares, 5-5-29

3 JN Ps., Misc. Ps., 'A Report by a Congress Worker on his Tour in Karchana Tahsil, Dist. Allahabad, November 1933' (emphasis added).

'masses' whom the Congress sought to represent. Even Gandhi's 'Constructive' programme, which did important work in town and country during the 1920's, reached no further than the richer peasantry and the lower middle classes in the towns, with minor exceptions in the case of khadi and anti-untouchability work.

It was only towards the end of the period of this study that the Congress made direct efforts to involve the broader masses in the organisation: through the Harijan uplift movement, through efforts to organise workers and peasants, most notably by the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) founded in 1934, and through changes in the Congress constitution. The new constitution, adopted at Wardha in 1934, sought to increase popular participation and 'direct democracy' in the Congress, even while making for greater central control through a CWC to be nominated by the President. It prescribed Hindustani as the language of all Congress proceedings. It also stipulated a 'manual labour' qualification for membership of Congress Committees, fixed the proportion of urban to rural delegates at 1:3, and provided for the direct election of all Congress bodies, including the PCCs but excepting the AICC.[1]

Whatever their superficial appearance, these changes made no really fundamental difference. The Congress itself, and even the CSP, remained ambivalent in its attitude towards the 'masses'. Many of the new 'mass'-oriented branches and activities again not excluding the CSP, became focii for in-fighting within the Congress, aimed at securing seats on Congress Committees and thereby on elective local and provincial bodies. It could still be argued, with some justification, that the imminence of elections (and, in this instance, a new constitution which would create a vastly extended electorate) brought a Congress organisation into being again and that much of the

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1 N. V. Rajkumar: op. cit., Aj, 2-6 November 1934

apparent strength of this organisation was fake.[1]

Yet, the ups and downs in the organisation of the Congress should not obscure the important advances made in 1920 and afterwards. The evidence from the U.P. certainly makes it difficult to accept the view that the post-non-co-operation Congress was 'reminiscent of the early Congress'.[2] What might be argued, with greater justice, is that the Congress organisation reached out to only rather limited sections of Indian society in the 1920's and 1930's, and, moreover, sometimes did so with a Hindu bias that could prove unfortunate.

The most significant development in the U.P. Congress organisation in 1920 was the establishment of Congress Committee (CCs) at various levels. Theoretically, every village with 5 Congress members had a village CC. Above these were circle, tahsil and district CCs. Independently, each town with a population of 50,000 had a TCC, and below these were town circle CCs. Several of these tiers - PCC, DCCs, tahsil CCs and TCCs - were involved in the election of delegates to the annual and special sessions of the Congress. The PCC itself represented chiefly the 45 DCCs, which elected 114 of its 150 members. 15 members were elected by the Executive Committees of the Allahabad, Agra, Benares, Kanpur, Lucknow and Bareilly TCCs; 2 by the Kashi Vidyapith, Benares, and the Muslim University, Aligarh; and 19 by the other elected members of the PCC. A PCC Executive Council was set up, to meet more

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1 The argument has been put forward cogently in B. R. Tomlinson: 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Indian Politics. The Indian National Congress, 1934-42' (Cambridge Ph. D. 1973), Ch. 2. He discusses also the role of new branch organisations as focii for discontented factions and individuals, esp. pp. 140 and 143-4

2 J. M. Brown: Gandhi's Rise to Power. Indian Politics, 1915-1922 (CUP 1972), p. 356. R. A. Gordon: 'Aspects in the History of the Indian National Congress, with Special Reference to the Swarajya Party, 1919-1927' (Oxford D. Phil. 1970), pp. 313-4, puts the view even more strongly. Compare Nehru's statement, 'When there was no civil disobedience struggle going on, the general attitude of non-co-operation with the British apparatus of government in India continued'; The Discovery of India (London 1946), p. 309

regularly than the PCC and to transact urgent business. It was to consist of a President, a number of Vice-Presidents, a number of Secretaries, a Treasurer, and 11 other members.[1] In 1921, neither the PCC nor its Executive Council seems to have been fully organised. But from 1922 the Executive Council had a regular membership of 21: a President, 4 Vice-Presidents, 4 Secretaries, a Treasurer and 11 other members.[2]

From 1918 to 1921, the U.P. evidently had between 30 and 45 functioning DCCs and a large number of lower-level CCs.[3] A Congress report, probably incomplete, indicated the existence of 11 DCCs, 61 tahsil CCs and 126 CCs at a lower level in 1922.[4] Incomplete figures of membership quoted by Gopal Krishna show that 'the Congress /in the U.P. and elsewhere/ acquired a large mass basis in 1921'. In July that year the U.P. reported 328,966 Congress members. Only Bihar's figure was higher: it claimed a membership of 350,000 in November 1921.[5]

It was in this period that the U.P. Congress first acquired substantial funds for its work. Apart from the income from Congress membership fees, special contributory funds were started. The greatest of these in the country, the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund, collected Rs. 10 millions in three months from April to June 1921. Between January 1921 and June 1922, the 'backward' U.P. raised nearly Rs. 600,000 for this fund.[6]

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1 The above is based on Constitution and Rules of the United Provinces Congress Committee (U.P. PCC, Allahabad, 1921); and P. D. Reeves: 'Some notes on developments in the 1920's (Sussex U.P. Seminar, April 1971)

2 Leader, 4 May 1921; AICC Ps. 11/1926; for examples of the PCC Council membership.

3 Gopal Krishna: 'The Development of the INC . . .'

4 AICC Ps. 3/1922, cited in J. M. Brown: Gandhi's Rise to Power, p. 355n.

5 Gopal Krishna: 'The Development of the INC . . .'

6 GOI Home Poll. 1922, No. 741 gives these figures for contributions between 1 January 1921 and 30 June 1922: Bombay Presidency - Rs. 3,170,049; Bengal - 1,800,000; Punjab - 856,000; U.P. - 596,228; Madras - 538,069; Bihar and Orissa - 483,419; etc., quoted in Brown: Gandhi's Rise to Power, pp. 320-1. Gopal

A powerful volunteer organisation arose parallel to the Congress organisation at this time. The earliest volunteer organisations to come to prominence were the Sewa Samitis, which were established in several places in the U.P. in the years 1917-19. Later, they merged into the volunteer organisations of the Congress and Khilafat movement to some extent. Appearing first in large towns and pilgrimage centres, the Sewa Samitis spread to smaller towns and rural areas in 1918 and 1919. By December 1918, Mathura district alone had 7 branch Samitis. By 1920, Sewa Samitis were functioning at Etmadpur and Achnera in Agra, Ghiror and Shikohabad in Mainpuri, Pura and Chawalmandi in Kanpur, Shahabad in Hardoi, and several other small centres. There was even a move in Benares to open a branch Sewa Samiti, under a mukhia (headman), in each ward of the city.[1]

By 1920, several avowedly nationalist volunteer associations had made their appearance. While important districts such as Allahabad and Benares probably set up separate volunteer corps independent of the Sewa Samitis, it seems likely that in most districts the Sewa Samitis, or at any rate their volunteers, were absorbed by the new associations. There was a change, however, in the growth of Muslim volunteer corps, the open nationalism of both the Muslim (Khilafat) and Congress associations, and the great increase in the number and membership of these volunteer bodies. A few Muslim social service associations had been noticed in 1918 and 1919, in Mathura, Agra and Shahjahanpur, for example. In the following two years, there was a great extension of the Muslim volunteer movement. By November 1921, 35 of 41 districts from where

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Krishna: 'The Development of the INC . . .' gives the smaller figure of Rs. 373,000 as the U.P.'s contribution between 1921 and 1923.

1 This account is based on U.P. GAD 604/1920 (SRR), Note on 'The Sewa Samiti movement in the United Provinces' by Biggane, Asst. to the D.I.G. Police, C.I.D., U.P., 18 December 1919; 'Note on the Volunteer Movement in the United Provinces', P. Biggane, 5 November 1920; 'Note on the Volunteer Movement in the United Provinces', S. O'Connor, 27 May 1922

reports were available had Khilafat volunteer associations, and Government reported a great increase in the number of Muslim volunteers, with figures as high as 1,423, 926 and 387 in Azamgarh, Saharanpur and Aligarh respectively.

The Congress volunteer associations which grew up simultaneously with the Khilafat ones seemed as successful. In November 1921, there was a Congress volunteer corps in 36 of the 42 districts from which the Intelligence Department received reports, with a total of 11,494 volunteers. It is not certain that this was everywhere a great advance on the Sewa Samiti organisation. But it was clearly a new development in some places. One such place was Azamgarh, where no Sewa Samiti had existed, and where Congress volunteer corps apparently emerged in the wake of the Khilafat organisation.[1] By November 1921, the Congress corps in Azamgarh was said to have 1,178 volunteers, among the largest number in the province. By that date, 'a volunteer corps of some kind existed as an appanage to practically every local Congress and Khilafat organisation'.[2]

The number of Muslim and other Congress volunteers was difficult to calculate separately, as there was not always a clear distinction between local Khilafat and Congress organisations. After November 1921, when volunteer associations were proclaimed unlawful, there seems to have been an even closer merger of the 'two denominations' at the town and district level. As a result of this Government move, the nationalist volunteer effort in general received a tremendous fillip. The Government was 'disobeyed, volunteer organisations failed to dissolve and fresh enlistments under the direction of the Congress leaders were made in large numbers', the Intelligence Department reported. '<u>The strength of the Congress organisation now stood revealed</u> and was reflected by the large response to the call for volunteers in all districts . . .'[3] By early 1922, Congress claimed

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1 O'Connor's Note listed this as one of the districts where the movement was dominated by the Khilafat organisation even in 1922, <u>loc. cit</u>.

2 O'Connor's Note, <u>loc cit</u>

3 O'Connor's Note, <u>loc cit</u>. (emphasis in the original)

72,865 volunteers in the 15 districts from which reports had been received, and Government granted 73,626 volunteers in the 37 districts from which it had got information.[1] The Government report noted that its total did not include the volunteers for such active districts as Gorakhpur and Budaun, which, it said, would certainly be over 5,000 in either case. At a conservative estimate, then, there would be 90,000 Congress volunteers in the U.P. Congress' 46 districts: a remarkable achievement of the Congress and Khilafat organisations, by any reckoning.

From the social service aspect of the Sewa Samitis, and other associations such as those of Boy Scouts, an important advance had been made to the openly political, and nationalist, organisations of 1920-21.[2] There was one problem, however. Many of the Sewa Samitis' activities had been associated with Hindu religious fairs and festivals, and it was no coincidence that no Muslim could be found among the office-bearers of the Samitis. When the Khilafat volunteer associations developed later, they attracted Muslims exclusively. Congress volunteer associations were established at the same time, but, with Congress and Khilafat leaders working together, there was every reason for Muslims to join the Khilafat associations. Consequantly, while there were demonstrations of Hindu-Muslim concord when Ramlila or Muharram was celebrated, the agencies for these demonstrations were a Muslim volunteer association and a Congress (mainly Hindu) volunteer association. Certainly, many Muslim volunteers joined the Congress volunteer organisation after the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act to the U.P. But the initial organisation of volunteer associations along communal lines was potentially dangerous. The two groups

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1 AICC Ps. 3/1922 Pt. 2; O'Connor's Note, loc. cit.

2 East India (Non-co-operation), Cmd. 1586, p. 4; U.P. GAD 604/1920; Krishna Dutt Bajpayee: Brajka Itihas, Pt. I (Mathura 1955); Tandon Ps., Grp. K., File 2, S.n. 24, 'Servants of India Society. Report for 1932', Poona 12 June 1933.

of volunteers worked together while their leaders agreed. When the Hindu and Muslim leaders clashed, the separate local organisations lent virulence to their conflict. (See Ch. V).

This was a later problem, however, At this point, it may be well to ponder the extent of the Congress' popularity in 1920-21. The claimed Congress membership for the U.P. alone at this juncture was over six times as great as the membership of the entire Chinese Communist Party in the period of the Northern Expedition (1926-7) and greater than that party's membership in the agrarian revolutionary period that followed.[1] It was also considerably larger than the membership of the Bolshevik Party on the eve of the Russian revolution, and larger even than the swelling Bolshevik Party membership in the first few years after the Revolution.[2] True, the claims of the U.P. Congress are likely to have been exaggerated. Yet, the Government reports on financial contributions and the number of Congress volunteers quoted above, testified to the enormous following gained by the Congress at this time, here and in other provinces.

This amazing success was never repeated in the 1920's and early 1930's. The claimed Congress membership attained these heights again only after the Congress formed its first ministry in the U.P. (see below); and the Tilak Swaraj Fund remained a much-discussed miracle. Yet, several developments during these years indicated that the Congress organisation acquired a certain basic strength during the non-co-operation period which it never lost again.

The first was a protracted tussle for control of the provincial Congress organisation, of a kind that was to become common in the 1930's and even more so later. This accompanied the bitter electoral contest that took place in 1926 between

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1 C. Brandt, et al (eds): A Documentary History of Chinese Communism (London 1952), p. 318. The claimed membership was 50,000 for the former and 300,000 for the latter period.

2 M. Fainsod: How Russia is Ruled (Harvard Univ. Press, 1963) p. 249. The membership was 23,600 in 1917, 115,000 in 1918 and 251,000 in 1919.

groups led by the two seniormost Congress leaders of the U.P., Madan Mohan Malaviya and Motilal Nehru.[1] As a result of this clash, the provincial Congress underwent binary fission. Two of the PCC's four General Secretaries had joined Malaviya's group, while two remained with Nehru, who retained the important links with the national Congress leadership as well as control of the provincial Congress office and accounts. The attempts of Malaviya's men to gain control of the latter caused the shifting of the office from Allahabad, a Malaviya stronghold, to Lucknow and thence to Benares.[2] This locking-out of Malaviya's men led to the setting up of a parallel PCC in an independent office.

For most of 1927, these two rival PCCs existed side by side,[3] each claiming to be the legally constituted body. The battle was also waged at the lower levels of the Congress organisation. The arbitration board appointed by the AICC to settle the U.P. Congress election disputes decided that

> 'the Elections of the several Committees have been generally so faulty that it is impossible to say, with justice and fairness as to which of the Committees are validly formed and which not.'[4]

So great were the differences within the U.P. Congress that the arbitrators found it impossible to bring the two sides together on any compromise solution. In November 1927, when the annual elections for a new PCC became due, the dispute had still not been settled. New elections, coming in the wake of the announcement of the Simon Commission, put an end to the conflict, which had shown by its extended and virulent nature the importance that politicians now attached to the Congress organisation.

The next couple of years saw a remarkably quick revival of a strong and extensive Congress organisation in the U.P.,

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1 For the electoral clash, see Ch. V

2 See AICC Ps. 13/1926, Pt. II, telegrams & correspondence between MN and Sitla Sahai, 30 September & October 1926; Leader, 15 December 1926

3 AICC Ps. G74/1926 and G1/1927; Leader, 5 December 1926

4 AICC Ps. G1/1927, Report of the Arbitration Board, Patna, 19 April 1927

further proof of its sound base. In March 1929, only 35 of the U.P. Congress' 46 districts were represented on the PCC, and definite information about DCCs was available for only 30 districts. The PCC had no information about the number of town or tahsil or village CCs. According to the PCC General Secretary, there was a Hindustani Seva Dal (Volunteer) Board in the province on which the PCC was represented, but the exact number of Seva Dal branches and membership figures were not known.[1]

Early in that year, the PCC office was reorganised, Vinayak Dandekar, the son of a retired Railway Station Master in the Central Provinces, appointed full-time Assistant Secretary, and Inspectors appointed to visit different districts and set up CCs. Much of this work was evidently soon accomplished, and 10,000 new members had been enrolled by the middle of the year.[2] Thereafter, there seems to have been a distinct spurt in organisational activity. By early September 1929, the districts of Gorakhpur, Benares, Allahabad, Kanpur, Etawah, Lucknow, Bareilly, Almora and Agra were said to have enrolled the quota of members laid down for them by the PCC.[3] In mid-September the General Secretary of the U.P. PCC reported the enrolment of 65,000 members from only 35 districts.[4]

The figure was small compared to the claimed membership

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1 AICC Ps. P24/1929, Sri Prakasa-JN, Benares, 15 March 1929; AICC Ps. 41/1929, Congress Bulletin no. 6. Other provincial organisations were also in poor shape at this point. In the city of Bombay, a Congress strong-point, where there were many effective workers, the total Congress membership was 1,016, and 3 of the 7 district Committees - A, B, and E, - were not functioning properly in June 1929; MN Ps., Subject File, 'INC', MN- J. M. Mehta, Allahabad 20 June 1929

2 Leader 22 June 1929. Curiously, the same figure had been given for members enrolled by 1 April 1929, Leader, 6 April 1929 - and in August 90,000 members were reportedly still required to fulfil the quote of 106,526 members that the AICC had laid down for the U.P., Leader, 2 and 5 August 1929

3 Leader, 4 September 1929

4 Leader, 14 September 1929

in non-co-operation times. But if this reflected a lower level of enthusiasm, it perhaps also reflected more careful organisation and greater hierarchical control. Jawaharlal Nehru observed that, in 1930, 'the provincial centres were in constant touch with headquarters as well as with their principal district centres'.[1]

Greater central control was evident from the holding back of most rural agitation for months after the start of civil disobedience. Early in October 1930, Governor Hailey observed that the hill districts of the U.P. were a difficult area, because they had no big landowners or other influential men through whom the Government could act. Therefore,

> 'I have authorized the formation of a special force of 150 police which will move in fairly large parties through the hill areas and serve to dissipate the belief so sedulously propagated that Government has ceased to exercise control.'[2]

Ten days after that statement was made, the PCC Council sanctioned the starting of a 'no-tax' campaign in the U.P.,[3] and within weeks Hailey found that Oudh, the area of the biggest landowners, had become his special problem child. (See map 3 above, and Ch. IV below).

In the 'truce' period, from March to December 1931, that intervened between the two phases of civil disobedience, the U.P. Congress leadership was again very largely (though not completely) successful in holding back peasant agitation. (See Ch. IV). The continuation of civil disobedience, when the movement was resumed, long after the worst of the economic crisis had gone, and the Government had begun to use brutal repression to end the campaign, also testified to the Congress' stronger organisation.[4] This stronger organisation, together

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1 Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 236

2 Hailey Colln., 19B, Hailey-Crerar, 2 October 1930

3 Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 232

4 In March 1932, the PCC still claimed that Congress branches continued to function in all U.P. districts and kept in fairly close touch with one another, despite Government's stern measures since December 1931 to curb all Congress activities;

with the Government's new policy of 'civil-martial law',[1] very largely accounts for the larger number of arrests during civil disobedience than during non-co-operation.

Considerable attention was devoted to organisation in 1929-30. The U.P. Political Conference held at Farrukhabad from 30 March to 1 April 1929, which called for the enrolment of 100,000 Congress members and 10,000 volunteers during the year, also appointed a committee to raise a Satyagraha Fund for the payment of volunteers, gave representation to the provincial Trade Union Congress on the PCC, and decided that a monthly bulletin should be issued to all Congress committees and members.[2] A PCC meeting at Kanpur on 8 December 1929 appointed sub-committees for prohibition, the boycott of foreign cloth, khadi and untouchability work, and decided to impose 1 per cent tax, as a compulsory subscription, on the incomes of individual members of the PCC (the minimum subscription was to be two rupees, and half of this could go to the member's local CC).[3] Another PCC meeting at Kanpur on 19 January 1930, to take a final example, appointed a sub-committee to report on the localities in the province suitable for civil disobedience, and nominated some persons to the U.P. National Service (for which, see below) for continued organisation and inspection of

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AICC Ps. 12/1932, AICC Bulletin No. 2, 15 April 1932. For civil disobedience arrests in U.P., see PAIs 16 July and 22 October 1932 and 14 January 1933; also PCC Hindi Bulletins No. 12 (1June 1932), No. 14 (16 July 1932), No. 20 (16 October 1932), No. 25-6 (15 January 1933) found in the collection of proscribed pamphlets held at the NAI and in AICC Ps. 5/1932 and 3/1933. Both Congress and police reports give the figure of those convicted in U.P. in the year 1932 as about 14,000.

1 See D. A. Low: 'Civil-Martial Law. The Government of India and the Civil Disobedience Movements, 1930-34', (forthcoming)

2 Leader, 6 April 1929; PAI 6 April 1929. Later, in May 1929, the AICC recommended that every province should have at least ¼ per cent of its population as original members of the Congress and at least 50 per cent of its districts represented on the PCC; CWMG, XL (New Delhi 1970), p. 420

3 AICC Ps. G-40(1)/1929, Pt. III; Leader 13 December 1929

Congress committees.[1]

The result was a more elaborate organisation than in the non-co-operation period. Allahabad city witnessed the organisation of mohalla CCs in every locality in 1930.[2] In Saharanpur it was noted that most villages of any size had their own CCs, quite unlike in 1921-2.[3]

In 1931 the 'truce' afforded the opportunity for Congress' greatest rural organisation effort until then. At this time, several districts in the province - Rae Bareli, Agra and Mathura, for example - came to be criss-crossed with village and circle and tahsil CCs, and the accompanying Congress flags and camps. The U.P. Government complained that, as soon as the Gandhi-Irwin 'truce' was signed, Jawaharlal Nehru, as General Secretary of the AICC, sent out a circular declaring it 'vitally necessary' that Congressmen should take

> 'immediate steps to consolidate the position gained by the Congress during the last year and to strengthen it still further . . . If we now establish firmly definite centres of work and activity in rural areas we shall strengthen our organisation and prepare the people for any contingency that might arise . . .'[4]

Certainly, Congress workers in various districts undertook just this kind of propaganda and activity in the months after March 1931.[5] In Rae Bareli, which Government considered the worst of these districts, officials reported the existence of

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1 PAI 25 January 1930

2 U.P. Police Department 1077/1930 (SRR)

3 Hume Colln., III, Pt. I, letter to his parents, Hardwar, 26 April 1930

4 GOI Home Poll. 33/24/1931, 'Purely Provisional Draft Statement', prepared by H. W. Emerson, for publication in case the 'truce' broke down.

5 See AICC Ps. G5(Kw)(ii)/1931, Agra District Congress Conference, Address of Chandradhar Johri, Chairman Reception Committee; AICC Ps. G 140(ii)/1931, Papers from DCC Muttra; AICC Ps. 63/1931, Kali Charan, Secy. Kanauj Tahsil CC (Farrukhabad)-JN, Secy., AICC, 17 July 1931; and AICC Ps. 14/1931 Pt. I, Memo submitted by the Executive Committee of the British Indian Association, Oudh, to H.E. the Governor. Also Tandon Ps., File 69, Nos. 612 and 644, etc; FR May 1931, 1; and PAIs for 1931.

840 panchayats, 32 Congress offices, 13,000 volunteers (8,000 of them four-anna members of the Congress) and 996 villages with Congress flags by early June.[1] This thesis will argue that the enormous increase in Congress presence and influence in the rural areas of many districts in 1931 was not entirely due to the efforts of the official Congress leadership or their lieutenants (Ch. IV, below). But there can be no doubt about the overall extension of the Congress' rural organisation at this time.

In 1934, when provincial Congress leaders set about reviving their completely battered organisation for electoral purposes, their success was again remarkable and again accomplished fairly quickly. From May 1934, when the AICC meeting at Patna decided that the Congress should contest the elections to the central Assembly, there was feverish activity in the U.P. Congress camp. The districts of the province were divided into a number of groups, with each division under the charge of a member of the PCC Council. CCs were revived and reorganised at the various levels, and the enrolment of new members taken up in earnest.[2] By June, regular Congress offices were functioning in 37 districts, and 17 districts reported the enrolment of between 100 and 500 new members each.[3] By the middle of July, the number was said to be as high as 1,000 and 1,100 in Benares and Ghazipur respectively.[4] After the 1934 elections, the work of revitalizing and extending the organisation continued, with an eye to the expected provincial elections under the impending Government of India Act, 1935. By September 1935, the PCC reported a total of 62,112 Congress members in the U.P., 38,396 from the rural areas and 23,716 from the urban.

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1 GOI Home Poll. 33/24/1931, 'Purely Provisional Draft Statement'

2 See FR May and June 1934 ff. Abhyud for June and July 1934; AICC Ps. P20/1934, M. L. Saxena, Secy., U.P. PCC-Secy. AICC, Lucknow, 5 June 1934; etc.

3 Loc. cit.

4 Abhyud., 23 July 1934

Only Bihar claimed a larger membership: 78,305.[1]

The Viceroy's report that the Congress' success in the 1934 elections was based on its 'superior organisation'[2] was only partially true. Like non-co-operation, the agitation against the Simon Commission and the civil disobedience campaigns, as also Gandhi's parleys and pact with Irwin, had left their mark; and the vote for the Congress would appear to have been more a vote for the heroes of the satyagraha than for indefatigable campaigners.[3] Yet the Viceroy's statement did indicate how easily the Congress organisation had been re-established.

The history of the volunteer movement in the U.P. proved somewhat similar. With the regular Congress organisation, the volunteer organisations declined after 1922 and were in poor shape in 1929.[4] Also, as in the case of Congress membership,

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1 AICC Ps. P31/1935 and AICC Ps. 22/1935-6. It may be added that Bengal's membership figures were unavailable at this time. See also L. Brennan: 'Political change in Rohilkhand', p. 185, for the revitalization of the Congress organisation after civil disobedience.

2 Templewood Colln., 12, 725S (P & P), Viceroy-Secy of State, 23 November 1934

3 It is notable that in 1934 the Congress won all the Legislative Assembly seats from the U.P. non-Muhammedan constituencies, where in 1926 it had won only two (MN from the 7 cities, and C. S. Ranga Iyer from Rohilkhand and Kumaun Rural); that in the Agra Rural constituency where the Congress had been unable to put up a candidate in 1926, Paliwal now defeated his influential Liberal rival, Hriday Nath Kunzru MLA from 1926-30 by over 8,000 votes; and that all the elected Congressmen, except Dr Bhagavan Das who was 65 and possibly Sardar Jogender Singh, had been to jail during civil disobedience. Had 'superior' organisation' alone brought these victories, it would be difficult to explain the Congress' comparative lack of success in the Muhammedan constituencies. For candidates and results, see The Pioneer 11-15 October and 25-6 November 1934. See also Halifax Colln., XVI, Viceroy-Secy of State for India, Home Dept. Tel. P., 2 June 1930, which says: '. . . a man like Patel can whip up a very big crowd in Lahore, no doubt because on popular view he figures as a hero who has courageously stood up to the British Government.'

4 See above, p. 24.

non-co-operation heights were not reached when the organisations were revived. In the 1930 civil disobedience campaign, only some 100,000 volunteers participated in the country as a whole.[1] This was, still, no mean figure. More important, the civil disobedience period saw a reorganisation of the volunteer forces, which in some ways increased their importance in the U.P. Here, as in the regular Congress organisation, the leadership initiated a centralising process: clearly, the dependence on the goodwill of local associations had decreased.

The CWC decided to establish an expert, specially-trained body which would keep out of all but the specific activities laid down for it. It was resolved that the Hindustani Seva Dal would be the Central Volunteer Organisation of the Congress, to be called the Congress Seva Dal. Each province would appoint a General Officer Commanding its provincial Seva Dal. The Dals would consist of three sections: children (Bal), boys and girls (Kumars and Kumaris) and adults (Proudhas). The Seva Dals were to hold aloof from all party politics within the Congress, and to take a pledge laid down by the CWC. Other rules and a training programme were also drawn up.[2] In the U.P., a training scheme was prepared by the Kashi Vidyapith and provincial Seva Dal together, and in August a six-month training camp began in Benares. The course included a series of over a hundred lectures on subjects as varied as Indian history, the labour movement, and cleanliness and health. Some of Congress' best-known intellectuals participated. Volunteers were also given physical training, and education in spinning and propaganda techniques. Initially, one worker from every DCC in the

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1 AICC Ps. G8/1931, AICC Circular no. 17, P1/1615, Gen. Secy. AICC-all PCCs, Allahabad 16 July 1931

2 Ibid., CWC resolution, Bombay, 7-12 July 1931, on Hindustani Seva Dal; and 'Congress Seva Dal', undated circular (July 1931?); AICC Ps. 82/1931-8, CWC resolution, Bombay, 4-14 August 1931, on Seva Dal rules. The establishment of a permanent, all-India volunteer organisation fulfilled suggestions first made in the early 1920's; ibid., Reports of CWC meetings, 22-23 November and 29 December 1921, and Cocanada Session of the Congress, 1923

province took the course.[1]

There was one other notable development in the organisation of volunteers at this time. This concerned the waiving of fees in the case of village volunteers, who had suffered a good deal on account of the Depression. Provincial Volunteer Boards were given the discretion of remitting the membership fees of such volunteers in any given area or even in a whole province. Thus, while the organisation of volunteer corps was tightened and centralized, an attempt was made to extend their social base.

The Congress Seva Dal proved an extremely effective force in the second phase of civil disobedience from 1932 onwards. This effectiveness may be judged from the fact that in 1934, when civil disobedience had ended and Government lifted the ban on Congress and its associate organisations, the ban on the Seva Dal remained.[2] The U.P. Congress then reorganised the volunteers under a new provincial Congress Volunteer Department.[3] It was the only province that felt the need to do so.[4] Clearly, different agencies proved to be of varying efficacy in the consolidation of nationalist forces in different areas. In the U.P., the volunteer corps had been invaluable, and the provincial Congress leaders were anxious not to lose the use of this powerful arm in the election campaign they were about to begin.

The repeated resurgence of a strong Congress organisation, described above, was made possible by the establishment of a firm infra-structure in 1920-22, a network of Congress branches and offices run by a core of active workers, and the presence

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1 AICC Ps. P21/1931

2 AICC Ps. P20/1934, Secy. PCC-Secy. AICC, Lucknow, 26 July and 2 August 1934; also AICC Ps. FD2/1935, letters no. 7 and 10 to Congress branches abroad, Allahabad, 28 February 1935 and 27 March 1935 respectively.

3 Ibid., N. K. D. Vasishth, Organising Secy. Provincial Congress Volunteer Dept., U.P.-Secy. AICC, Lucknow, 22 September 1934

4 Ibid., Secy. AICC-Vasishth, 30 January 1935

of fairly widespread sympathy and support for the Congress after those years. This could be seen, for instance, in the near permanence of the Congress leadership throughout the 1920's and the early 1930's, and in the availability of substantial funds for the organisation throughout that period.

The bulk of the non-co-operation leadership in the U.P. stayed on to run the Congress organisation in the years that followed. All six Presidents of the PCC in the latter half of the 1920's[1] - Shaukat Ali, Shiva Prasad Gupta, Purushottam Das Tandon, Govind Ballabh Pant, Jawaharlal Nehru and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi - were men who came to prominence during the non-co-operation movement or the Home Rule agitation preceding it.[2] Of the two even more senior Congress leaders in the province, Madan Mohan Maliviya and Motilal Nehru, the former had held aloof from non-co-operation. But this had only served to strengthen Motilal Nehru's claims to provincial leadership, and Malaviya quickly moved to make up some of the lost ground. In 1922 he defended the Chauri Chaura rioters in their appeal before the Allahabad High Court. From 1923 onwards, both he and Nehru turned their attention to the legislatures. Both worked to gain wider acceptance of their different approaches to nationalism, and both sought to extend their lines of support for electoral purposes,[3] thereby helping to maintain the strength of the Congress organisation.

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1 There were six Presidents in this five-year span on account of the dispute in the provincial Congress in 1926, mentioned above.

2 There are biographies of some of the most prominent U.P. Congress leaders of the time, such as the Nehrus, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pant and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai (see bibliography). But most of the biographical information used in this thesis has been collated from a number of sources: contemporary newspapers, pamphlets and Government reports; several "Who's Who"s; biographical, commemoration and congratulatory volumes; and interviews.

3 For further details of this rivalry, see Ch. V

The triennial elections to the provincial and central legislatures under the 1919 Act provided the most important focus for organisational work at the provincial level. A few senior Congress leaders, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Tandon and Shiva Prasad Gupta, chose to do most of their work of organisation and propaganda outside the electoral arena. But a majority of the provincial Congress leadership recognised that the new constitution provided important new platforms for nationalist propaganda and opposition to the British.

It is well to note, however, that many men who were prominent in the Congress' Council programme were relatively unimportant in the organisation as a whole and in its long-term leadership. Many men from well-to-do landed and commercial families joined Motilal Nehru, Pant, Sri Prakasa, Sherwani and other Congress leaders in the electoral contests of the 1920's. They included, for example, Thakur Sadho Singh, an influential zamindar of Shahjahanpur district; Lala Sangam Lal Agrawal, a substantial cloth merchant of Allahabad city; and Mukandi Lal, the son of a prosperous shopkeeper and contractor of Garhwal, himself educated at Oxford and subsequently an advocate at the Allahabad High Court and Director of several companies.[1] The Independent Congress Party set up by Malaviya to contest the 1926 elections, in opposition to the 'official' Congress, carried the representation of commercial and landed notables even further.[2] When the Congress returned to the electoral arena in 1934 and 1936, after the civil disobedience period, there was again a need to find candidates who could largely pay their way and who had substantial local influence in ordinary times; and again 'monied' men were heavily represented among Congress candidates.[3]

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1 See B. D. Graham and P. D. Reeves: 'Elections Handbook for U.P., 1920-1951', (forthcoming) for a complete list of candidates in the 1923 and 1926 elections which the Congress contested.

2 Abhyudaya, 2 October 1926; and Ch. V below

3 Pant, a member of the Congress Parliamentary Board in 1936, expressed his willingness to give Lady Wazir Hasan a ticket since 'she can afford to spend a substantial amount'; JN Corresp., with G. B. Pant, Pant-JN, Simla 10 September 1936. See

Fearful of the losses they might sustain at the hands of the Government, many such Congress legislators withdrew from the limelight when the Congress decided to launch civil disobedience.[1] Nehru, Pant, Sri Prakasa, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Vidyarthi and others stayed on to lead the movement, but they now worked with what one might call a second tier of leadership which, throughout the 1920's, had played a more important part than most Congress legislators in keeping the organisation running in the districts.

This tier included men like Sitla Sahai, the 'Shastris' - Algu Rai, Harihar Nath and Lal Bahadur - and Shivmurti Singh. Sitla Sahai was a Kayasth lawyer from Rae Bareli who gave up his practice to court arrest during non-co-operation. On release from imprisonment he worked for some time as editor of the Hindi Swarajya and also on the Allahabad Khadi Board. In 1925 he was arrested for suspected complicity in the Kakori Conspiracy Case,[2] but released soon afterwards. He then lived in Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram for a few months, before returning to become Motilal Nehru's chief lieutenant in the election campaign of 1926, and to work as a Secretary of the U.P. Swaraj Party and the U.P. PCC.

The three 'Shastris' mentioned above were all students at the time of non-co-operation. All took part in demonstrations, and two of them, Harihar Nath and ~~Algu Rai~~ Lal Bahadur, were arrested. After the suspension of the movement, all three went to the Kashi Vidyapith from where each received the degree of 'Shastri'. Then all of them joined Lajpat Rai's Lok Sevak Mandal (Servants of the People Society), Lahore, and devoted themselves to public

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also Tomlinson: 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Indian Politics', pp. 234-46; Brennan: 'Political Change in Rohilkhand', pp. 127 and 411-2

1 Mukandi Lal, his Oxford-educated colleague Anandi Prasad Dube, a prominent member of the Allahabad Bar, and the Dublin educated Lucknow barrister and University Lecturer in Law, Jaikaran Nath Misra, among others, held aloof from civil disobedience.

2 For details, see Ch. III

work while living on the small allowance of about sixty rupees a month, given by the Mandal to its members. Given the small number of men who were willing and able to devote themselves to full-time nationalist work, when the Congress and all its associate bodies were considered 'subversive' organisations, the Shastris quickly gained a conspicuous and important place in the Congress organisations of their different districts.

Algu Rai went to Meerut, set up a Kumar Ashram as his headquarters and concentrated on achutodhar (the uplift of untouchables). He raised funds for this work, organised Sweepers' Unions and so on, not only in Meerut but in neighbouring districts as well. Significantly, he was found organising and conducting the civil disobedience campaign in several of these districts in 1930-1.

Lal Bahadur also began his career in the Lok Sevak Mandal with achutodhar activity, beginning as Algu Rai's understudy in Meerut, but then moving on to work among untouchables at Delhi, Benares and finally Allahabad. Here Lal Bahadur's activities branched out into several areas. In 1928, at Tandon's suggestion, he successfully contested an election to membership of the Allahabad municipality. Then, and in the years following, he was an active organisation man in the district Congress.

Harihar Nath, like the other two, began his Lok Sevak Mandal work among the untouchables, in this case in Benares. But soon afterwards he transferred to work among industrial labourers. After a period of training with trade union leaders in Bombay, he went to Kanpur, took up residence in the workers' quarter, Gwaltoli, and quickly established his influence in the area. By 1929 he was General Secretary of the Kanpur Mazdur Sabha, by 1931 its President. He played an active part in the civil disobedience campaign of the early 1930's, and no doubt took many of his local supporters into the campaign with him.[1]

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1 See my 'The Shastris of Kashi and Lahore: the making of Congress leaders in the U.P.' (forthcoming) for a fuller account of these men.

It was to be expected that the leadership of a 'subversive' organisation making a general nationalist appeal would come from men with some degree of economic independence from the Government and some amount of political sophistication.[1] This explains the predominance of independent professionals in the provincial Congress leadership throughout the 1920's and early 1930's. (Table I). Among the second tier of the Congress leadership, the independent professionals remained important. An overwhelming majority of the score or so of district Congress leaders, whom Motilal Nehru referred to as 'thoroughly reliable' men in the course of preparations for local board elections in 1925, were lawyers.[2]

But there was at the district level another kind of Congress leader who was also important during this period. This was the man from an almost purely rural background, who was not directly involved in election contests for the provincial Council or the local boards, and who devoted his time primarily to work among peasant groups, helping thereby to keep the Congress organisation alive in at least some rural areas. Naturally, the bigger landowners did not provide such Congress workers. Yet the leadership even at this level came from relatively privileged groups: men with the economic independence, literacy, the chance of contacts with higher levels, and the spare time, to induce them to take up long-term national work.

Bayly suggests, from his study of the Allahabad region, that small <u>zamindars</u> and the 'upper tenantry' provided the most important organisation men of the Congress in the districts and <u>tahsils</u> throughout the 1920's and 1930's.[3] Brennan's work

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1 Cf. Gopal Krishna: 'The Development of the Indian National Congress . . .' He observes that the Congress leadership in the non-co-operation period was 'selected by the test of sacrifice as well as by the criteria of education and social status.'

2 AICC Ps. 9/1925, MN-Pant, 15-8-25

3 C. A. Bayly: 'The Development of Political Organisation in the Allahabad Locality, 1880-1925' (Oxford D. Phil. 1970) pp. 325-32 & 393

TABLE I

U.P. PCC COUNCIL, 1925-6 - 1934-5

	1925-6	1929-30	1934-5
Lawyers*	5	8	8
Teachers	1	2	3
Journalists	2	4	3
Doctors	2	-	-
Ex-Government Service	1	-	-
Rais and zamindars*	2	3	2
Business	-	-	-
Men of religion	1	1	1
Public work++	2	2	4
Not known	(5)	(1)	-

/Source: For the lists used, AICC Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum, New Delhi, Files 11/1926, P26/1929, P20/1934.

* All lawyers and advocates have been grouped together, as have all zamindars and rais. There were often wide variations in the wealth and social standing of men included in these groups, but by and large the less well-to-do lawyers and smaller zamindars predominated. In addition, certain men fall into more than one category. In such cases they have been classified according to their source of income, e.g. Sri Prakasa (a lawyer and zamindar) as a zamindar and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi (an ex-Government servant and a journalist) as a journalist.

++ 'Public workers' includes all those supported by public institutions, such as the National Service, the Lok Sevak Mandal (Servants of the People Society), Lahore, and the khaddar bhandars./

makes a similar finding about the new men who emerged as Congress leaders in the districts of Rohilkhand during the years of civil disobedience. Among them were an Agrawal paper-merchant and money-lender, a Mahajan Vaishya zamindar, a young Chauhan zamindar, a Thakur with a B.A., and two young graduates: 'Young men from rural castes, or with zamindari or money-lending connections with rural castes . . . /who had the/ ability to influence the petty zamindars and tenants'. [1]

A sample survey I made of Congress leaders and organisers in Agra, Allahabad, Azamgarh and Rae Bareli districts in the 1920's and early 1930's also revealed a heavy representation of small zamindars and patidars, and, especially in Agra (a growing commercial and industrial city), petty and middling merchants and businessmen, apart from the independent professionals.

An Allahabad man, Thakur Shivmurti Singh, provides a paradigm of this kind of district Congress leader from a rural background.[2] He was born in 1896 in a family of smallholders of Kotwa, Phulpur tahsil, some fifteen miles across the Ganga from Allahabad city. The upper-castes in the region did not touch the plough, and Shivmurti's father occupied himself as a teacher in the village school. From there Shivmurti passed the Hindi Middle (Standard Eight) examination. He then went to Allahabad to continue his studies. Reading progressive and nationalist literature, and periodicals such as Karmayogi, and attending political meetings at a time when the Swadeshi and the anti-partition agitations in Bengal were recent events,

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1 L. Brennan: 'Political Change in Rohilkhand, 1932-52' (Sussex Ph. D. 1972), pp. 174 and 182-3

2 Pandit Tikaram Tripathi, from the neighbouring village of Jamunipur, provides another typical case of the patidar turned Congress leader. The path for him was through teaching at a District Board school and a Librarian's job at Malaviya's Bharti Bhawan Library in Allahabad. (I am grateful to the late Thakur Shivmurti Singh, to Paddit Rup Narain Tripathi, son of Pandit Tikaram, and to Thakur Srinath Singh, all of Allahabad, for much of the information on which the next two paragraphs are based).

Shivmurti became a Swadeshi supporter in his first year at Allahabad. In 1918, he left his studies and, at the suggestion of Purushottam Das Tandon, became a Hindi teacher at Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram. Later, he taught in Allahabad, and then at a school in Bikaner of which Sampuranand, later an important Congress leader of Benares, was Principal.

When non-co-operation began in 1920, Shivmurti left teaching to take up Congress activities, working chiefly among the kisans in Allahabad and Pratapgarh districts. Following the decline of the movement, he went to Lahore where he graduated from the Qaumi Vidyapith. He then returned to Congress work in Allahabad, now working under the guidance of Jawaharlal Nehru, and still mainly among the kisans. His education and his experience enabled him to espouse the nationalist ideology consciously, and to establish contacts with better-known Congress leaders. His background equally fitted him for understanding the problems of the kisan and for interpreting the nationalist message to him. He was not the kind of person who would have found a place in the Congress leadership before 1920. After that date the provincial leadership worked through intermediaries like him to mobilise popular support.

If the presence of a core of committed workers and leaders was one reason for the continuing strength of the Congress organisation in the years after non-co-operation, the availability of substantial financial support to the organisation was another. We have noted above that the success of the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund was never repeated. Indeed, there were occasions during the next decade and a half when the Congress faced major financial difficulties.[1] Yet for a number of reasons

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1 Elections always produced a demand for larger funds than were available; see corresp. in AICC files for 1926, esp. AICC Ps. 13/1926, Pt. I and AICC Ps. 21/1926. The position grew worse in the mid-1930's, when the Congress returned to the electoral arena and individual ambitions and factional rivalries made men hesitant to subscribe to any fund that would not be used in their own local area; see Tomlinson: 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Indian Politics', Ch. 3.

the post-War Congress was always in a stronger financial position than the party had been earlier.

One was the open membership and 4-anna fee introduced in 1920, which, together with petty collections, proved sufficient for most local work.[1] Secondly, the greater sympathy for the Congress after the War, the strengthened organisation and the increased propaganda produced promising results in many of the major and minor collections made for or by the Congress (See Ch. III). Above all, business and industrial circles in India increasingly looked to the Congress to deliver the goods, whether by prizing concessions out of the British or by other means.[2]

The Swadeshi agitation in Bengal,[3] and again the foreign-cloth boycott campaign that formed part of non-co-operation, indicated the direct aid that a powerful national movement could give to these classes. The changes in the Governmental structure and in the organisation and support of the Congress in the years after the War served to emphasize the party's strength. The losses suffered by Indian business and industry at this time perhaps brought a realisation in some quarters of the need for a degree of state planning to safeguard and

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1 There was generally little expenditure at the local level; a Congressman's house was often the local Congress office, and a few leaflets, or more probably the beat of a drum, would announce public meetings. Interviews with Mangla Prasad, Allahabad, 22 June 1971 and 29 and 30 June 1972

2 An important reflection of this was the widespread rumour that Tata had donated a very large sum to Motilal Nehru in the mid-1920's, in order to secure protection for the Indian iron and steel industry through the central Legislative Assembly. Interviews, Hriday Nath Kunzru, New Delhi, 23 October 1972; Padma Kant Malaviya, Allahabad, 25 January 1973. (Birla was at the time supporting Malaviya against Nehru, and this may have been the reason for the Tata rumour. But the point is that such associations were now common).

3 See Sumit Sarkar: The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-8 (New Delhi 1973), esp. Ch. III

improve the prospects of Indian industrialists and businessmen.[1] By the 1930's, significantly, financial control at the centre and state control of 'key industires and services' were among the central demands of the Congress.[2] It appeared that the Indian capitalists' reliance on the Congress was increasing.

When civil disobedience began in 1930, the national Congress and several mill-owners reached a mutually beneficial understanding after some hard bargaining.[3] How far-reaching their agreement was was revealed when Jawaharlal Nehru expostulated with the Punjab National Bank for refusing to re-employ at its Kanpur branch a worker who had been jailed for civil disobedience. Nehru noted that Congress had taken pledges from various Indian mills to deal only with Indian banks.

> 'We propose to carry on this campaign further', he went on, 'and ultimately to break the power of the foreign banks in India. It would be a poor result of

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1 Michael Kidron: Foreign Investments in India (London 1965), pp. 24-5, argues that this feeling was widespread. But A. K. Bagchi: Private Investments in India, 1900-1939 (CUP 1972) pp. 426-7, suggests that articulate Indian opinion was only very slightly in advance of British opinion on economic matters; the demands were mainly mercantilist, and talk of 'state control' was rare. This fits in with my assessment of the vagueness of Congress policy on agrarian questions (Ch. 5), though it seems likely that at the national level the Congress would have needed to pay closer attention to the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie.

2 Report of the 45th Indian National Congress Karachi 1931 (Karachi 1931), p. 141; Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report. Being the Report of the Committee appointed by the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee to enquire into the Agrarian Situation in the Province (Bareilly 1936), p. i of Ch. VI, 'Recommendations'.

3 AICC Ps. G.2/1931, Pt. I, 'Report on Civil Disobedience' by Syed Mahmud, Jairamdas Daulatram, JN, Gen. Secies. AICC, p. 10. See also JN Corresp., with Gandhi, March-April 1928 and MN-Gandhi, Allahabad, 25 April 1930; and JN Corresp., with Mahadeo Desai, Desai-JN 4-4-28. Among the conditions first laid down by Gandhi in the negotiations with mill-owners were the following: that they should identify themselves fully with the foreign cloth boycott movement; help the sale not only of Indian mill-cloth but also of khadi; and contribute funds for boycott propaganda, as and when required, though in general not exceeding Rs. 1 lakh; JN Corresp. with Gandhi, Gandhi-Shantikumar 31-3-28.

> 'our endeavours in this behalf if national banks started behaving as badly as the foreign banks.'[1]

In the Congress' public announcements, and in the resolutions passed by different Congress Committees, there remained a certain ambivalence on the question of using Indian mill-cloth while boycotting the foreign variety.[2] But, at the head of the Congress organisation, there was a clear realisation of the long-term link between the Congress and Indian capitalists. Gandhi himself had put it succinctly in an article published in Young India in July 1929:

> '. . . the exclusive preaching of khadi does not mean hostility to indigenous mill-cloth . . . It is the popular indifference that has given the foreign cloth dealer his vantage ground. The moment the people are induced to think for themselves and make their choice, the boycott is a certainty. The indigenous mills are therefore playing their part in the movement, and profiting by it without the assistance from Congressmen.'[3]

Over the latter half of the 1920's and the early 1930's, the big men of commerce and industry in Bombay and Calcutta were the main source of U.P. Congress funds. The Calcutta magnate, Ghanshyamdas Birla made handsome donations for anti-untouchability work in the mid-1920's, towards the election costs of the Independent Congress Party in 1926, and for the propagation of the Nehru Report in 1928-29.[4] Motilal Nehru looked to Bombay and Calcutta generally for funds to enable the propagation of this report.[5] In 1936, there seemed to be an

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1 JN Corresp., with Lala Mulkraj Bhalla, JN-Bhalla, Managing Director, Punjab National Bank, Lucknow 8 March 1931

2 See NOP 4 May 1929; and provincial Congress resolutions in AICC Ps., 4/1933 and The Leader 14 October 1933

3 CWMG, XLI (New Delhi 1970), pp. 156-7

4 Interview, M. L. Gautam, New Delhi 31 October 1972; AICC Ps. G-57(ii)/1926, MN-Rangaswami Iyengar, 30-11-26, and G-57(iv)/1926, Raghupati Sahai-Iyengar, 16-9-26; MN Ps., A-15, MN-Ansari, 9-1-30. See also Tandon Ps., Grp. K, File 1, Tandon-Birla, Lahore, 14 April 1930

5 MN Ps., B-6, MN-Annie Besant, 30 September 1928

expectation among important U.P. Congressmen that Bombay would provide much of the finance for the election campaign of the province.[1]

U.P. based industrialists and businessmen themselves made large contributions to the Congress coffers.[2] This was probably an important reason for the strength of the 1930s' civil disobedience movement in major centres of commerce and industry like Kanpur and Agra.[3] By the mid-1930's, secret support was giving way to more open association between the Congress and industrial and commercial men in the U.P.: one indication of this was the appointment of several important Congressmen to the directing boards, or to branches, of the new insurance agencies being established to fill a gap created by the disruptive effects of the Depression.[4]

On occasion, the Congress' heavy reliance on these groups necessitated concessions on matters of principle. Thus, the Kanpur TCC had to acquiesce in the continued sale of foreign cloth in the years of civil disobedience, when other strong Congress centres were clamping down on such activity. Among the reasons for this, the Secretary of the TCC explained, was the danger of communal riots if the boycott was strictly enforced. In addition, Lala Lallu Mal, a member of the TCC Executive, was a working partner of a firm called 'Babu Ram and Co.'

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1 AICC Ps. P20/1936, JN-Pant, 13 May 1936.

2 Several interviews; PAI 20 July 1929; JN Misc. Ps., 'Report of the City sub-committee on the Financial Condition of CCC, Allahabad' (written in 1934 or 1935).

3 U.P. Police Dept. 1263/1931 (SRR), 'Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Communal Outbreak at Cawnpore', p. 4 and 'Report on Cawnpore Communal Riots' by Sale, D.M., Kanpur, 16 April 1931; Hailey Colln., 19A, 'Note' by R. J. S. Dodd, 25-8-30; Satyagraha Samachar (Allahabad), 18 April and 4 May 1930 (the files of this paper are found in U.P. Police Dept. 106/1930-UPSA); Agra Satyagraha Sangram (DCC, Agra 1931), P.P. Hind B. 33 (IOL), passim; and Map 3 above.

4 See Pant Ps., F4, Nos. 14 and 118, and F6, no. 40. AICC Ps. 24/1934, incomplete list of U.P. delegates to the 1934 Congress; and the U.P. Political "Who's Who" (2nd edn., Allahabad 1936) indicate the large number of district Congress leaders working for insurance agencies.

which had sold some foreign goods over the last year. Further, for two decades, Lallu Mal had been the Kanpur broker for 'Messrs Jugal Kishore Baldeo Sahai' of Gonda District. In this capacity he still sold some foreign piece goods, though the TCC Secretary suggested, most of his sales were of Swadeshi cloth.

> 'All the same', the Secretary went on, Lallu Mal 'is very useful to us in more than one way. He has been the mainstay of our financial resources, since /sic/ the last eleven years. He has helped us in the establishment of the Congress Khaddar Bhandar and he is a director thereof. He has been contributing handsomely towards the political sufferers' fund. In short there is no national scheme in which we do not avail of his generous help. Last year he went to jail in the Civil Disobedience movement. . . That is the secret of his being elected almost unanimously when annual elections took place . . .'[1]

Obviously, the Jamnalal Bajajes and the Ghanshyam Das Birlas had to be accommodated not only at the national level, but also in Agra and Kanpur.

Other big contributions to Congress funds in the U.P. during these years came from the princely States, relatively big landlords, and well-to-do advocates and other professionals.[2] The last two categories included some leading Congressmen, but financial support came from outside their ranks as well. Indeed, at moments of popular enthusiasm, contributions to Congress funds came from some of the most unlikely sources. Old Congress leaders recall contributions during the civil disobedience period from the wife of Sir Jagdish Prasad, the Chief Secretary to the U.P. Government, through a secret collection made at the Allahabad Police Lines, and from a Police Inspector sent to arrest an organiser of the 'no-tax'

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1 AICC Ps. G-139/1931, G. N. Singh, Secy. Kanpur TCC-Gen. Secy. AICC, 1 July and 6 September 1931

2 MN Ps., Subject File 'Meerut Conspiracy Case' MN-Ansari, Agra 21 April 1929, about contributions from an anonymous Maharaja; GOI Home Poll. 443/1930, Extract from an Agent's report, 1-11-30, regarding Rs. 10,000 received by MN from the Lakhana Raj (an estate, not an Indian state); and interviews

campaign in that district.[1] Later, the wife of Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava, the Kanpur rais and businessman, Minister for Education in the U.P. Government from 1931 to 1937, signed an appeal for subscriptions to Gandhi's Harijan Purse; and Srivastava had to make a hasty apology and disclaim prior knowledge of the act.[2]

There was one other factor which sustained the Congress organisation through periods of slackness in the nationalist camp after 1920. This was the presence of 'feeders' in the form of 'national' institutions and 'constructive' work organisations. The establishment (or, in some cases, further development) of select 'national' institutions, opposed to British and British-aided institutions in India, was one of the features of non-co-operation. Among these, educational institutions were perhaps most important, on account of the groups they affected and the ideological guidelines they provided.

'National' education had been advocated by the Arya Samaj since the late nineteenth century. At many places in the U.P., the Samaj had actually established Dayanand Anglo-Vedic schools and colleges, as well as more traditional Gurukuls. The Gurukuls were particularly influential, with their pronounced Indianness, their denunciation of distinctions based on caste, and their provision of free education which attracted many poor students. 'The cultural nationalism emerging from the Gurukul', writes the historian of the Arya Samaj, 'became the mother of political nationalism in India . . .'[3] While the Hindu bias of the 'national' education provided here

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1 Brennan: 'Political Change in Rohilkhand', p. 179; interview with Rup Narain Tripathi, Allahabad 16-7-72. See also Abhyudaya, 16 April 1934, U.P. Government notice that Government servants were prohibited from taking any part in any political movement

2 Hailey Colln., 27C, Srivastava-Hailey, 17 July 1934

3 Dhanpati Pandey: The Arya Samaj and Indian Nationalism, 1875-1920 (New Delhi 1972), p. 103

added to the growing and unfortunate Hindu appearance of Indian nationalism, the presence of these institutions did strengthen the Congress movement. The Gurukul Kangri, Hardwar (Saharanpur district) was particularly noted for its prominence in the early stages of the civil disobedience campaign in 1930.[1]

Individuals had also supported 'national' education. Raja Mahendra Pratap of Mursan founded the Prem Mahavidyalaya and four other colleges in Mathura district and two in Bulandshahr district in the period 1909-11, in addition to helping in the transfer of a Gurukul Vidyalaya from Farrukhabad to Brindaban (Mathura).[2] Men who were later well-known nationalist figures, such as Acharyas Jugal Kishore, Gidwani and Sampurnanand, were associated with the Prem Mahavidyalaya. In 1929, the institution provided for lectures on citizenship, economics, spinning and carding work, cleanliness and medicine, and organised a tour of villages at least once a week to collect statistics regarding village conditions.

> 'We are thinking of starting a small centre in one or two villages', wrote Jugal Kishore in Young India of 31 January 1929, 'I am hoping that other /sic/ students of this institution will also be aroused to take greater interest in village work. We have already a Hindustani Seva Dal here and hope to make it a more active and useful body than it has been so far.'

He pointed out, further, that only such students were admitted as pledged themselves to at least ten years of village work. Needy students received a stipend of Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 per month, and, after completion of their course, from Rs. 35 to Rs. 75 per month for continued public work.[3] Understandably, the Prem Mahavidyalaya earned the displeasure of the Government during the civil disobedience campaign. In 1932, it was closed down by a special Government order.[4]

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1 A. P. Hume Colln., vol III, Pt. I, letters to his parents, Hardwar, 26 April 1930 and Roorkee, 14 May 1930

2 Krishna Datt Bajpayee: Braj ka Itihas, Pt. I (Mathura, 1955)

3 MN Ps., G-1; Young India 31 January 1929

4 Bajpayee: Braj ka Itihas, Pt I

The non-co-operation movement brought a tremendous spurt in the establishment of 'national' educational institutions. By the end of July 1921, there were 137 such institutions in the U.P., with as many as 8,476 scholars.[1]

Probably the most famous of these was the Kashi Vidyapith, established through the munificence of Shiva Prasad Gupta, Benares rais and Congressman, modelled on the Gujerat Vidyapith and inaugurated in February 1921.[2] From the start, the institution was organised and run by well-known nationalist leaders. Dr Bhagavan Das, a leading Congressman in the early 1920's, was its Chancellor from 1921 to 1940. J. B. Kripalani, Narendra Deo, Sampuranand, Birbal Singh, Yajna Narain Upadhyaya, all of whom were later prominent in the U.P. Congress, were among its earliest teachers.[3]

In 1925, the Kashi Vidyapith was extended to include a college. Forty-two students passed through this college in the first four years of its existence. The work they then took up was as follows:

National Education	10
Newspaper editing	5
Anti-untouchability work	5
Khadi work	2
Unpaid Congress work	7
Other public work (unpaid)	7
TOTAL:	36

Of the remaining 6, at least 3 combined some public work with their personal vocation. Five of those involved in 'national' education were teachers at the Vidyapith itself, others were elsewhere in the U.P., Bihar and Rajputana, endeavouring to educate other young men for public work. The journalists were

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1 The Progress of Education in India, 1917-1922; Eighth Quinquennial Review, vol I (Calcutta, 1923), p. 5

2 For the institution, Gupta donated Rs. 10 lakhs, and Rs. 60,000 a year from a trust established in memory of a brother who died very young;- Sri Prakasa: Bharat Ratna Bhagavan Das (Meerut 1970), p. 78

3 Ibid., pp 78-9

working with Aj, Pratap, Sainik, Vishal Bharat and The Hindustan Times, once again in positions of some influence.[1]

In general, institutions like the Kashi Vidyapith inculcated a public spirit rarely found among the products of Government schools and colleges.

> 'The Kashi Vidyapith, as its prototype in Ahmedabad, has really always been the seminary where students are trained in extremists' methods of thinking,' the U.P. Government noted in 1930;[2] while the Congress report on civil disobedience observed: 'the response from the national schools and colleges was certainly remarkable. The Gujerat Vidyapith and the Kashi Vidyapith specially threw their entire resources into the struggle and almost all their professors and students took part.'[3]

But perhaps the most telling comment came from the Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareli when the U.P. Government was considering the issuing of a communique declaring students participating in 'subversive' movements disqualified from future Government employment. The nine students then in the Rae Bareli jail were all from the Kashi Vidyapith, and the Deputy Commissioner observed succinctly: 'the students of Kashi Vidyapith are not likely to seek Government employment . . .'[4]

Certain of the Government-aided educational institutions also stood out from the general run of such bodies, by virtue of the education they provided and the results they produced. One was Madan Mohan Malaviya's Benares Hindu University (BHU), started

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1 Aj, 1-2 March 1929, Satya Narain Tripathi on 'National Education'

2 U.P. Educ. (Confid) Dept. 127/1930, (SRR), 'Comment on Activities of the BHU', 14 June 1930

3 AICC Ps. G2/1931, Pt. I, 'Report on Civil Disobedience by Gen. Secies., AICC, October 1931, p. 57a. See also JN Corresp., with Chandrabhal Johri, Johri-JN, 17 January 1927, and CWMG, XLII (Delhi 1970), pp. 50-4, for accounts of the Gujerat Vidyapith's work

4 U.P. GAD 241/1930 (SRR), Jagdish Prasad, Chief Secy. U.P., 'Note' of 27-5-30, and comment on it by Dy. Commissioner, Rae Bareli

in 1917, with its emphasis on 'Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan'.[1] The U.P. Government noted in September 1930 that while the students of Allahabad, Lucknow and Agra Universities had shown sympathy for the movement, none of these institutions was as bad as Benares.

> 'More than a hundred students have left the /Benares/ University to take part openly in the civil disobedience movement. Their activities have not been confined to this province alone but have extended to Bombay, Bihar and Orissa and Madras . . .'[2]

Table III indicates the extent, and kind, of BHU activity during the first five months of civil disobedience.

BHU participation in nationalist activities continued throughout 1930 and was observed again in 1932. It was, naturally, greater in Benares than in other places. It was noted, in September 1932, that Benares was the centre of the movement in the U.P. on account of the activities of the University.[3] Six months later it was reported that some 500 students of the BHU had undertaken to 'devote themselves to untouchability propaganda work' during the vacation.[4]

Non-educational public (or social) service organisations that emerged in the non-co-operation years also provided valuable sustenance to the national movement. One that was of special importance to the U.P. was Lajpat Rai's Lok Sevak Mandal. Modelled on Gokhale's Servants of India Society, though with a more political bent, the Mandal was officially inaugurated by Gandhi at Lahore on 9 November 1921. From then until his death in 1928, Lajpat Rai himself was President of the Society. He was succeeded by Purushottam Das Tandon, the Allahabad and U.P. Congress leader. Partly owing to a shortage

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1 See S. L. Dar and S. Somaskandan: History of the Benares Hindu University (BHU Press 1966), passim.

2 U.P. Educ. (Confid) Dept. 127/1930 (SRR), 'Comment on Activities of the BHU'

3 FR September 1932, 1. See also MN Ps., V-2, G. S. Vidyarthi-MN, 23-4-30; and PAIs, September 1930-January 1931 and for 1932

4 FR April 1933, 1;

TABLE II

NATIONALIST ACTIVITIES OF BHU MEN, OUTSIDE BENARES, APRIL-AUGUST 1930

No. of BHU men	Date	Place	Type of activity
1 student	24 April	Ballia)	Speeches on khaddar
1 student	24 April	Ghazipur)	
1 teacher	May	Meerut	Speeches from Congress platform instigating civil disobedience. Also articles in Ghaziabad Satyagraha Samachar appealing to students to join the movement
1 teacher	15 July	Poona	Appeal to youth on above lines
Vice-Chancellor (Malaviya)	July-August	Bombay-Delhi	AICC-CWC activities, after these bodies were declared unlawful
1 student	3 August	To Azamgarh	Youth League propaganda
113 students) 1 employee)	4 August	To Bombay	Protest at arrest of Vice-Chancellor
Another batch of students	8 August	To Bombay	
12 students	12 August	Allahabad	Youth League activities
15 students	15 August	Dehradun	Started the picketing of all schools and colleges and had them closed
15 students		To Garhwal	(From Dehra Dun)
18 students	18 August	To Bombay	

TABLE II cont.

No. of BHU men	Date	Place	Type of activity
2 students	22 August	Gorakhpur	Speech urging students and Muslims to join civil disobedience
7 students	23 August	To Lucknow	(From Kanpur)
1 teacher	25 August	Unao	Arrested for civil disobedience
2 students	27 August	Mehndwal (Basti dist.)	Preached 'no-tax' and the boycott of foreign cloth
1 student	Last week of August	Rampura circle (Jalaun dist.)	Congress propaganda
Batch of students) 1 employee)	End of August	To Coimbatore (from Poona)	Congress propaganda
Batch of students	August?	Saran dist. (Bihar)	Led processions, made speeches
6 students	28 August	Mahoba (Hamirpur)	Arrested picketing

/Source: Prepared from information contained in U.P. Educ. (Confid.) Dept. 127/1930 (SRR)/

of funds, and partly on account of great selectivity, the Society remained a small band of select public workers, maintained by the Society and working full-time in an allotted sphere. In 1934, there were still only 14 members, with 3 assistants. The area of work was mainly Punjab and the U.P. There were also a few members in Gujerat and Orissa. In the U.P., Meerut, Allahabad and, later, Kanpur were the chief centres of Lok Sevak Mandal activity.[1] The Meerut centre worked for the uplift of 'untouchables', ran an ashrama, a library and other social services.[2] Through the mid-1920's such activities occupied most of the time of the society's members. Yet Government was of the opinion that by 1927

> 'members of the Society were engaged in endeavouring to meddle with the administration in the villages. Though some of their activities, such as an endeavour to improve sanitation and education were apparently not open to reproach,' a Government report said, 'yet the fact that they persuaded villagers not to call upon the police or courts to help them settle their disputes, and that they opened registers of births and deaths, showed that the Society was beginning to put into force what Congress had been advocating - the gradual establishment of parallel government.'[3]

The fact was that, in the political conditions of the U.P. in the 1920's, the dividing line between social and political work was a thin one. Indeed, there was a frankly political aspect to the Lok Sevak Mandal's work. This came to the fore with the civil disobedience campaign of 1930. Government reported then that all the members of the Mandal had been 'lent' to the Congress.[4] The truth was, rather, that these men, who

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1 Tandon Ps. File 52, Sn. 231, 'Servants of the People Society, Lahore. Brief Report of Work during 1930-34'

2 Ibid., File 35, Sn. 1342, 'Report of Work during January 1930-December 1931 in the Meerut centre of SPS'

3 U.P. Police Dept. 1504/1934 (SRR), 'Note on Subversive Movements and Organisations (other than Terrorist) in India . . .', Director, Intelligence Bureau, GOI, September 1933

4 Loc. cit. For an account of activities of LSM members in civil disobedience, See Tandon Ps.

were in most cases members of the Congress before they became members of the Mandal, turned at this stage from quiet and unostentatious nationalist work to open anti-imperialist agitation because the times and the leaders so dictated. One might describe it as a change of tactics, not however of the battlefield.

An important function performed by such institutions as the Lok Sevak Mandal and the Kashi Vidyapith was that of providing leaders, both of nationalist organisations and of public opinion. The Mandal itself, in spite of its limited membership, groomed such men as Algu Rai Shastri, Harihar Nath Shastri, Mohanlal Gautam, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Raja Ram Shastri for leadership in the U.P. Congress. The Kashi Vidyapith provided an even larger number of influential Congressmen. In addition to the four Shastris mentioned above, Kamlapati Tripathi, Tribhuvan Narain Singh, Balkrishna Keskar and Paripurnanand Varma were among the students who passed through the Vidyapith.[1] Several of the teachers at the Vidyapith also became important Congress leaders, as noted earlier.

As the value of full-time national workers became obvious, other institutions arose to provide for them. In 1929 a National Service was set up in the U.P., the delayed fulfilment of an idea first mooted in non-co-operation days. Gandhi's tour of the U.P., from September to November 1929, was utilised for the collection of funds for the service. By the time Gandhi left, over Rs. 12,000 had been collected, without doubt a good start. Gandhi commented:

> 'The idea of such a service has been before the country since 1920 . . . Pandit Jawaharlal /Nehru/ has given it a shape and a habitation. National work must suffer so long as we have to depend upon volunteers who give only a part of their time and that too in fits and starts. Permanent work requires permanent whole-time workers . . .'[2]

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1 Sri Prakasa: Bharat Ratna Bhagavan Das, p. 79; D. R. Mankekar: Lal Bahadur Shastri (New Delhi 1973) p. 21

2 The Leader 16 December 1929. See The Leader 10 July and 26 September 1929 for initial moves to set up the service.

In 1931, the Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Memorial Committee, appealing for donations of Rs. 1 lakh, declared that any money left after the erection of a suitable memorial to the Kanpur Congress leader who lost his life in the Kanpur communal riot of that year, would be used to set up a Ganesh Shankar National Service.[1] In 1931, too, Jawaharlal Nehru proposed, and Gandhi supported, the establishment of a National Workers' Association, with full-time, paid workers.[2]

In 1934, with the big Congress shake-up before the elections, the National Service Board which had ceased to function during the civil disobedience movement, was reconstituted. The National Service was now divided into a provincial and a district branch. Members of the former were given a monthly allowance of up to Rs. 40, and those of the latter up to Rs. 25. Provincial members were placed in charge of whole districts. Paucity of funds was a perennial problem for the service. Jawaharlal Nehru was able to obtain Rs. 4,000 from Gandhi, but the number of members had to be kept small. In June 1934, there were 12 members in the provincial and 14 in the district National Service.[3]

The Secretary of the U.P. PCC noted at the time that

> 'There is a large number of very good workers in the province who are patriotic and competent and are prepared to devote themselves to national work provided even subsistence allowance is given to them.'[4]

Efforts were made to raise more funds through appeals to the all-India Congress leadership and to the general public,[5] evidently with some success. In the mid-1930's, a large number of the most active Congress workers in the province were being

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1 Tandon Ps., File 141, Sn. 277, printed appeal, dated 16 May 1931

2 Aj, 6 July 1931, editl. 'National workers'

3 AICC Ps., P20/1934, Mohanlal Saxena, Secy. PCC-Secy. AICC, Lucknow, 5 June 1934

4 Loc. cit.

5 Loc. cit.; and The Leader, 14 September 1934

supported by the 'national' institutions and various associate organisations of the Congress.[1]

Other institutions for 'constructive' work in the 1920's and 1930's included Khaddar Bhandars and a whole range of ashramas run by nationalists. Less well organised than some of the bodies discussed above, these institutions still did a good deal of quiet work in towns and villages in many parts of the country. Thereby, they further propagated the fame of the Congress. In addition, they provided livelihood,to other 'national' workers, and, on occasion, financial aid to the regular Congress organisation.[2]

In the late 1920's and early 1930's, these institutions performed especially useful functions, through the production and sale of khadi. The revived agitation for the boycott of foreign cloth greatly increased the demand for khaddar in the U.P. In a period of two or three months in early 1929, Congress Committees in that province themselves sold khadi worth Rs. 7,650.[3] By early 1930 Motilal Nehru was writing: 'The rush on the khadi stores is tremendous and the great majority of intending buyers cannot be served.'[4] The U.P. branch of the Gandhi Ashram and the All-India Spinners' Association, set up by Gandhi to co-ordinate the work of the different Khaddar Bhandars, then made special efforts to increase production.[5] These efforts, supplemented by the Congress agreement with Indian mill-owners, served to ease the situation.

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1 See AICC PS. 24/1934, list of (possible) delegates from U.P. to the Bombay Congress, 1934; Tandon Ps. for men supported by the LSM; and The U.P. Political "Who's Who" (2nd edn. Allahabad 1936)

2 AICC Ps. G46/1931, Sitla Sahai, A-I Spinners' Assocn-Secy., AICC, Allahabad, 1 June 1927. Some U.P. Congressmen came to refer to the Khaddar Bhandars as their East India Company! (Interview, M. L. Gautam, New Delhi, 31 October 1972)

3 AICC Ps. P24/1929, Sri Prakasa-JN, 5-5-29; Ibid., G46/1931, J. G. Kripalani-JN, 5 April 1929

4 JN Corresp., with Gandhi, MN-Gandhi, 25 April 1930

5 See AICC Ps. G46/1931

Another function performed by the Congress ashramas, Khaddar Bhandars and the Swadeshi Sanghas set up by Malaviya in 1932, when enthusiasm for civil disobedience began to flag,[1] was that of providing a legal cover for illegal Congress propaganda and activities; so, at any rate, the Government believed.[2]

The major weakness in all this organisational activity was, of course, the absence of any specific appeal to the Indian 'masses'. The khaddar and swadeshi movement may have gone beyond the 'Indian gentlemen of the middle class . . . clerks, pleaders, etc.' who were most affected by the agitation in Bengal early in this century,[3] but it probably went no further than the rich peasants in the villages. The U.P.'s 'national' educational institutions, too, with their stipends for poor students, recruited mainly from rich peasant groups and the lower middle classes in the towns; it is significant that not a single untouchable's name is found among the Congress workers who emerged from these institutions. Not until the end of our period was any attempt made to redress the balance in this regard.

The view that the Congress movement took a radical turn in 1928[4] is not borne out by the evidence from the U.P., supposedly one of the more radical Congress provinces after that date. A restless Jawaharlal Nehru, strongly influenced by his visit to Europe and particularly Soviet Russia in 1926-7, and increasingly agitated by the tenor of Congress politics in the mid-1920's, sought to extend the areas of Congress attention in the U.P. However, his was a personal, and emotional, commitment, backed by other individual commitments and a growing, but vague, sympathy for socialism or egalitarianism; there was

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1 AICC Ps. 1/1932, Pt. III, Weekly Report (on Satyagraha) XIX, 22 May 1932; FRs April 1932, 1 ff.

2 e.g. FR June 1932, 2 and February 1934, 2; PAI, 10 December 1932

3 Sumit Sarkar: The Swadeshi Movement, p. 148

4 Zafar Imam: 'The Rise of Soviet Russia and Socialism in India, 1917-1929' in Nanda (ed.): Socialism in India, p. 62

little in the way of detailed study or solid organisational work.

The linking of the U.P. Trade Union Congress with the PCC, in 1929 when Nehru was President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, remained a token gesture. The Workers' and Peasants' Party, branches of which were being established in many parts of the country in 1928, appears to have been inactive in the U.P.[1]

More important in this province was the Independence for India League, founded in 1928, and the youth movements which were gathering momentum again about this time. Yet, their main accomplishment was only to give a new vigour to now traditional lines of Congress activity and propaganda. The Independence League, formed by the 'radical' wing of the Congress led by Nehru and Subhas Bose, set up a new ideal of considerable emotive power which had an obvious impact on youth in the U.P. and elsewhere. Some of the most active and influential of the younger leaders in the U.P. Congress joined the new organisation.[2] But the organisation did not make a great deal of headway,[3] and anyhow became superfluous once the Congress itself had adopted the goal of 'complete independence'.

Student and youth organisations were much in evidence, and generated considerable enthusiasm, in 1928-9. In the U.P., a large number of Youth Leagues and Student Associations sprang up. The big cities - Allahabad, Lucknow, Benares, Gorakhpur and so on -, being large educational centres, were prominent in

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1 Zafar Imam: loc. cit. refers to a U.P. branch of the Party, but AICC Ps. G52/1928, the relevant file in the Congress papers, does not contain a single reference to such a branch.

2 See The Proceedings of the All Parties National Convention (Allahabad, 1929), Appendix A, for a list of members

3 Narendra Deo's letter of 9 February 1929, in J. Nehru: A Bunch of Old Letters (Bombay 1958), pp. 70-1. For later thoughts on organisation in 1929, JN Corresp., with Narendra Deo, Deo-JN, Benares 20 March 1929; AICC Suppl. Ps. 61/1924-30, Programme of U.P. Branch of Independence League, with circular letter from JN, 10 April 1929

this regard. But smaller towns - Mathura, Mainpuri and Moradabad, Jhansi, Jalaun, and Jaunpur - also came to have youth organisations that were vociferous and active on occasion.[1]

These youth organisations expressed a militant nationalist stand-point, through slogans such as 'We are helots in our own country' and 'India first'. Their declared objects included the abolition of dated social and religious customs, the combating of communalism, the boycott of British goods, and the independence of India. They called for physical training, the study of international questions, an understanding of the causes of growing unemployment among youth, and practical welfare work among workers and peasants.[2]

In so far as Youth Leagues and their branches were established in areas where other nationalist associations were not very active or well-organised, and on account of the fact that several of the young men and women who participated in their activities came from rural or semi-rural areas, these organisations proved to be of value. In general, Congress mass meetings, processions and demonstrations owed much of their success to the student and youth associations, and their younger partners - the Bal Bharat Sabhas and Vanar Senas.[3] Besides, a fair number of Congress leaders who emerged during the late 1920's and early 1930's had their initial training in public work in the incompletely organised and sporadically functioning youth movement.[4]

Yet, the fact is that the organisation of students and youth did not extend as far as was desired. Little came of a number of attempts to set up a provincial organisation to

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1 AICC Ps. G39/1928 and G39/1929; U.P. Educ. Dept. 127/1930; and FRs and PAIs for 1929

2 AICC G39/1928, 'Lucknow Youth League Constitution' (Lucknow, 1929) and Circular Letter from Gen. Secy., Lucknow Youth League, Lucknow, 24 June 1929; AICC G39/1929 'Leaflet No. 2' of Allahabad Youth League.

3 See the detailed account of the 1930 satyagraha in Agra Satyagraha Sangram

4 Loc. cit. provides examples in Gopal Narain Shiromani and

co-ordinate the work of the various youth bodies, and even Jawaharlal Nehru grew dejected on this score.[1] Perhaps more important, these organisations, like the Independence League and others discussed above, failed to reach the poorer sections of society, partly because their leaders were not from those sections, partly because their pattern of activity was the angry procession and noisy meeting rather than sustained propaganda work. (See Ch. III). Militancy these educated young men may have brought back to the national movement, a radical departure they did not introduce.

It was not until 1933, indeed, that Nehmu asked loudly and clearly: '. . . whose freedom are we particularly striving for, for nationalism covers many sins and includes many conflicting elements?'[2] And about that time a number of developments suggested a definite Congress shift to the left. The 1934 Congress constitution, Gandhi's Harijan movement, and the emergence of the CSP were the most notable of these. These new factors certainly made some difference to the Congress' organisation and approach. Yet, one must be wary of taking the developments at their face-value, and of suggesting a major change in the orientation of the Congress at this time.[3]

Not only were many of the changes made in the organisation guided by expectations about the forthcoming Indian constitution and the needs of the 1934 and 1936 elections,[4] but also many

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Niranjan Singh; also Brennan: 'Political Change in Rohilkhand', pp. 182-3

1 AICC G39/1930, JN-Gen. Secy., All-India Students Federation, Karachi, 28 June 1931; see also AICC G39/1928, Circular from J. K. Banerjea, Provincial Secy., Lucknow Youth League, declaring it 'a shame . . . (that) we in the United Provinces have not been able to organise ourselves in any form or shape'. For efforts to organise a provincial body, loc. cit. and FR, September 1929, 2.

2 The Pioneer, 9 October 1933, 'Whither India?' Pt. I

3 T. Raychaudhuri: 'Participation of the Working-People in the Indian National Movement', in Mouvements Nationaux D'Independence et Classes Populaires (Paris 1971) pp. 544-5, makes such suggestio

4 See AICC Ps. 82/1931-8 and P20/1934; esp. Sanyukta Prantiya

of the provisions laid down in the new Congress constitution were scrapped within a short time. The condition of six months' labour to qualify for membership of Congress Committees and executive bodies very quickly became a farce. After prolonged discussion about how much spinning constituted how much manual labour, the CWC declared that 'It shall be open to members to offer their work consolidated for a period of six months.'[1] Even that condition was dropped by the national Congress meeting at Lucknow in April 1936. In addition that Congress reduced the minimum length of membership before a member was qualified to vote in Congress elections from six to three months, and reduced the ratio of members to delegates, laid down by the 1934 constitution as 500:1, to 250:1.[2]

To a certain extent, these changes legalized the preposterous position created by the non-observance of the labour qualification, and the back-dating of people's membership forms in order to enable them to vote in Congress elections, that had come to dominate district and provincial Congress politics, at least in the U.P., in 1934 and 1935.[3] At the same time they made it easier for Congress leaders to recruit new members in order to further individual or factional ambitions, and also facilitated the entry of less 'committed' men and women into the party. The era of undisguised transactional politics seemed

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Congress Committee ki Sangathan Niyamavali (Lucknow 1935); Tandon Ps., Grp. 2, File 1, S.N. 1 and 4; JN Misc. Ps., 'Report of the City Sub-Committee on the Financial Condition of CCC, Allahabad' (n.d.) for changes in U.P. Congress organisations in 1935-6. Also F.n. | , p. 17 above.

1 AICC Ps. 30/1934, CWC circular no. 9 - all PCCs, Patna, 9 December 1934

2 AICC Ps. 31/1936; Rajkumar: Development of the Congress Constitution

3 See esp. AICC Suppl. Ps. 40/1926-39, corresp., reports and newspaper cuttings regarding the bitter and extended conflict over the composition of the Reception Committee for the Lucknow Congress; FR July 1934, 1 ff. for intra-Congress quarrels in various U.P. districts. In the debate on the amendment of the 'manual labour' clause, Pattabhi Sitaramayya said: '. . . there is no use disguising the fact that it has not been worked very honestly', Report of the 49th Session of the Indian National Congress, Lucknow, April 1936 (Allahabad, n.d.) p. 108

to have arrived; significantly enough, the claimed membership of the U.P. Congress shot up from 62,703 in mid-1935 to 1,472,465 towards the end of 1938, 1,345,881 of the latter said to be rural members and only 126,675 urban.[1]

New organisations for 'constructive' work launched by Gandhi in the early 1930's, such as the All-India Village Industries Association and the Harijan Sevak Sangh, lend themselves to a similar interpretation. The former bore little fruit. A recent study has noted that it was 'most effective in the U.P., where its branch was improperly used in place of the banned Congress volunteer organisation, the Hindustan /sic/ Seva Dal, to organise meetings of peasants and workers in support of the 'socialist' faction of the PCC.'[2]

The Harijan movement was in one sense a culmination of the anti-untouchability work carried on by Congressmen and Arya Samajis in the 1920's and even earlier. Its immediate cause, however, was the British Premier's Communal Award made in September 1932 which gave separate electorates to the 'depressed classes'. Gandhi's fast to prevent such an electorate was the first step in the new movement. The 'untouchables' were now renamed Harijans or children of God; and in October 1932 the Harijan Sevak Sangh was established, with Malaviya as President, to work for Harijan uplift.

The Sangh's activities covered a fairly broad social and economic field. It aimed to secure for Harijans the civic rights enjoyed by other Hindus. It worked for their educational advancement, instituting scholarships and helping to open new

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1 AICC Ps. P31/1935 and National Herald 21 December 1938, cited in Brennan:'Political Change in Rohilkhand', p. 212. One must add a qualification, however, to this point about the development of a post-1947-type Congress Party, with local party bosses, factions, etcal. The presence of an easily identifiable enemy, the British, remained a unifying factor, as the 1939 resignations of all the Congress ministries showed.

2 Tomlinson: 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Indian Politics', p. 140.

preparatory schools, hostels and homes for Harijan children. Attempts were also made to employ Harijans in the offices and welfare centres of the Sangh and in newly established Industrial Homes.[1]

This work received a tremendous fillip when Gandhi undertook an all-India Harijan tour from November 1933 to July 1934. When the tour finished at Benares, Gandhi had collected 821,179 rupees, 15 annas and 11 paise for Harijan uplift. The largest provincial contribution came from Tamilnad (Rs. 116,458) and the largest contribution by any one city from Calcutta (Rs. 70,263 - 15 - 8). But even the poorer provinces and districts made a substantial contribution. The U.P. total was 60,337 rupees, 8 annas and 3 paise. Kanpur gave more than a third of this amount (Rs. 200,320 - 2 - 7½), Benares over Rs. 9,000, Allahabad over Rs. 8,000, Lucknow over Rs. 5,000 and Gorakhpur, Meerut, Agra, Mathura and Jhansi over Rs. 1,000 each.[2] The entire collection made in the U.P., as in several other provinces, was given to the provincial Harijan Sevak Sangh on the grounds of the generality of the region.[3] With this large sum at their disposal, the provincial board expanded their activities. By the middle of January 1934, there were affiliated branches in thirty-one districts. By early 1935, the province had been divided into an eastern, a central and a western part to facilitate Harijan work, and branches of the Sangh had been established throughout the province.[4]

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1 AICC Ps. G14/1934-5, 'Annual Report of A-I Harijan Sevak Sangh, 1933-4'

2 Ibid., Appendix to 'Annual Report, 1933-4'. Shortly before the end of Gandhi's tour, the U.P. Government reported that Rs. 44,000 had been collected in the province, Rs. 9,000 of this having been promised by Tej Bahadur Sapru for the purpose of setting up a Harijan colony; FR July 1934, 2.

3 AICC Ps. G14/1934-5, 'Annual Report . . . 1933-4'

4 The Leader 14 January and 1 April 1934; AICC Ps. F.D. 2/1935, Letter no. 6 to Congress branches abroad, Allahabad 21 February 1935. See also Tandon Ps. File 52, No. 231, for the work of Lok Sevak Mandal men in the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

This extension of Congress activities among the section of society which provided the largest number of cultivators in the U.P. was obviously important. It enabled the first organised contact between the Congress and some of the poorest in Indian society. Gandhi's movement was able to gather substantial support, even in the teeth of much orthodox Hindu opposition;[1] in many parts of the country, numbers of temples and public wells were now thrown open to the 'untouchables'. The movement also created a heightened awareness of the Harijan problem, not least among the Harijans themselves. For all these reasons, it brought rich dividends to the Congress, especially in elections.

However, this should not obscure the very great limitations of the anti-untouchability campaign. A few scholarships and industrial homes were scarcely an adequate answer to the Harijan problem. And the separation of economic oppression from social depression was not conducive either to a real amelioration of the Harijans' conditions or to the winning of long-term support for the Congress.[2]

A more radical departure in the organisation of the Congress in the 1930's was the formation of the CSP. Like the Swaraj Party organised a decade earlier, the CSP began as a minority movement in the Congress. Like the Swarajists, the Congress Socialists remained in the parent organisation and worked to gain control of it. 'Comrade' Sampurnanand's thesis 'Our role in the Congress', stated the ideal CSP position:

> 'As a part of the Congress, we form, so to say, the official opposition but I am convinced that we can never hope to capture the machinery of the Congress by purely parliamentary methods. To say the least, we have not the time required for this purpose. If we are to function successfully as a Party, we must,

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1 See The Pioneer, 22-30 July 1934 and 21 September 1934

2 Cf. B. R. Ambedkar: What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables. (Bombay 1945), passim. The greatest condemnation of the Congress' Harijan movement is, of course, the fact that 'untouchability' remains widely prevalent in India to this day.

> 'while concentrating on the organisation of Labour and the Peasantry, leave no stone unturned to expose the follies and reactionary policies of the Congress High Command, without deliberately irritating the rank and file . . .'[1]

The U.P. became one of the strongholds of the CSP in a very short time. A large number of influential Congressmen joined the new body. After the PCC elections held at Kanpur in September 1934, the Government reported:

> 'The President and four vice-presidents, four out of six secretaries and seven of the eleven members of the executive Council all belong to the socialist party, as well as 26 out of 46 provincial representatives elected to the AICC.'

In Benares district, it added, the CSP had gained 'complete control of all local committees'.[2] Strong branches were also established in a number of other districts.[3]

The CSP did some valuable organisation and propaganda work among groups of workers and peasants in the U.P., in 1934 and later.[4] Its role as defence counsel for the 'exploited' against right-wing elements in the Congress was also important. In 1934, the Socialists strongly attacked the U.P. Congress Parliamentary Board claim that the Congress had consistently tried to preserve and strengthen the position of zamindars.[5] They called, in their turn, for the elimination of middlemen, the abolition of illegal cesses, a graded land tax, the wiping

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1 AICC Ps. G23/1934, which also gives details of Patna Conference, May 1934, at which CSP was formed. See also Abhyud., 21 May and 25 June 1934, CSP leaders' statements regarding their position and soliciting support.

2 FR September 1934, 2

3 Abhyud., 11 June 1934; FR June 1934, 1 and 2 and September 1934, 1 and 2; The Pioneer 24 June 1934, etc.

4 FR December 1934, 1 and 2; Tomlinson: 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Indian Politics', p. 149; and Brennan: 'Political Change in Rohilkhand', pp. 243-6, about CSP work among Bareilly factory workers in 1938 and 1939.

5 Put forward in a pamphlet entitled Congress and the Zamindar

out of arrears of rent and debts owed by tenants and petty zamindars, and so on.[1] One of their most creditable battles was fought in connection with the U.P. Tenancy Act, 1939, passed by the first Congress ministry in the province. This would probably have been a far more conservative measure but for the fight put up by the Socialists in the debate in the Congress councils before the measure reached the legislature.[2]

The weakness of the CSP lay in the fact that as a focus for opposition to the 'official' Congress leadership it attracted a bundle of disgruntled elements not necessarily bound by a common ideology. The party's anomalous position was indicated by Nehru's refusal to join it, in spite of his well-known socialist sympathies. It was also revealed by the numerous entrances and exits of Congressmen at different levels through the CSP doors, which had been opened to all Congressmen who were not members of communal organisations.

Many members accepted the general drift of the CSP programme but opposed some of its most important immediate recommendations. The question of whether Socialists should participate in parliamentary activity proved particularly controversial. The U.P. CSP disagreed with the all-India body, and ultimately itself split, on the issues of participation in the Legislative Assembly elections of 1934 and acceptance of offices in Congress Committees.[3]

Even for men like Sri Prakasa, a senior and respected Congress leader and active member of the CSP, there seemed to be no more than a sentimental attachment to the concept of socialism, brought about by the experience of kisan conditions and agitation during the Depression and the rhetoric of

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1 See Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report (Bareilly 1936) 'Note' by Sampurnanand, pp. xv-xvi; GOI, Home Poll. 41/1/1934, Sampurnanand's pamphlet 'A tentative Socialist programme for India' (April 1934); Vidyapith, issues of Ashvin & Paush & Chaitra 1993 (i.e. 1935 A.D.)

2 See P. D. Reeves: 'Landlord Associations and Provincial Politics in U.P., 1920-51' (forthcoming), and my 'A Rural Base for Congress, U.P. 1920-39' (forthcoming)

3 The Leader, 3, 4, 25 October 1934; The Pioneer, 10 September, 3, 4, and 25 October 1934

Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1934, Sri Prakasa served as Secretary and President of the PCC, and member of the U.P. Congress Parliamentary Board which the Socialists so strongly attacked. Later he was nominated a Congress candidate in the Legislative Assembly elections, and, before his election by a thumping majority, he resigned from the CSP when the split in the party occurred.[1]

For many others who joined the CSP, there was probably not even this sentimental attachment. 'Socialist' and 'non-socialist' very quickly became catch-phrases and slogans in a whole range of intra-Congress factional disputes.[2] All but a select group of committed socialists turned their attention inwards on the Congress. The 'outside' work of mobilising and organising the 'masses' waited for another day.

Thus, even the 'radical' developments of the 1932-34 period did little to bridge the gap between the leadership of the major nationalist party and the majority of the 'nation' it fought for. On an organisational level, there was still no substantial representation of the labouring classes in the Congress. What had happened in the period since the First World War was, first, the creation of an extensive and popular organisation and, then, a consolidating and strengthening of the base of this organisation among more limited sections of the society and a toning up of central control and general efficiency. I have suggested that a primary reason for this was the very general nationalist approach of the Congress leadership, which made only late and rather feeble efforts at

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1 See Venkatesh Narain Tewari's criticism of Socialists who called the Congress Parliamentary Board reactionary and yet supported its candidates; The Leader 8 October 1934. It is worth noting that during the debate on the 1939 tenancy proposal, Sri Prakasa was among those who defended the rights of the '22 lacs of the so-called [!] zamindars in our province'; The Pioneer 12 January 1938, 'Congress and the Zemindari System'. (I am indebted to Dr P. D. Reeves for this reference)

2 FRs for 1934-5; also The Pioneer 4 November 1935, Statement issued by Sampurnanand and Narendra Deo on behalf of Congressmen who had just resigned from the PCC Council

providing specifically for the 'masses'. The techniques of mobilisation employed by the Congress during this period confirm this pattern.

Chapter 3

TECHNIQUES OF MOBILISATION

In early June 1930, less than two months after the start of civil disobedience, the Viceroy wired the Secretary of State for India: '. . . every European and Indian would tell you that he was surprised at the dimensions the movement has assumed . . .'[1] In July, the Governor of the U.P. observed that the Congress had succeeded 'beyond our expectations in arousing very deep sympathy among every class of Hindus'.[2] In August, a British official posted in Roorkee, Saharanpur district, U.P., declared it 'astounding' that the Congress should have gained so great an influence over the populace.[3]

Naturally, the British, like any other ruling power, did all they could to discredit this opposition movement. The Government took note of the economic pressures and the lack of political sophistication that were rife in the country, and, on this basis, built up an interpretation of a 'subversive' movement thriving on short-term economic demands alone.

Throughout India, to take one example, the numbers of educated had expanded faster than employment opportunities in the early decades of this century. The position was clearly acute by the late 1920's, when the Government instituted special enquiries into 'educated unemployment' in the U.P. and a number of other provinces.[4] But the Government's concern was expressed

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1 Halifax Colln., XVI, Viceroy-Secy. of State for India, Telegram P. Home Dept., 2 June 1930

2 Hailey Colln., 19A, Hailey-Verney Lovett, 3 July 1930

3 Hume Colln., III, Pt. I, Hume to his parents, Roorkee, 28 August 1930

4 Progress of Education in India. 9th Quinquennial Report (Calcutta 1929), Vol. I, p. 112; U.P. Admin. Report, 1928-9, p. 101; S. Nurullah and J. P. Naik: A History of Education in India (during the British period) (Bombay 1951), passim.

in more ways than one. In 1928, the Secretary of State for India wrote of how 'failed B.A.s and students' swelled the ranks of nationalist agitators.[1]

In similar fashion, the Viceroy wrote in 1930 of how

> 'the methods by which the civil disobedience agitation has been worked up and is being conducted are artificial in the sense that many of the principal activities depend upon the agency of paid volunteers . . .'[2]

Again, Congress leaders at the district level were often accused of agitating out of crude, mercenary motives.[3] And it was claimed that the majority of participants in civil disobedience came from the 'bazaar riff-raff' or, at any rate, belonged to the 'inferior' class.[4] Of the sympathisers of the Congress movement generally, the U.P. Government observed in May 1932:

> 'Economic causes and unemployment have made many of them discontented and ready to welcome any change.'[5]

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1 Halifax Colln., IV, Wedgwood-Benn to Irwin, 19 July 1928

2 Ibid., XIX, Irwin-Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, Simla 5 June 1930. This letter, and the Viceroy's telegram referred to on p.68, f.n.1, give the following interesting appraisal of the constituent factors in the civil disobedience campaign:

Communist and Revolutionary	5 per cent
Gandhians, and declared and sincere Congress adherents	30 per cent
'General Nationalist sympathisers, ignorant masses and hireling Volunteers [sic]'	50 per cent
Commercial and economic discontent	15 per cent

3 This sometimes caused confusion. In Rae Bareli, for instance, it was not clear which of the Congress leaders, Kalka Prasad (a small patidar) or Mata Prasad Mishra, was a bankrupt cloth merchant leading the 'no-tax' campaign in order that he could pay off his debts; compare GOI Home-Poll. 33/XVI and Kw/31, Letter no. 45/P7, Dy. Commissioner, Rae Bareli-Chief Secy., U.P., 22 July 1931, and PAI 11 July 1931 with PAI 9 May and 1 August 1931.

4 GOI Home-Poll. 23/66/32, letters from Governments of U.P., Bombay, C.P., Bihar, etc., to Home Secy., GOI. Hume Colln., III, Pt. I, Hume to his parents, Roorkee 20 July 1930, declared that 'all vagrants, vagabonds, bad characters' found a home in the Congress, though he added that some zamindars and men-of-rank were to be found in it as well.

5 GOI Home-Poll. 1428/1932, Express Letter no. 233/C.X., Chief Secy., U.P. Govt.-Home Secy., GOI, Naini Tal 16 May 1932

The available evidence suggests, however, that this simple economic explanation was an insufficient one. In the non-co-operation period, the strong kisan agitation in Oudh certainly arose on account of acute economic distress. Yet, as Reeves has noted, there had been such economic crises before:

> 'at this time they were associated with new forces at work in the villages: nearly half a million returned soldiers who brought with them a new awareness of their plight and grumbles of their own about unfulfilled recruiting promises and hasty demobilisation; and new peasant leaders who spoke of direct action against the British to end their problems.'[1]

Oudh was, in other words, not only the province of 'notoriously bad, harsh landlords'[2] often rack-renting and ill-treating their tenants and other dependants, but of Harcourt Butler, the British Governor given an honoured place in their fraternity.[3] This fact, and the image of the Congress as the 'poor man's party', both contributed to the intense kisan agitation of the non-co-operation period.

A decade later, the economic crisis caused by the Depression affected the poorer peasants in the economically backward Benares and Gorakhpur divisions of the U.P. almost as badly as it affected their counterparts in Oudh: yet there was a significant difference in the pattern of response from the two areas (see Map 3). Again, a letter from the District Magistrate of Mathura, enclosed with the U.P. Government report of May 1932 quoted above, showed that economic hardship and lack of employment could cut both ways.

> 'The main class of people here sympathetic with the civil disobedience movement are the lawyers,' he wrote.

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1 Reeves: 'The Politics of Order . . .' See also W. F. Crawley: 'Kisan Sabhas and Agrarian Revolt in the United Provinces, 1920 to 1921' (MAS, 5, 2 April 1971); M. H. Siddiqui: 'The Peasant Movement in Pratapgarh, 1920' (IESHR, IX, 3, 1972); D. N. Dhangare: 'Peasant Movements in India, c. 1920-1950' (Sussex Ph. D. 1973), Ch. V.

2 Hume Colln., IV, Hume to his parents, Rae Bareli 27 January 1932.

3 For Butler of Oudh, and the British and landlords' reliance on one another, see Reeves 'The Politics of Order . . .', and 'The Landlords' Response to Political Change . . .', passim.

> 'I regard the majority of these as sympathetic with the movement . . . The few lawyers who assist me in my publicity campaign belong to the rural area and are zamindars, with one exception; this exception is a lawyer with little practice, who aspires to employment in an Indian State!'[1]

That there was an important non-economic element in the rise of popular agitation in the early 1930's was recognised by several observers, Indian and British. Tej Bahadur Sapru commented on the effectiveness of the Congress' 'continuous and persistent' propaganda. Few understood what was said, according to him, but an intense distrust of the Government had arisen and racial feelings had been fanned.[2]

Andrew Parke Hume, the civil servant in Roorkee, made a similar comment while describing the 'very wide-spread, well-organised and intense' agitation[3] for the boycott of foreign cloth. He wrote of the picketing in small towns like Jwalapur, and the way in which an arrested picket was accompanied by something of a triumphal procession to court, where he might be garlanded and slogans such as 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai' would be raised. His assessment of the situation was this:

> 'One may say that the mass of the people do not know what they want or what is good for them . . . They may not know what they want but they want "it" just the same . . .'[4]

Hailey, the Governor, added another dimension in his letter of 3 July 1930, quoted above.

> 'Every District Officer with whom I have talked has been much impressed', he wrote, 'with the fact that even those whose interests are affected by the agitation, such as landowners 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

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1 GOI Home-Poll. 1428/1932, D.O. No. 226/1932, from W. C. Dible, D.M., Muttra, 4 May 1932 (emphasis added)

2 Halifax Colln., 25, Sapru-Irwin, Allahabad 19 September 1930

3 Hume Colln., III, Pt. I, Hume to his parents, Roorkee 6 May 1930

4 Ibid, III, Pt. I, Hume to his parents, Roorkee, 24 May 1930

'people a kind of pride in the persistence and sense of solidarity it has shown . . .'[1]

Of course, the Congress could scarcely claim sole credit for bringing about this state of affairs. The economic situation of the late 1920's and early 1930's, and the growing impatience of numerous young men with the staid nationalist politics of the mid-1920's, had a major impact. We shall see that local leaders in the rural areas, not directly connected with the Congress, mobilised large numbers of peasants for political action. Revolutionary terrorists caused sensations with their own Philosophy of the Bomb. Moreover, popular agitation, once started, tended to generate its own momentum. Yet, given the general problems of communication in India,[2] the channelling of general discontent into one non-violent anti-imperialist campaign, and especially the starting of such a campaign, was a formidable task. In accomplishing it, Congress propaganda and efforts played an obviously important part.

With fairly substantial funds available, and a larger number of organised cadres than before, the Congress used a whole gamut of techniques to reach different sections of society: from women picketers blackmailing a rich family by placing a curse upon a wedding in the house should foreign cloth be used in it,[3] to Congress workers cycling from village to village distributing leaflets to literate and locally influential men or talking to small meetings called by the latter[4], to emotional orators addressing meetings of thousands in the cities, small towns and even large villages.[5]

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1 Hailey Colln., 19A, Hailey-Verney Lovett, 3 July 1930 (emphasis added)

2 Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, I - Survey (London 1930), p. 194; Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 236

3 e.g. Halifax Colln., 19, Irwin-H. Spender-Clay, Simla 4 October 1930. As Irwin wrote, 'It is difficult to see what legislation could effectively deal with this kind of thing'.

4 Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 236; interviews with Jagan Prasad Rawat, Lucknow 15 January 1973, and Radhe Shyam Sharma, Benares 16 February 1973

5 PAIs for 1930, 1932, etc. sought to tabulate the numbers of meetings of different sizes, though this was a near impossible task.

In the initial mobilisation effort certain kinds of loud, sometimes almost aggressive, public activity proved especially effective. One was the relentless, and in the early 1930's, almost violent, propaganda of the nationalist press. Then there were public tours by renowned leaders who had come to symbolise the nationalist spirit and people's, often rather different, hopes for the future. Perhaps most important were public demonstrations of fearlessness in the face of the Raj, what might be called propaganda by deed.

There were two features of these early efforts which could place serious limitations on the movement as a whole. One was the concentration of nationalist propaganda in the towns, partly by force of circumstances (most obviously in the case of the press) and partly because of the need to create maximum impact. The other was the making of a very broad, nationalist appeal in order to draw into the movement several diverse groups. The former limitation was overcome, as we shall see, by the chain reaction created in the politicising and mobilising process itself, and by the U.P. Congress' heavy concentration on the rural areas from the last quarter of 1930 onwards. The limitations of the broad, nationalist appeal proved more difficult to circumvent, for it was at once a point of strength and one of weakness for the Congress movement. Ultimately it meant the failure of the Congress to mobilise the long-term support of the mass of the poor, especially in the rural areas. (See Ch. IV) At the same time, the evidence shows,it enabled the mobilisation of a wide array of social groups on behalf of the nationalist cause, particularly in the first phase of civil disobedience.

In line with the experience of popular politics elsewhere in recent times,[1] we find that the press in the U.P. - broadly

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1 Scholars have noted the importance of newspapers in the early stages of nationalist agitations: R. Suntharalingam: 'The "Hindu" and the Genesis of Nationalist Politics in South India, 1878-1885' (South Asia, No. 2, August 1972); R. C. Majumdar (ed): Struggle for Freedom (Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1969), pp. 1016-32, Ch. on 'The Press'; W. R. Roff: 'The Origins

defined to include periodicals as well as pamphlets, posters, leaflets and all public notices, even if non-printed - played a crucial part in the build-up to civil disobedience, and in the early stages of the campaign.

> 'In the case of . . . the agitation for the boycott of the Indian Statutory Commission,' the U.P. Government observed, 'the press has set the pace and had a wide and powerful influence . . .'[1]
>
> 'Never before /1930/ had the press played so important a part in the national campaign,' wrote another commentator, '. . . enthusiasm was kindled and maintained by the vigorous action of the Nationalist newspapers. The facts of daily arrests of leaders, vast processions, injuries to Congress volunteers who had come into conflict with the police, were all displayed in bold type. Indeed, all the methods which a nationalist press might be expected to use in a country at war were employed by the journals supporting the movement.'[2]

In the U.P. the number of periodicals directly supporting the Congress programme, or openly sympathetic to it, had increased since the early 1920's. By 1930 they had (in the case of those of long standing) generally regained their circulation of the non-co-operation period, and in a few important cases even surpassed that. (Table I). This showed a return to something like the enthusiasm of the non-co-operation

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of Malay Nationalism (Yale, New Haven & London, 1967), pp. 157-77; J. S. Coleman: Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (University of California, Berkely & Los Angeles, 1958), esp. p. 342; N. N. LaBrooy: 'The Movement towards Constitutional Reform in Ceylon, 1880-1910' (Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1973). Cf. also Stalin's emphasis on the importance of a country-wide underground newspaper in the initial stages of the organisation of an opposition party, J. V. Stalin: The Foundations of Leninism (Peking, 1965), p. 96. Less attention has been paid to pamphlets, leaflets and other non-periodical literature. But the Chinese cultural revolution and Paris in 1968 showed the important part posters could play in popular politics. See also Christopher Hill: The World Turned Upside Down. Radical Ideas during the English Revolution (London 1972) for the role of pamphlets in the 17th century English revolution.

1 Indian Statutory Commission, IX, p. 213

2 Margarita Barns: The Indian Press: A History of the Growth of Public Opinion in India (London 1940), p. 373

STATEMENT OF IMPORTANT NATIONALIST PERIODICALS IN THE U.P., 1922-30

Name	Language	Place	Period	Circulation 1922	1927	1930
Abhyudaya	Hindi	Allahabad	Weekly	3,000	2,500	3,000
Aj	"	Benares	Daily	4,000	4,000[a]	5,000
Bharat	"	Allahabad	Bi-weekly	N.A.	3,800	9,000
Bhavishya	"	"	Weekly	N.A.	N.A.	11,000
Chand	"	"	Monthly	N.A.	8,000	15,000
Hind Kesari	"	Benares	Weekly	4,000	3,000	3,000
Indian Daily Telegraph	English	Lucknow	Daily	2,000	2,500	3,000
The Leader	"	Allahabad	"	5,000	8,000[a]	9,000[b]
Mazdoor	Hindi	Kanpur	Weekly	500	1,000	1,500[b]
Medina	Urdu	Bijnor	Bi-weekly	12,500	6,500[a]	6,000
Mustaqil	"	Kanpur	Daily	N.A.	700	500
Pratap	Hindi	"	Weekly	10,000	7,800	16,000
Sainik	"	Agra	"	N.A.	3,000	4,500
Samaya	"	Jaunpur	"	N.A.	550	750
Shakti	"	Almora	"	1,000	1,100	1,000
Swadesh	"	Gorakhpur	"	N.A.	1,300	3,700[c]
Tar	"	"	Daily	N.A.	N.A.	1,200
Vartman	"	Kanpur	"	8,000	3,000	4,000

a Figure for 1928; that for 1927 is unavailable

b Figure for 1931; that for 1930 is unavailable

c Figure for 1929; that for 1930 is unavailable

The large number of N.A.s in the column for 1922 occurs because many of these periodicals had not started then.

The importance of periodicals has been judged from their circulation and ascribed political standing. A majority of those listed here were included in the list of important periodicals given in: Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. IX, Memorandum submitted by the Government of the United Provinces to the Indian Statutory Commission (London, 1930) p. 209

Source: 'Statement of Newspapers and Periodicals published in the U.P.' (Govt. Press, Allahabad) for the relevant years

period, at least among groups that could buy newspapers and journals. On the other hand, it is significant that both the Urdu periodicals listed in Table I declined in circulation in the 1920's, an indication perhaps of the growing Muslim disaffection with the Congress programme. (See Ch. V)

Circulation figures are, of course, rather deceptive. Periodicals were very cheap in the 1930's - the daily Aj cost only 2 paise; still the number of buyers gives no indication of the number of readers. Even today, the Aj newspaper, posted up on a wall outside the paper's office in Benares, attracts scores of readers throughout the day. Vernacular newspapers and journals in the U.P. in the 1930's often bore such slogans as: 'Read this yourself, read it to others, and give it to a peasant'.[1] The Indian Statutory Commission noted in 1928 that vernacular newspapers 'can be, and are, read to illiterate hearers by their literate fellows in towns, villages, railway carriages, public meetings and so on'.[2] All this suggests that only some kind of geometric progression would give us an idea of the number of buyers, readers and listeners reached by the press.

This would appear to be truer still of the non-periodical literature put out by the nationalists in the late 1920's and early 1930's. 'Following the publication of resolution number 6 of the Congress Working Committee', said the weekly intelligence report of 5 July 1930, 'numerous copies of this resolution and of pamphlets based on it have come to notice' (emphasis added). The reports of the following weeks noticed further leaflets and pamphlets based on the resolution.[3] Resolution 6 was an appeal to the army and the police to support the national struggle for independence. Therefore, the Government took special note

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1 There are numerous examples among the collections of proscribed literature of the 1930's held in the IOL and the NAI, e.g. Abhyudaya 18 November 1931, Pamphlet No. 990 (NAI)

2 Indian Statutory Commission, I, p. 261

3 PAI, 5 July 1930 ff.

of it. The course followed by other important Congress resolutions and messages was in fact the same.

The Provincial, District, Town and Local Congress Committees often published notices of meetings, circular letters, resolutions and general information for workers in the columns of newspapers. Apparently, much of this was passed on through the medium of the non-periodical press. Hence, Madan Mohan Malaviya's indictment of 'Repression in India', written in English, 'exclusively for the legal press' (as the author said), is found in Hindi among the publications confiscated by the U.P. Government.[1] Hence the whole history of the freedom struggle, since 1857, was put into verse to be distributed widely.[2] Hence there were songs detailing Gandhi's 'eleven points'[3] or Vallabhbhai Patel's speech to 5,000 school and college students in Bombay,[4] or the heads of income and expenditure under the British Raj and the fact that more money was spent annually on every single convict than was the per capita income of the unjailed Indian population.[5] Hence also, a lieutenant of Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to him in 1934 about an article Nehru had written, 'Reality and Myth', in which he propounded his socialist views:

> 'You have only introduced the /socialist/ idea to the uppermost crust of the population . . . Your message must be carried to the millions through a flood of easy straightforward and cleverly worded literature . . .'[6]

One final example illustrates the place of the press in Congress propaganda. One of the many thousands of pamphlets proscribed by the U.P. Government in the course of civil disobedience was entitled Jwalamukhi arthat dabi hui aag ('A volcano, that is suppressed fire'). It was written by

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1 Bharat men daman-chakra, PP. Hin. B. 132 (IOL)

2 Pamphlet No. 831 (NAI)

3 Pamphlet No. 191 (NAI)

4 Pamphlet No. 203 (NAI)

5 Pamphlet No. 285 (NAI)

6 JN Corresp. with Kesho Deo Malaviya, Malaviya-JN, Benares, 13 January 1934 (emphasis added)

Gopinath Vaidya, Secretary of the Haldaur CC, Bijnor, and published by that Committee in 1930. The preface to the fourteen-page pamphlet said that it was written for Congress propaganda in the villages; an attempt had been made to write it in such a language that if a boy reading in Class II read it to men and women in the villages, they would comprehend easily; it was hoped that CCs would use it fully in village propaganda; CCs could have the pamphlet at cost price and were at liberty to print further copies themselves.[1] In a very real sense, it would seem, if 'The movement made speakers of us all',[2] the press provided the texts for the sermons.

In this context, it is worthwhile examining more closely the volume and the tone of nationalist press propaganda. Civil disobedience brought a flood of nationalist pamphlets, leaflets, posters and so on. Government's incomplete figures of seizures under the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931 give some indication of this. (Table II)

Intelligence reports confirm this impression of a tremendous surge in non-periodical nationalist literature. Non-periodicals had been noticed in the mid-1920's. Both communal politics, with their nationalist claims and associations, and elections had produced what the Intelligence Department called the 'usual flood of leaflets'.[3] But non-periodical literature really came to the fore only in 1930. By the middle of that year, intelligence reports referred constantly to the distribution and sale of leaflets and pamphlets by Congress and its sympathisers. 'Propaganda by means of pamphlets and other forms of literature is on the increase', said a report in June 1930.[4] This refrain

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1 The printed price was 2 paise, Pamphlet No. 457 (NAI). Interviews, and Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 236-7, also reveal the widespread use of leaflets and notices at meetings, political demonstrations, religious festivals and so on.

2 Muzaffar Hasan, Allahabad Congressman, in interview, Allahabad, 3 January 1973

3 PAI, 18 September 1926; notice also M. Nehru's request to the Manager of Aj to print 1,000 copies of a statement by Benares sanyasis for use in the election campaign of 1926, Ch. V below.

4 PAI 21 June 1930

TABLE II

STATEMENT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER THE 1931 ACT

District	No. of seized pamphlets, newsheets, etc. (Sec.16(1))	No. of Prosecutions (Both under	No. of Convictions Sec.18(1))
Dehradun	113	2	2
Saharanpur	-	1	1
Muzaffarnagar	77	-	-
Meerut	22	5	5
Bulandshahr	-	-	-
MEERUT DIVISION	212	8	8
Agra	Some 100s	13	13
Mathura	- do -	90	89
Mainpuri	-	-	-
Etah	-	-	-
Aligarh	-	-	-
AGRA DIVISION	Some 100s	103	102
Bareilly	Unknown no. of 45 varieties	-	-
Bijnor	-	-	-
Budaun	-	-	-
Moradabad	157	-	-
Shahjahanpur	-	-	-
Pilibhit	-	-	-
ROHILKHAND	157 + unknown no.	-	-
Farrukhabad	-	-	-
Etawah	4,161	13	11
Kanpur	Fair no.	-	-
Fatehpur	-	22	22
Allahabad	10,474 in 1933 alone	49	43
ALLAHABAD DIVISION	14,635 + considerable no.	84	76
Jhansi	111	4	4
Jalaun	-	-	-
Hamirpur	275	16	16
Banda	630	4	2
JHANSI DIVISION	1,016	24	22

TABLE II cont.

District	Seizures	Prosecutions	Convictions
Benares	1,000s	2	2
Ballia	-	-	-
Ghazipur	-	-	-
Mirzapur	-	-	-
Jaunpur	-	-	-
BENARES DIVISION	1,000s	2	2
Gorakhpur	30,251 (of 26 varieties)	54	54
Basti	-	-	-
Azamgarh	144	15	14
GORAKHPUR DIVISION	30,395	69	68
Almora	-	-	-
Garhwal	-	13	13
Naini Tal	Fair no.	12	12
KUMAUN	Fair no.	25	25
Lucknow	-	19	13
Unao	-	-	-
Rae Bareli	-	3	3
Hardoi	100	-	-
Sitapur	-	-	-
Kheri	-	-	-
LUCKNOW DIVISION	100	22	16
Fyzabad	832	2	2
Gonda	-	-	-
Bahraich	-	-	-
Sultanpur	569	7	4
Partabgarh	-	1	1
Bara Banki	-	-	-
FYZABAD DIVISION	1,401	10	7
U.P. TOTAL	47,916 + considerable no.	347	327

/Sec.16(1) of Act XXIII of 1931 authorised any police officer, or other person thus empowered by the Local Government, to seize any unauthorised news-sheet or newspaper, wherever found.

Sec.18(1) provided that 'Whoever makes, sells, distributes, publishes or publicly exhibits or keeps for sale, distribution

TABLE II cont.

or publication, any unauthorised news-sheet or newspaper, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with both'.

Source: U.P. Police Dept. File 1589/1931, Secretariat Record Room, Lucknow./

was heard again on numerous occasions in the next few years, especially when the Congress renewed civil disobedience at the beginning of 1932.[1]

The tone of this propaganda was striking. 'Foreigner! You have tasted the blood and the flesh of Pathans, Gujeratis, Bengalis, Punjabis, Sindhis, Biharis, Madrasis, all . . . Speak! Did you find the flesh of our little children delicious!' This is an extract from a bulletin issued by the very respectable, and non-violent, Town Congress Committee of Allahabad. The bulletin went on: 'Foreigner. Do not get tired . . . Do not let your lathis and guns rest. Do not talk of compromise and truce. Today, on the day of Holi, we issue you a new invitation to war:-

> Khoon ka keechad faag machao, laashon ki rangroli hai,
> Khel phirangi khoob khel le, lahu loth ki holi hai.

(Blood mingling with mud, lusty songs, corpses merry-making, Play, foreigner, play all you can, this is a Holi of flesh and blood).'[2]

It was natural enough that such propaganda should have stirred racial hatred against the British. Unfortunately, the Hindu slant of much Congress propaganda - noticeable in the reference to Holi in the bulletin quoted above - also created special problems of identification with the national movement for non-Hindu groups. Repeatedly, nationalist leaflets and pamphlets depicted the British imperialist as a Kumbhkaran or Ravana. Ramrajya was, likewise, a convenient description of swaraj.[3] And, to many, there seemed no anomaly in prefacing an exhortation for Hindu-Muslim unity with a quotation from the Bhagavad Gita.[4]

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1 See e.g., PAI 30 January, 27 February 1932, and my paper: 'Mobilisation in a Mass Movement: Congress "Propaganda" in the United Provinces, 1930-34' (forthcoming)

2 Pamphlet No. 1175, Translation throughout this thesis mine, unless otherwise stated.

3 Leaflets and pamphlets issued by the Congress in the early 1930's show that these terms were used repeatedly.

4 See Pamphlet No. 744 (NAI)

After the experience of communal friction in the mid-1920's, even a simple call for organisation (in Hindi, sangathan) appeared to carry elements of communal hostility. Sangathan now had the connotation - and one that was sometimes made explicit with the call for organisation[1] - of Hindu unity against all comers (not only the British). Moreover, direct religious appeals were an important element in the Congress campaign, though they were less in evidence now than during non-co-operation.[2] A meeting in an Allahabad village was told that Indians who used foreign cloth were indirectly responsible for the killing of forty to forty-five lakhs of cows annually.[3] Alleged increases in the consumption of liquor and in prostitution, the belief that the firangi was slaughtering cows in ever-growing numbers, all these were to symbolise the injustice of imperialism.[4] Inevitably, such propaganda contributed to the increasing fears of large numbers of Muslims regarding the 'Hindu' movement for freedom (see below, Ch. V), even as it helped to mobilise support for the Congress campaign of civil disobedience.

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1 e.g., PAI, 21 September 1929, account of Agra meeting, 10 September

2 The Khilafat agitation was of course based on a purely religious issue. And Gandhi was quite willing to use religious appeals for the mobilisation of Hindus for non-co-operation. Thus, 'I look upon the Khilafat problem for the Mussulmans in the same light as the cow problem for the Hindus. It is my firm belief that the solution of one will automatically lead to the solution of the other,' CWMG, XXI (Delhi 1966), p. 75. See also PP. Hin. B. 140 and 163 (IOL), examples of pamphlets that made a direct religious appeal to Hindus in 1920-22. Hindi and Urdu pamphlets at IOL and NAI suggest that while such propaganda was still used by the Congress in the late 1920's and early 1930's, its share in the whole volume of propaganda had declined.

3 PAI, 20 April 1929. See also PAI 19 October 1929; and U.P. Police Dept. 202/1930 (SRR) for further examples of such propaganda

4 PAI, 22 June and 26 October 1929, etc. See also NOP, 9 March 1929 where Bharat is quoted as writing, 'Is not this question of cow-protection sufficient in itself to inspire us to strive for the attainment of Swaraj?'

The press was, of course, only one starting point in the mobilising process. The renewed organisation of nationalist meetings and demonstrations, on a fairly large scale, provided others. Table III shows the expenditure incurred by the Agra DCC and the Kanpur TCC for propaganda during the first phase of civil disobedience. While the expenditure on publications was fairly substantial in both cases, the main charges were for 'travel' and 'district propaganda'.[1] Much of the latter is likely to have been concerned with the organisation of public meetings, big and small.

Altogether, the late 1920's and early 1930's saw a gigantic propaganda campaign through nationalist meetings and conferences, from the annual Provincial Political Conferences down to the gatherings at the weekly or bi-weekly markets (hat, painth or bazaar) that groups of villages held throughout the U.P.[2] In addition, there were specially celebrated Days and Weeks, which were expected to have a particularly strong emotional impact by evoking memories of national suffering or national achievement: National Week, Jallianwala Bagh Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Day, Lajpat Rai Day, and so on. 'Traditional' elements associated with nationalist meetings served to add to the enthusiasm: the prabhat pheris and flag salutations that were a part of the Congress' Sunday programme; the bugles, in earlier times signals of war, sounded in the Shult pattis of Ranikhet tahsil (Almora) to indicate the place of a meeting; the drums more widely used

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1 Both Agra and Kanpur were, of course, extremely active centres of civil disobedience. Overall expenditure, and the proportion spent on publications, is likely to have been less in poorer and politically more 'backward' districts, though one may assume that the general pattern was similar everywhere.

2 PAIs for 1930 and 1932; FRs, June-July 1932; AICC Ps. 5/1932, Pt. III (e.g. Report No. 16 of Hind PCC, for the fortnight 26 July-8 August 1932, which refers to the holding of 22 District Conferences, numerous Tahsil and other Conferences); AICC Ps. P29/1934-6, Brief Report of U.P. Congress Work (in Hindi), by Ram Kumar Shastri, Asst. Secy. PCC, Lucknow, 28 February 1934, and Aj 5 January 1934, Statement by Lal Bahadur and Vishambhar Nath, Allahabad, 4 January 1934

TABLE III

CONGRESS EXPENDITURE ON PROPAGANDA 1930-31

Item	Agra DCC 1:4:30-24:6:31	Kanpur TCC 24:3:30-24:4:31
Travel	Rs. 8,659	
Wages & fares of volunteers	Rs. 3,372	Rs. 2,746 (fares alone)
District propaganda		Rs. 4,997
Tahsil account	Rs. 3,131	
Muslim propaganda		Rs. 1,070
Khadi propaganda	Rs. 1,826 (includes uniforms)	Rs. 910
Aid to political sufferers	Rs. 2,226	Rs. 475
Publications	Rs. 3,926	Rs. 3,378
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	Rs. 39,187	Rs. 34,310

/Source: Agra Satyagraha Sangram (DCC, Agra, 1931), P.P. Hin. B. (IOL), pp. 116-17; AICC Ps. P21/1931, Statement of Kanpur TCC Income & Expenditure for 1930-31 (in Hindi). The nearest rupee figure has been taken./

for publicising nationalist news of all kinds; and the alas and dholas, bhajans and ghazals (different styles of singing) that became an integral part of most public meetings and processions.[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru noted the special significance of the mass-meeting in his comments on a kisan conference held at Allahabad for the starting of the 'no-tax' campaign in October 1930.

> 'Delegates had come to it from practically every important village in the district', he wrote, 'and, when they dispersed, they carried the news of the fresh decisions affecting the peasantry, and of my arrest in connection with them, to every part of the district. They became, sixteen hundred of them, effective and enthusiastic propagandists for the no-tax campaign.'[2]

In similar fashion, Nehru's whirlwind tour of the U.P. in 1929, when he was President of the Congress and widely looked upon as the rising star in the Indian political firmament, performed effective propaganda.[3] Gandhi's tour of the province in the latter half of the year was an even greater success. Table IV indicates the enthusiasm it generated, not only in districts with large cities and major educational centres (Agra and Allahabad), but in 'backward' areas where the head-quarters town was distinguished from the rest of the district

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1 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, passim; Shult par Kaisi Biti (Ranikhet Tahsil CC, Almora, 1932), P.P. Hin. B. 126 (IOL), p. 10; Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 237; interviews with old Congress workers, which provided considerable evidence ofnnationalist meetings at rural markets etc., and of the use of poems and songs, esp. Jagan Prasad Rawat, Lucknow 15-16 January 1973

2 Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 237

3 AICC Ps. P20/1929, 'Report on Visits to Aligarh, Muttra, and Hathras', submitted by JN to Secy. PCC, U.P., 22 July 1929, said: 'My visit to Muttra was an exceedingly busy one. I was rushed about from place to place all over the district and made to speak at nine or ten meetings in the course of a day and a quarter'. In 1937 JN repeated the exercise, and the U.P. Government listed the influence of JN's 'whirlwind' tour' of the province on the eve of the poll among the major causes of Congress' great election victory, FR, Februaryl1937, 1; see also FR, September 1936, 1 and November 1936, 2.

TABLE IV
MEETINGS AND COLLECTIONS DURING GANDHI'S VISIT
TO VARIOUS U.P. DISTRICTS, 1929

Place of meeting	Audience	Purse presented	On-the-spot contributions
AGRA, 11-18 Sept. 1929			
Hewett Park	10,000	Rs. 4,000	Rs. 110 + gold buttons
Bagh Muzaffar Khan	2,000 women	Rs. 300	
Meston Hall	100 students	Rs. 1,031	
Village Fatehabad	4,000	Rs. 501	
Village Achnera	2,000		
Fatehpur-Sikri	2,000		
Village Kirauli	3,000		
Village Etmadpur	4,000	Rs. 501	Rs. 25
Firozabad	10,000	Rs. 1,000	
Dayal Bagh	1,000		
AZAMGARH, 3-4 Oct. 1929			
Kshatriya School	Several 1,000s	Rs. 2,500	Rs. 182 + sale of 1,500 entrance tickets at rates of 4 annas-Rs. 100
Village Azmatgarh		Rs. 1,000	
Village Dohri Ghat	3,000	Rs. 320	
RAE BARELI, 13-14 Oct. 1929			
Village Bachrawan	400	Rs. 160	
Headquarters town	3,000	Rs. 3,760	Rs. 157
Hindu High School	300 women	Rs. 82	
Lalganj	8,000	Rs. 1,857	
Village Salon		Rs. 385	
ALLAHABAD, 16-17 Nov. 1929			
Ewing Christian College	1,500	Rs. 732	
The University	4,000	Rs. 3,000	Rs. 352
Municipal Board Office	2,000	Rs. 2,094	Rs. 1,125
Purushottam Das Park	8-9,000	Rs.31,000	Rs. 150

/Source: PAI, 21 September, 19 October, 23 November 1929. The figures given may not be entirely correct, and are besides incomplete, but they do give a fair idea of the enthusiasm generated by Gandhi's visit./

chiefly by the presence of the civil courts, and the gravelled street which led up to the District Officer's residence (Azamgarh and Rae Bareli).

A feature of Gandhi's meetings throughout the U.P. had been public bonfires of foreign cloth.[1] This, like the wearing and the sale of khadi[2] - not only to support the campaign for the boycott of foreign cloth, but also as a symbol of national pride - was an example of 'propaganda by deed' widely used by the Congress in the late 1920's and early 1930's. The Bardoli satyagraha of 1928, and Gandhi's salt satyagraha, beginning with his long march to the sea-shore in March-April 1930, were examples of a different kind of demonstration against the 'evils' of British rule, which also served to spread political awakening. The special significance of Bardoli lay in its timing; when politically-conscious groups in India were already considerably exercised about the question of the Simon Commission, it was able to focus much discontent on one particular act of injustice in one quite remote taluka of Gujerat and to draw attention again to the efficacy of satyagraha.[3] The march to Dandi, on the other hand, revealed something of Gandhi's genius for choosing the right issue for the launching of a struggle.[4] It

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1 See PAI 21 September, 19 October, 23 November 1929

2 See above, Ch. II. There was a special emphasis on khadi in the early part of 1931. Even the low prices created by the Depression were used to advantage in this regard. 'Bhartiyon ki bekari ki samasya hal ho gayi, sut kato, yeh kafi bhojan de sakta hai kyonki ab ann sasta hai' (The Indian unemployment problem has been solved, spin thread, this can bring one enough to eat since grain is now cheap), Aj 22 January 1931. See Aj for January-February 1931 generally.

3 For the enthusiastic response of the nationalist press in the U.P., see NOPs, June-August 1928. Nehru wrote: 'Bardoli became a sign and a symbol of hope and strength and victory to the Indian peasant', An Autobiography, p. 171; See also GOI Home-Poll. 197/1928; FR August 1928, 1; PAI 30 June & 4 August 1928.

4 In the Congress' view, this became the classic illustration of Gandhi's political genius, and of the efficacy of propaganda by deed. '. . . the march to Dandi was an event of historical importance which will rank on the same level with Napoleon's march to Paris on his return from Elba or Mussolini's march to Rome when he wanted to seize political power', wrote S. C. Bose,

was expected that this symbolic protest would catch the imagination of the people, and that Gandhi's arrest would be the signal for open breach of the Salt Laws around the country. To a limited extent this plan succeeded, though the Government reduced its force considerably by deliberately delaying Gandhi's arrest.[1]

More important for mobilisation in the U.P., however, were the demonstrations against the Simon Commission when that body visited the province in 1928, and - what was not a Congress-controlled area at all - the activities of the revolutionary terrorists in the second half of the 1920's generally. These events, and their effects bear examination in some detail.

The appointment of an 'all-white' Commission to review the progress of the reforms in India brought forth loud protest from virtually every major political grouping in the country.[2] But the Simon Commission - and its boycott - were far from being mass issues. The hartal of 3 February 1928, the day the Commission landed in Bombay, was incomplete. The U.P. Government cynically reported: 'The Muslims held aloof, the Hindus were half-hearted, and the rain spoilt the public meetings'.[3] Even in Allahabad, the home of the Nehrus, the Muslim shops remained open, as did many of the smaller Hindu shops.[4]

The Indian Struggle 1920-42 (London 1948) p. 255. See also P. Sitaramayya: The History of the Indian National Congress, I 1885-1935 (Bombay 1935) pp. 383-9

1 Halifax Colln., VI, Hailey-Irwin, 13 May 1930 (enclosed with Irwin-Wedgwood Benn, Simla, 22 May 1930), XIX, Irwin-G. R. Lane-Fox, New Delhi, 31 March 1930; Hailey Colln., 17B, Hailey-Hirtzel, 4 April 1930, and for escalation of nationalist agitation on account of subsequent arrests, ibid., telegg. Hailey-Viceroy (in reply to Viceroy's telegram of 22 April 1930).

2 The All-India Trade Union Congress, the All-India Muslim League (or, at any rate, one section of it), the Kashi Sanatan Dharm Pandit Sabha joined in the chorus, FR, 2, November 1927; GOI Home Poll. 36/1928; Abhyud., 28 April 1928. So did several landlords, the chosen collaborators of the Raj in U.P.

3 FR, February 1928, 1

4 PAI, 11 February 1928

Throughout the province, and the country, students were the main supporters of the boycott programme. Later in February, when the Simon Commission paid a private visit to Benares, students of the Benares Hindu University, led by Govind Malaviya, the son of the Vice-Chancellor Madan Mohan Malaviya, staged a noisy (and to that extent successful) demonstration against the Commission, in spite of the opposition of the University authorities and the precautions of the police.[1] It was a foretaste of the reception accorded to the Commission when it returned to the province on business at the end of the year. On that occasion, students and youths were still the leaders in the demonstrations, but enthusiasm was greater than before and support far more general. The Government observed that little or nothing would have been achieved by the Congress in Lucknow without the University students and schoolboys. But it noted also that 'the Hindu community as a whole is in favour of the political boycott of the Simon Commission'.[2]

An event of major importance in bringing about the changed atmosphere was the death of the Punjab Congress leader, Lajpat Rai, shortly after the visit of the Simon Commission to Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. On the occasion of that visit, Lajpat Rai had received a lathi-blow in the course of demonstrations against the Commission, and his death was freely attributed to that blow. Martyrdom has a unique and compelling force. Condolence meetings, which were at the same time meetings for a more complete boycott of the Simon Commission, were held in most districts of the U.P., including some which had shown few signs of Congress activity hitherto.[3] Nationalist Muslim leaders, such as Ansari and Abul Kalam Azad, expressed their grief for

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1 FR February 1928, 2

2 GOI Home Poll. 130/1929, D.O. 1840-C.R., G. W. Gwynne, D.C. Lucknow-Commissioner, Lucknow, 5 December 1928 (hereafter, Gwynne's letter, 5 December 1928). The reference to 'the Hindu community' was only an example of the Government's peculiar way of describing the state of political feelings; see below

3 PAIs. 1-15 December 1928; NOPs 47-48 of 1928; FR, November 1928, 2

one who had come to be feared as a Hindu communal leader. Motilal Nehru, who had suffered at the hands of Lajpat Rai in 1926 when the latter teamed up with Malaviya to oppose the Swarajists in the elections, joined in the call for the observance of Lajpat Rai Day on 29 November 1928.[1]

In Agra and Meerut, strongly worded leaflets were distributed in the name of Mrs C. R. Das, widow of the respected Swarajist leader who had died in 1925.

> 'I am ashamed . . .', these leaflets read,'to think that those base . . . hands had the audacity to attack this aged man who was beloved by 30 crores of Indians. Are there still men and youths living in this country . . .?'[2]

However, despite a reasonable response from students, there was but a small and quiet black-flag demonstration on 28 November 1928, when the Commission reached Agra. The local Congress leaders restrained the demonstrators, partly because of a pro-Commission demonstration by a group of Agra Muslims.[3] In Lucknow and Kanpur, where the Commission went next, there were no such constraints. Muslim leaders were prominent in the organisation of the boycott, and they had the support of one of the leading Muslim talugdars of Oudh. Congress, and its leaders, concentrated their efforts on the boycott demonstrations in Lucknow. Events, therefore, turned out differently.

The Simon Commission Boycott Committee in Lucknow included not only local leaders - Mohanlal Saxena, Khaliquzzaman, Mrs Suniti Mitter, and K. Pestonji, a happy 'national' combination of a Kayastha, a Muslim, a Bengali and a Parsee - but also prominent Lucknow Liberals such as Rahas Behari Tewari and Krishna Prasad Kaul.[4] Shortly before the coming of the Simon

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1 Abhyud., 24 November 1928

2 Abhyud., 24 November 1928; PAI, 8 December 1928

3 GOI Home Poll. 130/1929, D.O. No. D/300/28, Commissioner Agra-Chief Secy. U.P., 13 December 1928; PAI, 8 December 1928

4 The following account is based on GOI Home Poll. 130/1929; Pioneer, 2 December 1928, JN's Statement to the Press; Abhyud., 1 and 8 December 1928; and interviews with old Congressmen.

Commission, Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant, the most respected Congressmen of the U.P. after Motilal Nehru and Madan Mohan Malaviya, and with them Gauri Shankar Misra arrived to strengthen the hands of the local boycott committee.

The liberals reportedly concentrated on the hartal of 29 November, Lajpat Rai Day, which proved a great success. Others, led by Khaliquzzaman, acted on the impulse of the moment on the day the Commission arrived, to fly black kites over the grounds where the talugdars were holding a garden-party for the Commission, and cut them ingeniously so that they dropped into those very grounds.[1] At least a little commotion resulted. But the most important part of the Lucknow boycott programme was the black-flag demonstration organised to welcome the Commission outside the Lucknow railway station.

In preparation, the Boycott Committee started organising processions and public meetings several days before the Commission's arrival.[2] With these activities began a regular jousting match between the Congress leadership and the local administration. The administration insisted that licenses were needed before processions could be taken out, and emphasised that licenses would be issued only if processions remained orderly and kept to specified routes. The Congress leaders questioned the rules regarding licenses, and declared that Congress processions could never be disorderly. After the first few days, the jousting took a serious turn - and the use of force followed. On the last three days of November, police forcibly dispersed what Government called 'aggressive demonstrators'.[3] On the last of those days, Jawaharlal Nehru and Pant were among the injured.

It was the Government's view that Nehru's intervention was responsible for the ugly turn of events in Lucknow. Certainly,

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1 Chowdhry Khaliquzzaman: Pathway to Pakistan (Lahore, 1961), pp. 92-3; GOI Home Poll. 130/1929, letter no. 1843 D.C. Lucknow-Commissioner Lucknow, 6 December 1928

2 At the time, the exact date of the Commission's arrival had not been made public.

3 FR, November 1928, 2

Nehru spared no effort to strengthen the nationalist demonstrations. He addressed students at a public meeting on 25 November, the day he arrived in the city. He sent a circular to the University declaring in characteristic language:

> 'It is announced in the public press that the Lucknow University authorities have invited Sir John Simon and his undistinguished crew to the University Convocation . . . every schoolboy knows that India has resented the appointment and the coming of the Simon Commission and has boycotted it. Has no whisper of this reached the academic ears of the Lucknow University authorities? Have they not heard or felt in their boudoirs the deep rumble of a nation in anger? Do they not know how one of the greatest of India's sons was treated in Lahore city less than a month ago because he would not bow his head to this Commission . . .?
> . . . Will you not make it clear to your University authorities, to the Simon Commission, and to all whom it may concern, that the young men and young women of Lucknow cherish the memory of their departed leader and stand for the boycott of the Simon Commission and will not permit anyone to exploit them on behalf of the enemies of Indian freedom. Will you not take full part in the boycott demonstrations in Lucknow, and above all, boycott the Convocation to which your University authorities have invited the Simon Commission?
> They have dared. Do you also dare?'[1]

Others followed Nehru's lead. 'A student of Narhai', the quarter that was a centre of Congress agitation on 29 November, issued an 'Appeal to Lucknow University students' which bears quotation in full.

> 'The students of Lucknow University are hereby informed that a public meeting will be held at about /sic/ 5 p.m. on the ground left to /sic/ the building of Oriental Life Assurance Co. near the gate of Nakti ka Imambara, Hazratganj, whence we will go to join the great meeting of Lucknow citizens to be held at 5 p.m. in Aminuddaula Park. In both these meetings prominent leaders are expected to deliver lectures. I hope that you will come in great number /sic/ and make the meeting successful.
> NB It is expected that Simon Commission will pass through that road while going to attend the farmers' blood feast given by the Barons of Oudh at Kaiserbagh Baradari.'[2]

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1 GOI Home Poll. 130/1929, Annexure 'A' to Gwynne's letter, 5 December 1928

2 Ibid. 'Appeal to Lucknow University Students' (n.d. but issued 30 November 1928, judging by the reference to the taluqdars' garden-party)

On 29 November, Lajpat Rai Day, the Municipal Board - which was, significantly, not in Congress control - closed all its schools and offices. University students went on strike and, with the schoolboys, spent the day 'working for the boycott demonstration of the 30th'. Congress seemed already to have achieved success in its demonstrations.

In this, Nehru's hectic activity and emotional appeal certainly played a part. But it would seem that repeated processions and demonstrations were themselves the main cause of the rising militancy. Government's stricture that the Congress-Government clash occurred because, as soon as he arrived in Lucknow, Nehru asked local Congress leaders to disregard orders seeking to regulate the path and timing of procession, appears to be incorrect. The first open clash occurred on 28 November, while Nehru returned to Lucknow only on the twenty-ninth (having left after a brief visit on 25 November). The Lucknow Congress leaders were themselves hesitant about Government's suggestion that Congress must obtain a license each time it wished to take out a procession; and apparently the growing support for the boycott and the rising militancy all around them gave them the confidence to oppose Government's stand. Nehru's coming did make the question more clearly one of prestige; he was obdurate in his refusal to kowtow to the British authorities, as the events of 29 November showed.

On that day Nehru and other Congress leaders started a procession from Narhai, near the European shopping centre, which was to go to Aminuddaulah Park on the outskirts of the city's Indian quarter. They had no license, and were stopped a few hundred yards from Narhai by mounted police armed with lathis. The Deputy Commissioner, who arrived on the scene soon afterwards, reported that 'The processionists maintained . . . that they were not taking out a procession, but were merely proceeding in three companies of twelve men each, carrying black flags, and singing songs, to Aminuddaulah Park'. The growing crowd, and the arrival of more Congress volunteers, heightened the tension.

The Deputy Commissioner then agreed to allow the procession in the manner mentioned above

> 'if the leaders would merely make a verbal request for permission. Pandit Jawahir Lal Nehru declined to do this, but Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant said they would not proceed without permission, and they wanted to go. This was so little different from a request for permission,' wrote the Deputy Commissioner, 'that I agreed . . .'[1]

These verbal niceties and legal technicalities did not end the matter, however. The three groups of twelve each that started out from Newal Kishore Road, near Narhai, rapidly grew in size. The procession stopped and shouted slogans for some time outside the Deputy Commissioner's house. By the time it reached its destination, it had assumed 'considerable dimensions'. The Congress leaders were well aware of the spontaneous element in processions and demonstrations, once these had been started.[2] The importance of refusal to follow Government orders regarding processions lay notoonly in the making of another symbolic protest against alien rule, but also in allowing nationalist demonstrations the flexibility and the time to have maximum impact, and above all in the direct confrontation this caused with the Government - a situation that was likely to influence far more people than a quiet, orderly procession.

On the day the Simon Commission finally arrived in Lucknow (30 November), a very large number of demonstrators gathered at the station with black flags and black arm-bands. The Congress leaders refused to take up the position allotted to them for the demonstration; they said it was too far from the route the Commission would take.[3] In addition, the demonstrators were apparently in such a pitch of excitement that the Congress leaders could not have stopped them rushing nearer the station, even had

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1 GOI Home Poll. 130/1929, Gwynne's letter, 5 December 1928

2 Obliquely, even the British civilian recognized this when he wrote that the Indian loves a tamasha, A. P. Hume Colln., III, Pt. I, Hume's letter to his parents, Roorkee, 31 May 1930.

3 JN put the distance at over quarter of a mile, Pioneer, 2 December 1928

they so desired. The occasion was marked, then not only by shouts of 'Simon, go back', black flags and - later that day - black kites, but also by action from the mounted police, the beating back of demonstrators, the throwing of stones and bricks, and injuries on both sides. Pant suffered rather serious injuries.[1] And Government was already beginning to appear guilty of the 'repression' that brought hundreds snowballing into civil disobedience, when that movement began.

Then, as in the demonstrations against the Simon Commission, direct confrontation with the British, the beating or trial of venerated Indians at the hands of the white man, and the apparent fearlessness of Congress volunteers in the face of brute force, contributed to the rapid growth of strong anti-imperialist feelings. When unknown, poorly-clad villagers, quite apart from the Congress' well-known leaders, stood up to the 'awesome' foreigner on the streets or in the court, something snapped inside the men who watched.[2] The special merit of propaganda by deed lay precisely in this, in ridding men of the mentality of dependence or of subjection (which perhaps better describes the state of India, especially before the popular agitations of the 1920's and 1930's).

The Lucknow events connected with the visit of the Simon Commission themselves had important repercussions in Kanpur city, forty-five miles away. College students went on strike and joined the anti-Simon demonstrations in large numbers when the Commission arrived on 3 December.[3] They were in so militant

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1 JN: An Autobiography, p. 180, and Press Statement in Pioneer, 2 December 1928

2 Jail lists at Agra, Allahabad, Azamgarh and Rae Bareli contain numerous entries such as the following: Name: Gandhi-bhakt (follower of Gandhi); Address: India; Occupation: Freedom-fighter. This form of propaganda became famous when used first by Chandrasekhar Azad - whose adopted surname means 'Free' - and, coming from poor, unsophisticated villagers it could scarcely have gone unpunished by the police. Nehru noted the important difference that Gandhi made in Indian politics by his emphasis on 'fearlessness', The Discovery of India (London 1946) p. 303

3 Pioneer, 5 December 1928

a mood that the Kanpur Congress leaders, Vidyarthi and Jawaharlal Rohatgi, were apparently in no position to control them.[1] The cars carrying the members of the Commission were at one point surrounded by slogan-shouting demonstrators. One or two cars were actually hit by stones. 'Altogether the visit was an unpleasant one for them /the Commission/', wrote Hailey, with characteristic British understatement.[2]

> 'Lucknow', wrote Nehru, 'has reason to be proud of the events of this morning /30 November/ and the officials, who were responsible for this morning's events, have helped greatly in producing an atmosphere in India which will put an end to British rule.'[3]

'The purpose of the boycott demonstrations has been more than achieved', wrote The Leader, the influential Liberal daily, 'and the victors are those who carry the marks of police batons on their bodies.'[4]

Several developments proved the force of these assessments. In the press, and on the platform, there was a round of condemnation of 'police brutality' and the 'insult' to as respected an Indian as the Maharaja of Mahmudabad,[5] a leading talugdar and an ex-Minister of the U.P. Government, whose house happened to be surrounded along with others in the effort to control demonstrators during the Taluqdars' Garden Party on 30 November. Motilal Nehru, the Liberal leader Sapru, and Annie Besant, called for a complete banning of all news of the Simon Commission in the columns of the nationalist press, and for the social boycott of the Simon Commission and all who co-operated with it.[6] That was more than the Liberals had preached at any time before this. In the U.P. Legislative Council, a resolution condemning

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1 GOI Home Poll. 130/1929, Chief Secy. U.P.-Secy., Home, GOI, Lucknow, 20 December 1928

2 Hailey Colln., 14B, Hailey-Crerar, Lucknow 6 December 1929

3 Pioneer, 2 December 1928

4 NOP, 8 December 1928

5 NOP 22 December 1928; Pioneer, 2 December 1928

6 Pioneer, 6 December 1928

the action of the Lucknow authorities was moved by the Liberal leader C. Y. Chintamani, and carried without division. Government wisely refrained from challenging a division. Not only Nehru, but Pant, leader of the Swaraj Party in the Council, Rahas Behari Tewari, a Nationalist Party member of the Council, and also Andrews Dube and Krishna Prasad Kaul, members of the Servants of India Society, were involved in the clashes. Besides, as the Chief Secretary noted,

> 'Many non-officials, who often supported Government, felt that if they opposed the adjournment motion, they would be pilloried in the press and in their constituencies as approving of police assaults on prominent and patriotic Indians. The racial issue was prominent throughout . . .'[1]

In the elections to local bodies and the Congress' own organisational elections held at the end of 1928, this widespread expression of sympathy assumed a more tangible form. In both, there were notable successes for the boycotters, and especially for Jawaharlal and his 'independence' men.[2]

We have noticed earlier the energetic efforts of Jawaharlal and his supporters in the work of mobilisation and organisation, especially among students and youth in 1928-29. A very valuable supplement to these efforts was provided by the activities of revolutionary terrorists. These activities were undertaken on a large scale in the 1920's; and through them men like Bhagat Singh and Chandraseklar Azad acquired a legendary fame. ' . . . the popularity that the man achieved was something amazing', wrote Jawaharlal Nehru about Bhagat Singh.[3] The reason was simply that political circles in India, and especially students and other young people in the towns, were more receptive to Bhagat Singh's message[4] in the late 1920's than they had probably

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1 GOI Home Poll. 130/1929, Chief Secy. U.P.-Secy., Home, GOI, 20 December 1928; see also Pioneer, 15 December 1928

2 Pioneer, 7 December 1928 and 16 and 23 January 1929

3 Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 176

4 For the message of the revolutionary-terrorists, see Bipan Chandra: 'The Ideological Development of the Revolutionary Terrorists in Northern India in the 1920's', in B. R. Nanda (ed), Socialism in India

TABLE V

NATIONALIST ACTIVITIES AMONG YOUTH, ALLAHABAD 1928-29

Date	Event	Details/Causes
Jan. 1928	Attempted procession	Attempt to take out the body of Roshan Singh, executed after his conviction in Kakori Conspiracy Case
Feb. "	1 meeting	200 University students.
Apr. "	1 meeting	School anniversary; Congress leaders participated
Aug. "	1 meeting No. of private meetings	University Hindu Hostel University students visiting J. Nehru daily
Sept. "	4 meetings	On account of Bipin Chandra Pal and Sarojini Naidu's presence in city
Oct. "	1 public debate) 1 meeting)	In University
Dec. "	Youth League formed	J. Nehru was associated with it, but refused the Presidentship so that the League might be independent
Jan. 1929	Private meetings	J. Nehru visiting hostels frequently
Feb. "	1 meeting	250-500 students; sympathy with striking Gujerat students
Mar. "	1 procession) Over 500 join Youth) League)	On account of University student P. C. Joshi's arrest in Meerut Conspiracy Case. The House Tutor of Kayasth Pathshala University College reported that students were 'flocking' to the Youth League 'in large numbers'
Apr. "	1 Youth League meeting 1 meeting	Decided programme of work for vacations and for 'Comrade Joshi's defence.
Aug. "	1 meeting	School.
Sept. "	1 procession) 1 meeting) 1 University general) strike) And picketing)	On account of Lahore Conspiracy Case under-trial, Jatindranath Das' death as a result of a hunger-strike in Lahore jail

TABLE V cont.

Date	Event	Details/Causes
Oct. 1929	1 meeting	School anniversary
	1 meeting	Young boys
Nov. "	3 meetings	Two of these on the occasion of Gandhi's visit
	1 public debate	University
Dec. "	Training	Classes for boys

/Source: AICC Ps. G39/1928 and G39/1929; FRs and PAIs for 1928-29.
Only events specifically described as youth activities have been listed./

ever been before. Nationalist newspapers and speakers praised his ideals and lauded his courage.[1] At the Karachi session of the Congress, in March 1931, even the Mahatma, Gandhi, had to face black-flag demonstrations for his failure to have Bhagat Singh's death-sentence commuted.

The political activities of students and other youth in Allahabad indicated the extent of the revolutionary-terrorists' impact in 1928-29. (Table V). It is notable that the high points of their activities, which included virtually spontaneous processions, in March-April and September 1929, were all connected with revolutionary terrorist actions. Moreover, the impact was not confined to Allahabad.

The earlier Kakori Conspiracy Case had occasioned sympathy for terrorists and condemnation of the treatment Government meted out to them throughout the U.P. The Kakori 'dacoits' followed up their looting of a train at Kakori (Lucknow) in 1925 by a daring protest against their treatment in jail. (Gandhi was in a sense only following in their footsteps when he subsequently undertook fasts for political causes). For several months, then, different sections of the Indian press expressed grave concern for the Kakori men. Wild rumours circulated especially about the 'worsening condition', 'impending (or actual) death' and constant transfers of Damodar Swarup Seth, later an important Bareilly and UMP. Congress leader.[2]

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1 See Aj February-March 1931; AICC Ps. 17/1930, 'The Week out of Jail', JN's statement to the Press on his release from Naini Central Jail on 11 October 1930.

2 U.P. Judicl. (Crim.) Dept. 1210/1926 (SRR), e.g.s from Aj, IDT, Leader, Republic (Kanpur), Pratap, Sainik; Aj, 12 September 1926, Editl; and interviews, Vijay Kumar Sinha, New Delhi, 31 October 1972, Manmathnath Gupta, New Delhi, 1 November 1972, Chandra Bhanu Gapta, Lucknow, 17 November 1972, Rup Narain Tripathi, Allahabad, 16 July 1972, etc. The following table, put together from U.P. Judicial (Criminal) Department 1210/1926, 'Medical history of Damodar Swarup Seth', prepared because the authorities feared Seth might die in jail, gives the record of Damodar Swarup Seth's condition in jail, during the course of the Kakori trial. For table see overleaf.

The political repercussions of the Kakori Case became more evident after the trial. The sentence of death passed on four of the accused brought pleas for commutation not only from the pro-Congress Aj and Abhyudaya, but from the Liberal papers, The Leader and Oudh Akhbar, and what Congressmen call the half-English paper, The Pioneer. An appeal for mercy was made by MLCs of a wide range of parties: Congressmen like Pant and Vidyarthi; Liberals such as Chintamani; independent notables such as Khan Bahadur Fazlur Rahman Khan and Rai Bahadur Pandit Sankatha Prasad Bajpai; the industrialist and future minister, Jwala Prasad Srivastava, also, among others.[1]

Congress support was especially strong. The Congress press commended the spirit of patriotism which had swayed the Kakori men in their act.[2] Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Shiva Prasad Gupta, Manjit Singh Rathore and other Congress leaders visited those under trial in jail, and provided them - as also their revolutionary-terrorist colleagues outside - with financial and

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Date	Weight	Remarks
6 Dec. 1925	99 lbs.	Admitted to Lucknow District Jail, 6 December 1925. Took very little food, steadily became weaker.
13 Apr. 1926	94 lbs.	Transferred to Lucknow Central Prison, 1 May 1926. Commenced hunger strike
		Transferred to Bareilly District Jail, 23 May 1926. Continued hunger strike.
27 May 1926	76 lbs.	Forcibly fed at both these jails.
16 June 1926	78 lbs.	
11 July 1926	82 lbs.	
6 Aug. 1926	73 lbs.	
24 Aug. 1926	68 lbs.	Transferred to Dehradun Jail for X-ray
1 Sept 1926	67½ lbs.	examination, 24 August 1926. Did not
15 Sept 1926	67½ lbs.	refuse food, but sometimes deliberately
1 Oct. 1926	70 lbs.	vomited out the food he ate.
		December 1926, transferred to Bareilly at request of Dehradun Jail authorities
14 Jan. 1927	61 lbs.	
18 Jan. 1927	63 lbs.	Released on bail, 18 January 1927

1 U.P. Judicl. (Crim.) Dept. 1210/1926 (SRR)

2 e.g. Abhyud, 17 September 1927

other support.[1] Pant, the Congress leader in the UPLC, became the chief defense counsel for the accused. His assistants included Mohanlal Saxena and Chandrabhanu Gupta, Lucknow men who were to be prominent in civil disobedience and other nationalist activities afterwards. Thus, the Kakori men made a strong plea for a nobler struggle, when large numbers of nationalists were getting bogged down in the factional conflicts of elections and the legislature or falling prey to the spreading plague of communalism.

The fact that the Lahore Conspiracy Case followed not long after Kakori, and that thirteen of the twenty-four accused in this case were residents of the U.P.,[2] strengthened the punch. The staging of the Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929 in the U.P., because it was easier to obtain conviction here,[3] added further to the impact.

Government noted that the arrests in the Meerut Case, especially that of the Allahabad student, Joshi, in March 1929, became the focal point for much student activity and protest in the U.P.[4] Understandably, Allahabad and Meerut led in this agitation. The months that followed saw a certain slackening of tempo, but rapid revival came in September 1929. The death of Jatindranath Das in the course of a hunger-strike in Lahore Jail brought emotion among the young men and women of U.P. to a high pitch. Protest meetings and demonstrations were held, especially at the more important student centres, and at the Provincial Youth Conference held in Lucknow that month Congress leaders were constrained to water down some of the resolutions proposed.[5] In a letter to a man who himself had experienced

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1 Manmathnath Gupta: Bharat ke Krantikari (Delhi 1929) and Ve Amar Krantikari (Delhi 1970): Bhagwandas Mahaur and others: Yash ki Dharohar (Delhi 1938) and other publications in the series 'Shaheed Granth Mala' brought out by Atma Ram & Sons, Delhi, in the 1960's. Interviews, as in f.n.2, p.101.

2 U.P. Police Dept. 1504/1934 (SRR)

3 Halifax Colln., V. Peel-Irwin, London, 14 March 1929; X Teleg. Viceroy-Secy. of State, 10 March 1929

4 FR, March 1929, 2

5 FR, September 1929, 1 & 2; Hailey Colln., 16, Hailey-Irwin, 16 October 1929. See also Table II above.

that 'emotional character' a decade ago, Hailey wrote: 'The emotional character of India came out at its very worst over the death of Jatin Das . . .'[1] There can be little doubt that the emotional fever thus generated did much to strengthen the hands of the younger Nehru and the Congress 'Left' at this time, and helped them carry the Congress into civil disobedience.

Though much of the early mobilisation and propaganda work described above was concentrated in the towns, it was in the nature of a primary mobilisation of certain limited groups, to be followed by a secondary mobilisation of broader groups by those mobilised in the towns and by Congressmen working in the rural areas. The Intelligence Department at New Delhi observed in mid-1929 that the Congress was relying fully on 'young men and youths'.

> 'The next anti-Government movement . . . may be supported by fewer people than in Non-co-operation times', it said, 'but the agitation will be more intensive and more dangerous, because of the class and character of the people conducting it.'[2]

Strong support among several urban groups, and among rural groups directly linked with the Congress organisation, was the starting point, though the 'catchment area' was to expand considerably thereafter.

A Government survey of civil disobedience prisoners held in five U.P. jails in early 1932 suggested that of the 2,004 satyagrahis in these jails, 1,397 were 'petty tenants or labourers', 145 shopkeepers, 53 students, and the remaining 409, 'a sprinkling of beggars' and people in 'miscellaneous occupations'.[3] Apart from the first of these categories, all were probably powerfully affected by the nationalist propaganda in the towns, and more especially by the strong racial feelings aroused.

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1 Hailey Colln., 16 A, Hailey-O'Dwyer, 4 October 1929

2 Hailey Colln., 15B, Note by D. Petrie, enclosed with Crerar-Hailey, Simla 3 July 1929

3 FR, March 1932, 2

We have already noticed how students responded to the Congress' appeal. Of the business community, Hailey wrote: '

> 'If it is absolutely certain that we are going to stamp out boycott, it will co-operate, though not very openly, for the Marwari tradesman is not only very timid, but at heart has all the Hindu feeling in favour of Congress. The Marwari as a body tend to place Hinduism before almost any other consideration . . . [!]'[1]

The last category in the 1932 survey, that of 'beggars' and people in 'miscellaneous occupations', was probably the real basis for Government claims that a majority of Congress volunteers came from the 'bazaar riff raff'. Of these, however, a very large number are likely to have been artisans (weavers in particular were greatly influenced by the Congress' khadi programme[2]). Small peddlers and hawkers, personal servants and other odd-job men also appear to have taken some part in the movement.[3]

There is, in addition, certain evidence of 'lumpen-proletarian' elements volunteering for civil disobedience. 'Congress was, at the time of the census, employing and paying as volunteers many who would otherwise have been unemployed', reported the Census Commissioner for the U.P. in 1931.[4] Government reports repeatedly said that 'irresponsibles and loafers . . . did Congress work as a means of livelihood'.[5]

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1 Hailey Colln., 23A, Hailey-Willingdon, 10 January 1932; (emphasis added). Both Government and Congress sources acknowledged that the active cadres of the Congress came from the lower middle classes generally, but especially the intelligentsia; ibid. 24B, Hailey-Haig, 21 June 1932, and 26C, Hailey-Clay, 3 November 1933; JN Corresp. with Dr Mahmud, Mahmud-JN, 15-10-33

2 Professor Irfan Habib of Aligarh recalled that even in the 1946 elections in the U.P., large numbers of Muslim weavers voted for the Congress.

3 Interviews with C. B. Gupta, Lucknow 17 and 24 November 1972; M. L. Gautam, New Delhi 31 October 1972; Santoshanand, Azamgarh 20 February 1973

4 U.P. Census 1931, Pt. I, p. 417

5 PAI 14 June 1930, 21 March 1931; FR April 1933, 1

Interviews with old Congress workers confirm these reports to an extent.[1] Motilal Nehru's call for the removal of 'undesirable volunteers'[2] is proof enough of the penetration of 'underground' elements into the Congress campaign. And the presence of a large 'floating' population, in addition to substantial finance, might partly explain the strength of civil disobedience in centres such as Kanpur and Agra.

Yet, it is easy to exaggerate the importance of those who joined the nationalist struggle for the payment they received or the food they got in jail. It is well to remember that the payment was nominal, and jail treatment (including jail food) - for those who were jailed and not simply beaten and dumped on the road - remarkably bad.[3] Also, the available evidence regarding the Congress' longer-term paid volunteers does suggest that they were mainly men from low or middle income groups in the villages, or in the commercial and service sectors of the town, who needed a subsistence allowance while away from their normal sources of livelihood.[4] Finally, if Kanpur and Agra were notable for their large 'floating' population, and strong financial backing for the Congress campaign, they were notable also for the intensity and scale of nationalist propaganda. It is reasonable to assume that this had a major impact on the 'lumpen proletariat', especially since the cities also provided ample evidence of the aloofness, even the arrogance, of the foreigner.[5]

Starting, then, with substantial support in the towns, civil

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1 Interviews with Srinath Singh, Allahabad 25 August 1972; Brajesh Dube, Allahabad, 22-23 February 1973.

2 MN Ps., T-1, MN-Tandon, 18 May 1930

3 R. C. Majumdar (ed): Struggle for Freedom, p. 527, f.n. 15; Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 344; CWMG, XXII (Delhi 1966), pp. 253, 303, etc; and numerous interviews.

4 AICC Ps. 24/1934, provisional (and incomplete) list of U.P. delegates to the 1934 Congress; the U.P. Political "Who's Who" (Allahabad 1936); and interviews.

5 Cf. John Urry: Reference Groups and the Theory of Revolution (London 1973), passim; Chalmers Johnson: Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power (Stanford 1962), pp. 7-8, 49-50, 69-70, 238 (f.n. 10), etc.

disobedience, like other agitational campaigns, gathered a momentum of its own. A clear indication of this was provided by the large number of legislators, and public men of other parties, who resigned their positions and joined the Congress campaign as civil disobedience gathered force and Government 'repression' took its course.[1] Chaudhuri Mukhtar Singh, a Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly, who resigned in May 1930, revealed an extremely troubled conscience in a letter to Sir Sita Ram, the Speaker of the U.P. Legislative Council and himself an ex-Liberal. He wrote in anger about the Government's repression and false propaganda, and of his desire to join the civil disobedience movement, from which he had held back so far only because he was in debt to the tune of Rs. 10,000 and he had hoped to clear this debt from his allowance as Member, Central Banking Enquiry Committee, and his next sugarcane crop. 'But now I cannot tolerate any further the humiliation . . .,' he wrote, declaring his willingness to sell his house or part of his property to meet his debts, so that his family might be left unburdened.[2]

Other groups were also affected by these events. In addition, some of them - including many of the 'petty tenants or labourers' found among the civil disobedience prisoners in 1932 - had the direct encouragement of teachers, students and others who had first responded to Congress propaganda and the call for civil disobedience.

Students and teachers, and men from other 'intellectual' professions such as law and journalism, provided a smaller proportion of Congress volunteers during civil disobedience than they had done in non-co-operation; there were altogether fewer resignations from the schools and the courts.[3] Yet, as

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1 See The Leader, 2, 4, 8, 11, 14 May 1930 for examples

2 Sir Sita Ram Ps., F.29, No. 76, Mukhtar Singh-Sitaram, Meerut 19-5-30. See also ibid., F. 29, No. 77, Kunzru-Sita Ram, Lucknow 26-5-30

3 See U.P. GAD 241/1930 (SRR). A very large number of Congressmen who became important public figures later, especially after

influential 'learned' men, these groups proved invaluable in the process of general mobilisation for civil disobedience. Teachers in 'national' institutions, and in Municipal and District Board Schools which were only indirectly tied to the Government, became a major headache for the U.P. Government during this period. In April 1930, when civil disobedience had just begun, the Government drew the attention of the Education Department to paragraph 169A of the Educational Code, 1927, whereby "No teacher in a recognized vernacular school shall take part" in any anti-Government political agitation, or inculcate opinion which tends to support such agitation. Later that month, and sporadically over the year 1930, action was urged and taken against teachers involved in, or encouraging, civil disobedience.[1] Yet, in September 1930, Hailey complained:

> '. . . until we can have summary powers for suspending the district boards or their education committees, we shall never be able to tackle the rural areas effectively . . .'[2]

In mid-1932, when, according to many Government reports, civil disobedience had virtually run its course, district officials were still concerned on this score.[3]

Students, likewise, exercised an influence out of all proportion to their numbers among the satyagrahis. A few gave up their studies at this time, joined the civil disobedience

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independence, had left their careers or schools in 1920-21. The biographical data available, including oral evidence, has far fewer references to such sacrifices in the early 1930's.

1 See U.P. Educ. Dept. 53/1930 (UPSA); and U.P. Police Dept. 1672/1930 (SRR), D.O. No. 786, Commissioner Allahabad-all Collectors, 26 November 1930. Interviews confirmed the importance of teachers; old teachers in Jamunipur, Kotwa and Leelapur villages in Allahabad district recalled that in the years 1930-2, Government adopted the policy of posting rural school-teachers away from their home areas in order to reduce their influence.

2 Hailey Colln., 19B, Hailey-de Montmorency, 16 September 1930; also Hailey-Irwin 3 October 1930; also Hailey Colln., 19A, Minutes of Conference held at Viceregal Lodge on 23 July 1930

3 U.P. GAD 283/1930 (SRR), D.O. No. 157, D. M. Etah-Chief Secy. U.P., 12 June 1932

movement and rapidly rose to Congress leadership in their districts: Gopal Narain Shiromani and Niranjan Singh of Agra were typical examples.[1] A larger number, whose enthusiasm carried them into the movement for a short while before parental or other pressures sent them back to their homes or their colleges, performed useful functions as 'shock-troops' and 'leaders of opinion'. They played a prominent part in demonstrations in the early stages of the civil disobedience movement, as they had done earlier during the boycott of the Simon Commission.[2] In 1932-3, when enthusiasm for civil disobedience had begun to flag, it was student volunteers who made a valiant bid to revive agitation, through attacks on Government property in urban and rural areas, which they planned and executed on their own.[3] That these methods, borrowed from the revolutionary terrorists, failed to revive the earlier enthusiasm was on account of a whole range of factors outside their control: among these factors was the vague and somewhat hesitant approach of the Congress leadership towards the broader masses whose support they solicited, which we shall examine presently.

First, it may be well to recount the widespread support created for the nationalist cause by the Congress' initial propaganda and by events in the civil disobedience campaign itself. Outside the ranks of the Congress' active workers and

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1 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, p. 58. The pamphlet also reveals the very small number of students who took a long-term part in civil disobedience.

2 Hailey Colln., 17B, telegram Hailey-Viceroy, replying to telegram of 22 April 1930; PAI 1 February 1930.

3 Interviews, Jagan Prasad Rawat, Lucknow, 15 January 1973 and Radhe Shyam Sharma, Benares, 16 February 1973, indicated that such prominent Congress leaders as Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, S. K. D. Paliwal and Jagan Prasad Rawat approved of these 'violent' demonstrations. U.P. Police Dept. 1504/1934 (SRR) 'A Note on Terrorism in India (except Bengal)' by H. Williamson, with additional notes by Local Governments. (Simla, GOI Press, 1933) confirms this. For the extent, and impact, of these activities, see FRs, April 1932, 2, May 1932, 1, October 1932, 1; PAIs 9 April 1932 ff; U.P. Police Dept. 1890/1932 D.O. No. 435-S, Collector Agra-Chief Secy. U.P., 14 July 1932.

volunteers, individual landlords, men of commerce and well-established professionals showed their sympathy clearly.

The Rajas of Kalakankar and Samastipur gave all their foreign cloth to Gandhi for burning.[1] Numerous Municipal and District Boards, controlled by commercial and landed groups, flew the Congress flag, closed their offices and schools to support nationalist demonstrations, and strongly backed the campaign for the boycott of foreign cloth.[2] Even in Allahabad, where local networks and connections had caused the defeat of Jawaharlal Nehru when he made a strenuous attempt to be elected Chairman of the Municipal Board in 1928, the Municipal Board reminded its teachers in April 1930 of their pledge taken in 1924 to wear khaddar alone[3]: a significant comment on the limitations involved in studying a country-wide struggle through local connections alone. In districts throughout the province, again, Bar and Mukhtars Associations resolved to wear swadeshi and, as far as possible, khadi, and to boycott British goods - including, in one instance, 'British' newspapers that opposed the national movement.[4]

The U.P. Liberals, mainly prosperous professionals with a sprinkling of landlords and businessmen, for all their Rai Bahadurships and Knighthoods, and despite all the tenets of Liberalism, had, as noted above, supported the call for a newspaper boycott of the Simon Commission after police action against anti-Commission demonstrators in Lucknow in late 1928. They followed up with whole-hearted support for Congress' foreign cloth boycott campaign.[5] Besides, the Liberal papers, The Leader and Bharat, lent strong support to Congress throughout civil disobedience, speaking out against Government 'repression' and

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1 PAI 23 November 1929

2 GOI Home Poll. 130/1929; FR July 1928, 2; Hailey Colln., 19B, Hailey-de Montmorency, 16 September 1930, and Hailey Irwin, 3 October 1930; Ibid, 28A, Hailey-Willingdon, 18 September 1934

3 Satyagraha Samachar, 21 April 1930; also PAI 20 July 1929

4 Satyagraha Samachar, 5 & 10 May 1930; Abhyudaya 3 May 1930

5 The Pioneer 17 April 1929

highlighting civil disobedience activities.[1] Later, when the civil disobedience movement had declined, U.P. Liberals were prominently associated with Congress' Harijan uplift programme.[2]

Congress leaders, recognizing the value of non-Congress support, called upon their workers to co-operate in the foreign cloth boycott campaign with people 'who may not be interested in other items of our programme', and to set up special, multi-party committees.[3]

Agra provided a good example of how such multi-party efforts could work. Here Rao Krishnapal Singh, a prominent landlord and a Liberal member of the Legislative Council from the district, was President of the Foreign Cloth and British Goods Boycott Committee. Other members of the Committee included a Liberal advocate (Rajnath Kunzru) and a number of millowners and businessmen, not all of whom were members of the Congress. The same persons, with the exclusion of Krishnapal Singh and Kunzru and the addition of a few other businessmen and vakils (again not all Congressmen), made up the Finance Committee responsible for the collection of funds for civil disobedience.[4]

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1 See The Leader 1930-33, and, more especially, Bharat for 1930 and 1932; and Indian Statutory Commission, IX, p. 213 for the influential part played by the Leader in nationalist campaigns. Interestingly, Venkatesh Narain Tewari, the editor of Bharat, left the Liberal Party and joined the Congress when the civil disobedience campaign began. He later played an important part in the organisation of the 'no-tax' campaign; see especially JN Ps., JN's Note for CWC on 'The Programme /of Congress/', enclosing letter V. N. Tewari-JN, Allahabad 28-12-30.

2 e.g. Hriday Nath Kunzru, son of a leading advocate at the Allahabad High Court and member of a rich landed family of Agra; member Servants of India Society since 1909; Liberal MLC, U.P. 1921-23 and MLA 1927-30, resigned from the Legislative Assembly in May 1930 to protest against Government 'repression'; from 1932, President, U.P. Board of All-India Servants of Untouchables Society, later the U.P. Harijan Sevak Sangh. Some of the Congress legislators who held aloof from civil disobedience were very like the Liberals. Jaikaran Nath Misra, for example, was prominent in the Congress' Harijan programme, and President of the Harijan Sevak Sangh from 1934.

3 AICC Ps. 17-1930, 'The Week out of Jail', Circular P1/3009 to all PCCs, Allahabad 14-10-30.

4 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, pp. 6 and 47.

In May 1930, Motilal Nehru singled out Krishnapal Singh for an expression of gratitude for all that was being done to make the Congress struggle a success in Agra.[1] Non-Congress sympathisers were clearly doing more than participating in an activity (the foreign cloth boycott) that was peripheral to the civil disobedience programme. Krishnapal Singh was standing by at village Jarar, when tenants protested against oppressive measures taken by their landlord, and police arrived to subdue them.[2] He, and others like him, provided essential funds, and indeed food and shelter for Congress volunteers. Their social standing and influence (even in Government circles), prominent rais and public men as many of them were, were valuable assets. Poorer men, commanding less status and wealth, made their own contribution. Where the landlord donated a bag of grain as food for Congress volunteers, poorer villagers adopted the system of chutki whereby each family set aside a little grain daily for the feeding of Congress volunteers. One might add that the majority of the Congress' volunteers during the civil disobedience campaign in Agra, as in most other U.P. districts, came from the rural areas and naturally enough not from the richer groups in these areas.[3]

Agra was, of course, exceptional in the strength of its Congress organisation,[4] greatly aided and sustained by the strong 'second line' support described above. But such 'second line' support for the Congress could be found in districts throughout the province. We have noticed a striking demonstration of this in the course of Gandhi's tour of the U.P. in 1929. It

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1 MN Ps., R-8, MN-Rao Krishnapal Singh, Allahabad 1 May 1930

2 The rest of this paragraph is based on Agra Satyagraha Sangram, passim, and interviews with Achal Singh, Jagan Prasad Rawat, Radhe Shyam Sharma and Vidyavati Rathore.

3 Jail records for 1930-33, held at the Agra, Allahabad, Azamgarh and Rae Bareli Collectorates; Svatantrata Sangram ke Sainik (volumes for all the U.P. districts published in connection with the Silver Jubilee of Indian independence); and FR March 1932, 2.

4 See Ch. IV for further evidence of this

was evidenced also by the considerable impact created by the low-caste 'dummy' candidates set up by the Congress in the U.P. Legislative Council elections of October 1930. The Chief Secretary to the Government reported:

> '. . . the Congress dominated the elections in the districts of Meerut, Benares, Dehra Dun, Fatehpur and a part of Bulandshahr, and in the cities of Benares, Agra and Lucknow',

returning seven such candidates to office, including a sweeper, two Doms and two Gadariyas.[1] More charming proof may be found in the claim made by a Congress worker of Gorakhpur, at the other end of the province from Agra, that the chutki system was the invention of his district's Congress leader, Baba Raghavadas![2]

It would appear, then, that the U.P. Congress' propaganda and mobilisation efforts did penetrate into the rural areas. This penetration was extended further in the last quarter of 1930 and during the 'truce' of 1931. (See Chs. II and IV). Throughout the mobilisation process, however, there remained an important limitation which the Congress leadership was unable to get over. This was the Gandhian and general Congress understanding of the nature of the national movement, one part of which pronounced the landlords (and the Princes) the trustees of the people and completely forbade class war.[3]

The classic exposition of the Congress view of an anti-imperialist war on the widest possible front was made by the Swaraj Party manifesto of 1923:

> 'True it is that the Party stands for justice to the tenant, but poor indeed will be the quality of that justice if it involves any injustice to the landlord. The Party believes that it is only by serving the true

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1 FR October 1930, 1; see also Sir Sita Ram Ps., F.29, No. 84, Munshi Lal Agrawal-Sita Ram, Meerut 19-9-30, for the impact in Meerut; and Hailey Colln, 19B, Hailey-Malcolm Seton, 6 October 1930

2 Interview with Brahmachari of Gorakhpur, Allahabad, 21 July 1972

3 J. P. Chander (ed): Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi (Lahore 1947) pp. 617-20; Gandhi: To the Princes and their People (Karachi 1942), esp. pp. 4-7

'interests of both that it can find a solid base for Swarajya . . .'[1]

In line with this approach, the Congress in the U.P. addressed rural society at large in its appeals for support in the civil disobedience campaign. Its report on Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, 1931, was as concerned with the problems of zamindars as with those of tenants.[2] In February 1933, that is, after the so-called 'no-rent' campaigns of 1930-31 and 1932, the U.P. PCC called upon 'the peasants and the /zamindars?/ of the Province not to pay a single pie to this bureaucratic Government as land revenue'.[3] Even Jawaharlal Nehru, who frankly acknowledged the restricting effects of the Congress' multi-interest approach,[4] declared in 1930, ' . . . our activity should be such as to appeal or inspire /sic/ the largest numbers of classes of our countrymen',[5] forgetting that 'the largest numbers' and 'the largest number of classes' might well be in conflict.

An examination of the nationalist literature seized by the Government in very different U.P. districts in the course of civil disobedience confirms the Congress concentration on general nationalist appeals (Table VI).

Although titles alone do not reveal much, Table VI clearly suggests a preponderance of general appeals, rather than ones to any specific group or class. Well over half the unauthorised

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1 K. M. Panikkar and A. Pershad (eds): The Voice of Freedom. Selected Speeches of Pandit Motilal Nehru (London 1961), p. 512

2 Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces. Being the Report of the Committee appointed by the Council of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee to enquire into the Agrarian Situation in the Province (Allahabad 1931), passim.

3 AICC Ps. 4/1933

4 An Autobiography, pp. 231-2; AICC Ps. G-140 (Kw) (i)/1931, JN-Altafur Rahman, Allahabad 30-7-31

5 Syed Mahmud Ps., File 'From JN - 1930', Notes in JN's hand (n.d., but evidently written in October 1930). See also JN Misc. Ps., 'The Programme /of Congress/', V. N. Tewari-JN, Allahabad 28-12-30

TABLE VI

SEIZURES OF UNAUTHORIZED LITERATURE
IN MATHURA (1930) AND ALLAHABAD (1933)

	MATHURA: seizures under 1930 Ordinances	ALLAHABAD: seizures for 1933 alone, under 1931 Act
1 No. of leaflets, etc	1,640	10,474
2 No. of different titles	52	60
3 General nationalist	25	21
4 Congress circulars, bulletins, etc	4	17
5 Concerning peasants	12	13
6 Concerning boycott of foreign goods	2	3
7 Concerning boycott of intoxicants	-	1
8 Concerning the census	3	-
9 Concerning students	3	1
10 Concerning volunteers	2	-
11 Appeal to women	1	-
12 Appeal for Hindu-Muslim unity	-	3
13 Revolutionary/terrorist	-	1

/Source: Calculated from the titles of seized publications given in U.P. Police Dept. Files Lo12/1930 and 1589/1931 (SRR)/

pamphlets and leaflets that came to thennotice of Government fall in this category, over 55 per cent in the case of Mathura and over 63 per cent in the case of Allahabad if we consider columns 3 and 4 alone. The vast majority of non-periodicals listed in these two columns broadcast news of civil disobedience in different parts of the country, accounts of meetings and resolutions, exhortations to strengthen one or other aspect of the movement, and congratulations for the great nationalist spirit displayed.

We may look more closely at some of the collections of songs contained in these publications to judge the nature of this broad appeal. It is not uncharacteristic that one of these should be headed '<u>Bande Mataram, Sat Siri Akal, Allah-o-Akbar</u>'[1] Nor is it surprising that the song popularized by Bhagat Singh, '<u>Mera rang de basanti chola</u>', should be found in many different pamphlets and leaflets, in each case with different verses added on.[2] This was part of an effort to involve the people of different regions and different religions in the struggle.

The subject matter of the songs illustrates the point further. A pamphlet entitled <u>Bijli</u> (Gorakhpur, 1930)[3] contained songs on Flag Salutation, <u>Khadi</u>, Non-violent war, Memories (of the greatness of India's past), 'Give the nation its salt', Martyrs of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, Man (who is a real man), A lackey of imperialism, Students (an appeal), Foreign cloth merchants (an appeal), The civil disobedience movement, The peasant, <u>Swadeshi</u>, and The two sons of India (Hindus and Muslims).

In the same year, 1930, Baburam Pengoria, a well-known Congressman of Agra, wrote and published a collection of songs, '<u>Bharat ki Rashtriya Alha</u>' or 'The Song of India'.[4] The

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1 Traditional Hindu, Sikh and Muslim greetings. Pamphlet No. 255 (NAI)

2 In the "Azad Bharat Tract", Pamphlet No. 576 (NAI), the song mentions Shivaji, Maharana Pratap, Abbas Tyabji, Tara Singh and numerous others.

3 Pamphlet No. 316 (NAI)

4 Pamphlet No. 285 (NAI)

preface said:

> 'In view of the Satyagraha being launched, this book is written to help readers understand the past, present and future of India . . . In this book is related the history of the total destruction of India. Any number of tears that may be shed over this /history/ will be insufficient . . .'

His songs covered such subjects as India's past, Prices in the past, Lord Clive (and other prominent Britons in India), 'The baseness of the fair (skinned)', 'Thoughts on the dumping of British goods in India', 'Atrocities against weavers', 'India's present history', 'Income-expenditure', 'Service in the courts' (giving the wages earned by different levels of the judiciary in India) and 'The condition of the peasants'.

'Why are we fighting?' asked a Congress paper started at the time of civil disobedience. Its answer will serve as a final example of the Congress' broad, nationalist appeal. The fight, it declared, was for the 90 per cent who were the poor of the country, the kisans who 'produce the grain and then yearn for a morsel and a rag.' 'Why is their condition so terrible?' it asked further, and answered 'Because we don't have Swaraj'. The remaining 10 per cent of India's people included handicraftmen and traders, and service people. The former used to be more prosperous than their kind in any other country before the British came and used to export beautifully made goods, according to the paper. Now, it lamented, only raw material was produced in India, even that to be exported for manufacturing purposes; the British had opened enterprises in their own country and finished India's manufacturers. The educated had also suffered, it added. If they were unable to work on the land they paced the cities looking for employment; for every vacant post there were thousands of applicants. 'The chief reason for this war /civil disobedience/ is to rid the country of this pitiable condition'.[1]

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1 Satyagraha Samachar 23 April 1930, Editl. The Satyagraha Samachar was issued by the Allahabad Satyagraha Committee from April to August 1930. Initially printed, and several pages in length, it was from the middle of May cyclostyled and also reduced to

Within this broad appeal, as some of the above examples will already have indicated, there was room for more direct appeals to specific sections of the population. Pamphlets and leaflets surviving from the 1930's provide examples of appeals to students,[1] to shopkeepers, launderers and barbers,[2] to factory workers,[3] and above all to the general category of kisans - who were urged to set up their own law courts in every village and to fight for food and independence, and asked: 'Kisan brothers, how long will you let these leeches . . . suck your blood?'[4]

Congress propaganda among the 'peasants' of many districts was greatly increased towards the end of 1931, before the renewal of civil disobedience, when peasant distress and agitation had been revealed in a variety of ways. (See Ch. IV). Yet, Congress calls for the non-payment of rent continued to be accompanied by calls for the non-payment of revenue: the outlook remained anti-Government rather than pro-peasant.

The weekly intelligence report for the U.P., dated 12 December 1931, referred to the 'considerable amount of literature distributed' in the rural areas.[5] In Kanpur, the Congress took steps to braodcast a large number of leaflets regarding the non-payment of rent and revenue.[6] In December itself, great numbers of leaflets were seized in that district, ten thousand of them while being sent to Unao.[7] In Rae Bareli

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one or two pages. Declared a daily, it came out at very irregular intervals in its later months. For the original, see U.P. Police Dept. File 106/1930 (UPSA)

1 Pamphlets No. 112, 1031, etc. (NAI)

2 Pamphlet No. 1284 (NAI)

3 Pamphlet No. 553 (NAI)

4 P.P. Hin. B. 179 & 395 (IOL); Pamphlets No. 1141, 1151, 1156, 1163, 1186, etc. (NAI)

5 PAI 12 December 1931

6 GOI Home. Poll. 13/21/1931, D.O.No. 1906/Z, from J. M. Clay, Chief Secretary to the U.P. Government, dated 11 December 1931

7 GOI Home Poll. 33/36/1931, Express Letter No. 1964/Z, UPGO, Lucknow-India, Home, New Delhi, dated Lucknow 24 December 1931

district, again, thousands of leaflets and notices were distributed.[1] Clearly, this was approcess repeated in most districts,[2] and the number of leaflets and notices involved was not small.

The leaflets carried a fairly straightforward message. In Allahabad, the first district to re-start satyagraha after the 'truce', an earlier leaflet had asked all tenants who had been ejected, whether their lands were subsequently returned to them or not, to file details of their lands and ejectments at a Congress office in any one of a number of specified places. It had listed the names of some twenty places in the district, and added: 'The District Congress Committee will do all it can to help the Kisans once it has all the information necessary.'[3] In November 1931, another leaflet went out, being distributed with copies of Abhyudaya's 'Kisan Ank' and in other ways

It outlined the Congress' efforts to obtain concessions for the peasants, and Government's unresponsiveness; and it called for the withholding of rent and revenue until further orders were issued by the Congress.[4] Early in 1932, other leaflets were sent out to the 'Brother Cultivators'.

> 'Just as on behalf of Congress notices are being sent to you', one of them said, 'Government is also sending you notices to frighten and threaten you through the police, etc. . . . You know that Government has not granted remissions with any graceful clemency. Government has been governing 150 years, there have been many droughts and famines why did not Government give remission then. For the last two years why has Government begun to give in succession remissions;

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1 Aj, 11 December 1931

2 Even Azamgarh, a district not particularly noted for its part in civil disobedience, had its quota of 'no rent' leaflets at the beginning of 1931. See PAI 31 January 1931

3 AICC Ps. G-140/1931, Part V, Printed Hindi leaflet signed by Narmada Prasad, Shiv Murti and Lal Bahadur, Secretaries of the DCC, Allahabad. (n.d.)

4 A copy of the leaflet is found in Abhyudaya, 18 November 1931, Pamphlet No. 990 (NAI). There is a translation of it in Government of India, Home Poll. 33/36/1931

> 'why was Allahabad given the most remission? There is only one reason: your obstinate defiance and your satyagrah . . . if you remain firm . . . and don't pay a single paisa, you will not only get back the fields from which you were ejected and get four times as much remission, but the cultivators will get the Raj later.'[1]

The Kanpur and Rae Bareli notices mentioned above were very similar. Bulletin No. 1 of the Kanpur Congress, issued on 12 December 1931, declared:

> 'Let it be known by beat of drum in each and every village . . . Stop payment of rent at once. This is the proclamation of the Congress . . . The Provincial Congress Committee has given sanction to stop payment of rent, revenue, canal dues and takavi . . .'

It went on to lay down a vow for the satyagrahi kisan, by which he pledged, inter alia, to stop payment of rent, revenue, takavi, and so on unless Government made a settlement with the Congress; to remain non-violent; to refuse to bid for the property of ejected cultivators; and to obey the commands of the Congress.[2] Notices in Rae Bareli recounted the grievances of the peasants, and the callousness and oppression of Government. One of them explained:

> 'Jila Kangres Kameti yahi ke tain suba ki badi Kangres te hukum mangis hai ki ya tau yah sarkar ka dabai kai kisanan ka kharif ke laqan man bara ana auri chutt devavai au nozari nazrana, beqari, hari, bhusa, bayai, ityadi jetni qair niyaye ki batain band karave ye kisan ka hukum dey ki ui laqan debu band kai dey (.) suba kai badi Kangres kai baithak 5 disumber ka hoi au vahima i sab baten tai hoi hain. Aap log yahi kameti ke faisla ka sunai ke tai tayyar rahyo au apne parosee Kangres ke netan te yahi mamle ki baten poonchat rahey . . .

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1 This translation of this "specimen leaflet" is given in FR February 1932, 1. The promises were, of course, made in too facile a manner; many of the ejected tenants of 1931-32 are landless labourers today, and the Ramrajya of the peasants is as far away as China.

2 Translation given in GOI Home Poll. 33/36/1931

'(The District Congress Committee has asked the principal Congress Committee of the province that either it should press Government and obtain a further remission of twelve annas in the rents for the kharif crops, and have nazrana, begari, hari, bhusa, bayai, etc., all illegal practices stopped, or it should allow the cultivator to stop payment of rents. The principal Congress Committee of the province is to meet on 5 December [1931] and all these questions will be decided then. All of you should be ready for the Committee's decision, and [meanwhile] keep in touch with your local Congress leader . . .)'[1]

Thus, the Congress stood forth as the champion of the kisans - undifferentiated - as of other groups. Speaking to them in plain language, and often in the local dialects of the different regions, Congress leaders sought to involve them in the wider nationalist struggle. Yet, there was no real attempt to integrate the basic socio-economic demands of the mass of the common people with the nationalist cause. On the one hand was the Congress leaders' fear of social disruption and class war; on the other, their repeated claims to be the real representatives of the kisans and, in addition, their social conscience. The conflict between these was a feature of the Congress campaign throughout the late 1920's and early 1930's.

In 1928-29, when a series of poor harvests, and settlement operations bringing an enhancement of revenue and, consequently, rent, caused much suffering in certain U.P. districts, the Congress held back. 'Somewhat contrary to my own expectations', wrote George Lambert, acting-Governor of the U.P. at the time, 'comparatively hard times in the villages have not led so far to a development of agrarian agitation'.[2] But the Congress could not ignore the very real distress of large sections of the peasantry, and Congress leaders were more than willing to highlight specific peasant grievances. The question of relief

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1 Leaflet entitled 'Rae Bareli ke kisanon ko suchna', in the jail records of 1920-42, Rae Bareli District Collectorate. Significantly, another leaflet was printed together with this one, the substance of which was the same but which was in polished Hindustani - addressed, presumably, to the people of Rae Bareli town.

2 Halifax Colln., 22, Lambert-Irwin, 4 February 1929

to the peasantry was quickly taken up in the press and on the platform. 'The tenants are shrieking, but the Government is indifferent', wrote Sainik, Sri Krishna Dutt Paliwal's Hindi weekly published from Agra, in August 1928.[1] A month later it commented on Lambert's speech in the U.P. Legislative Council in September 1928, announcing a grant of Rs. 20 lakhs for taqavi (Government loans to peasants).

> 'Mr Lambert's speech is disappointing. How long will the Government watch the situation? . . . We would tell the Government that it has watched long enough, now it should act. Your machinery is notorious for its dilatoriness. The system of your administration is vicious. Not to say of crops there is not even a blade of green grass in villages. Yet the patwaris report that the crops are eight annas and even more . . . They think that such reports please the officers and that there would be a danger of incurring their displeasure if true reports were submitted.'[2]

Immediately afterwards Baba Raghava Das, the Gorakhpur Congress leader, wrote, in equally moderate terms and in similar despair, of how official underestimation of damage to the 1928 rabi had caused great hardships to the people in paying their revenue. In the case of the kharif too, he said, officials were preparing incorrect reports on the basis of insufficient data. Much greater care was needed; otherwise, Reghava Das warned, the officials would be responsible for unrest among the people.[3]

Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders took the issue to the platform, and were joined there by Baba Ramchandra, the renowned leader of the Oudh kisan agitation in the early 1920's.[4] At numerous village meetings, these men urged the need for rural organisation, pointed to the achievements of workers and peasants in the Soviet Union, and at the beginning of 1930 began calling for the non-payment of enhancements of rent and revenue.[5]

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1 NOP 1 September 1928

2 NOP 29 September 1928

3 NOP 6 October 1928. Hundreds of letters giving accounts of the peasants' suffering were published in the Congress papers, NOPs 12 May, 26 May, 2 June, 9 June, 16 June 1928 etc.

4 Abhyud, 10 November 1928; PAI 23 February 1929, 9 March 1929 etc.

5 FR January 1928, 1 and 2; June 1929, 1, which notes a

The peasant agitation of the late 1920's appears to have begun in Oudh, certain hill districts (such as Almora) and elsewhere independently of Congress efforts.[1] Patently, the Congress movement, and especially those in it calling for a more militant programme at this time, gained great strength from this agitation. But clearly also, peasant protests and agitation received much wider publicity through the Congress espousal of their cause, whatever the limitations on this espousal. Seeing themselves and their discontent as part of a broader movement, the protesting peasants gained considerable confidence. Perhaps as important, they gained greater loans and remissions from Government than they could otherwise have done.

Whereas in the partial famine of 1907-8, the U.P. Government had remitted Rs. 76 lakhs of revenue, and in the scarcities of 1913-14 and 1918-19, Rs. 46 lakhs and Rs. 61 lakhs respectively, in the difficult but much less severe year 1928-9 it felt constrained to remit Rs. 60 lakhs.[2] The remissions it granted in the following years, marked by uncertain seasons and exceptionally low prices, had to be on an even more liberal scale (Table VII). In addition, Government suspended operations for the revision of Settlements in five districts, and postponed the beginning of operations for such revision inaa number of others.[3] It also granted some remission on canal dues and debts from taqavi loans, mainly in the U.P.'s western districts which were better provided with canals and where relative prosperity had enabled a demand for taqavi loans.[4]

"recrudescence" of Kisan Sabha activity in Pratapgarh; February 1930, 1; PAIs 8 September, 3 November 1928 and January-February 1930, NOP 6 July 1929

1 JN: An Autobiography, p. 171

2 A. A. Waugh: Rent and Revenue Policy in the United Provinces (Lucknow 1932) p. 10. He gives the year 1929-30 for the 60 lakh remission, but U.P. Admin. Reports suggest this was a mistake

3 Hailey Colln. 29C; A. A. Waugh: 'Rent and Revenue problems' (1934), p. 4. The total no. of districts affected thus was 19.

4 In the kharif of 1338F remission on canal dues was Rs. 5¾ lakhs, much of it in Meerut division; and on taqavi Rs. 3½ lakhs, much of this in Mathura district.

TABLE VII

LAND REVENUE DEMAND, COLLECTIONS AND ADJUSTMENT BY SUSPENSION AND REMISSION, 1905-06 - 1933-34

Years	Demand (in rupees)	% BALANCE Outstanding to Demand	% of Suspensions to Balance	% of Remissions to Balance	% of Remissions on Account of: Deterioration	Drought	Hail	Floods	Slump in Prices
1905-06	64,183,391	6.41	3.41	87.90	.23	99.76	-	-	-
1906-07	64,375,942	0.40	4.79	17.48	.55	-	68.99	-	-
1907-08*	64,444,629	23.80	48.10	41.54	.02	99.85	.12	-	-
1908-09	64,804,818	1.94	25.66	59.62	-	97.24	.95	.82	-
1909-10	64,937,777	.17	6.45	1.49	-	9.94	-	17.09	-
1910-11	65,023,457	.38	4.45	13.54	--	2.58	13.40	83.55	-
1911-12	64,900,001	.42	6.32	56.44	18.12	80.72	.90	-	-
1912-13	64,907,723	.53	38.93	32.32	-	-	55.60	-	-
1913-14*	65,014,853	14.02	48.86	50.04	-	99.83	.17	-	-
1914-15	65,095,228	.45	14.24	46.53	-	59.56	34.14	5.24	-
1915-16	65,369,908	1.07	65.95	19.22	-	99.64	-	.09	-
1916-17	65,551,829	.16	2.14	14.42	-	.65	97.65	.79	-
1917-18	65,676,023	.36	60.32	4.38	-	4.34	94.49	-	-
1918-19*	65,710,604	15.91	42.93	56.00	-	99.97	.03	-	-
1919-20	67,711,525	.24	32.21	10.31	-	18.30	63.48	-	-
1920-21	68,170,304	1.95	42.74	50.43	-	99.74	.26	-	-
1921-22	68,534,538	.19	.80	.09	-	-	-	100.00	-
1922-23	68,564,039	.34	30.64	9.84	-	-	1.01	98.99	-
1923-24	68,622,640	.22	20.55	.44	-	-	-	100.00	-
1924-25	68,957,329	1.80	3.01	79.51	-	-	-	100.00	-
1925-26	69,147,466	.64	6.58	48.54	6.51	-	15.76	77.73	-
1926-27	69,177,023	.21	.66	14.50	.48	54.76	41.27	1.68	-
1927-28	69,101,787	.87	5.03	73.21	.05	-	99.69	.35	-
1928-29*	69,409,380	12.14	22.58	71.50	-	89.79	7.14	-	-
1929-30	70,319,153	4.09	.78	86.66	-	57.38	.10	-	-
1930-31	70,775,715	13.05	.03	80.18	-	33.93	8.49	-	57.48
1931-32	70,967,829	18.14	.05	96.35	-	7.04	.18	-	92.78
1932-33	70,983,466	21.61	.71	98.02	-	6.83	16.07	6.83	75.10
1933-34	71,105,917	21.93	.02	99.16	-	5.77	3.09	5.61	83.09

Source: overleaf

TABLE VII cont.

* Famine years

/Source: Government Resolution on the Revenue Administration of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (for the relevant years). I am grateful to Dr Elizabeth Whitcombe for this table: see her 'Agrarian Relations in Northern India, Vol. II'(forthcoming)/

The overriding concern for land revenue which characterised British rule in India is now well established.[1] Government reactions in the U.P. at the time of the Depression only add a nail to that coffin. Remissions were extremely slow in coming and, initially, grossly inadequate. A senior Government official explained why:

> 'Land revenue is easily the main source of provincial revenue. Normally, and even as now reduced, it exceeds 50 per cent of the whole revenue, and more than equals the combined receipts from irrigation, stamps and excise. No reserve had been set aside year by year from which Government could meet remissions of revenue made necessary by any cause. The result was that when the fall in prices came Government were in no position, and in no hurry, to deal with it, and hoped that the slump might prove to be of temporary duration.' (emphasis added)[2]

Consequently, though the decline in prices was evident by the end of 1930, little account was taken of it until Hailey's return from the Round Table Conference at the end of April 1931. And, then, Hailey wrote of how revenue remissions had reached 'a horrible total of nearly 70 lakhs'.[3] A little less than two years later, Hailey noted that the price of wheat had improved considerably, but other crops lagged behind and gur was at least 50 per cent cheaper than it was three years earlier. 'If we could only get an improvement of price there', he said, 'I really think that we would begin to move rents up again a little'.[4] At the district level, Hume observed in December 1931 that tenants were not paying their rents partly because of their

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1 E. Whitcome: Agrarian Relations in Northern India. Vol I. The United Provinces under British Rule. 1860-1900. (University of California Press, 1971), p. 194 & 273; J. Rosselli: 'Theory and Practice in Northern India: The Background to the Land "Settlement" of 1833' (IESHR, Vol 8, No. 2, 1971); A. Siddiqui: Agrarian Change in a Northern Indian State (OUP 1973) pp. 126-7, 130-3

2 Waugh: 'Rent and Revenue Problems' (1934), p. 5. See also Reeves: 'The Landlords' Response . . .', p. 267; AJ, 31 July 1931, editl.

3 Hailey Colln., 20, Hailey-de Montmorency, 7 May 1931, and Hailey-Crerar, 8 May 1931

4 Ibid., 25 C, Hailey-Richard Burn, 9 March 1933

financial straits; but, he added, 'they are going to be made to all right [sic].'[1]

With the Government in this frame of mind, the Congress' representation of the interests of rent and revenue payers was especially important. There was endless controversy about whether prices had fallen to the level of 1915 or 1901 or an earlier date. Government talked of the need for all sections of society - Government, landlords and tenants, as it defined them - to share the burdens of the crisis. It pointed out that occupancy rents amounted to a mere 10 per cent of the assets of a holding; that prices had risen by a 100 per cent between 1901 and 1926 whereas occupancy rents in Agra province had increased by only 25 per cent over that period, (but, admittedly, the rents of non-occupancy tenants had risen by 110 per cent); and that while landlords had received some benefits from rising prices through higher rents, Government's share of the landlord's assets had actually decreased: recently, an Act in 1929 had reduced the land revenue from 50 to 40 per cent of the assets.[2] Against these arguments, the Congress' part as counsel for various groups in rural society proved to be a crucial one. Ultimately peasant discontent and unrest were suppressed by large-scale rent and revenue remissions and a fairly liberal use of force. Without the presence of the Congress, the task might have been accomplished through smaller remissions and a freer use of force.

By detailed investigation of agrarian conditions, and by prolonged negotiations with the Government on the subject of

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1 Hume Colln., III, Pt. 2, Hume to his parents, Rae Bareli 18 December 1931. Hailey also noted the need to use force to collect landlord and Government dues; left to themselves, 'Practically they [the landlords] would collect nothing', Hailey Colln., 22, Hailey-Crerar, 9 November 1931

2 Waugh: Rent and Revenue Policy (1932) pp. 13-14 and 28-31; U.P. Police Dept. 1672/1930 (UPSA) Commissioner, Allahabad-all collectors, D.O. No. 786, 26 November 1930, a revealing letter; GOI Home Poll. 77/31/1931, Express Letter 507C, T. Sloan, Secy. U.P. Govt-Secy. GOI, Lucknow, 19 January 1931; voluminous correspondence in Leader and Pioneer, especially October-November 1931

remissions and the treatment of defaulting peasants,[1] as well as by rural meetings and organisation and the partial encouragement of the policy of withholding rents and revenue even during the 'truce',[2] the Congress made a major contribution to the obtaining of large-scale remissions. The Settlement Commissioner of the U.P. noted in June 1931 that there was 'a strong public opinion', 'even' among the villagers, in favour of general remissions.[3] It goes without saying that such feeling is likely to have been strong 'especially' among the villagers, and that Government's awareness of it arose not least because of the presence of the Congress as an interpreter. An interesting illustration of this was provided by Government's decision to increase by Rs. 1 lakh the revenue remissions sanctioned for Allahabad district. This increase came at the end of October 1931, long after the scale of remissions for the entire province (including Allahabad district) had been announced, and as a direct result of Congress propaganda and petitions regarding Allahabad which had continued after the announcement of general remissions.[4]

There were other benefits resulting from the peasant agitation of these years, appearing as it did to have full Congress backing. A Government official noted in 1932 that tenants were refusing to pay illegal, additional dues (traditionally collected, especially in Oudh) because of changed

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1 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., passim. but especially Appendix XV. 'Correspondence with the U.P. Govt.; Abhyud. 18 November 1931 (the special Kisan No., which was proscribed by the Government); GOI Home Poll. 33/XVI and Kw./1931, JN letters of 11 March, 9 April and 27 June 1931; Home Poll. 23/23/31, printed reports of Gandhi's and JN's interviews with H. W. Emerson, 15-16 July and 19-20 July 1931, respectively; correspondence, e.g., in AICC Ps. G7/1931, G-25/1931

2 See below for Gandhi's 'Manifesto to the Kisans', 23 May 1931, and 'Appeal to the Zamindars'; also Hailey Colln. 22, 'Government of the United Provinces. Statement of Case Regarding No-Rent Campaign'.

3 Hailey Colln., 29A, 'Note on Remission of Rent and Revenue by the Settlement Commissioner, U.P.' (K. N. Knox, 25 June 1931)

4 Hailey Colln., 22, Hailey-Chhatari, 30 October 1931; for details of negotiations, see GOI Home Poll 33/36/1931 & AICC Ps. G-25/1931.

political conditions.[1] Another observed in 1934 that no tenant was paying more than was recorded in his parcha.[2] It is likely also that the use of force to collect dues and discipline tenants declined somewhat when Congress launched its widespread investigations of police and landlord 'repression', in the latter half of 1931.[3]

The Congress' powerful position by the late 1920's, its proclaimed goal, and the programmes and postures it publicly adopted, forbade complete Congress neutrality on any major question affecting a considerable section of the population. It was because of this that Gandhi's 'Manifesto to the kisans' and 'Appeal to the zamindars', issued after his meeting with the U.P. Governor in May 1931, had a distinctly dual aspect. Together, the 'Manifesto . . .' and the 'Appeal . . .' echoed the philosophy of the public school (the various classes in rural society forming one big family, etc.). But, lest it appear to the peasant as remote as the public school itself, the 'Manifesto . . .' went further. It moved out of the realms of philosophy into the specifics of action that cultivators might take.

> 'The Congress expects every tenant to pay as early as possible all the rent he can', it read, 'and in no case as a general rule less than 8 annas or 12 annas as the case may be. But just as even in the same district there may be cases in which a larger payment is possible, it is equally possible that there may be cases in which less than 8 annas or 12 annas can only be paid. In such cases I hope the tenants will be treated liberally by the Zamindars. In every case you will see that you get against payment a full discharge from your obligation for the current year's rent.'[4]

Both landlords and Government complained later that knowledge of the 'Manifesto . . .' did nothing more than to encourage

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1 Ibid., 29C, 'Report on the Present Economic Situation in the United Provinces' (by E. A. H. Blunt, 1932), p. 17

2 Waugh: 'Rent and Revenue Problems' (1934), p. 8

3 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 116

4 Ibid., Appendix XIV; the amount of 8 or 12 annas refers to the proportion of the rupee (16 annas) to be paid.

the total non-payment of rent by tenants.[1] The Congress leadership was not unaware that this was the likely result of its actions. But, in the circumstances, it had to go at least so far, while appealing for the maintenance of non-violence and a spirit of give and take.

It was in part a similar need to maintain the credibility of the Congress that gave rise to the 'socialist' slogans of 1933-34 and afterwards. And, again, the broader claims of the Congress led to at least some 'spin-off' benefits to cultivators and the poorer and middling rent-receivers.[2]

The attention that the U.P. Congress gave to peasant questions in the late 1920's and early 1930's, and the populist slogans raised by its leaders, combined with the persistent propaganda and strenuous efforts at mobilisation and organisation discussed in this chapter, undoubtedly won widespread support for the national movement in the rural areas. More generally, these propaganda techniques, and the broad, nationalist appeal made by the Congress, enabled the party to draw on the support and sympathy of a wide array of social groups.

In providing such support along a very broad front, the Congress' multi-interest approach proved an apparent source of strength. But this very approach was to prove a drawback, and become an important cause for the decline of civil disobedience from 1932 onwards. When conflict arose between different groups represented in the national movement, the Congress leadership proved unable to resolve the differences or,

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1 AICC Ps. 14/1931, Pt. I, Mushir Husain Kidwai-Gandhi, Lucknow 9 July 1931; GOI Home Poll. 33/24/31, statements regarding events in Rae Bareli, Bara Banki, Allahabad and other districts in May-June 1931; also 'Statement of Case Regarding No-Rent Campaign'.

2 Apart from the major advance in the form of the U.P. Tenancy Act, 1939 - see B. R. Misra: Land Revenue Policy in the United Provinces under British Rule (Benares 1942), pp. 167-84 - the first Congress Government in the U.P. introduced various intermediate relief measures in 1937-9, for which see: Congress Government in the U.P., July 1937-October 1939. An Authoritative Record of Legislative and Administrative Activities of the Congress Ministry in the U.P. (Allahabad, Law Journal Press, n.d.) pp. 57-59

alternatively, to make a clear choice in favour of one or other of the conflicting parties. This led to the decline of support for the Congress campaign, especially among those who suffered most from the Congress failure to espouse their cause fully. The next chapter considers these problems, particularly with reference to the 'masses' in the rural areas of the U.P.

Chapter 4

MASS PARTICIPATION

The pattern of participation in the popular agitational campaigns launched by the Congress differed substantially, not only from area to area,[1] but also from one period to another. By the time of the civil disobedience campaign, as we have seen, the Congress leadership was well aware of the need to win the support of the rural 'masses'. In the U.P. they had the special advantage of being able to appeal to the poor in the villages on the basis of opposition to the iniquitous system of intermediaries between the cultivators and the State - often very big, absentee landlords - who pocketed much of the surplus produce of the land. They also had special reasons for making such an appeal. The richer intermediaries were the chief collaborators of the Raj in the U.P., helping it to maintain 'law and order' in the countryside. In return, the British shored up the power of this, in many ways, effete 'aristocracy'. Even under the partly representative government introduced in the provinces in 1909, and more clearly in 1919, the landlords were able to retain their dominance in the politics of the U.P. The electoral arrangements then made, heavily biased in favour of the landed 'aristocracy', effectively locked out the predominantly independent professional Congress party from the limited influence and power conceded to Indians. Therefore, in order to gain such influence and power, or to use the new legislatures for nationalist opposition to the British, in other words, to undermine the basis of British rule through the Councils, the Congress needed to step outside the electoral arena and challenge the power of the big landlords in

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1 See, e.g., R. Kumar (ed): Essays on Gandhian Politics. The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919 (OUP 1971), passim.

the rural areas.

It has often been argued that this is precisely what happened, that the backing of business and industry in Bombay and opposition to the zamindari system in northern India was the foundation of Jawaharlal Nehru's 'radicalism'.[1] Nehru's own writings suggest this, though he seems to admit a degree of independent initiative for the 'masses' in his analysis of the support won for the civil disobedience campaign.

> 'The Civil Disobedience movement of 1930 happened to fit in unbeknown to its own leaders at first, with the great world slump in industry and agriculture', he wrote in his Autobiography. 'The rural masses were powerfully affected by this slump, and they turned to the Congress and civil disobedience. For them it was not a matter of a fine constitution drawn up in London or elsewhere, but of a basic change in the land system, especially in the zamindari areas.'[2]

Again, the U.P. Government finding in its sample survey of civil disobedience prisoners in March 1932, that nearly 70 per cent of them were 'petty tenants or labourers'[3] would seem to support the contention that the Congress' success was based on a radical programme for the rural areas.

A closer examination of the civil disobedience campaign in the U.P. suggests, however, that this was not the case. Without a doubt, the civil disobedience campaign concentrated heavily on the rural areas. This was true not only in the 'backward' talugdari province of Oudh, but also in the rich doab districts from Meerut to Allahabad, where smaller landlords and peasant proprietors held most of the land and where there were many more important commercial and educational centres.[4]

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1 D. Rothermund: 'Nehru and Early Indian Socialism' in S. N. Mukherjee (ed): The Movement for National Freedom in India (St. Antony's papers No. 18, OUP 1966); Rothermund: The Phases of Indian Nationalism and Other Essays (Bombay 1970), pp. 157-9; D. J. H. Page: 'Prelude to Partition: All India Moslem Politics 1920-32' (Oxford D. Phil 1974), p. 265

2 Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 282

3 FR March 1932, 2

4 Jail records, which I examined for Agra, Allahabad, Azamgarh and Rae Bareli, and the Svatantrata Sangram ke Sainik volumes

In the success of the campaign in these very different areas, the Congress' improved organisation and greater propaganda, in comparison with non-co-operation times, played a major part.

Yet the very extension of the organisation, and tighter central control, meant a closer check on the classes that participated in the movement, on the issues over which they could agitate, and on the manner of their agitation. Regarding the Oudh kisan agitation of 1920-1, an official had observed:

> 'In this district /Pratapgarh, where the agitation originated/, at any rate in the first instance, it was a movement of tenants for the amendment of the law. As soon, however, as the agitation was taken up as a political cry, many of the sabhas or tenants' associations came to be composed almost entirely of landless labourers, who were led to believe that they were somehow in the promised swaraj to acquire land and wealth.'[1]

There had been a certain recklessness in the political protests of these impoverished cultivators, with little to lose but their chains, and Congress leaders strongly disapproved of their proneness to violence.[2] By the early 1930's the strengthened position of the Congress enabled the leadership to extend the 'political cry' on the one hand, while ensuring

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for the different U.P. districts indicate this clearly. In Agra and Allahabad, there was a larger number of arrests in urban areas than in rural in the first few months of civil disobedience, but the majority of satyagrahis came from the rural areas. Thereafter, the vast majority of arrests were in the rural areas, until 1933 when, in the declining phase of the campaign, attention reverted to the towns,, In Azamgarh, civil disobedience was a small-scale affair and mainly concentrated in the small towns, though again numerous volunteers came from the rural areas. In Rae Bareli, the campaign was conducted almost completely in the rural areas, especially after October 1930. See Map 3 above for the spread of the 'no-tax' campaign in 1930-1; and see below for further details of the campaign in Agra and Rae Bareli.

1 U.P. Admin. Report, 1921-22, p. xviii. See also Bayly: 'The Development of Political Organisation in the Allahabad Locality', pp. 369-71 and 382

2 Loc. cit.; Crawley: 'Kisan Sabhas and Agrarian Revolt in the United Provinces' and Siddiqui: 'The Peasant Movement in Pratapgarh.

on the other, that control of the agitation did not pass out of their hands into those of unruly and potentially violent classes and men.

The evidence suggests that the Congress was completely unwilling to let the civil disobedience campaign in the rural areas develop into an anti-landlord struggle. It appealed to all classes in rural society (see Ch. 1), and got a favourable response from a fair range among them. As we shall see, many rich peasants, and even small landlords, joined the civil disobedience campaign. In this context both Nehru's lumping together of the rural groups which responded to the call for civil disobedience as 'rural masses' and the Government's description of a majority of them as 'petty tenants or labourers' would appear to be misleading.

Certainly, there were areas where poor peasants provided a very large number, possibly the bulk, of volunteers for civil disobedience. One such area was Oudh, with its large body of non-occupancy tenants with small holdings, many of them living at subsistence level, and sub-tenants often in a worse condition. The Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act of 1921 had given most tenants-at-will some security of tenure, but it had been unable to control the levying of illegal cesses[1] or the hiking up of their rents in the years of high prices. (See Table I below).

> '. . . even at the prices of two years ago,' wrote the Governor of the U.P. in July 1931, when the effects of the slump in prices had become quite evident, 'there were many cases where they /rents/ were most distinctly high and can only have been collected in ordinary times with a good deal of pressure . . . there must be a large number of individual cases in which rents have in recent years been worked up to figures so high that I should not have cared to have quoted them publicly . . .'[2]

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1 Final Report on the Third Regular Settlement of the Rae Bareli District, Oudh. 1929. (Allahabad 1929), pp. 22, 24 and 2-3 of 'Note on the Rae Bareli Final Settlement Report' by K. N. Knox, Settlement Commissioner, U.P.

2 Hailey Coll., 21A, Hailey-Crerar, 24 July 1931

In Rae Bareli, one of the Oudh districts most prominent in the civil disobedience campaign, the Government reported in mid-1931 that Congress volunteers came from 'all classes'.[1] It was clear, however, that the poorer in the Rae Bareli villages, especially hard-hit by the economic crises and by the relentless pressure of the landlords, the moneylenders and the Government, provided the bulk of the volunteer force at this time.[2]

Yet, even in such areas, the Congress was chary of encouraging any class conflict. It preferred to appeal for the non-payment of taxes rather than of rents, and it preached social harmony, peace and good-will to all in Indian society at every opportunity. On occasion, in the course of the years of civil disobedience, groups of oppressed tenants took to 'direct action' and violence as a means of making clear their distress and need for relief. At such times, the Congress' confused standpoint, the inconsistencies between its claim to represent the 'masses' and its aim of winning the support of as many different sections of society as possible, became most obvious. Its hesitation, at the height of the agrarian crisis, in choosing between support for protesting tenants and support for landlords was, as we shall see, a crucial factor in the decline of mass support for civil disobedience.

Interestingly, the 'direct' and sometimes violent action of groups of poor and middle peasants at the worst stage of the Depression did appear to have made their point, not only to the Government and the landlords - who made substantial remissions when militancy and violence grew in the villages - but also to the Congress. It is certainly possible to detect the direct influence of some of these actions on the position of that party. If that is the case, one might even suggest that it was protesting peasants who brought 'radicalism' to the Congress and not a 'radical'Congress which took politics to the peasants in the hope

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1 GOI Home Poll. 33/23/1931, account of events in Rae Bareli enclosed with D.O. No. 707, Jagdish Prasad-Emerson, Naini Tal 16 July 1931.

2 See below

of overthrowing the peasants' masters in the rural areas.

An analysis of the progress of civil disobedience in two very different U.P. districts, Agra and Rae Bareli, indicates the extent to which the Congress was able to win popular support for the movement, and, equally, the limitations on the Congress' commitment to the mobilisation of the 'masses'. Both were strong centres of the Congress campaign, and there were interesting similarities in the pattern of agitation in the two districts, in spite of their vastly dissimilar social and physical features.

Agra was, for the U.P., a fairly urbanised district. Prominent since the setting up of the Mughal capital in the district, Agra had retained its importance in several respects. With its good educational centres, it was one of the most 'literate' districts in the U.P. in the 1920's. It had once rivalled Kanpur as an industrial centre, and still had fairly prosperous and growing industries in its headquarters city and in Firozabad town. It was also an important centre of commercial activity. The agriculture of the district, especially of its richer parts, was inevitably influenced by the presence of these large urban and commercial centres.[1]

Agriculturally, Agra was extremely varied, but on the whole none-too-prosperous. On the extreme west of the U.P., bordering on Rajasthan, it had a lighter average of rainfall (26 in. per annum) and a sparser rural population (average 590 persons per cultivated square mile) than districts further west. However, the topography of the district, the path of its rivers, and the existence of an extensive if somewhat uncertain canal system (uncertain because the district lay at the end of

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1 This account of social and physical conditions in Agra and Rae Bareli is based on the District Gazetteers of Agra and Rae Bareli (by H. R. Nevill, 1905), Final Report on the Third Regular Settlement of the Rae Bareli District (1929) and, Final Report on the Settlement and Record Operations in District Agra (Allahabad 1930), R. F. Mudie: Cultivators' Debt in the Agra District (Allahabad 1931), S. S. Nehru: Caste and Credit in the Rural Area, and Hailey Colln., Vol 29

many of the canals that flowed into it), made the agricultural conditions of Agra very uneven. There were areas in the district where cultivation was always a hazardous occupation, and the vast majority of tenants and peasant proprietors was in debt. There were others where a good year could bring substantial profits and where a much smaller percentage of tenants and zamindars were indebted.[1]

For the district as a whole, wheat and barley were the major rabi crops, bajra and juar the main kharif ones, the scarce rainfall allowing little cultivation of rice. Richer farmers also grew a certain amount of cotton and, at the time of the Depression, and especially after the granting of protection to the sugar industry in 1932, revived the cultivation of sugar-cane to the level of the War years.

Small landlords and rich peasants held most of the land in Agra district. There were only a few really big landowners. Nearly two-thirds of the proprietors were resident. Among tenants here, as in the rest of Agra province, the majority held occupancy rights.[2] But there was a relatively large

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1 Final Settlement Report of Agra (1930) noted that probably over 20 per cent of the land of the district had passed into the hands of moneylenders in the last fifty years: this testified to the precarious position of many of the smaller proprietors in Agra.

2 'Occupancy' or 'stable' tenures were heritable but not transferable. They also enjoyed some protection in the matter of ejectment and enhancement of rent. The Agra Tenancy Act of 1859 created occupancy rights, laying down that all tenants who cultivated land continuously for 12 years should have such rights in those lands. Under the Tenancy Act of 1926, the accrual of the right by continuous cultivation disappeared: new occupancy rights could be conferred only by the landlord.

'Ordinary' tenants or tenants-at-will had no protection in the matter of ejectment or enhancement of rent, until the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 created a class of statutory tenants who were entitled to hold land without disturbance or enhancement of rent for 7 years. By the Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act of 1921 the statutory tenant was given a life tenancy which passed on to his heir for a period of 5 years after his death. (The Act of 1926 created a similar statutory right in Agra). Enhancements of rent could now be made at Settlements and every tenth year

proportion of statutory and other non-occupancy holdings, these covering 25 per cent of the holdings' area. For them, as for sub-tenants, the incidence of rent was high. Yet they were seldom under the thumb of their landlords, or their landlords' agents, in the way of their counterparts in the Oudh districts such as Rae Bareli.

The very sharp division between different classes in the rural areas of Rae Bareli, and the almost complete dominance of the district's big landlords, were among the major points of contrast between Rae Bareli and Agra. The great talugdars held 66 per cent of the area of Rae Bareli district.

In just one parganah which was especially noted for rural agitation in the late 1920's and early 1930's, Dalmau, in the south-west corner of the district, 228 of the 295 mahals[1] were held by talugdars, and the rest by zamindars and coparcenary communities. The largest talugdari estate in the parganah - Khajurgaon - covered 88 mahals, and there were many that extended over 10 or more. There was a degree of insight in the Government official's comment, 'The history of the pargana is practically the history of these estates.'[2]

With the big and powerful landlords went a comparative absence of security for tenants, a good deal of the sub-letting of land and a higher proportion of landless labour than in western U.P. Only 1.5 per cent of the area of the district was

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thereafter, but maximum rates of enhancement were fixed under the law.

In both Agra and Oudh there were other classes of 'superior' or 'stable' tenants, such as ex-proprietary tenants and under-proprietary tenants, but their numbers were small. For an account of how the different tenancy rights arose, see B. R. Misra: Land Revenue Policy in the United Provinces Under British Rule (Benares 1942); Report of the United Provinces Zamindari Abolition Committee. Volume I. (Allahabad 1948), pp. 92-195.

1 Mahal = revenue unit, covering from part of a village to a number of villages.

2 Rae Bareli District Gazetteer (1905), pp. 168-9.

held by occupancy tenants, compared to over 72 per cent held by tenants with no occupancy rights. Numerous observers noted the extreme poverty of the majority of villagers in Rae Bareli. The senior I.C.S. official, S. S. Nehru wrote, for example, after his survey of 54 villages in the district on behalf of the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, 1929-30:

> 'The average villager who relies on agriculture for a livelihood for himself and numerous dependents, usually lives from hand to mouth, with little or no reserve for lean times . . .'[1]

In terms of natural conditions, Rae Bareli was better provided than Agra. It was generally more fertile and received a much greater and more regular rainfall than the latter. The average annual rainfall was 38 in. and only on two occasions between the Settlements of 1891 and 1929 had it been much below 25 in., whereas in Agra in dry years the rainfall could be as low as 15-18 in. or lower and that too would be unevenly distributed in the district. This difference in rainfall accounted for the two major differences in the cropping pattern of the two districts. One was the cultivation of rice on a large scale in Rae Bareli. The other was the relative immutability over the years of the cropping pattern in Rae Bareli, compared to fairly major changes in the acreages under different crops in Agra district at various times in the first three decades of this century.[2]

Where Rae Bareli compared unfavourably with Agra was in the density of its rural population, over 990 persons per cultivated square mile, and in the concentration of its land and wealth in a very few hands, noted above. It was these factors, together with the lack of urban development and a low level of literacy, which gave to Rae Bareli its 'backward' appearance. 'Even for an agricultural country,' wrote the Settlement Officer for the district in 1929, 'Rae Bareli is

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1 Caste and Credit in the Rural Area, p. 103. See also U.P. Census, 1931, Pt. I, p. 46

2 Final Settlement Report of Agra (1930), pp. 12-13; Season and Crop Report of the United Provinces, annual for 1905-6 to 1933-4

remarkable for its purely agricultural character.'[1] It is worth noting, however, that Allahabad district was adjacent to Rae Bareli and perhaps transmitted to it some of the political excitement of the big city.

Certainly, both Agra and Rae Bareli were caught up in the political excitement of the late 1920's and early 1930's. Both became major centres of civil disobedience in 1930-31, and in both cases this appears to have been due very largely to the participation of rural classes. In Rae Bareli, of course, any agitation of significant magnitude would inevitably depend upon rural groups. In Agra and other districts with large urban centres, the shifting of the centre of agitation from the towns (during the non-co-operation movement) to the villages (during civil disobedience) requires some explanation.

Among the factors responsible for this was the experience of the earlier agitation, the different nature of the economic crises in the two periods, and the change in the Congress' own emphasis and organisation. Non-co-operation had left its mark, not only by popularizing a powerful technique of opposing the British and by instilling a new confidence in large numbers of Indians, but also by its failure to fulfil promised goals and by the strength the Government showed in putting down the movement. This must go some way to explain 'the weariness of the middle-class elements', noticeable in the U.P. and elsewhere in the country at a fairly early stage of the civil disobedience campaign.[2] It may also provide part of the explanation for the apparently very significant decline in Congress membership in the U.P. from 328,966 in July 1921 to 67,849 in October 1929, and further to 62,112 in September 1935,[3] though as I have suggested, more methodical calculations and the

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1 Final Settlement Report of Rae Bareli (1929) p. 4

2 Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 238

3 Gopal Krishna: 'The Development of the Indian National Congress . . .'; CWMG, XLI (New Delhi 1970), p. 538; AICC Ps. 22/1935-6

greater check exercised by the AICC and the PCC were probably partly responsible for the smaller claims in the later years.

Again, in the early 1930's, unlike in the earlier period, there was no Khilafat issue to quicken the pulse of masses of Muslims, nor the enormity of Jallianwala Bagh - the clashes on the occasion of the Simon Commission's visit to Lahore, Lucknow and Kanpur were extremely poor seconds, in this respect. The absence of such highly emotive issues made it more difficult for nationalist propaganda, even if it was concentrated in the towns, to have a very quick or considerable impact.[1]

Equally, the latter period saw no mobilisation of thousands of villagers for war. This meant greater difficulty in conveying Congress messages, or news of the general struggle, to the villages. This difficulty was met, in part, as the last chapter has shown, by the Congress' concentration on the rural areas after the initial stages of civil disobedience. The task of overcoming it was facilitated because the nature of the economic crisis of these years made several classes of villagers far more receptive to appeals for agitation, and indeed led large groups of peasants to seek Congress support rather than vice versa.

The economic fluctuations of the late 1920's and early 1930's were quite different from those of the years immediately after World War I, and affected various classes in the society very differently. High prices throughout the 1920's were followed by a catastrophic fall in grain prices after 1929 (Table I and Graph III). 'Nothing like the chute of prices in 1930-31 had been observed before in provincial history', a U.P. Government

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1 For the mass of the Muslims in the towns, of course, there were added fears caused by the bitter communal conflicts of the mid-1920's and the growing estrangement between Muslim and Congress leaders, particularly marked after the Nehru Report of 1928 spelled out in some detail the Congress vision of a future Indian constitution; and the almost total absence of Muslim names from the lists of those jailed for civil disobedience is surely the most notable difference between the campaigns of the early 1920's and the early 1930's. For the alienation of the Muslims, see Ch. V.

TABLE I

INDEX NUMBERS OF PRICES, RENTS AND REVENUE IN THE U.P.

(AVERAGE 1901-05 = 100)

Year	Wholesale prices	Rents (stable tenants)	Rents (Ordinary tenants)	Land revenue demand	Agricultural wages
1909	136	105	111	102	-
1913	144	107	117	103	100 (1911)
1917	158	111	122	104	120 (1916)
1918	200	111	125	104	-
1919	258	109	128	104	-
1920	243	113	133	107	-
1921	258	114	134	108	-
1922	236	115	137	108	-
1923	182	117	139	108	-
1924	187	118	142	108	-
1925	220	119	144	109	-
1926	230	120	146	109	-
1927	217	120	146	109	-
1928	213	120	146	109	-
1929	218	120	165	110	180
1930	162	121	166	111	-
1931	112	121	165	112	-
1932	119	120	162	112	-
1933	114	121	161	112	-
1934	103	121	161	113	120
1935	122	120	160	113	-

/Source: B. R. Misra: Land Revenue Policy in the United Provinces Under British Rule (Benares 1942) pp 260-1; Agricultural Prices in the United Provinces (Bureau of Statistics and Economic Research, U.P., Bulletin No. 1, Allahabad, Govt. Press, 1937), pp. 51-2/

official observed.[1] '. . . the prices were reduced to half in about a year's time. No other period of such short duration in the history of Indian prices shows such a violent change', commented another.[2]

Men with fixed incomes, and most urban dwellers, benefited from the new situation, though factory workers suffered some retrenchment. Of agricultural labour in general, Government opinion was that 'thanks, partly to the increasing purchasing power of money, partly to rural custom, wage-earners have certainly suffered little loss, certainly far less than their employers'.[3] However, rural custom was heavily weighted against the unskilled labourer. In his pamphlet, Rent and Revenue Policy in the United Provinces, written in 1931, A. A. Waugh, the Settlement Officer of Meerut, noted a 30 per cent fall in agricultural wages.[4] (Also Table I). The Government's 1947 report on Rural Wages in the United Provinces confirmed the impression of an all-round decline in agricultural wages. For example, in Agra the median daily wage for unskilled labour went down from 5 annas in 1928 to 3.5 annas in 1934, in Allahabad from 4 annas to 2 annas (in the Doab tahsils) and 2.5 annas (in the Jumna-par region), in Azamgarh from 2.5 annas to 2 annas, and in Rae Bareli from 3.5 annas to 2 annas, over the same period. For those who received their wages in kind, there was, interestingly, by and large a slightly greater decline: here, even the increased buying power of money was inconsequential.[5] Finally there was also, in some areas, a loss of job opportunities

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1 Waugh: Rent and Revenue Policy (1932), p. 17

2 Hailey Colln., 29B, 'Agricultural Prices in the United Provinces' (n.d., but covers the period up to August 1932)

3 Ibid., 29C, 'Report on the Present Economic Situation in the United Provinces' by E. A. H. Blunt (n.d., but evidently written in 1933), p. 15

4 Waugh: Rent and Revenue Policy, p. 27

5 S. C. Chaturvedi: Rural Wages in the United Provinces (Govt. of the U.P., Dept. of Economics and Statistics, Allahabad, 1947) Table 75, pp. 510-517

on account of the straitened circumstances of employers and the increased competition from petty tenants forced to relinquish their land.[1]

For all this, landless labourers, mostly paid in cash by the 1920's, living at a low subsistence level, and having little to do with the market, probably saw less change in their conditions than various other classes in the villages. The bigger landlords, substantial rural mahajans and city-based sahukars were naturally affected by Government remissions and by the failure to collect dues and arrears. In most cases, however, they had enough savings and credit to tide over the crisis. Smaller zamindars and patidars, and upper-caste rent-receivers in general, were badly hit; in normal times, the sale of much of the produce of their lands went to maintain their living standards, and they were, by and large, the classes most heavily in debt.

The large concentration of non-occupancy tenants in Oudh was, of course, among the worst sufferers. More generally, this was true of all cultivating tenants with small holdings. Such men were found in abundance in Oudh and the other eastern divisions of the U.P. Of the 'typical' cultivator among them, a Government official wrote as follows in 1933

> '. . . at the present time he owns fewer cattle than he did; he has sold or pawned his ornaments freely; his reserves of hoarded silver are much reduced; his crops have not only fallen in value, but for four years past have been indifferent; and in many cases he must have lost his most important subsidiary asset, namely his jajmani.'[2]

In this comment, the official noticed the second factor that adversely affected the position of large numbers of peasants and landowners in the U.P. in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

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1 See Report on the Revenue Administration of the United Provinces, 1928-9 to 1931-2; A. A. Waugh: Rent and Revenue Policy in the United Provinces (Luchnow 1932), p. 32; GOI Home Poll. 33/36/31, D.O. no. 1385-S, Jagdish Prasad-Emerson, Lucknow, 26 October 1931, and Hailey-Crerar 9 November 1931; and P. D. Reeves: 'Agrarian Legislation and Rural Society in Uttar Pradesh, India' (University of Tasmania M.A. thesis, 1959), pp. 82-3

2 Hailey Colln., 29C, Blunt's 'Report on the Present Economic Situation . . .', p. 12

An examination of the outturn of the main staples in Agra and Rae Bareli districts shows that 'indifferent crops' afflicted Agra no less than Oudh during this period. (See Graphs I and II). The drought of 1928-29 resulted in an abysmally poor kharif in Rae Bareli; Agra also suffered a fall in produce, in the rabi as well as in the kharif of that year. Fairly great fluctuations in the amount of agricultural produce continued in the following years, in both Rae Bareli and Agra, as Graphs I and II indicate.

The extent of these fluctuations may be indicated by a statement of actual results in the rabi of 1930 and the kharif of 1931. In the former, there was a decrease of 8 per cent in the cultivated area over the entire province. But the out-back was greatest in Agra division, 37.6 per cent. In Oudh, the area sown actually increased by 10.5 per cent and the result was a record harvest of wheat, the best since 1921. The kharif of 1931, on the other hand, suffered from heavy rains in October, which destroyed the standing crop in many parts of the U.P. Agra was one of the two districts where the calamity was widespread; here the Government had to make a flat revenue remission of four annas in the rupee.[1]

In normal circumstances the bumper rabi of 1930 would have led to a definite improvement of living conditions in the rural areas of Oudh, albeit short-term. Coming with the slump in prices, the larger crop did little to ease the situation of the majority of Rae Bareli peasants. Agra suffered doubly, with a reduced output accompanying the decline in prices. Even the richer farmers felt the disaster, as cotton prices fell rapidly with those of wheat and other food-grains, and reached their lowest point in the last part of 1930 (Graph III).

Before these shortfalls in production and the slump in prices had taken their toll, an action of Government had started ripples of disturbance in parts of the U.P. countryside. With certain other districts, Agra and Rae Bareli were re-settled

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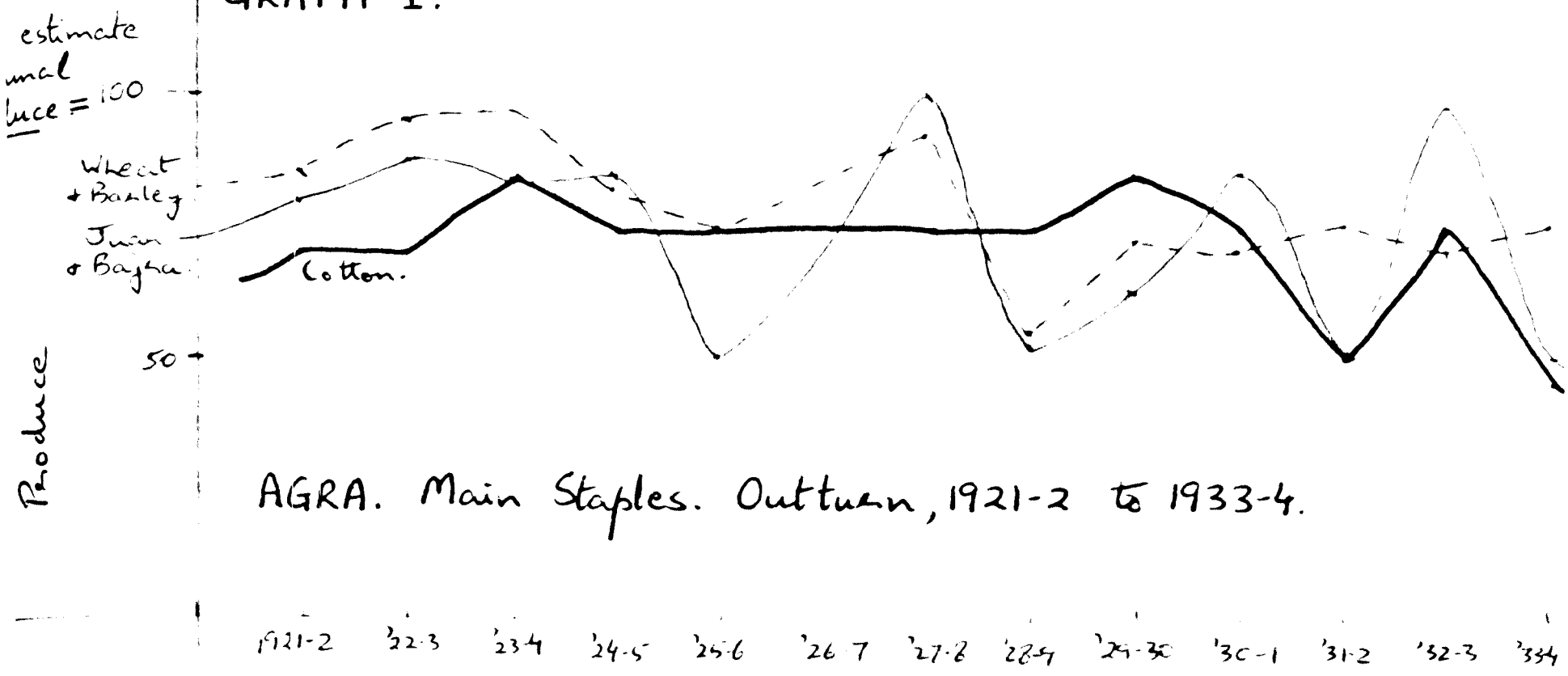
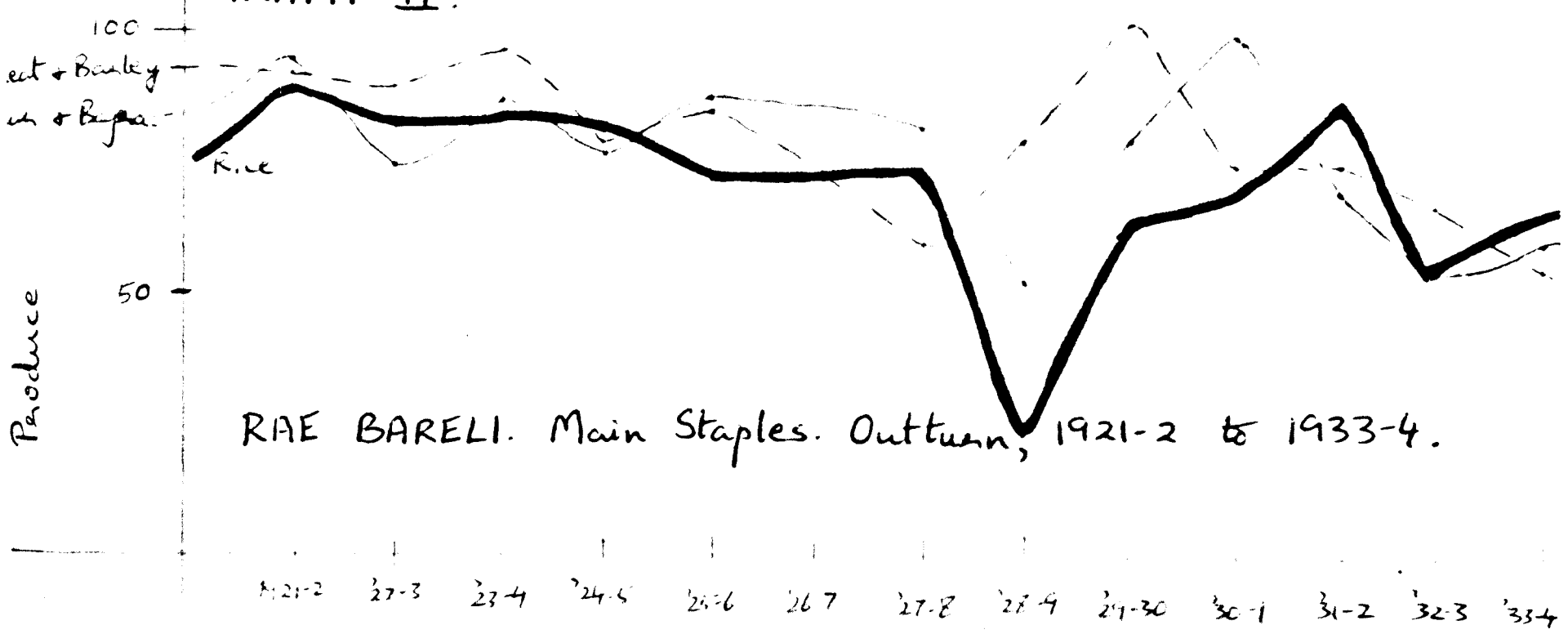
1 U.P. Admin. Reports 1929-30, p. xix, and 1930-31, p. xv

GRAPH I.



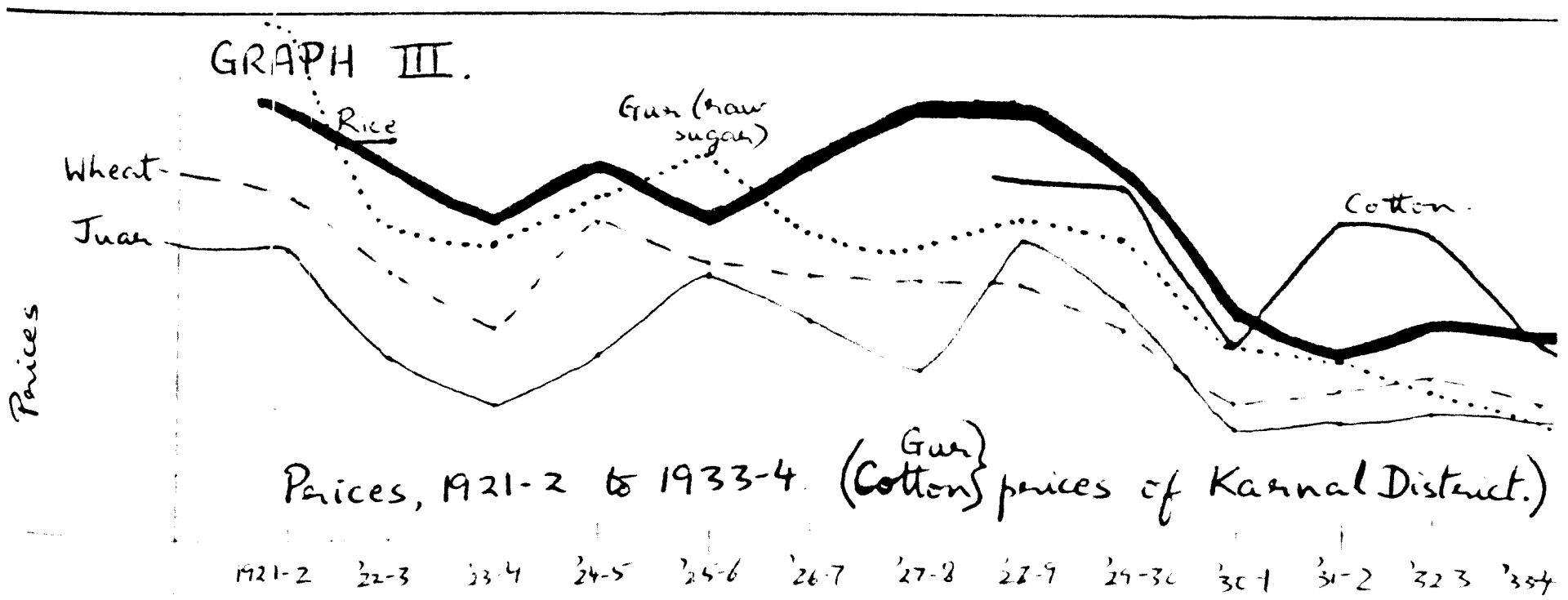
AGRA. Main Staples. Outturn, 1921-2 to 1933-4.

GRAPH II.



RAE BARELI. Main Staples. Outturn, 1921-2 to 1933-4.

GRAPH III.



Prices, 1921-2 to 1933-4 (Cotton / Gur prices of Karnal District.)

[Source: Season and Crop Report of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (relevant years); Agricultural Statistics of India, 1930-1 to

in the years 1926-29. In Agra, the result was a small increase in the revenue demand, Rs. 117,000 or 5½ per cent. In Rae Bareli, the increase was larger, Rs. 218,000 or 12 per cent.[1] This change in revenue demand and the consequent demand for a higher rent contributed to some agitation against enhancement in Rae Bareli, as we have noted earlier (Ch. 3).[2]

These several economic changes, coming together, prepared the ground for political agitation in Agra and Rae Bareli, as in other districts, and to an extent set that agitation in motion. But there were other factors of importance in determining the shape and course of political developments. Among these were the attitudes and actions of the Government, the experience or lack thereof of organised peasant protest, and the organisation and propaganda of the Congress.

In the years 1338 and 1339 *fasli*, the remissions granted to Agra and Rae Bareli districts were as follows:[3]

		AGRA	RAE BARELI
Kharif	1930	Rs. 119,453 revenue	-
Rabi	1931	Rs. 340,764 revenue (Rs. 1,047,000 rent)	Rs. 208,052 revenue (Rs. 560,191 rent)
Kharif	1931	4 anna remission of revenue for destruction of crop	-
Kharif	1931)	General remissions based on the proposals of the Rent & Revenue Committee appointed by the U.P. Legislative Council.	
Rabi	1932)		

Until the latter half of 1931, Agra received proportionately far greater relief than Rae Bareli. Moreover, while remissions

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1 Hailey Colln., 29A, 'Note for Rent and Revenue Committee' (n.d.)

2 The Settlement Commissioner of Rae Bareli made a charming note of how new feelings could rise against the Government and its operations: 'Owing to the series of adverse seasons ending with the drought of 1928', he wrote, the introduction of the new *jamas* (revenue demands) was postponed. 'As the same thing happened at last settlement it is now the confirmed belief in Rae Bareli that settlement brings famine in its wake'. *Final Settlement Report of Rae Bareli* (1929), p. 25

3 Waugh: *Rent and Revenue Policy*, pp. 16-32; *U.P. Admin. Reports* for 1930-31 and 1931-32

granted were not necessarily remissions received anywhere, the dangers of discrepancy were greater in Rae Bareli than in Agra.[1] The Government's refusal to make any remission of the revenue due from Rae Bareli for the kharif of 1930, and Hailey's assertion as late as May 1931 that neither sugar nor rice had been affected by the slump,[2] were remarkable considering that the price of rice (and of sugar) had fallen almost as drastically as that of cotton and wheat (which the Government did notice)[3] in the latter half of 1930. (Graph III). Then, in the rabi of 1931, the different land laws of Agra and Oudh resulted in markedly smaller rent remissions to tenants in Rae Bareli than in Agra.[4] In the following months, while the tension eased considerably in the Agra rural areas, an explosive situation developed in Rae Bareli. Traditional landlord-tenant relations in Oudh, and the use of force by the Government and landlords to exact their dues, had also contributed to this result.

Oudh had come to be dominated by the Government-talugdar alliance in the twentieth century. It had also been the scene of the great Kisan Sabha agitation of 1920-21. The peasant and landlord actions of the early 1920's, the passage of the Oudh Rent (Amendment) Act 1921, and the efforts of the landlords to

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1 This was because of the larger number of intermediaries involved, and the greater subjection of the Rae Bareli peasant. The inefficiency of the administration caused further difficulties; Hailey Colln., 21B, Hailey-Willingdon, 12 August 1931, and Hume Colln., IV, Hume to his parents, Rae Bareli, 14 August 1932.

2 Hailey Colln., 20, Hailey-Lord Peel, 25 May 1931. Only in August 1931 was the low level of rice prices discovered (or admitted), ibid., 21B, Hailey-Sir Richard Burn, 31 August 1931. For Kanpur gur prices, see Dharam Narain: Impact of Price Movements on Areas under Selected Crops in India, 1900-1939 (CUP 1965), p. 199

3 Ibid., 19B, Hailey-Crerar, 14 October 1930, and 20, Hailey-de Montmorency, 29 April 1931

4 Section 73 of the Agra Tenancy Act laid down that the landlord must remit rent in the same proportion as Government's remission of revenue, but by Section 19-A of the Oudh Rent Act, the landlord was obliged to remit only twice the amount of revenue remitted.

take unfair advantage of the provisions of that Act, had badly embittered landlord-tenant relations in Rae Bareli and other districts.[1] The evident successes of the 1920-1 agitation, and the continued presence of influential grass-roots leaders, such as the famous Baba Ramchandra, proved important inspirations for the Oudh peasant. The Agra districts had no recent example of successful peasant protest and few, if any, millenarian dreamers. Equally, the Agra landlord was not complete lord and master of his tenants, and relations between them were better than in Oudh despite growing strains after the passing of the Agra Tenancy Act, 1926.

A final factor of significance in the development of agitation in these two districts was the Congress presence and propaganda in the late 1920's and early 1930's. It was for political as much as economic reasons that Agra reached its crisis point in the winter of 1930-31, resulting in a well-organised and widely publicised 'no tax' campaign. In Rae Bareli, the 'peak' of agitation was more a plateau, extending from late 1930 to the latter half of 1931. In both cases, the Congress leadership appears to have helped not only in the rise of popular agitation but also in its decline.

The renewed burst of Congress propaganda in 1928-29 had affected both Agra and Rae Bareli. In Agra, the strong Congress

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1 U.P. Revenue Administration Reports for the mid- and later 1920's show an increasing number of ejectment suits throughout the province, greater in Oudh than in Agra, especially after the passage of the 1921 Oudh Rent Act and the 1926 Agra Tenancy Act. The Revenue Admin. Report for 1928-9 noted: 'With the exception of the Jhansi and Benares divisions all Commissioners consider that the relations between landlords and tenants have become more embittered as a result of the new [Agra] law, more particularly in those areas where formerly rents were concealed. The new Act has put the tenants in a very much stronger position and, with the law on their side, they are refusing to pay more than the recorded rents. This has naturally [sic] been resented by many zamindars who have retaliated by any means at their disposal', p. 2 of Appendix B. While any such 'position of strength' as a result of new legislation was more doubtful in the case of the Oudh tenant, the concealment of rent was greater in this area and so was landlord resentment when their tenants opposed their will.

organisation in the city and the presence of organs such as the district Congress leader, Sri Krishna Dutt Paliwal's Hindi weekly Sainik, facilitated the Congress' task of propaganda and mobilisation, which picked up specially after the visit of the Simon Commission to Agra and other cities in the U.P. at the end of 1928. Agra Congress leaders also made special efforts to extend their propaganda to the villages. In Rae Bareli, nationalist propaganda, inevitably concentrated in the rural areas, received a boost when Settlement operations and poor seasons created unrest among sections of the peasantry (See Ch. 3).

This pattern of propaganda persisted in Agra and Rae Bareli, though with increased attention to the rural areas in both districts, when the Congress intensified its mobilisation efforts in the first quarter of 1930. There was considerable talk of swaraj, the boycott of foreign cloth, kisan unity and organisation and the need for greater loans and remissions, in addition to continued appeals for the non-payment of enhancements of rent and revenue in Rae Bareli.[1] Sometimes unknown, or little known, local men carried this further and advocated the total non-payment of taxes, including rents,[2] a fact of some importance as we shall see. When Gandhi began his march to Dandi, Salt and Gandhi became major propaganda issues. In October 1930, when the civil disobedience campaign was six months old and when several Congress leaders were released after their first term of six months in prison, the Congress officially launched a 'no-tax' campaign. From then until the end of civil disobedience, except for the period of the 'truce' from March to

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1 FR March 1930, 2; PAI 22 March 1930; Halifax Colln., 19, Irwin-G... R. Lane-Fox, New Delhi, 31 March 1930. The following account of political activities in Agra and Rae Bareli districts is based largely on PAIs, contemporary pamphlets and leaflets, especially Agra Satyagraha Sangram, and interviews. Supplementary information was found in various Congress and Government files and reports, and in Hindi and English language newspapers of the time, some of which appear in footnotes below.

2 See PAIs 11 January, 1 and 8 March 1930

November 1931, the non-payment of taxes was perhaps the most important part of the Congress programme.

In Agra, the success of the Salt satyagraha, in small towns and large village centres such as Shahdara and Runakta, the decline of popular agitation after the arrest of important district leaders in April, and the pattern of popular agitation after October 1930, revealed the efficiency of the district Congress machine and the extensive influence of its leaders. Further, the involvement of landlords, village officials and rural school teachers in the Congress campaign pointed to the classes attracted to the Agra Congress.[1] Partly for this reason, popular agitation in the rural areas of the district never assumed the form of an anti-landlord 'no-rent' campaign.

The Rae Bareli situation was different. Popular agitation here was much more clearly 'economic' from the start, and the district's big landlords - fearful of Government action against them, as well as of losses from any general 'no-tax' campaign - never supported the Congress campaign. Equally, the weaknesses of the Congress presence and of centrally-controlled propaganda were evident in the early stages of civil disobedience. In April 1930 itself the Rae Bareli Congress had to abandon some of its chosen centres for the Salt satyagraha, and then to shelve this satyagraha altogether with the decision to lay more 'stress on the economic side.'[2] The arrest of the 'important' district Congress leaders - whom both the Government and the Congress had some difficulty in locating[3] - led to some decline in rural agitation, inevitably, but more notably led to a

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1 e.g., See PAI 24 January 1931; Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 208; and Agra Satyagraha Sangram, pp. 53-4. Congress leaders working in the Agra rural areas in the mid-1920's had also sought to associate landowners with their village organisation efforts; see Aj 15 March 1926, letter from Deokinandan Vibhav, Organiser, Kisan-Mazdur Ashram, Agra, 19 February 1926.

2 AICC Ps. G-59/1930, Corresp. between JN and Sitla Sahai, 9-11 April 1930

3 The PCC tried to meet this difficulty by exports from other districts. See below, p. 161.

clearer focus for the substantial rural propaganda that continued.[1] In June, Kalka Prasad, a small patidar from the Dalmau tahsil, became 'Dictator' of the Rae Bareli district Congress in the absence of better-known men. He intensified the picketing of village liquor shops, and 'no-rent' propaganda, coupled with promises of smaller rents under swaraj. His arrest for these activities led to a complete hartal in 'a few small bazaars' (as the Intelligence Department put it),[2] a reflection of his not inconsiderable following in the Sareni-Lalganj circles of Dalmau tahsil. On 19 August 1930, to take another instance of Rae Bareli's peasant protests at this time, kisans in the Mustafabad circle decided on civil disobedience by grazing on fields belonging to local landholders. Even the Intelligence Department acknowledged that 'No district leader was present . . .'[3]

In the period after October 1930, the differences in the popular agitation of Agra and Rae Bareli, and also the different interests of 'responsible' Congress leaders on the one hand and local 'militants' on the other, became abundantly clear. Borrowing a leaf from the Bardoli book, the Agra Congress decided on an intensive and concentrated agitation in two villages of every tahsil, after the PCC Council's authorisation of a selective 'no-tax' campaign. Congress leaders, released in October and November, and Sainik, now something like the 'official' organ of the Agra Congress, enthusiastically took up the work.[4]

The campaign was inaugurated in villages Barauda and Bhilaoti of Kiravali tahsil in December. From there it spread

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1 PAIs 26 April and 24 May 1930 noticed the distribution of 'no-rent' leaflets. See also PAIs 14 and 21 June 1930

2 PAI 5 July 1930

3 PAI 30 August 1930

4 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, pp. 89-90, which notes also that 10,000 leaflets containing the PCC Council resolution on non-payment of taxes were distributed in the district in the last three months of 1930; and NOPs December 1930 and January 1931.

to other tahsils and villages. In all, the Congress listed 95 villages that 'took part in the no-tax campaign and refused to pay taxes',[1] - 20 of these in Etmadpur tahsil. Evidence suggests that a strong Congress organisational effort lay behind this success. By February 1931, the Congress claimed, 55 villages had Prabhat Pheris and 50 had their own Bal Bharat Sabhas in Etmadpur tahsil alone. In Firozabad tahsil, 90 villages had National Village Panchayats, and over 200 villages celebrated Independence Day on 26 January 1931.[2] On that day, 68 villages (from the district as a whole?) were said to have over 200 persons each at the celebrations, and it was claimed that over 1,000 took part in processions and meetings in several villages: Khandauli, Pinahat, Bah, Okhra and Nagla Ajeeta among others.[3]

The manner in which the Barauda-Bilaota satyagraha was

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1 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, pp. 98-9. I have rendered lagan (lit. rent) as tax; it is clear from the context that this is what is meant.

2 It is significant that the two most prosperous tahsils of the district, Etmadpur and Firozabad, responded best to the Congress appeal for satyagraha. This was not because of the presence of big landlords in these areas; a prominent Congress leader of the district, Jagan Prasad Rawat, argued that this explained the ready response received here (interview, Lucknow 16-1-73), but the big landlords of Agra held land throughout the district and were not concentrated in any one area. Nor was the reason the presence of a greater number of high-caste peasants here than elsewhere in the district - Etmadpur had a slightly higher than usual proportion of high caste tenants, but again the spread was fairly even throughout the district. The most important cause appears to have been the fact that these 'rich' areas were most closely tied to the market, and hence suffered most on account of the slump. The greater literacy of the richer peasants, as well as the importance of Firozabad town as a nodal point for the direction of satyagraha, probably contributed to the greater success of the Congress campaign in these tahsils.

3 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, pp. 66-70. Intelligence reports acknowledged the effectiveness of Congress propaganda, e.g., PAIs 10 and 24 January 1931; and Govt's extensive use of force - which all interviewees dwelt upon at length - also testified to it.

organised is extremely revealing. Well-known Congress workers were posted in the villages to expedite preparations, Jayanti Prasad and Sobaran Singh in Barauda, Muneer Khan in Bhilaoti. Released from jail after his re-arrest in October, Paliwal visited and inspected the two villages in December. He obtained written pledges from zamindars as well as tenants that they would remain steadfast in the satyagraha.[1]

> 'From 15 December to 21 December, Agra celebrated Khadi Week. The sixth day, i.e. 20 December, was celebrated as Barauda-Bhilaoti Day in the city. In the morning a flag salutation ceremony, and kabaddi matches and other sports, were held. In the afternoon, a thousand volunteers and some men and women from Barauda, Bhilaoti took out a grand procession. In the evening a meeting was held in which Mr. Paliwal announced that . . . because the Gita Week (?) was to end in Barauda, Bhilaoti the next day, a great sacrifice would take place there. In the morning there would be flag songs, until the afternoon religious recitation, and after that the distribution of prasad.'

The following day, despite the precautions, orders and actions of an alarmed administration, 'thousands' of people congregated in the two villages and 'The Gita was read, prasad distributed, and speeches made on the non-payment of taxes.'[2]

The next step in this satyagraha was the amazing one of the desertion of the two villages. Apparently, brutal action on the part of the police - the looting of property, the driving away of animals, the destruction of crops - left the villagers no option but to leave.[3] There was, besides, no other means of avoiding

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1 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, p. 90; and FR December 1930, 2

2 Ibid., pp. 90-4 Prasad = offerings made to a deity, and later distributed to devotees.

3 See U.P. Police Dept. 1568/1934 (SRR), extracts from Sainik, December 1930 and January 1931, for examples of police brutality. Of course, these were not the only villages where men were forced to leave their homes and holdings. Throughout the province there was a large number of formal (i.e. legal) relinquishments of holdings, apart from temporary retirements. In Agra province, legal relinquishments had been high since the mid-1920's, averaging about 20,000 annually. In 1931-2 the figure shot up to 71,430. In Oudh the figure was 5,204 in 1930-1 and 17,609 in 1931-2; U.P. Revenue Administration Reports, for relevant years.

the forced payment of taxes. Hence, small zamindars, peasant proprietors, cultivating tenants and labourers left, many of them to live in open fields for a few days before Congress could provide them accommodation elsewhere.[1] Barauda, a village of Jats,[2] whose leader Bhanwar Singh was to become a force in the civil disobedience campaign of the district generally, was completely deserted. 'For two months', says the Congress history of the satyagraha, 'even the village dog was not seen.'[3] In Bhilaoti, success was less complete; some men paid up their taxes, but even here 300 of the 435 inhabitants left the village. They returned only after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March 1931

The Barauda-Bhilaoti campaign showed all the marks of efficient organisation and sustained propaganda. Bardoli was an appropriate ideal; like Bardoli, Barauda-Bhilaoti were struggles against the British raj, and only incidentally for the peasants' rights. In the villages that followed Barauda and Bhilaoti in the 'no-tax' campaign, Congress leaders tried to maintain this pattern. There was no question of starting an anti-landlord campaign except, as happened in village Jarar,[4] where the landlord clearly allied himself with the foreign Government. The object was simply as widespread an anti-imperialist agitation as possible - firmly under the control of the Congress.

With the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March 1931,

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1 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, pp. 95-6; interviews with Rawat, Lucknow, 15-16 January 1973

2 Interview, Vidyavati Rathore, Lucknow, 16 January 1973

3 Agra Satyagraha Sangram, p. 96

4 Rai Sahib Chandhri Surajpal Singh, a landlord of the village (in Tahsil Bah), objected - allegedly at Govt. instigation - to the setting up of a Congress camp on his lands. The result was an armed clash between the landlord's men and police, on the one hand, and Congressmen and their supporters on the other. Local traders manned the Congress organisation in the area, and it was said that there was a long-standing enmity between them and the Chaudhri. This may have been partly responsible for the clash. A detailed account is given in ibid., pp. 29-35.

a change of tactics became necessary. Congress leaders, returning 'victoriously' from jail, invaded the villages in strength.[1] Sainik declared that the U.P. Government had done little for the kisans and called on kisans to join the Congress for the redress of their grievances.[2] The number of rural meetings increased, and Congress branches - including panchayats and arbitration boards - penetrated further into the countryside.[3] However, the Congress' approach had changed in one crucial regard. Its leaders now said that 'land revenue should not be withheld', while suggesting that 'remissions should be asked for'.[4] They themselves appealed to the Government for substantial remissions, enquired into any report of the continued non-payment of taxes, and helped zamindars realise 'reasonable' and 'proper' rents.[5]

In May 1931, the Achal Gram Seva Sangh was established in Agra, following a PCC directive that Kisan Sanghas should be set up in every district. This body was financed by Seth Achal Singh, a prominent rais and Congress leader. Paliwal became its President, and other important Congressmen, including Achal Singh, Chandradhar Johri and Jaspatrai Kapur, joined the executive committee. Among the objects of the Sangh was the distribution of free medicine; the teaching of agricultural reform, health and cleanliness; the education and organisation of villagers; and the encouragement of a spirit of co-operation among kisans, zamindars and all castes and religions.[6] The

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1 PAIs April-May 1931; AICC Ps. G-5/(Kw)(ii)/1931

2 NOP 28 March 1931

3 See, e.g., PAI 4 April and 9 May 1931

4 PAI 28 March 1931. Significantly enough, less than six months earlier, JN had strongly opposed the idea of peasants asking the Government for greater remissions, Syed Mahmud Ps., File 'From JN - 1930', Notes (in JN's hand, evidently written in October 1930).

5 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 212; AICC Ps. G-5(Kw)(ii)/1931, 'Agra District Congress Conference. Address of Shri Chandradhar Johri, Chairman Reception Committee.'

6 AICC Ps., P-21/1931, 'Achal Gram Seva Sangh' and 'Achal Gram

Sangh now came to guide much of the Congress work in the rural areas of the district.

Congress workers preached self-help, collected statistics and spoke of the insufficiency of remissions, a complaint that Agra landlords were making at the same time.[1] At a typical meeting, the Tahsil Kisan Conference at Achnera in July 1931, Paliwal, presiding, spoke of the need to reduce rents, bribes, interest rates (and military expenditure), and to increase agricultural produce and Government loans which would enable peasants to pay off debts to money-lenders. In addition, he compared the action of a Congressman, Achal Singh, who had given Rs. 15,000 to help 'peasants who joined the Congress' /sic/ with that of the British Collector who received a pay of Rs. 2,200 every month.[2] In September 1931, Jawaharlal Nehru visited Agra and advised local men to 'continue quiet constructive work', though he also asked them to be prepared to start a campaign 'at a moment's notice, if necessary'.[3] It was rather as though the Trade Union of Barauda and Bhilaoti had become the Social Service League of Seth Achal Singh.

Yet the obvious hardship of large numbers of peasants, the chief cause of the 'success' of the Barauda-Bhilaoti satyagraha, had not disappeared. Government officials noted in May 1931 that 'economic distress' accounted for the still slow payment of taxes.[4] Gandhi's 'Manifesto to the kisans', issued in that

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Sevak Sangh - Constitution and Rules' (both Hindi); and PAI 18 July 1931. Achal Singh himself described the Sangha's work as chiefly that of 'medicine and propaganda'; interview, New Delhi, 8 March 1973.

1 PAI 17 October 1931, report that 70 zamindars met at Shamsabad, 4 October and formed a (Kiravali?) Tahsil Zamindars' Association to press their demands. Sainik also wrote of the need for kisans, zamindars and their well-wishers - Congressmen - to unite and organise to gain concessions from the Government, NOP, 24 October 1931

2 PAI 25 July 1931

3 PAI 19 September 1931

4 PAI 9 May 1931

month, and the open efforts of various provincial Congress leaders to 'champion' the cause of kisans in the more troubled districts, gave defaulting peasants further support for their stand. 'Peasants are taking shelter under Congress instructions and postponing full payment in the hope of more remissions', the Intelligence Department reported.[1] Unrest among sections of the Agra peasantry was so great at this time that even a strong Congress presence could not always prevent violence. Shahja-garhi in Etmadpur tahsil, with 80 registered Congress members among its 97 families (540 persons in all), illustrated this in a serious riot on 27 June 1931. Villagers resisted an attempt to attach some of their property. The police opened fire, killed 4 persons, injured 14 and arrested another 16.[2] The District Congress Committee [redacted] then appointed a committee to enquire into the incident, and asked the District Magistrate to nominate two persons to the committee. The officer's refusal played into Congress' hands: the Government was seen to be callous, the Congress concerned. But this publicity achieved little.

For all its organisational and propaganda efforts, the Congress' influence in the Agra villages declined after the Gandhi-Irwin 'truce'. Government's remissions, and its stern action - the initial withholding of remission notices from villages that had taken part in civil disobedicne, the use of police force in the collection of dues,[3] and so on - played a part in this. But the Congress' own methods contributed to the result. Having worked large numbers of peasants up to fever pitch in late 1930-early 1931, the Congress had suddenly called off the campaign. What the peasants had gained from the satyagraha was not clear. In Barauda and Bhilaoti, fields and houses still lay spoiled; there was no proper rabi crop in

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1 PAI 11 July 1931

2 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., pp. 206-225; The Pioneer 1 and 15 July 1931; PAI, 11 July 1931

3 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 274; and above example of Shahja-garhi.

March-April 1931, and the kharif was not due till the autumn. Again, peasants in Shahja-garhi needed a lead in their fight against tax collectors, not enquiry committees. The failure of the district Congress to provide this lead could not but mean loss of support.

By the second half of 1931, militant Congress propaganda in Agra district appeared to have ceased completely. The leaders were drifting back to the city. At the end of that year, when Allahabad and other districts decided to renew the 'no-tax' campaign, Agra was found unready for such agitation. 'There was no "no-rent" campaign in Agra after 1931', a prominent Congress leader of the district recalled later.[1]

Certainly, the second phase of civil disobedience in Agra proved to be much more an urban phenomenon than the first.[2] Volunteers were still enlisted, and some funds collected, in the rural areas. There were also occasional 'no-rent'/'no-tax' appeals.[3] In May 1932, moreover, the Intelligence Department reported that the tenants of Barauda had again withheld rents, some zamindars had applied for the realization of rent arrears as arrears of revenue, and the tenants had therefore removed all moveable property. The district Congress supported this action as well as it could.[4] But Barauda was a special, isolated case, a flash in the pan, after a Congress build-up that allowed for few flashes; and even in Barauda, support for the Congress campaign had declined considerably from the height it had reached in late 1930.[5]

What was more, the renewed agitational campaign was unable to generate much enthusiasm even in the urban areas. Towards

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1 Interview, Jagan Prasad Rawat, Lucknow, 15 January 1973

2 Jail lists indicate a far smaller number of rural arrests than in 1930.

3 e.g. PAI 14 May 1932, Munir Khan's distribution of 'no-rent' leaflets.

4 Loc. cit.

5 Compare loc. cit. with PAIs 27 December 1930, 3 and 10 January 1931

the end of 1932, and even more clearly in 1933, the Congress leadership in Agra and other neighbouring districts were pooling their resources in order to create some impact through new kinds of activity: the holding of illegal conferences, 'raids' on confiscated Congress property, and so on. At this time too, a number of younger Congress workers in Agra resorted to more desperate measures in order to revive morale in urban and in rural areas. They took to cutting telegraph and telephone wires, burning postal pillar boxes and First Class railway carriages, blowing up small bridges, and distributing anti-imperialist leaflets on trains after pulling the alarm-chains to bring them to a stop.[1] Their failure in this endeavour was not surprising, since the Agra Congress had itself spiked its biggest guns - the mass of supporters in the rural areas - by its actions in 1931.

A somewhat similar end was reached in Rae Bareli, in a rather more remarkable way. The peculiarly strained landlord-tenant relations in the district, and the striking lack of adequate or timely remissions (especially, of rent), made it particularly fertile ground for a 'no-rent' campaign. Besides, the provincial Congress chose Rae Bareli as one of the centres of the civil disobedience movement. From the start prominent Congress leaders visited the district when they could. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sri Prakasa were there in the first quarter of 1930 and Nehru again in his week out of jail in October 1930. In the intervening period Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Mohanlal Gautam, Jai Prakash Narayan, Sundar Lal, Nand Kumar Deo Vasishth, Ramakant Malaviya, Birbal Singh and Chandramul Misra visited Rae Bareli, and Misra at least was arrested for his activities in the rural areas of the district.[2] Kidwai returned to the district in early 1931, and after the 'truce' was signed, Nehru

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1 See AICC Ps. 1/1932, 5/1932, 12/1932 and 12/1933; U.P. Congress bulletins for 1932-33 among proscribed pamphlets held at the IOL and NAI; and f.n. 3, p. 109

2 PAI 5 July 1930

and Purushottam Das Tandon sent special messages to 'the Rae Bareli peasants', congratulating them for their part in civil disobedience and urging them to prepare for a further struggle should it be required.[1]

The respite afforded by the 'truce' gave Congress the chance to intensify its organisation efforts. The DCC launched a new scheme of 'Congress ashramas' in various parts of the district to act as propaganda centres. Cultivators and others were to register complaints against talugdars, police and Government officials at these centres.[2] In Rae Bareli town, a General Congress Office, a Publicity Office and a satyagraha ashram were re-established. There were reports also of vigorous efforts at the reorganisation of Tahsil Congress Committees, of the enlistment of Congress members - 1,800 in Salon Tahsil alone by early April, - of the setting up of panchayats and the enrolling of volunteers.[3] In May, a separate Kisan Sangh was established in Rae Bareli, with Sitla Sahai, the Rae Bareli Congress leader closest to Nehru and the provincial leadership, as President.

The Congress mobilisation effort met with quick success, apparently, and its influence reached a new high. Large numbers of peasants flocked to its meetings - there were 10,000 of them at one in March. Congress panchayats sprouted, and to a great extent usurped the functions of the police and the magistracy.[4] Congress flags were hoisted in more and more villages. Together with a charge of a rupee and a quarter, these flags marked the passing of a village into Congress protection, and the number of flags being raised in the district was an index of Congress' influence. At the Salon Tahsil Kisan Conference in May 1931, it was announced that there were in that tahsil alone 426 panchayats, 2,100 Congress members, 1,825 volunteers, in addition, it was claimed, to a Congress flag in every village. Government reported at

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1 Hailey Colln., 22, Govt's 'Statement of Case Regarding No-Rent Campaign'; and NOP 18 April 1931, quoting Pathik

2 PAI 28 March 1931

3 PAI 18 April, 2 May 1931, etc.

4 See GOI Home Poll. 33/24/1931.

this time, that the district as a whole had 840 panchayats, 32 Congress offices, 8,040 Congress members, 13,081 volunteers and 1,019 villages with Congress flags.[1] In May and June, there were weeks in which as many as 29, 34 and 45 flags were hoisted in new villages.[2]

By June 1931, Gandhi's 'Manifesto . . .' had added to the tumult. Government noted the increase in 'disguised no-rent propaganda' and, consequently, of tension in the rural areas. '. . . matters are coming to a head', it declared 'owing to the greater pressure exerted by the Congress.[3] A typical weekly Intelligence report of this period noted the 'no-rent' propaganda being conducted by local workers, and the efforts of the revenue staff, with police protection, to realise rents by attachment of property. On 13 June, it added, a collision occurred at Sheoratanganj and lathis were needed to disperse the crowds. On 16 June, trouble arose between zamindars at Bilwa Hasanpur and Sheo Datt, the President of the Sagona Congress. Further, a sadhu, Bhagwan Din, squatted on the outskirts of Gullupur village to stop tenants from meeting their zamindar. Mohanlal Gautam and others from Allahabad arrived to enquire into recent incidents. The report concluded on a note of optimism: proceedings under Section 12(a) of the Oudh Rent Act had been successful.[4] Here was clear evidence for Government's charge that the Congress was planning another 'mass' movement, and that strong police action alone prevented a conflagration.[5]

A closer analysis of events in Rae Bareli reveals, however,

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1 PAI 16 May and 23 May 1931; also GOI Home Poll. 33/24/31, 'Purely Provisional Draft Statement' (of the Govt. case regarding 'No-Rent' campaign)

2 PAI 13 June, 9 May and 2 May, respectively

3 GOI Home Poll. 33/XVI and Kw/1931, D.O. 600/Z. Jagdish Prasad-Emerson, Naini Tal 30 June 1931

4 PAI 27 June 1931

5 'Statement of Case Regarding 'No-Rent' Campaign'.

that Government's condemnation of the Congress was unwarranted. It was the attempt at the forced collection of rents and forcible ejectments, in April-May 1931 and later, when most statutory tenants and many others were in desperate straits and grossly insufficient remissions had been sanctioned, that created a near-revolutionary situation in the Rae Bareli countryside. The advocates of resistance found appreciative audiences, and violence broke out in places, most notably in village Sandiram.[1] The great accession of strength to the 'Congress' at this time appears to have been largely the result of the work of local 'militants', speaking in the Congress' name but not always as Congress leaders would.

When the Congress initially launched the 'no-tax' campaign in October 1930, the Rae Bareli Congress organisation was in poor shape, and Kisan Sabhas were conspicuously absent. At this time, the Intelligence Department observed that ' . . . rent will be collected with the greatest difficulty and a no-rent campaign will have considerable success'; or, again, that 'The kisans . . . are likely to accept any Congress suggestion of non-payment of rents'.[2]

The U.P. Congress' decision to launch a 'no-tax' campaign in October 1930 was taken with a view to strengthening civil disobedience. Pursuing this object, Rae Bareli Congressmen issued calls for the non-payment of dues, whether rent or revenue.[3] Local militants, little known in Congress circles, but closer to those who toiled in the sun, supported this plea - sometimes with vehement and bitter attacks against landlords and Government.[4] On occasion, tenants took independent action. Thus, all but three tenants of village Surajkunda surrendered their holdings

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1 PAI 28 February and 14 March 1931; Abhyudaya 4 March 1931, 'PCC Enquiry Report', Allahabad 23 February 1931

2 PAI 25 October 1930 and 10 January 1931

3 See U.P. Police Dept. 1077/1930 (SRR), Commissioner, Lucknow, Divn-Jagdish Prasad, 15 January 1931, for the success of the campaign

4 e.g., PAI 10 January 1931.

in the winter of 1930-1, as a protest against the enhancements of rent made in 1930.[1]

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact of March 1931 brought a change in the official Congress position. It did not, however, affect that of discontented peasants. Officials observed ~~that~~ in that month that 'Tenants are disposed to withhold payment of rent irrespective of Congress instructions, because in some cases they are unable to pay and in many cases they are on bad terms with their landlords'.[2] On the other hand, in June and even as late as September 1931, Congress leaders in the district lamented the fact that they were unable to pay to the peasant problem the attention it deserved.[3]

Yet, militant 'Congress' propaganda and organisational efforts were continuing in the rural areas of Rae Bareli during these months. The evidence suggests that much of this was outside the control of the official Congress leadership. Governor Hailey noted in May 1931 that his initial reaction on his return to the U.P. from England, that Congress was violating the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, was probably too hasty. 'The trouble in many districts is purely economic', he wrote, adding that even where agitators were responsible for the spread of discontent, it was difficult to establish that 'responsible' Congress leaders were involved, for the local volunteers might have passed out of even their hands.[4] At the end of June, the Chief Secretary to the U.P. Government noted the 'somewhat new factor' of the intervention of 'leading Congressmen' in rural affairs.[5]

The Special Correspondent of the Pioneer, investigating the 'serious aspect' that agrarian affairs in Rae Bareli assumed after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, arrived at a similar conclusion.

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1 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 115

2 PAI 28 March 1931

3 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., pp. 121-4; AICC Ps. G-140/1931, Pt IV, Sitla Sahai-JN, Naini Tal, 13 September 1931

4 Hailey Colln., 20, Hailey-Irwin, 9 May 1931

5 GOI Home Poll. 33/XVI and Kw/1931, D.O. 600/Z, Jagdish Prasad-Emerson, Naini Tal, 30 June 1931

> 'Taking advantage of the agreement', he wrote, '. . . more than 10,000 volunteers, whose connection with the Congress was not very apparent, swarmed into the villages to stir up trouble between zamindars and tenants . . .'[1]

His figure was perhaps exaggerated, his suggestion that volunteers 'swarmed into the villages' was misleading, since most of them were local men, but he had sensed shrewdly a certain gap between these volunteers and the 'responsible' Congress leadership.

Rae Bareli's 'responsible' Congressmen and the local 'militants' worked along very different lines in these crucial months; and it appears that the former did much, ultimately with success, to water down militancy in the rural areas.

Since the Delhi Pact, Sitla Sahai and his associates had followed provincial Congress guidelines. Here, as in Agra and elsewhere, they had announced the suspension of the 'no-tax' campaign. Then, acknowledging that sections of the peasantry might still have difficulty in paying rents, they had suggested that 'For this tenants should send applications to the Congress Office, and the Congress workers will see the zamindars, talukdars and deputy commissioner and try to get the rent suspended, remitted or reduced.'[2] For peasants who lived at or only slightly above subsistence level in ordinary times, who had found the value of their produce suddenly reduced by half or more, and who were still expected - and pressurised - to pay the normal amount of cash as rent or revenue, this was not an easy shift to make. There were occasions in 1931 when the Congress leaders' unqualified assertion that rents should be paid, at least in part, provoked loud tenant protest.[3] The Congressmen, then, urged patience. 'Kisans' should strengthen the Congress' hand so as to bring nearer swaraj which would rid them of their grievances. For the time being, said the

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1 The Pioneer 8 July 1931 (emphasis added)

2 Government's 'Statement of Case Regarding 'No-Rent' Campaign'

3 PAI 16 May 1931, Maharajganj meeting, 8 May, for instance.

Congress leaders, tenants should pay 5 or 6 or 8 annas of their rent, a line that Gandhi himself had advocated in May.[1]

In July 1931, some of the bigger landlords of Rae Bareli met under Rai Rajeshwar Bali. They formed a District Landlords' Association, appealed to Government for further remissions, requested the District Board to withdraw the new tax on circumstances, and urged the cultivation of good relations with tenants.[2] In a manner reminiscent of the best of the Agra Congress, 'responsible' Congress leaders in Rae Bareli and 'responsible' landlords had arrived on the same platform.

Moreover, since the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, these Congress leaders had worked to bring about settlements between landlords and tenants, and, where these had been arranged, they had helped landlords in the collection of rents.[3] Even with Sardar Birpal Singh, the talugdar of Khureti, dubbed the Dyer of Rae Bareli for allegedly firing on unarmed peasants in 1921,[4] and described by the Congress report on Agrarian Distress in the U.P. as 'very harsh before . . . harsher today',[5] the district Congress leaders reached an agreement.[6] Efforts to arrange settlements with individual landlords of the district, with the assistance of the district administration, continued

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1 GOI Home Poll. 33/24/31, Note on Rae Bareli events; also PAIs April-June 1931. For similar exhortations by Congress leaders of other districts, see e.g. Leader 19 June, 26 June, 27 June 1931, Tandon's Press Note, and Raghubir Sahai and Uma Shankar's letters.

2 PAI 8 August 1931, meeting of 19 July

3 PAI, 11 April 1931; Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 113. Hailey Colln., 20, Madan Mohan Malaviya-Emerson, 15 April 1931, notes the efforts of the Allahabad and Rae Bareli DCCs to bring about settlements with zamindars. For other Congress-landlord agreements, see GOI Home Poll. 33/XVI and Kw/1931, JN-Jagdish Prasad, Allahabad, 11 March 1931; and Abhyudaya, 13 May 1931

4 Pratap, 13 January 1921, quoted in NOP, 15 January 1921

5 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 122

6 Ibid., p. 113.

well into the second half of 1931.[1]

The 'militants' spoke a very different language. Kalka Prasad, the small patidar from Dalmau mentioned earlier, became the most notorious of them, partly because he was among the most successful.[2] 'Kalka Prasad told the cultivators not to pay rent, and naturally has a greater following among the masses', the Intelligence Department reported.[3] Again, he asked why the Government did not arrest Gandhi for advising the cultivators to pay half their rents and obtain full receipts, instead of ordering the police to beat the kisans.[4]

In mid-1931, Kalka Prasad's forthright approach caused a complete enstrangement between him and the official Congress leadership. The break came with his threat to picket the house of Rana Umanath Bux Singh, taluqdar of the great Khajurgaon estate, and a very loyal landlord according to the Government, for alleged oppression of his tenants. Police intervention sent Kalka Prasad into hiding,[5] and it was another month before he was arrested. Meanwhile, Congress had disowned him.[6] When Kalka Prasad was finally arrested in September, no one in the Congress camp uttered a word of protest.[7]

Earlier, Kalka Prasad's election to the Presidentship of the Rae Bareli DCC - an indication of his enormous influence

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1 AICC Ps., G-140/1931, Pt. II, English translation of the agreement signed on 25 October 1931 by Sitla Sahai and the Zamindar, Arkha, at the residence of the Sub-divisional Officer, Salon, Rae Bareli

2 Interviews in Rae Bareli, Lalganj and Sareni testified to the tremendous following Kalka Prasad had in south-west Rae Bareli.

3 PAI, 9 May 1931. Agrarian Distress in the U.P., pp. 113-4, also noted the different approaches of different Rae Bareli Congress workers.

4 PAI, 11 July 1931

5 GOI Home Poll. 33/XVI and Kw/1931, Letter No. 45-P/7, Dy. Commissioner, Rae Bareli-Chief Secy., U.P., 22 July 1931

6 AICC Ps. G-59/1931, JN-Rana Umanath Bux Singh of Khajurgaon, Rae Bareli (n.d.); also PAI, 8 August 1931

7 PAI, 26 September 1931.

among the cultivators, who were being enrolled as Congress members in large numbers - had caused trouble in the official Congress. The election was set aside, and a protracted dispute ensued between Kalka Prasad and Mata Prasad Mishra, who was appointed acting-President.[1] Nehru visited the district in June and announced that an Enquiry Committee would be sent to settle the dispute. Kalka Prasad did not participate in Nehru's meetings at this time, nor did his followers welcome the Enquiry Committee when it came;[2] he, himself, was in hiding at this time. The result of the enquiry was a foregone conclusion.

It seemed no coincidence that while Kalka Prasad was striking out on a radical path in opposition to the approved Congress policy in Rae Bareli, Baba Ramchandra, the remarkable leader and organiser of the Oudh kisan agitation in 1920-21, was fighting a similar battle in the U.P. Political Conference at Mirzapur (2-4 May 1931). He condemned a resolution calling for the fixing of rents in accordance with the rates of a year when prices were at the level of 1931; such a step would 'totally ruin the cultivators', he said.[3] Ramchandra and Kalka Prasad both had in them marks of the millenarian leader. Both had their ears tuned to the 'masses'. Both saw the importance of the political struggle launched by the Congress, but only in the context of the peasants' grievances. It was poetic justice that the resolution Ramchandra so bitterly attacked should have been moved by Rae Bareli's own Sitla Sahai. It was Congress justice that Ramchandra's standpoint should be rejected, and with it Kalka Prasad's.

The months of May to July 1931 were crucial as far as rural agitation in Rae Bareli was concerned. Peasant distress and peasant militancy were at their height. Government and

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1 PAI, 9 May 1931; AICC Ps. G-59/1931, letters from Anjani Kumar and Mata Prasad Misra-JN, June 1931 and JN-Misra, 1 July 1931

2 PAI, 4 July and 8 August 1931. Damodar Swarup Seth, the Bareilly Congress leader, constituted the one-man committee

3 PAI, 9 May 1931.

landlords were near their wit's end to know how to collect their dues. There was a vicious circle of peasant resistance, the use of police and other force, further peasant resistance, and greater repression. Congress workers in the tahsils saw the brutality of combined Government-landlord action. Bachan Lal Shukla, Secretary of the Pargana Congress Committee, Khiron, Rae Bareli wrote in Pratap (Kanpur):

> '. . . The agents of taluqdars accompanied by 35 or 40 armed policemen are touring in pargana Khiron for the collection of rent. Whatever village they visit they surround it and do not allow even women and children to go out. The police enters into the houses and forcibly takes away milk and curd . . . At the time of collecting rent they realize more than the prescribed amount, but do not give receipt. At some places rent has been forcibly realized from the neighbours of the tenant who owes it. They specially harass the Congress workers and volunteers . . .'[1]

Congress leaders at a higher level could not fail to notice the extent of the repression. In their charge-sheet against the Government, they referred to incidents of the terrorising and beating of tenants in Rae Bareli in July and August 1931. They noted the special orders issued by the Deputy Commissioner of the district, aimed at undermining the district Congress organisation. They enquired into allegations of police excesses, such as the firing at Daulatpur which resulted from resistance to a Kanungo, and declared such use of force 'quite unjustified'.[2] Later in the year, the DCC encouraged kisans to petition against the insufficiency of the recently made remissions, and posted a clerk to the Collectorate to help the kisans who now came there in large numbers. But at no time during this period did they feel able to go further.

Indeed, far from giving a concerted call for organised peasant resistance, the official Congress leadership took disciplinary action against men who 'offended against the creed

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1 NOP 22 August 1931

2 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., pp. 113-129 and 272-3; AICC Ps. G-59/1931, Sitla Sahai-JN, Rae Bareli 20-7-31; also PAI 25 July 1931 and NOP 30 May, 4 and 11 July 1931, comments by Congress papers.

or otherwise misbehaved themselves.'[1] Combined with the continuation of stern Government action, and the provision of substantial relief to the Rae Bareli tenant for the first time, this served to reduce militancy in the rural areas.

In Rae Bareli, the Intelligence Department reported in October 1931, all had been quiet since Nehru's visit in June.[2] Taxes had come in better. Peasant interest in the Congress had declined; no more than two or three new Congress flags were hoisted in the villages in any normal week in the second half of 1931. The resumption of agricultural operations was partly responsible for these developments. But Nehru's visit also had an importance, for reasons that the Intelligence men did not suspect. They implied that 'outside agitators' fomented trouble in Rae Bareli, The truth was probably that the 'outside agitators' had helped to bring an apparently dangerous situation under control.

Rural agitation was not completely finished, of course. That was not the Congress' intention and, even had it been, conditions in the rural areas were not such as to foster complete peace and quiet. Prices appeared to have taken an irrevocable dive. To make matters worse, the winter rains failed in 1931-2, and rats destroyed 25 per cent of the subnormal crop that did come up in Rae Bareli, The monsoon again was poor: in the whole month of July 1932, there was less than 2 inches of rain in the district. In addition there were problems with rent remissions: corruption at the local level, and 'hopelessly confusing, ambiguous and inadequate orders' from the provincial Government.[3] Finally, many landlords and the Government continued the use of force for the collection of their dues. Consequently, there were signs of agitation at

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1 AICC Ps. G-140(kw)(i)/1931, JN-Altafur Rahman, 3o-7-31

2 PAI 24 October 1931

3 Hume Colln., IV, Hume to his parents, Rae Bareli 3 March, 3 April, 14 and 26 July 1932. See also Graphs II and III.

various times in 1932.[1] As a whole, however, the movement had lost its force.

Andrew Parke Hume, now in Rae Bareli, remarked on how 'extraordinarily quiet' the district was in December 1931.[2] In May 1932, he reported that of the 22 tahsils in Lucknow division, 3 of Rae Bareli were third, fourth and fifth in order of merit in the year's revenue collections; 'for the centre of the Congress no-rent campaign in the U.P., I think this is quite satisfactory.'[3] By July, 80 per cent of the revenue due from the district had come in, and the administration had until September to collect the rest.[4] That was clear evidence of the brutal efficiency of the Government and the blundering decline of the Congress campaign.

Agra and Rae Bareli, not representative of the U.P. as a whole, were still typical of large parts of the province, the one of the fairly prosperous doab districts south-west of Rohilkhand, the other of much of Oudh. In the early 1930's, moreover, most of the province shared certain common factors: the disastrous effects of the Depression, a Government bent on preserving as much of its revenue as possible, and a nationalist party with a policy of opposition to the Government to the exclusion of other questions. Consequently, there were several similarities in the manner in which peasant agitation arose and declined in Agra, Rae Bareli and other districts. Perhaps the most striking of these was the Congress clamp-down at the moment of greatest peasant militancy. In Agra this happened by the chance of the Delhi agreement, in Rae Bareli by the conscious action of an ostensibly 'radical' leadership, again mainly because of the Delhi agreement. There were places in other districts also where, after initial Congress encouragement

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1 Ibid., IV, Hume to his parents, 3 March, 10 July 1932; PAI 11 June and 2 July 1932

2 Hume Colln., III, Pt. 2, Hume to his parents, 18 December 1931

3 Ibid., IV, Hume to his parents, 29 May 1932

4 Ibid., IV, Hume to his parents, 10 July 1932

and the later withdrawal of the 'no-tax' campaign, the patience of large numbers of discontented peasants gave way in the middle months of 1931 and violence resulted. On these occasions, again, the local Congress leaders did their best to restore 'non-violence' and keep the situation under control.

Allahabad itself, the centre of the U.P. Congress organisation, and the home of such important Congress leaders as Motilal Nehru, Tandon, Sundar Lal and Krishna Kant Malaviya, and such influential 'radicals' as Jawaharlal Nehru and Venkatesh Narain Tewari, provides a striking example of this process. Here, the doab tahsils of Manjhanpur, Sirathu and Allahabad were conspicuously inactive in the two phases of civil disobedience in 1930 and 1932-3. (See Table II). Yet, in mid-1931, Manjhanpur came to be regarded by the Government as 'the worst affected area in the district'.[1] In June that year a serious riot occurred in the tahsil, in Bhatwaria village, resulting in the death of the landlord and a number of his men. The Congress then appeared on the scene. Some of its lawyer leaders represented the tenants in what became known as the Bhatwaria Riot Case. In addition,

> '. . . the Congress Committee enquired into the matter, published its statement and strongly condemned by leaflets and speeches those kisans who had been guilty of violence.'[2]

Elsewhere in the U.P., too, these months were noted for great distress and unrest among several rural groups. Government and newspaper reports pointed to the 'terrible conditions' of masses of peasants, not only in Oudh, but in districts from

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1 GOI Home Poll. 33/XVI and Kw/1931, Confidl. D.O. 663/5, Jagdish Prasad-Emerson, Naini Tal, 9 July 1931; PAI 20 June 1931

2 AICC Ps. G-140(Kw)(i)/1931 JN-Altafur Rahman, 30-7-31. In this last matter, at any rate, the Congress and the Government had a common object; the Allahabad authorities posted additional police to Manjhanpur to maintain the peace. PAIs 20 June and 8 August 1931, and interviews with Babu Mangla Prasad, one of the Congress leaders involved in this case (Allahabad, 22 June 1971, 29-30 June 1972), also provided information on the Bhatwaria Case.

TABLE II

ALLAHABAD DISTRICT POLITICAL PRISONERS

1930-33

CLASSIFIED BY TAHSIL

		According to:	
		Svatantrata Sangram ke Sainik	Malaka Jail list
	The City	179	245
DOAB	(Allahabad tahsil ((minus City)	15	13
	(Sirathu tahsil	10	10
	(Manjhanpur tahsil	19	12
GANGA-PAR	(Phulpur tahsil	34	38
	(Soraon "	97	55
	(Handia "	87	51
JUMNA-PAR	(Bara tahsil	43	47
	(Karchana tahsil	82	83
	(Meja tahsil	113	100
	Tahsil not known	-	11
	TOTAL:	679	655

/Source: Calculated from the addresses and Police Stations given in Svatantrata Sangram ke Sainik for Allahabad district, and 'Malaka Jail List', respectively. The discrepancies between the two sets of figures arise mainly because the 'Malaka Jail List' mentions the Police Station where an arrest occurred, not that of a prisoner's home. Obviously many of those arrested in the city of Allahabad were villagers who had gone there for demonstrations or public meetings./

Farrukhabad to Azamgarh.[1] '. . . matters are coming to a head', the U.P. Government observed in June 1931, in Rae Bareli, Bara Banki, part of Allahabad and 'possibly Unao'.[2] In Bara Banki, in particular, gatherings of armed villagers became common.[3]

At this time, national political considerations prevented the U.P. Congress from adopting a militant standpoint and supporting peasant actions against landlords and the Government. For the peasants this was clearly a let-down. For the Congress, too, it was a costly mistake. Quite unlike the civil disobedience of 1930, the campaign of 1932-33 had to concentrate on the big cities (Map 3), and here it was mainly the financial resources and strong organisation of the Congress that kept the campaign alive. Hailey observed, in early 1932, that except in two districts of the Allahabad division, Kanpur and Allhabad, the 'no-tax' campaign 'doesn't exist any more'.[4] A. A. Waugh, the Settlement Officer of Meerut, put it more pungently:

> '. . . when at last Congressmen definitely launched their 'no-rent' campaign in the autumn of 1931, they found, not for the first time, that they had "missed the bus".'[5]

The Congress' hesitant approach to peasant problems, described above, was not a transitory phenomenon. It was a product of the leadership's understanding of the nature of the national movement ever since 1919-20, which we have discussed earlier (Ch. 3). One important reason for the effort to retain as broad a nationalist front as possible in general, and the

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1 U.P. Police Dept. 202/1931 (SRR); Aj 17 May, 27 June, 6 July 1931, etc; NOP 30 May, 20 and 27 June, 18 July 1931

2 GOI Home Poll. 33/XVI and Kw/1931, D.O. 600/Z, Jagdish Prasad-Emerson, Naini Tal, 30 June 1931

3 Ibid., Confidl. D.O. No. 752-D, Jagdish Prasad-Emerson, Lucknow 25 July 1931. See also GOI Home Poll. 33/24/31, D.O. No. 707-/illegible/, Prasad-Emerson, Naini Tal 16 July 1931

4 Hailey Colln., 23A, Hailey-Findlater Stewart, 19 January 1932, and Hailey-de Montmorency, 31 January 1932; also Templewood Colln., 15, Hailey-Samuel Hoare, 28 February 1932

5 Waugh: 'Rent and Revenue Problems' (1934), p. 7.

vague and vacillating approach to the poorer sections of society in particular, was the class composition of the party leadership and cadres. A wide range of social groups was represented in the Congress leadership, and Jawaharlal Nehru, for one, repeatedly remarked on the substantial landlords who were among the most important Congress leaders in the U.P.[1] At the district and tahsil level, as we have noted (Ch. 2), small zamindars and upper-caste rent-receivers provided the majority of Congress leaders. The little available evidence regarding tahsil-level Congress leaders in Rae Bareli in 1930-31 supports this contention. In various Congress reports, the names of the following tahsil-level leaders appear: Thakur Bhagwan Baksh Singh, zamindar of Rampur, Maharajganj tahsil (paying an annual revenue of Rs. 800); Pandit Gaya Prasad Shukla; Babu Chandrika Prasad; Chaudhuri Hazarilal, a merchant of Bachhrawan; Thakur Jagrup Singh; Pandit Bachan Lal Shukla.[2] Without exception, these were upper-caste men, and we may assume that most of them derived a good part of their income from rents, especially in view of the tangential but suggestive evidence that upper-caste tenants possessed a disproportionately high share of large holdings.[3] It is clear that men of this background would be reluctant to extend unambiguous support to the poorer classes in the countryside against the richer, or to launch an unmitigated 'no-rent' campaign.

During elections, the Congress' reliance on substantial landlords, moneylenders and businessmen was especially great. More generally, as we have seen (Ch. 2) the Congress was dependent on the commercial and industrial classes for the major

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1 AICC Ps. G-140(Kw)(i)/1931, JN-Altafur Rahman, 30-7-31. See also JN: An Autobiography, p. 297, and Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 50

2 Svatantrata Sangram ke Sainik, Rae Bareli district, Introduction; Agrarian Distress in the U.P., pp. 125-7; NOP 22 August 1931; report on Rae Bareli in Pratap

3 Final Settlement Report of Rae Bareli (1929), p. 13, U.P. Banking Enquiry Committee Report, I, p. 96

part of its funds. It was not surprising, then, that the Congress proved unable to speak out against moneylenders, despite the growing realisation in the early 1930's that indebtedness was the most important single problem for a large proportion of the 'masses' in the U.P.[1] Neither the U.P. Congress' report on agrarian distress (1931), nor its resolutions in the early 1930's, mentioned the problem at all. It was not until 1936 that the party first noted the magnitude of this problem, and then the woes of moneylenders were discussed together with those of the indebted.[2]

Equally, the socio-economic demands of the industrial working class found no place in the Congress programme, in spite of the token representation granted to the U.P. Trade Union Congress in 1929 and the work of individual Congress leaders among workers in the urban areas. In the industrial towns, even more clearly than in the villages, the Congress showed its willingness to mobilise the working 'masses' on issues that concerned the British but not on issues that affected the interests of Indian mill-owners.

In his presidential address to the All-India Trade Union Congress at Nagpur in November 1929, Nehru declared:

> 'We have had in India during the past year a general offensive against Labour in which the government and the employers have joined hands and co-operated together. The Trades Disputes Act and the Public Safety Ordinance were the first contributions of the Government of India. Then followed the trial of the thirty-two labour leaders and workers in Meerut and /a/ large number of individual cases against labour workers . . . These are the conditions that face us . . . And yet we are asked to believe in the bonafide of the Labour Government and to co-operate with the Whitley Commission /the Royal Commission on Labour in India, 1929-30/.'[3]

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1 U.P. Government Gazette, 10 September 1932, Pt. VIIL, p. 257

2 Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report (1936), pp. 68-9 and 72

3 N. N. Mitra (ed): The Indian Quarterly Register, 1929, Vol II July-December (Calcutta, n.d.), p. 427

In Kanpur, Harihar Nath Shastri, the U.P. Congress' labour specialist, organised protest meetings in August and September 1928 against the two Government measures Nehru had mentioned, the one seeking to control general strikes as well as lightning strikes or lockouts in certain 'public utility services', the other aimed at expelling from India foreigners who were taking part in the labour movement. Then, in December 1929, he organised black-flag demonstrations against the Whitley Commission on the occasion of its visit to Kanpur.[1]

On other occasions, however, Shastri excelled as a leader of 'compromise'. This is illustrated by his actions in November 1931 over a strike in the Jhuggilal Kamlapat Mills. The strike was caused by a large-scale retrenchment of workers. When the employers tried to engage new hands in order to nullify the effect of the strike, the old workers resisted, and an explosive situation developed. Shastri then appealed to Jawaharlal Nehru to use his influence to win over the employers. At the same time, he sought the arbitration of the Kanpur district administration. His efforts succeeded and a compromise was arranged.[2] The labour leader in Shastri could scarcely afford to ignore the actions and demands of three hundred workers on such an occasion, and it would be wrong to suggest that his actions involved a complete betrayal of the workers' interests. But they were certainly another example of the general Congress policy at this time of trying to ride two horses simultaneously. There was further evidence of this in the vague nature of the Congress' 'socialist' programme as it emerged in 1933 and 1934. Virtually every meeting of the U.P. Congress leaders from September 1933 to April 1934 urged the drawing up of a 'socialist' programme.[3] At the same time

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1 PAI 1 September 1928, and 14 and 21 December 1929, which suggested that the anti-Whitley Commission demonstrations were not a great success; B. N. Datar (ed): Harihar Nath Shastri, Life and Work (Bombay 1968), pp. 18-19

2 Ibid., p. 21; PAI 12, 19, 26 December 1931

3 See The Leader 23-24 September and 13 October 1933, 10 January and 18 April 1934; GOI Home Poll. 4/7/34; also The Leader

a Congressman argued, through the columns of the Benares Congress daily, Aj, that 'socialism' was nothing new, that even a republican form of Government meant 'socialism', and that the Congress' work for the uplift of Harijans was one aspect of 'socialist' propaganda.[1] It seemed fitting, indeed, that in 1934, when the CSP was formed and gained a large number of adherents from among the U.P. Congress leaders, the U.P. Congress also restaked its claims to being a landlord-cum-tenant party in the campaign for elections to the central Legislative Assembly.[2]

If the general Congress dependence on privileged groups and classes was one reason for the Congress' hesitant and unclear approach to the 'masses', another was the obvious lack of clarity in the leaders' minds about both Indian society and popular struggle. In spite of the concerted effort to obtain extensive popular participation in the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements, there was no proper analysis of the forces and contradictions in the society until well into the 1930's. There was fairly general agreement among nationalist leaders about the ultimate goal, but no real long-term strategy for its attainment. Even the Congress moved in fits and starts, responding to the pressures of the moment. There seemed to be only hazy notions of the task of mobilisation to be performed.

The Congress' approach to rural society in the U.P. illustrates the point. The Swaraj Party manifesto of 1923 made a confused statement about the agrarian structure in this and other zamindari areas. Repudiating any suggestion that the Swaraj Party aimed at the abolition of landlordism, it declared that the Party 'cannot possibly dream of such madness as to undermine the very foundations of society as it has existed for hundreds of years in India by trying to eliminate

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31 December 1934 for the 'socialist' resolution at the U.P. Political Conference, Etawah, 28-29 December 1934.

1 Aj 10 June 1934

2 Ch. 2 above, and Aj 22 September 1934

an important and influential class from it.'[1]

The performance of the Swarajists in the U.P. Legislative Council during the debate on the Agra Tenancy Bill in 1926 indicated the extent to which the U.P. Congress went, with Gandhi, 'one step at a time'.

> 'Our party has decided today to act as umpires;' declared Mukandi Lal, the Deputy Leader of the Party, 'and we will watch the interests of both the peasant and the landlord, and make an earnest effort to find a solution for the existing friction and conflict of interests.'[2]

The Leader echoed the views of all nationalist leaders, including the Swarajists, when it called for 'a generous spirit' and 'far-sighted action' on the part of Government, enlightened zamindars and all the well-wishers of both landlords and tenants.[3] There followed a demonstration of superb quick-footed boxing by the Swarajists in the Legislative Council. In a series of what they considered reasonable compromises, the Swarajists first combined with the 'progressive landlords' in the Council to defeat the Government;[4] then took advantage of the absence of many landlords from the legislature - they had left Naini Tal when proceedings closed for Muharram and were late in returning - to support the Government in amending certain clauses favourable to the landlords, and indeed withdrawing some of the concessions they had made to the landlords in the first compromise; and finally, in a sequel to the Tenancy Act, joined the indignant landlords in forcing the withdrawal of

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1 Panikkar and Pershad (eds): The Voice of Freedom, p. 512. (emphasis added)

2 Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the United Provinces. Official Report. (Hereafter UPLC Progs), XXIX, p. 355, cited in Reeves: 'The Landlords' Response to Political Change . . .', p. 197

3 The Leader, 1 July 1926, editl. 'Agra Tenancy Bill - VI'

4 Even The Leader cried out 'Why this compromise?' (11 July 1926, editl.) when the Swarajist concessions to the landlords became known.

Government's U.P. Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1926.[1] The legislation that emerged brought some benefits to small zamindars, occupancy tenants and even tenants-at-will. But the real victory, in the eyes of the Congress, lay in the successful outwitting and embarrassment of the Government. In order to achieve this, the party was willing to compromise even on issues on which it had earlier steadfastly defended the tenantry.

During the civil disobedience campaign, as noted earlier, the U.P. Congress appealed for support to the kisans, undifferentiated, if not to the kisans and zamindars together, as in the case of most appeals by provincial Congress leaders. (Ch. 3). At this time, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to a big landlord that his own views on the zamindari system were well-known, 'But those views have no application to present day politics, and in any event the Congress is not committed to those views.'[2] It is interesting to set this opinion against the great debate in the Communist Party of China in the mid-1920's, about the forces to be mobilised in the anti-imperialist struggle and about the nature of the alliances to be sought.[3] No such debate

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1 For details, see UPLC progs., XXX and XXXI; Reeves; 'The Landlords' Response . . .', pp. 191-210. Marris, then the Governor of the U.P., wrote: 'The Swarajists profess pro-tenant views, but their only serious aim is to down the Government . . . and they do not mind the inconsistency between the line which their members took in the Select Committee and a vote in favour of the landlords on one of the crucial points', Halifax Colln., 20, Marris-Irwin, 2 July 1926.

2 AICC Ps. G-140(Kw)(i)/1931, JN-Altafur Rahman, 30-7-31 (emphasis added).

3 See Conrad Brandt, et al (eds): A Documentary History of Chinese Communism, passim; Stuart R. Schram: 'Mao Tse-Tung and the Role of the Various Classes in the Chinese Revolution, 1923-27', (in 'The Polity and Economy of China'; forthcoming). The latter quotes Mao's statement in 1926, at a crucial turning point in the debate: 'The greatest adversary of revolution [i.e. the National Revolution, led by the bourgeoisie] in an economically backward semi-colony is the feudal-patriarchal class (the landlord class) in the villages.' It was through this class and its chieftains, the warlords, that the imperialists maintained their domination in the country. Hence, Mao concluded, to overthrow that domination it was necessary to mobilise the peasantry to destroy the foundations of imperialist and warlord rule.

rocked the councils of the Congress as it appealed for support to every section of Indian society, rural and urban, during the years of civil disobedience. Later, Purushottam Das Tandon revealed the grossly inadequate knowledge in the higher echelons of the U.P. Congress regarding the conditions of the mass of the 'peasants' whose support the party solicited and, to some extent, procured: he wrote, after a five-day tour of 33 villages in three tahsils of Allahabad district, 'We who live in the towns have generally no notion of how peasants are passing their days . . .'[1]

Of course, in the U.P., as in other areas, independent actions on the part of the 'masses' forced political leaders to take account of them and of their grievances.[2] We have noted, in the Bhatwaria case, how militant peasant action in 1931 drew the Congress leadership into a new area, in order to control the situation, but also in order to represent the protesting peasants in the courts. Other districts in the U.P. also provide examples of direct Congress responses to independent initiatives by groups of peasants. In Rae Bareli, a 'strike' by 500 tenants of the Arkha estate, who stopped tilling their zamindar's field in October 1931,[3] brought immediate intervention by the district Congress. Congress leaders negotiated with the zamindar, and quickly concluded an agreement, laying down

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1 Tandon Ps., Grp. XIII, s.n. 200, 'Notes' (in Tandon's hand, n.d. but a reference to Linlithgow suggests that they were written in 1936).

2 Schram, loc. cit., writes '. . . the upsurge of revolutionary activity in the countryside, since the middle of 1925 . . . forced itself on the attention of even the most urban-oriented'. See also Nehru: An Autobiography, pp. 49 and 51, for the influence of the Oudh kisan agitation of 1920-21 on Nehru; Blair B. Kling: The Blue Mutiny. The Indigo Disturbances in Bengal. 1859-1862 (Philadelphia 1966), p. 222, for the influence of the indigo ryots' actions on Calcutta politicians.

3 PAI 31 October 1931. PAI 7 November 1931 reported another example of independent tenant action: 46 tenants from village Pandera, ejected by their talugdar, tilled the fields without his consent and urged other ejected kisans to do the same.

conditions under which land would be leased out to the tenants once again, and the tenants could pay a given proportion of rent arrears or postpone payment for a limited period.[1]

More strikingly, Anjani Kumar (Tewari),[2] the son of a police official of Balrampur (Gonda) and himself a lawyer in Rae Bareli town, an active civil disobedience worker in his home tahsil of Bachhrawan and 'Dictator' of the district Congress in December 1930, showed how a recognised Congress leader could be swept along in the wave of peasant militancy. In June 1931, with four or five hundred volunteers, he picketed the house of the Raja of Sheogarh who had started attachment proceedings against some of his tenants. The picketers demanded an apology from the Manager of the Raja's estate, and announced that the Raja had been fined Rs. 1,000 by the Congress.[3]

At this stage, Anjani Kumar was pulled up by the senior Congress leader of the district,[4] partly because the Raja of Sheogarh had earlier reached an agreement with the district Congress regarding remissions for his tenants.[5] Yet, the action of Anjani Kumar and the tenant-volunteers had demonstrable effect. By August, this 'militant' had been fully rehabilitated in the Rae Bareli Congress and detailed enquiries were being conducted regarding atrocities in the Sheogarh estate; and the report of the enquiry committee on Agrarian Distress in the U.P. (published in September) carried a long note on the subject,

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1 See p.168, f.n. 1 above

2 Like others, he dropped the surname during civil disobedience in order to avoid caste distinctions: interview, Rae Bareli, 14 January 1973

3 GOI Home Poll. 33/24/31, D.O. 17/6 D.C., Rae Bareli-Commissioner, Lucknow, 30 June 1931; also 'Statement of Case Regarding 'No-Rent' Campaign'

4 AICC Ps. G-59/1931, JN-Secy. PCC, 2 July 1931, enclosing complaints from Sitla Sahai

5 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., p. 113; GOI Home Poll. 33/24/31, D.O. 17/6 D.C. Rae Bareli-Commissioner Lucknow, 30 June 1931. The latter reported that the Raja had also started a Khadi Vidyalaya in which Sitla Sahai's wife taught spinning.

written by Anjani Kumar himself.[1]

The evidence suggests that the independent protests of the poorer tenants and small patidars and zamindars in 1931, which brought upon them the full fury of the Government and the big landlords, served to draw the U.P. Congress leadership, first, into loud speech, and then, into action on their behalf. It might even be argued that these protests, and Government and landlord repression - which was aimed both at 'unruly' peasants and at the Congress organisation[2] - ultimately compelled the official Congress leadership to launch what it knew would be primarily a 'no-rent' campaign though it called for a campaign against the payment of both rent and revenue.

In the months after June 1931, U.P. Congress leaders had toured a large number of districts in the province, enquiring into, and publicising, 'peasant' woes and Government and landlord atrocities. Their report on Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces (1931), a direct result of these investigations, showed a growing inclination to represent strongly the viewpoint of the tenants of big landlords, even while indicating the problems faced by various classes of zamindars themselves. At this time, moreover, a growing number of Congress leaders in the U.P. began to adopt a more militant and radical line on agrarian questions, speaking of the need for immediate action to alleviate the distress of tenants, especially in Oudh, and even of the need to remove intermediaries between the cultivator and the State.[3] By November 1931, indeed, the leadership had gone so far in its commitment to renew satyagraha that the reference of the question of agrarian troubles in the U.P. to Gandhi at the Round Table Conference[4] was no more than a

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1 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., pp. 124-8

2 In Rae Bareli and Bara Banki, Government orders had to be withdrawn because they were aimed too directly at the Congress: GOI Home Poll. 33/23/31, and Agrarian Distress in the U.P. p. 128

3 e.g. NOP 15 August and 19 September 1931

4 See U.P. Government's 'Statement of Case regarding No-rent Campaign' (14 December 1931), which mentions JN's cable to

formality, seeking sanction for something that could not be stopped.

In the years that followed, the 'radical' trend in U.P. Congress circles continued to grow. The U.P. Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report of 1936 showed the distance that important elements in the provincial Congress leadership had traversed since 1931. The 1931 Congress enquiry committee had produced an account of suffering and ill-treatment in the countryside, with no attempt at an analysis of the structure of rural society.[1] The 1936 committee faced precisely this latter task, and concluded by demanding the abolition of the zamindari system in the long-term. In addition, it recommended, for implementation as soon as possible, a great reduction in rent; the exemption of uneconomic holdings from all rent or land-tax; the abolition of all feudal dues and illegal demands; the tackling of the problem of rural indebtedness, and the introduction of co-operative farming, among other things.[2] There was still no mention of the landless labourer[3] but the voice of the poor and middle peasants at least was heard, together with that of rich peasants and small landlords. While the latter were easily the greatest beneficiaries of the 1939 U.P. Tenancy Act, passed under the aegis of the Pant ministry, the Act also brought certain tangible gains to the poorer

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Gandhi on 16 October 1931 and Gandhi's reply, and the all-India Congress President Vallabhbhai Patel's letter of 10 November 1931 to the President of the U.P. PCC saying that since collections began in mid-November they could not await Gandhi's return and 'he saw no alternative before the Provincial Committee but . . . /that of/ advising peasants to refuse voluntarily to pay any rent or revenue till adequate relief was secured.'

1 Agrarian Distress in the U.P., passim.

2 Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report, Ch. on 'Recommendations'

3 The Lucknow Congress leader, Gopi Nath Srivastava, admitted this openly. 'The role of the landless . . . in the determination of the Congress policy is not yet active', he wrote, When Congress Ruled (A Close-Range Survey of the Congress Administration during the Twenty-Eight Months of 1937-39 in the United Provinces (Lucknow, n.d.), p. 18

sections of rural society.[1]

We have already noted that the impression of a general re-orientation of the Congress movement in the early or mid-1930's is misleading. But Congress actions at the time of the Depression, and its subsequent pronouncements, had clarified to some extent what had earlier been (perhaps deliberately) a rather vague and ill-defined platform. Jawaharlal Nehru spoke not for himself alone, but for a growing body of opinion in the U.P. Congress, when he wrote in 1934:

> 'Both . . . poor landowners and the middle landlords, though often intellectually backward, are as a whole a fine body of men and women . . . Not so the taluqadars /sic/ and the big zamindars, barring a few notable exceptions. They have not even the virtues of an aristocracy. As a class they are physically and intellectually degenerate and have outlived their day; they will continue so long as an external power like the British Government props them up.'[2]

He could make no such analysis of the richer classes in urban areas, but from the point of view of a movement against imperialism and its local agents this was a less important task.

With the clarification of the Congress' position vis a vis the different sections of rural society, there was, inevitably, a shrinking of the range from which the Congress drew its support. The bigger landlords in the U.P. had long been loosely allied to the Raj. Various events in 1928 strengthened the alliance: among these was the publication of the Nehru Report produced by a Congress-dominated All Parties' Conference, and the cajoling of a concerned bureaucracy.[3] Congress actions and pronouncements during the civil disobedience movement[4] and after completed the

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1 See my 'A Rural Base for Congress: the United Provinces, 1920-39' (forthcoming). P. D. Reeves: 'Landlord Associations and Provincial Politics in the U.P., 1920-51 (forthcoming) discusses the measure fully.

2 Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 58

3 See Ch. 5

4 Halifax Colln., 24, Hailey-Irwin, 9 June 1930, noted the opposition of 'men of position' when the Congress began to talk in terms of the non-payment of dues.

Congress-landlord split. By the mid-1930's, the big landlords as a class were well aware of the losses they must suffer under swaraj, and the 1939 Tenancy Act provided them a foretaste of things to come.

At the other end of the scale, the mass of the poor in the villages, as in the towns, (urban and rural labourers, and the petty tenants) found little mention in the U.P. Congress' proposals and legislative enactments. The Harijan movement certainly affected a very large number of men from these classes, but it did not provide a sufficient basis for long-term commitment to the Congress struggle. Nor was such commitment encouraged by the sacrifice of their interests when these clashed with some, to them necessarily distant, 'national political considerations'. Consequently, the Indian national movement failed to become a mass movement in the real sense of the term. It was, in the 1920's and early 1930's, an extremely popular movement, but one symbolised by mass meetings rather than mass actions. This was much more obvious in the civil disobedience movement of the early 1930's than it had been during non-co-operation in 1920-22, and it goes a long way to explain why the British in India were never as disturbed by the later movement as they had been by the earlier.[1]

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1 D. A. Low: 'Combating Congress: The Government of India and the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1905-1945' (Seminar Paper, Oxford 1971); and discussions with Professors Low and J. A. Gallagher.

Chapter 5

THE ALIENATION OF THE MUSLIMS

If the limited social base of the Indian national movement was one of its major weaknesses, its ultimate failure to carry with it the largest minority community in the country was another, perhaps greater, one. The many complex pressures and events of the years 1937 to 1947, especially the period of the Second World War, had much to do with the final denouement of Partition. But communalism, that is, the Hindu and Muslim perceptions of themselves as politically distinct, even hostile, communities, had become a factor to reckon with long before then. Signs of general Muslim disaffection from what they increasingly considered the 'Hindu' Congress had become clear by the time of civil disobedience.

A sample survey of civil disobedience prisoners in various provinces in 1932 revealed the overwhelmingly Hindu composition of the satyagrahis. The variations were unimportant, from 89 per cent Hindus (and Sikhs) in one Punjab jail and 91 per cent in Delhi, to over 99 per cent in the Central Provinces and Bihar and Orissa. Only the North West Frontier Province defied this pattern: here, of 1,500 persons jailed for civil disobedience between December 1931 and December 1932, all were Muslim except for 5 Hindus and 2 Sikhs.[1] The Bombay Government commented:

> '. . . Congress and its foreign friends . . . represent the civil disobedience movement in India as the spontaneous uprising of a whole nation . . . But the facts show that the civil disobedience movement is a sectional movement practically confined to the Hindus . . .'[2]

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1 GOI Home Poll. 23/66/1932

2 Ibid., Gennings, Publicity Officer, Bombay, D.O. No. 1/1885 to D.P.I. 5 August 1932.

The implication that the Congress movement aimed at benefiting the Hindus alone was open to question, but it could scarcely be denied that Muslims in general had held aloof from the agitation. The countrywide pattern was replicated in the U.P:

> 'Muslims continue for the most part to hold aloof from the Congress', it was reported in August 1930. 'The Aligarh Muslim university and other Muslim educational institutions have so far not been affected by the Congress agitation. Successful Muslim counter-demonstrations have been held at Cawnpore, Lucknow and other places . . .'[1]

Lists of U.P. 'freedom fighters' felicitated subsequently by the Government of independent India, include several Muslim names.[2] But they are, by and large, those of men who were involved in the Khilafat-non-co-operation campaigns of 1920-22. Few among them continued active in the Congress agitations of 1930-33, and these were men like Sherwani, Kidwai, and Manzhar Ali Sokhta, leaders of the Congress in their own right and men who had close links with the Nehrus.

A closer scrutiny of lists of civil disobedience prisoners in Allahabad between 1930 and 1933 illustrates the point further. Two independent lists give the number of political prisoners as 679 and 655.[3] The total number of Muslim names found in the first list is 9, all of men jailed in the first phase of civil disobedience in 1930-31. Eight of these were from the city of Allahabad, and of them 3 were established local Congress leaders. According to the second list, 5 Muslims went to Malaka district jail in the period 1930-31. Four were from the city,

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1 FR August 1930, 1

2 See Svatantrata Sangram ke Sainik volumes for the individual U.P. districts. Jail-going has been taken as the criterion for determining who was a 'freedom fighter'.

3 Svatantrata Sangram ke Sainik, Allahabad Division, and 'Malaka Jail Records' (Collectorate, Allahabad) respectively. The discrepancy in the totals arises partly because the former source contains in it the names of all political prisoners of Allahabad, whether jailed in Malaka Jail, the Naini Central Jail (where prominent leaders were sent) or elsewhere.

2 of them local Congress leaders and a third - whose address was given as 'Congress Office, Allahabad' - presumably a Congress employee. Three more Muslim names are found among those convicted in 1932. Two were of city men, 1 a recognized leader who had been to jail in 1930 as well.

In Government's sample survey of 1932, enquiries were made in the district jails of Lucknow, Bareilly and Fyzabad concerning political prisoners arrested between the end of 1931 and 1 November 1932, and in the camp jail at Lucknow which was open from early January to 15 May 1932. The proportions of Hindus among the prisoners were as follows:[1]

Lucknow Camp Jail - 1,721 out of 1,735 i.e. 99.2%
Lucknow District Jail - 755 out of 765, i.e. 98.7%
Bareilly District Jail - all Hindus
Fyzabad District Jail - 135 out of 140, i.e. 96.4%

The Fyzabad figure is especially significant, since this jail was set apart mainly for students arrested during civil disobedience. That even Muslim students at college and school found it difficult to join forces with their Hindu colleagues in the nationalist agitation is a telling reflection on the state of communal relations in the province by this time.

At the level of the political leadership, the Nehru Report has been seen as the breaking-point between Muslims and the Congress.[2] Tables I and II set out the Nehru Committee's proposals for the U.P., against other proposals put forward in 1928 when the Simon Commission came out to review the progress of the 1919 Reforms. A glance at these proposals is enough to show why landlords, Muslim and Hindu, immediately shied away from the Congress. Not only did the Nehru Report completely

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1 GOI Home Poll. 23/66/1932, J. R. W. Bennett, Secy. to U.P. Govt-Secy. to GOI, Lucknow, 2 December 1932

2 Hector Bolitho: Jinnah, Creator of Pakistan (London, 1954), pp. 92-5, and Waheed-uz-zaman: Towards Pakistan (Lahore, 1969), pp. 36-76, have called it 'The parting of ways', after a remark imputed to Jinnah. See also Page: 'Prelude to Partition: All India Moslim Politics 1920-1932', pp. 149-186.

TABLE I

COMPOSITION OF THE U.P. LEGISLATURE: LOWER HOUSE

	Under the 1919 Act	U.P. Govt.	Proposal of UP Legislative Council C'ttee	Proposal of U.P. Muslims	Proposal of Nehru C'ttee
ELECTED					
Non-Muhammadan	60	60	133	70	408
Muhammadan	29	29		30	72
Europeans	1	1	2	Demand	Seats
Anglo-Indians	-	-	3	was for	reserved
Indian Christians	-	-	3	separate	for
Landholders	6	12		electorate	Muslims
(British Indian Association, Oudh)		(4 Oudh Taluqds.	8	and reser-	on
(Agra Province Zamindars Association)		1 Oudh non-Taluq.	6	vation of	popula-
(U.P. Zamindars Association)		7 Agra Zaminds.)	2	seats as in 1919 Act, i.e. 30% of elective seats	tion basis
Trade and Commerce	3	3	5		
Universities	1	2	2		
NOMINATED					
Depressed and Backward Classes	-	-	15		
Labour	-	-	1		
Women	-	-	2		
General non-official	5	10	-		
Official	16	1	-		
Ex-officio	2	0	-		
TOTAL:	123	118	182	(100)	408

1911

continued over

TABLE I cont.

	Under the 1919 Act	U.P. Govt.	Proposal of UP Legislative Council C'ttee	Proposal of U.P. Muslims	Proposal of Nehru C'ttee
% of Elective Seats reserved for Muslims	30%	27%	30%	30%	15%
% of Elective Seats reserved for landlords	6%	Nearly 16%	Nearly 10%	-	0%

Source: Prepared from the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission (H.M.'s Stationery Office, London, 1930), Vols. III and IX; Representation of the Muslims of U.P. to the Indian Statutory Commission, July 1928 (Allahabad); and Report of the All-Parties Conference, 1928 (AICC, Allahabad, 1928).

TABLE II

FRANCHISE FOR ELECTIONS TO THE LOWER HOUSE

	1919 Act	U.P. Govt.	Proposal of UPLC Committee	U.P. Muslims	Nehru Committee
RURAL:	Rs. 25 rev. Rs. 50 rent	Rs. 10 rev. Rs. 25 rent	Rs. 20 rev. Rs. 50 rent	No discussion of the question	ADULT FRANCHISE
URBAN:	Rs. 36 rent on house Rs. 2,000 income				
EDUCATIONAL:	-	-	All persons, aged 21 years or more, who possess Vernacular Upper Primary (IV Std.) certificate, or have passed Vernacular Final or Anglo-Vernacular Matriculation (or equivalent) examination		
WOMEN'S:	-	-	Above qualifications, but age requirement 25 years. Also wives of men who have 3 times urban or rural qualification of 1919		
TOTAL:	1.5 million	Increase of about 30,000 voters	Increase not calculable but small	All adults in population of 48 million	

Source: Same as for Table 1, this chapter

dispense with special representation for landlords, and the possibility of nomination to additional seats which they enjoyed under the 1919 constitution, it also advocated full adult franchise, a situation in which the landlords' methods of traditional influence were likely to be less effective and an organised party, with a large body of campaigners, would have a distinct advantage.[1]

Besides, in the two hundred or so pages which the Nehru Report covered, there was only one sentence concerning the landlords: 'All titles to private and personal property, lawfully acquired and enjoyed at the establishment of the Commonwealth, are hereby guaranteed.'[2] This sentence itself was added in the Supplementary Report at the behest of Madan Mohan Malaviya, a friend of many leading landlords, and then not without some opposition from others, including prominent U.P. Congressmen like Sri Prakasa.[3]

At least one Muslim landlord, Sheikh Habibullah, admitted subsequently that the Nehru Report had led him to desert the nationalist camp on the question of the boycott of the Simon Commission.[4] Others seem to have been similarly affected. Early in 1928, one of the three landlord associations of the U.P., the Agra Province Zamindars' Association, controlled by the Muslim minister Nawab Muhammad Yusuf, had declared its intention of putting its case before the Simon Commission. After the publication of the Nehru Report, the U.P. Zamindars' Association and the British Indian Association of Oudh followed

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1 See P. D. Reeves: 'Landlords and Party Politics in the United Provinces, 1934-7' in D. A. Low (ed): Soundings in Modern South Asian History (London 1968), for the consequences of an enlarged electorate, which was still far smaller than the electorate that adult franchise would have created.

2 All Parties' Conference, 1928, Supplementary Report of the Committee (Allahabad 1928), p. 32

3 All Parties' Conference, 1928, Report of the Committee appointed to determine the Principles of a Constitution for India (Allahabad 1928), p. 168, and Proceedings of the All-Parties National Convention (Allahabad 1929), pp. 63-5

4 UPLC Progs., XXXIX, pp. 173-4

suit. With this shift in positions, a 56 to 55 majority in the U.P. Legislative Council, favouring the boycott of the Simon Commission in February 1928, became a distinct minority by September when another vote was taken on this issue. On the second occasion, the Swarajists and Nationalists in the Council had to content themselves with bitter speeches and a 'walk-out'.[1]

For other Muslim politicians in the U.P., also, the Nehru Report proved disappointing. While all other proposals put forward in the U.P. at this time preserved a 'reserved' quota of nearly 30 per cent of the elective seats for them, the Nehru Report reduced their proportion of reserved seats by a clear 50 per cent, making it strictly proportional to population. At the centre as well as in the provinces, Muslim representation in excess of their proportion in the population was to disappear under the Nehru scheme.[2] For Muslim politicians, including those sympathetic to the Congress, this proved a particularly difficult pill to swallow. In the months following the publication of the Nehru Report, indeed, the reservation for Muslims of a third of the seats at the centre became a central demand of almost all Muslim political groups in India, whether classified 'communalist' or 'nationalist' hitherto.[3]

In the U.P., prior to the publication of the Nehru Report, certain Muslim politicians, apart from the landlords,[4] had spoken out in favour of representing Muslim interests before the Simon Commission.[5] The publication of the Report led to a

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1 FR February 1928, 2 and The Pioneer, 20 September 1928

2 Report of the All-Parties' Conference, p. 52

3 For the dissent and demands of different Muslim politicians and political groups, leading on to the formation of the All-India Moslem Conference which showed a greater degree of agreement among Muslim political leaders than ever before, see Page: 'Prelude to Partition . . .', pp. 149-186

4 Of the 31 Muslim legislators in the U.P., most of them substantial landlords, 24 had voted against the boycott of the Simon Commission when a division was first called on this issue; FR, February 1928, 2.

5 Prominent among them were Zahur Ahmad, Allahabad barrister and a Swarajist legislator from 1923, and Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Dublin

redoubling of their efforts. More notably, it led to a desertion of the Congress by Muslims who were until then closely associated with it. Shuaib Qureshi, product of Aligarh, prominent Khilafatist, and a member of the Nehru Committee (which produced the Report), wrote a dissenting minute which opposed basic premises of the Nehru Report.[1] Shaukat Ali, President of the U.P. PCC as recently as 1925-6, now came to be recognized as the leader of the opposition to the Nehru Report.[2] Hasrat Mohani, who had clashed with Gandhi on account of his demand that 'complete independence' be declared the Congress' goal as early as 1921, expressed his growing concern for Muslim interests. While supporting the idea of an All-Parties' Conference to frame a constitution for India,[3] he urged a settlement of Muslim claims first.[4] When the Nehru Report was published, he rejected it totally. He declared, indeed, that the National or rather the 'Nehru Convention' (to be held in Calcutta in December 1928 to ratify the Report) was designed simply to establish Hindu raj under British protection; that the Nehruites were enemies of 'complete independence' and no Muslim could have any sympathy with them; and that it was mostly organisations possessed of the Hindu Sabhaite mentality that had been invited to the Calcutta Convention.[5]

The ulema of the U.P., especially those in Deoband, largely remained aloof from the constitutional discussions. If anything, the Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind of Deoband was sympathetic to the Congress programme; in 1930 it would even issue a fatwa

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and London-educated Professor of Modern History at Allahabad University, who with others formed a committee to formulate the demands of U.P. Muslims; see Abhyudaya 4 February 1928, The Pioneer 5 and 6 February 1928.

1 Page: 'Prelude to Partition . . .'. p. 159

2 Pioneer, 24 August and 14 October 1928

3 NOP, 4 February 1928

4 Indian Quarterly Register, July-December 1927, vol. II, p. 16

5 Pioneer, 1 September 1928; NOP 22 December 1928 (extracts from Mohani's paper, Mustaqil).

declaring the Salt Tax 'impious'.[1] To counter its influence, and to increase support for their view among Muslims generally, the Ali Brothers, Mohani and others established a break-away Jamiat-ul-ulema at Kanpur in 1929.[2] Primarily, the object was to establish a school of divines who could support their moves against any proclamation from Deoband. 'The tragedy', Motilal Nehru wrote,

> 'is that some of those very Muslims who have in the recent past contributed to a considerable extent to the greatness of Congress have now arrayed themselves among its enemies . ... All Parties' Committee Report has got on their brains and they smell in it disaster for Islam.'[3]

Among the factors responsible for this almost total alienation of the U.P. Muslim leadership from the Congress were the style and form of British rule in India and the conscious encouragement and efforts of the Government of the U.P. Recent studies of Muslim politics in India have noticed the importance of both these factors. 'The very idiom of British rule after 1857 encouraged the development of political consciousness by religious communities', writes Peter Hardy.[4]

David Page carries the argument further in his study of Muslim politics under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. He sees the granting of separate electorates as:

> '. . . an attempt by the Raj to shore up a crucial part of its system of control. For those Moslems outside the system of control, however', he adds, ' and particularly for the Moslem professional and educated elite, this innovation had serious implications. For it meant that they could onlywork the Reforms successfully if they came to terms with the grievances of the Moslem localities.'[5]

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1 Halifax Colln., 24, Hailey-Cunningham, 26 April 1930.

2 GOI Home Poll. 150/1934, S. N. A. Jafri: 'Statement on Muslim Organisations in India'.

3 MN Ps., Miscellaneous, Subject File: 'Motilal Nehru's message to Brelvi on the occasion of the formation of the Muslim Congress Party'.

4 The Muslims of British India (CUP 1972), p. 116; also Page: 'Prelude to Partition . . .', p. 263

5 Ibid., p. xx.

Together with the pressure of political institutions went the direct encouragement of British administrators, in the U.P. as elsewhere.[1] Hailey, transferred from the Governorship of the Punjab to that of the U.P. in August 1928, saw his major task in the U.P. as that of helping 'landlords' and 'Muslims' to organise and express themselves - in support of the British.[2] For this purpose Hailey regarded the Nehru Report as a heaven-sent opportunity 'for it presents their [i.e. the nationalists'] ideas in a concrete form'.

> 'In the U.P.', he wrote, 'we should probably have twelve or fifteen million voters, mainly tenants, so that the landlords would be ousted from general constituencies and at the same time reserved seats would disappear. As for the Mussalmans, they would be far worse off than at present. I am afraid that I have already been guilty of impressing these facts on both parties . . .'[3]

His efforts were evidently not ineffective, judging from the U.P. Legislative Council's reversal of its earlier decision to boycott the Simon Commission.

In 1929 and 1930, the U.P. Government's courting of Muslims continued. On its behalf, the Nawab of Chhatari, an influential Muslim landlord of Bulandshahr district, an MBE and KCIE, Home Member of the U.P. Government and acting-Governor of the province for a short while in 1928 (and again in 1933-4), tried to persuade Muhammad Ali, the Khilafat leader, to make an announcement against a civil disobedience campaign until the results of the Round Table Conference were

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1 Ibid., pp. 17-19, for a Bengal example

2 Hailey Colln., 13B, and C, Hailey's correspondence of August and September 1928.

3 Ibid., 13B, Hailey-Fazl-i-Husain, 25 August 1928. Even without the Nehru Report, something could be done. As Lord Irwin, the Viceroy put it:

> '. . . it seems an unnatural and an unnecessary state of things for many of the principal representatives of the landed interest to have drifted away from Government, and I should suppose that, with a little attention and encouragement, they might be persuaded to drift back again . . .'.

Ibid., 13B, Irwin-Hailey, 22 August 1928.

clear.[1] Efforts were made to get the ulema to pronounce against civil disobedience, and to have the Nawab of Bhopal exercise his influence with the ulema.[2] Chhatari was also responsible for a Tausih Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind (Kanpur) meeting in May 1930, which strongly opposed the Congress programme.[3]

At this point, with civil disobedience attaining a pitch quite unexpected by the Government, Hailey went a step further in his efforts to win over the Muslims. U.P. Muslims were extremely agitated by the Sarda (Child Marriage Restraint) Act. Hailey noted that even a level-headed, loyal zamindar like Chhatari pressed for its amendment. Such an amendment might be a good idea, he suggested to Delhi; 'I am so impressed by the necessity of retaining Muslim opinion on our side'.[4] Ultimately, the idea of an amendment was not accepted, but it was made clear to Muslims generally that prosecutions for breaches of the Act were unlikely.[5]

A similar thought process led Hailey, in the last week of May 1930, to order an enquiry by a Sessions Judge into police action against demonstrators in Lucknow. He saw Muslims adding to the barrage of complaints, and noted their dissatisfaction at the magisterial enquiry that had been ordered.

> 'A danger arose', he explained, 'that the Muslims of Lucknow who had hitherto held aloof from Civil Disobedience would join in with the Congress as a kind of protest . . .'[6]

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1 Halifax Colln., 23, Chhatari-Irwin, 18 November 1929

2 Ibid., 24, Hailey-Cunningham, 26 April 1930; Hailey Colln., 18A, Hailey-Chhatari, 1 May 1930

3 Ibid., 18A, Hailey-Haig, 10 May 1930

4 Loc. cit.

5 U.P. GAD 241/1930 (SRR), D.O. No. 199, Commissioner Allahabad-Chief Secy., U.P., 9 May 1930

6 Hailey Colln., 18B, unaddressed note signed Hailey, 2 June 1930. See also ibid., 18B, Hailey-de Montmorency, 5 June 1930; ibid., 23A, Hailey-de Montmorency, 31 January 1932 which shows Govt's concern at the slightest sign of a Muslim 'drift towards Congress politics'; and ibid., 28A, Hailey-Willingdon, 9 November 1934 which reports Congress successes in the Legislative Assembly elections in the U.P. and says 'We had better hopes in the

It was the Government's view that 'every legitimate effort must be made to prevent the Muslims as a body from declaring in favour of the civil disobedience movement'; in accordance with this, wrote the Commissioner of Allahabad division, 'action is being and had already been taken in a quiet way.'[1] The provincial Government itself gave financial assistance to the U.P. Tanzim Committee, an organisation led by Shaukat Ali and including several traditional Muslim leaders, which did effective anti-Congress work in these years.[2] At the district level, Government officials could be more brazen in their efforts to undercut Congress support. A Muslim journalist of Kanpur reported, for instance, that

> '. . . the Collector tried to throw nets round me. He tempted me with everything including title, Honorary Magistracy, and service. A very big Hindu Officer of the Province . . . offered me Rs. 150/p.m., besides travelling expenses, for delivering in the villages of Cawnpore district only four speeches against the Congress, every month . . .'[3]

Yet an explanation of the growing Muslim alienation from the Congress which stops short at this point misses out a crucial element. The Government's efforts at wooing the Muslims, and the preaching of communal organisations like the Tanzim Committee, could be effective only in conditions of communal ill-will on the ground. Equally, the reception accorded to the Nehru Report by men like Shaukat Ali and Hasrat Mohani, who had kept aloof from elections and the legislatures, cannot

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Muhammadan constituencies and some organisation was attempted by the "League" interests'.

1 U.P. GAD 241/1930, Commissioner Allahabad-Chief Secy., 9 May 1930

2 Hailey Colln., 19B, Hailey-Crerar, 25 September 1930; PAI 6 and 13 September 1930; and AICC Ps. 68/1931, typescript of 'Report of Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee' (hereafter, Congress Kanpur Report), p. 179

3 Congress Kanpur Report, p. 180. U.P. GAD 241/1930, Commissioner Allahabad's letter, 9 May 1930, recommended that it be made clear that in the award of titles, and the making of appointments, preferential treatment would be given to those who supported Govt. at this time. This was written in the context of the need to retain Muslim support.

be explained in constitutional terms alone. To generalise the argument, there was no reason for groups which had gained nothing from the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms to automatically oppose any proposal for change in the constitutional arrangements.

Big Muslim landlords in the U.P., like their Hindu counterparts, would naturally be alienated by proposals for 'one man one vote', and legislature seats for those who could gain the greatest support among all the electors, regardless of social position or religion. But even for them it is important to ask why a Muslim platform became specially significant. Other Muslim politicians - lawyers, teachers, journalists, and others - of course gained nothing from the rural bias of the 1919 constitution and little from the reserved quota of Muslim seats; only four of these were from urban constituencies. If these men, including many whose nationalist leanings and activities were well known, had shifted by the late 1920's to a position where they saw their political future closer to that of powerful Muslim groups outside the U.P., such as the Punjabi Muslims, than to the Congress,[1] the shift requires explanation.

The quandary in which nationalist Muslim politicians found themselves at this time is clearly seen in their actions in connection with the civil disobedience movement. T. A. K. Sherwani and Khaliquzzaman, two of Motilal Nehru's closest followers in the U.P., resigned from the AICC in December 1929 when the Lahore Congress decided on mass civil disobedience, on the grounds that the Viceroy's 'Dominion Status' declaration of 31 October 1929 deserved greater credit than the Congress gave it. Shortly afterwards, however, Sherwani was persuaded by Motilal Nehru to accept the new Congress position.[2] Later,

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1 Page: 'Prelude to Partition . . .', p. 172-3, suggests that this was so, possibly because of new Muslim fears generated by the Nehru Report regarding a Congress-dominated national government at the centre.

2 Khaliquzzaman: Pathway to Pakistan (Lahore 1961), pp. 104-5

during the civil disobedience movement, Khaliquzzaman was persuaded by Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, the Delhi Congress and nationalist Muslim leader, to accept the 'Dictatorship' of the banned national Congress; and Khaliquzzaman wore this 'crown' uneasily for three months.[1]

Hasrat Mohani, the independence-wallah never a believer in British promises,[2] was himself not completely at ease in the Congress camp during these years. He opposed the Nehru Report strongly, as noted above. At the same time, however, he was enthused by the 'rising spirit' of Indian youth and the growing opinion on the Congress in favour of 'complete independence'. In November 1929, he resigned his membership of the Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind, Kanpur. The reason he gave for this step was that he was a whole-hearted nationalist.[3] Yet, in the following month, he was prominent in the Muslim agitation against the Sarda Act, which Muslims considered an unwarranted interference with their religion.[4] He took an active part in the civil disobedience campaign that followed, exhorting the masses of Muslims to participate, but his concern for Muslim interests remained evident throughout.

In Maulvi Riyasat Husain of Rae Bareli, similarly, 'communal' feelings and nationalist sympathies co-existed uneasily. Founder and organiser of the Madarsa Rahmania in Rae Bareli, Riyasat Husain was drawn into the Khilafat agitation in 1921 and joined the Congress. He was jailed for a year. By 1922 he was a recognized Congress leader of the district. In the troubled communal situation of the following years, he drifted away from the main line of Congress activities. In 1928, he was among those who felt that Muslims must protect themselves from other religions; he became President of an anjuman in Rae Bareli to teach religion to ignorant Muslims.[5]

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1 Ibid., p. 107

2 See NOP 9 November 1929, extract from Mustaqil

3 Abhyud., 2 November 1929

4 PAIs for December 1929. See also NOP 14 and 21 June 1930.

5 PAI 28 July 1928

In 1929 and early 1930, he spoke at mosques and public meetings, on specifically Muslim questions, for specifically Muslim interests[1] - including their position vis-a-vis the Sarda Act. The civil disobedience of 1930, the Government's reaction to it, and growing anti-British feelings in the district caused another change in Riyasat Husain's position. In October 1930 he was reported to be working secretly for the Congress in Rae Bareli town, and supplying volunteers at the Tilak Bhawan with food.[2] Since open association with the Congress might damage his reputation among men of his religion, this was one of the few lines of action open to him.

These examples themselves indicate the extent of anti-Hindu (and anti-Congress) feeling among the Muslims of the U.P. in the late 1920's and early 1930's. In creating this strong sense of Muslim identity, and general Muslim antagonism to the Hindus, the style and form of government had certainly played a part. But the style and form of Congress propaganda, and the refusal of the Congress leadership to face the communal problem squarely, also had an importance. The Hindu slant in much of the Congress' propaganda, noticed earlier, was scarcely encouraging to Muslims. In addition, communal appeals, used for short-term electoral purposes, tended to develop a life of their own. 'Ideology' became something of an independent variable, as it were. We have seen, in the last chapter, how independent peasant actions, themselves partly the result of earlier politicisation by the Congress, pushed the Congress into a more militant position in the last part of 1931. In the development of communalism, too, there were in time instances of the tail wagging the dog. When that happened any hopes of a bold tackling of the Hindu-Muslim problem receded further.

Throughout northern India, but especially in the U.P., the mid-1920's were marked by a great increase in the level of

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1 PAI 26 October and 7 December 1929, 1 February 1930, etc.

2 PAI 4 October 1930.

communal tension and the number of communal riots. (See Table III).[1] Intelligence reports indicate that communal meetings and incidents completely over-shadowed all other public activities in the U.P. during the years 1925 to 1927.[2] In certain areas, Hindu communal movements became very highly organised and extremely active at this time. Agra city, for instance, was divided by the Arya Samaj into several sections, each under a samdai bhikshu who was in charge of all Samaj activities in his section.[3] As late as 1928, the weekly Arya Samaj meetings (and the Muslim meetings held at the mosque after Friday evening prayers) continued to be the most regular political meetings in Agra.[4] Communal hostility in the city was so great by this time that, in the election to the chairmanship of the municipality in February 1929, Hindu members as a body and Muslim members likewise backed different candidates and refused to attend together on any date fixed for the election.[5]

The new age of communalism in northern India was heralded by Swami Shraddhanand's move in 1923 for the reclamation of Malkana Rajput, Gujar and Bania converts to Islam in western U.P. There followed a vicious circle of sprouting shuddhi (purification) and sangathan (unity) organisations on the Hindu side, matched by tabligh (propagation) and tanzim (organisation) bodies on the Muslim.[6] The initial Hindu reaction itself was set off by the fears generated on account of the strong Muslim

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1 Indian Statutory Commission, IV, pp. 108-120, gives different figures for riots in the U.P. and suggests a marked decline in the number of riots in 1925 and 1926, but that communal tension remained high throughout these years, and that the U.P. was more affected than other provinces, is clear.

2 PAIs for 1925 to 1927.

3 PAI 27 February 1926

4 PAIs for first half of 1928

5 PAI 2 February 1929. Saharanpur faced an equally difficult situation; see Hume Colln., II, Hume to his parents, Saharanpur 1 September 1929.

6 U.P. Govt. 'A' Progs. (IOL) No. 71, 'Communal Friction in the U.P. 1924', No. 6522, Chief Secy. U.P.-Home Secy. GOI, Allahabad 2 January 1925.

TABLE III

STATEMENT OF COMMUNAL RIOTS
IN THE U.P.

Division	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
Kumaun	1	1	-	-	-
Meerut	4	3	-	1	3
Rohilkhand	4	6	3	1	4
Agra	2	-	1	-	3
Jhansi	-	-	1	-	1
Allahabad	1	1	-	8	6
Benares	1	1	2	1	3
Gorakhpur	-	1	-	2	2
Lucknow	2	5	3	2	4
Fyzabad	2	-	3	1	1
U.P. TOTAL	17	18	13	16	27

/Source: Prepared from the statements of the communal riots for the relevant years, in the U.P. General Department File 438/1927 (SRR)/

organisations that arose at the time of the Khilafat movement in many parts of India,[1] and more immediately by the Moplah rebellion of 1922, a revolt of Muslim peasants in Malabar in which Hindu landlords and moneylenders, shopkeepers and priests were the principal victims.[2]

A clear social division between Hindus and Muslims, especially in the towns, had of course existed for long.[3] Certain events of the Khilafat-non-co-operation period, particularly the religious appeals and the organisation of volunteers on communal lines, probably consolidated this division, and gave it a clear political aspect. But recent research on the emergence of separatist Muslim politics indicates that this social division acquired a permanent political significance, in the special circumstances of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, largely because of the instigation of certain interested parties within these communities.

> 'Muslim separatism in U.P.', writes Brass, 'was, in origin, the ideology of an upper class and upper middle class elite attempting to preserve its privileged position in society through political means.'[4]

Robinson, in his study of the emergence of Muslim politics in the U.P., discusses in detail the threat to the Muslim land-holding and service elites, in terms of land transfers, the growing strength of Hindu commercial men, and the problems regarding government employment. He distinguishes between the

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1 See Ch. 2 above.

2 Indra Prakash: A Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sangathan Movement (New Delhi 1938) Bhai Parmanand's 'Note', pp. xviii-xix; Hafeez Malik: Moslem Nationalism in India and Pakistan (Washington 1963), p. 238

3 M. Mujeeb: The Indian Muslims (London 1967), passim; Imtiaz Ahmad: 'Secularism and Communalism' (Economic and Political Weekly, IV, 28-30 July 1929); and R. Russell: 'Strands of Muslim Identity in South Asia' (South Asian Review, 6, 1 October 1967).

4 Paul R. Brass: 'Muslim Separatism in United Provinces. Social Context and Political Strategy before Partition' (Economic and Political Weekly, V, 3-5, 1970), p. 183.

Muslim elites of west U.P. and those of east U.P. and Oudh, suggesting that the latter were able to retain their position better than the former and that, consequently, it was among the former that communal thinking and demands first arose.[1] Finally, Page has argued that when membership of local boards became a stepping stone to membership of the provincial Council in the U.P., in 1909, elections at the local level became much more hotly contested and there was a distinct increase in communal ill-feeling.[2]

Evidence from the U.P. in the 1920's certainly supports the view that communal ill-will first affected 'the upper-middle class and . . . public men, and it was these elements who were responsible for introducing communal tension into the general population from above.'[3] In this province, with its minority of Muslims, whose leaders could well feel threatened by the growing number of Hindu educated men, government servants, traders, nationalist politicians, and so on, it was, interestingly, Hindu leaders who set the communal snowball rolling in the 1920's. Events surrounding the local elections of 1925-26, and the 1926 elections to the central and provincial legislatures, indicate this clearly. In both, groups led by Madan Mohan Malaviya and Motilal Nehru played a prominent part. We have suggested earlier that the non-co-operation movement proved a turning point in the contest for leadership between these two senior Congressmen. Until then, Nehru had none of the local

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1 F. C. R. Robinson: 'The Emergence of Muslim Politics in India: the Politics of the U.P. Muslims, 1860-1923' (forthcoming). See also his 'Municipal Government and Muslim Separatism in the United Provinces, 1883 to 1916' in Gallagher, et al (eds): Locality, Province and Nation. Page: 'Prelude to Partition . . .', pp. xxi-ii, disagrees with some of Robinson's figures, but agrees with the general point that Muslim elites who felt the greatest threat to their position adopted the most communal line.

2 Ibid., p. xxiv

3 Ibid., p. 62. Page bases this assessment on evidence from the Punjab and the U.P. This appears to have been the case in Bengal also to an extent; see J. H. Broomfield: Elite Conflict in a Plural Society. Twentieth Century Bengal (California, 1968), p. 327

support and influential connections that Malaviya had built up through his Hindi work, his Seva Samitis and his Kisan Sabhas. In 1920, he was expressing his disappointment that Gandhi consulted Malaviya far more than him in drawing up his programme.[1] Nehru's active part in the non-co-operation movement helped him greatly. He went to jail, organised new Kisan Sabhas, and got involved in a variety of public activities, while Malaviya concentrated on petitioning the Government to organise a Round Table Conference. In 1923, with non-co-operation over, Nehru and the Bengal leader C. R. Das organised the Swaraj Party, which was able to use both the organisation and the prestige of the Congress. After C. R. Das' death in 1925, Nehru became unquestioned leader of the party, and the Congress' acceptance of the party's programme added to his stature. He became Gandhi's 'attorney', as it were, in political matters. The positions that he and Malaviya held at the beginning of the decade seemed to have been reversed.

Malaviya had kept out of the Swaraj Party, even though it espoused the very policy he had originally advocated vis-a-vis the 1919 Reforms.[2] He could not declare open opposition to the party in the provincial elections of 1923, when it was riding the crest of a popular wave, but he did support some Liberal and independent candidates who opposed it. Over the next few years, the euphoria of the non-co-operation Congress declined, and there was growing disillusionment with the Swarajist programme.[3] The Malaviya group, then, vigorously opposed Nehru and his followers in the various elections of 1925-26, and in 1926 organised an Independent Congress Party (ICP)[4] to

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1 J. Nehru: A Bunch of Old Letters (Bombay 1958) pp. 6-7

2 The Leader, 5 April 1930, Malaviya's letter of resignation from the Legislative Assembly.

3 J. Nehru: An Autobiography, p. 132

4 For the moves leading up to the establishment of the ICP, see The Leader 28 February, 24 and 27 March, 7 April, 9 and 12 May, 28 August 1926; MN-JN Corresp., Vol. XII, MN's letters to JN, March-September 1926; AICC Ps. G-37/(iv) Pt. I/1926, MN's corresp. with Rangaswami Iyengar, Gen. Secy. AICC, September 1926.

contest the elections against the official Congress (or Swaraj) party, controlled by Nehru.

In the elections both to local boards and to the provincial and central legislatures the U.P. Swarajists suffered major losses:[1] Motilal Nehru looked on it as 'a disaster' and 'a veritable rout'.[2] The decline from 30 seats in the U.P. Council after the 1923 elections to 21 after 1926 was certainly significant. In Oudh, there was a particularly striking collapse: after the eight seats they held from 1923, the Swarajists were now left with a solitary, Muslim, representative.[3]

Among the reasons for these setbacks to the Swarajist position was the disappearance of some of the aura attached to the non-co-operation Congress and Malaviya's support for a policy of 'responsive co-operation' inside the legislatures.[4] This last fact made it easier for men of landed and commercial

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1 FR December 1925, 1; The Leader, 16 December 1925 and 18 February 1926 give local elections results. For the 1926 elections to the provincial Council, three different Govt. authorities gave three different versions of 'final results':

	FR Dec. 1926, 1	PAI 18 Dec. 1926	Halifax Colln.II Irwin-Wedgwood Benn 30 Dec. 1926
Swaraj Party	21	19	21
ICP	6	11	9
Liberals	5	12	0
Hindu Sabha	-	2	-
Landlords	16	46	21
Independents	51	-	50
Ind. Muslim Party	-	10	-
TOTAL	99	100	101

2 J. Nehru: A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 49; MN Ps., 'Statements', Statement to press, 10-12-26.

3 The results used here are as in Graham and Reeves: 'Elections Handbook for the U.P., 1920-51'

4 The Malaviya weekly, Abhyudaya (Allahabad), consistently referred to the various groupings that came under the Malaviya banner in 1926 as the 'responsive co-operation' party. See esp. Abhyudaya 27 March 1926.

wealth to join the ICP.[1] But such men were also attracted to the Malaviya party by its strong defense of 'Hindu interests' at a time when, as we shall see, these appeared to be under severe attack.[2]

An examination of the political situation in the Malaviya and Nehru home-town, Allahabad, during the mid-1920's, indicates how communal appeals could be used to win electoral support, and how such propaganda tended at the same time to create conditions of dangerous communal tension on the ground. Here the question of Hindu religious processions playing music before Muslim mosques became the centre of political controversy in the years 1923 to 1926. Quarrels on this question in 1923 were followed by a riot during the Ram Lila in 1924 and increasingly acute Hindu-Muslim differences before the Dasehra of 1925.[3] At this point, the district administration intervened, somewhat reluctantly according to the nationalists.[4] However,

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1 That 'office-acceptance' was a central plank in the Malaviya platform can be seen from the fact that Annie Besant, Jinnah, Sapru and M. C. Chagla were among the men involved in the early efforts to form a new alliance; The Leader 7 April 1926. Maulvi Enayat Ali Khan and Hasrat Mohani, who declared that if one must enter the Councils one may as well accept office, were in the ICP ultimately set up; Aj, 30 September 1926, Abhyudaya 2 October 1926. Among the ICP candidates in the U.P. were such great landlords as Rai Rajeshwar Bali, Raja Durga Narain Singh of Tirwa, Raja Vishwanath Singh of Tiloi, and Raja Raghuraj Singh, such men of commerce as Lalas Prag Narayan of Agra, Jwala Prasad Jigyasu of Aligarh and Chunnilal Garg of Kanpur, and the Calcutta magnate, millowner, merchant and zamindar, Ghanshyam Das Birla, who was also the chief financier of the party: Abhyudaya 2 October 1926, The Leader 28 October & 5 November 1926.

2 Cf. C. A. Bayly's emphasis on the importance of religious patronage to commercial notables in northern India; 'Patrons and Politics in Northern India in Gallagher, et al (eds): Locality, Province and Nation.

3 This account is based on U.P. GAD 246/1926 and 613/1926 (both SRR), PAIs 1925 to 1927 and newspaper reports from 1926 onwards. Page: 'Prelude to Partition', pp. 56-9, also examines the communal situation in Allahabad in 1924-5.

4 Many nationalists and nationalist newspapers commented on this. The Najat (Bijnor) wrote: 'Where is Aman Sabha? /the 'Peace Councils' that had been established all over the U.P. to combat non-co-operation/ . . . the non-existence of the Aman Sabhas is

Hindu leaders refused either to guarantee that their Ram Lila procession would be over by sunset or to stop playing music if the procession was still on the road. The Muslims agreed to close 15 of the 17 mosques on the route, if the processionists would pass silently by the other two, but this proposal was also rejected. Ultimately, the Magistrate issued an order under Section 144 (prohibiting public gatherings of more than five persons). The Hindu leaders, then, called off the procession altogether. A riot was averted, but communal relations had certainly deteriorated.

The 'music before mosques' controversy raged throughout 1926, to decline perceptibly after the elections that year. Holi, in February 1926, the Rath Yatra processions in July, and the Ram Lila celebrations in October, once again saw Hindu-Muslim quarrels. The Government took a decision to enforce 'established local custom' throughout the province, but in Allahabad Hindus and Muslims differed in their views of what the established custom was.

On both the Hindu and the Muslim side, there were leaders who were willing to be reasonable. During the first half of 1926, Motilal Nehru, Kailash Nath Katju and others tried to get leading Hindu rais - such as Lalas Sanwal Das and Kanhaiya Lal - to reach some agreement with Muslim leaders, 'traditional' as well as 'modern', Maulana Vilayat Husain, Zahur Ahmad, Badruddin, and so on. In May, the Muslims withdrew every condition except that the playing of music should be stopped outside mosques for five to ten minutes at the time of the evening prayer.[1] Like the very reasonable terms of 1925, these were rejected, partly for the same reasons as those of 1925.

The Malaviya group appears to have been at the back of much of the Hindu intransigence. In 1924, a Unity Conference

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a living proof of the fact that Government does not regard the Hindu-Muslim quarrels to be subversive of peace and that from its point of view patriotism is the only unpardonable offence'. Govt. itself admitted this reluctance; see U.P. GAD 246/1926.

1 PAI 27 March and 15 May 1926.

in Delhi had come to an agreement on the question of 'music before mosques'.[1] But the Allahabad Hindu Sabha, controlled by Malaviya men, had preempted their position by declaring that they would not be bound by the decisions of the conference. After the 1924 riot, when Purushottam Das Tandon and Zahur Ahmad toured the city in an effort to restore normality, they were welcomed and helped by the leaders of most localities. In the Malaviya mohulla, however, they were met with a volley of abuse and indeed with threats to Ahmad's life. The District Magistrate noted also that the Malaviyas were the least conciliatory when Hindu and Muslim leaders met to consider the situation after the riot.

In 1925, this narrow 'political' aspect of the problem became clearer, with elections to the local boards due in December. 'To a very large extent', wrote the Commissioner of Allahabad division, 'the whole movement has been political, with a view to its result on the coming elections . . .'[2] In these elections, it may be well to recall, the Swarajists suffered a severe setback. In 1923 they had gained control of the Municipal Board. Now, the Malaviya group swept the polls.[3]

'Hindu' intransigence continued in 1926, the year of the provincial and central legislative elections. At the end of September that year, the Allahabad authorities, having failed to get Hindu and Muslim leaders to agree on any terms, again imposed restrictions on processions. This was the occasion for renewed acrimony on the part of Hindu leaders. Among them was Madan Mohan Malaviya who presided over a protest meeting attended by 10,000 Hindus. 'Meeting invites attention . . .', he telegraphed the Governor, 'to deep and universal pain which said attitude [of the authorities] has caused Hindus.'[4]

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1 U.P. GAD 246/1926, Note on music in front of mosques by H. S. Crosthwaite, D.M. Allahabad, 23-5-26

2 U.P. GAD 680/1925, Commissioner Allahabad-Chief Secy. U.P., 14 September 1925, cited in Page: 'Prelude to Partition', p. 59.

3 FR December 1925, 1

4 U.P. GAD 613/1926, Telegram, Malaviya P.S. to Governor, 5 October 1926.

Much the same kind of propaganda occurred in other places,[1] and in 1926 the Malaviya group established the communal Hindu campaign on an organised basis at the provincial level, even before the formation of the ICP. At a U.P. Hindu Sabha meeting in April 1926, Malaviya strongly backed the proposal that the organisation should support those candidates in the elections who would promise to safeguard Hindu interests. The Hindus had too long given way to the Muslims, he said, and it was time they learnt to protect themselves.[2] In August he and his lieutenants in the U.P. went a step further. They supported a move by the Hindu Sabhas of these provinces to set up 'election boards'. These would not nominate candidates separately. They would support candidates nominated by others who were prepared to sign the Hindu Sabha pledge, which bound them to abide by the decision of either the majority of Hindu members in a legislature or the all-India or provincial Hindu Sabha. On 1 August 1926, the Agra Provincial Hindu Sabha set up such a board. Later that month, the Oudh Hindu Sabha followed suit.[3]

If, before this, the Malaviya group had been able to use the Hindu Sabha organisation informally, it was now able to do so openly and fully. In August itself Krishna Kant Malaviya, nephew of Madan Mohan and his right-hand man throughout the elections campaign, issued a notice on behalf of the Hindu Sabha to all candidates seeking election from the U.P. to the central and provincial legislatures. They were to submit to him their names and a statement of their political opinions if they desired Hindu Sabha support in the campaign.[4] ICP

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1 For the example of Lucknow, see Page: 'Prelude to Partition . . .', pp. 53-6

2 PAI 1 May 1926

3 Leader, 11 and 25 August 1926; Abhyudaya, 31 July 1926; PAI 14 and 21 August 1926. See also Aj, 2 October 1926, report of Oudh Hindu Sabha sanctioning support to specified candidates.

4 PAI 28 August 1926.

electioneering in the districts showed how close the party's association with the Hindu Sabha was, and how deep it went. To take only one instance, on 1 October 1926, Lajpat Rai, Gauri Shankar Mishra and Raghavadas arrived in Azamgarh to campaign for the ICP. They were taken in a procession through the town, and were presented addresses by the Municipal Board, the Hindu Sabh and the Arya Samaj. In the evening, Lajpat Rai asked for votes for G. D. Birla at a public meeting, the strength of which was estimated to be about 5,000, an astonishing figure in a town with perhaps 10,000 Hindus.[1]

The repercussions of this campaign were evident in the communal riots that became rampant in the U.P. during these years. In Allahabad itself, the communal snowball had grown to a considerable size by 1926, and there was little that the leaders, Hindu or Muslim, could do to control it. Officials found in 1926 that Kasais, Kunjras and other low-caste Muslims were inclined to be 'fanatical and reckless',[2] irrespective of the reasonableness or otherwise of their 'leaders'. The intensity of feelings on the Hindu side was reflected at a meeting in May that year, when an unknown but angry sonar, Kedar Nath, upbraided Motilal Nehru for insisting on Hindu-Muslim unity and aroused the audience to a frenzy by saying that it was only Hindu cowardice that had caused the abandoning of the Dasehra celebration in the city the year before.[3]

At the level of those politically more sophisticated, too, any compromise on the religious issue was now being considered the surrender of a vital principle. 'Swarajism . . .', declared

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1 PAI 9 October 1926; Aj, 4 and 8 October 1926. Both reported the day's events in some detail, and both gave the number of those attending the public meeting as 5,000. Aj reported that Pt. Baijnath Mishra, a member of the Legislative Council, explained the difference in policy between the Swaraj Party and the ICP, and called for votes for the ICP and especially G. D. Birla 'to whom Hindus owe much'.

2 U.P. GAD 246/1926, Note by Crosthwaite, D.M. Allahabad, 23-5-26.

3 PAI 8 May 1926. See also U.P. GAD 241/1930 (SRR), D.O. 199, Commissioner Allahabad-Chief Secy., U.P., 9 May 1930.

The Leader, published in the city, is 'synonymous with the betrayal of just and legitimate Hindu interests.'[1] Members of the Swaraj Party also expressed concern. One of them, a provincial legislator since 1923, accused the Government of bowing to the wishes of the Muslims because they threatened 'force' and 'incendiarism'. This, he said, contradicted all claims regarding British love of justice.

> 'Unfortunately', he wrote, 'the infection is spreading and if Government continue to pander to the Muhammadans irrespective of the justness or otherwise of their claims, the Hindu leaders would before long find it difficult to restrain the Hindus from following in the footsteps of their Muhammadan countrymen.'[2]

Outside Allahabad, too, Hindu public men across the board tended to adopt a more communal stance and to support the Malaviya party which alone looked like giving blow for blow.[3] A good example was Baba Raghavadas, the Gorakhpur Congress leader, whom Motilal Nehru thought the most unlikely person to go over to the Hindu Sabha.[4] As early as April 1926, Raghavadas was advising crowded Hindu meetings in his district not to mix with Muslims or go to Muslim fairs, and Hindu ekka drivers to wear some distinguishing mark so that men of their community used only their ekkas.[5]

In August he declared:

> '. . . the protection of Hindu society is the most important task before us. Only by protecting it can we protect nationalism. For this reason, I consider it necessary to join the Hindu Sabha and work through it, despite its shortcomings.'[6]

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1 The Leader 19 April 1926, Editl.

2 U.P. GAD 246/1926, Sangamlal Agrawal PS to Governor, 16-7-26

3 Motilal Nehru wrote to his son, 'With the exception of Rafi [Ahmad Kidwai] and Sitla Sahai there is not a man I can thoroughly rely upon'; MN-JN Corresp. Vol XIII, MN-JN, 5-8-26. See also AICC Ps. 10/1926, MN's telegrams of 15-10-26.

4 AICC Ps. 13/1926, Pt. II, MN-Sitla Sahai, Mussoorie 24-7-26

5 PAI 24 April 1926

6 Aj, 17 August 1926

In September, he joined Malaviya's new ICP, and took with him a majority of the Congress workers in Gorakhpur district.[1]

From Benares, Govind Malaviya, son of Madan Mohan, but also a close associate, if not a follower, of the secular and 'radical' Jawaharlal Nehru, wrote to the latter in Europe in June 1926:

> 'Our politics are really growing absolutely impossible . . . you will have learnt of the shame which the whole country was put to in the form of precautions against communal outbreaks on the occasion of the Bakr-id. All this was done and yet disturbances did take place at various places. It drives me mad. I don't know if I had the opportunity to tell you when you were here that I was losing my patience and was fast becoming a Hindu Sabhaite - but I may tell you that I am a full-fledged one now.'[2]

Raghubir Sahai, a science and law graduate from Agra College, who gave up his law practice in Budaun to join the non-co-operation movement and quickly became an important Congress leader in the district, also veered around to Hindu Sabhaite views. Himself disqualified from participating in the elections probably because of his long imprisonment in 1921,[3] this follower of Motilal Nehru nevertheless expressed his fear that the country would suffer, and the legislature be 'inundated by members of the most reactionary type', if the Hindu Mahasabha abstained from the elections when the Congress prestige was at its lowest point.[4] Sahai's definition of 'reactionaries' was interesting, considering that he was thinking of men who supported the British Government and that the Hindu Mahasabha was replete with talugdars, Rajas and rais from whom such collaborators generally came.[5] But it was clear

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1 Abhyudaya 2 October 1926

2 JN Corresp. (NML) with Govind Malaviya, Malaviya-JN, Benares, 26 June 1926

3 See L. Brennan: 'Political leadership in Budaun, 1920-28', (Sussex seminar paper, April 1971)

4 Leader, 8 February 1926, letter to Editor, dated Budaun, 4 February 1926

5 The U.P. members on the Hindu Mahasabha Working Committee for 1923 included Raja Durga Narain Singh of Tirwa and Raja

that the rising communal tension all around him had pushed him into a more openly communalist position than before.

In the elections themselves, we have noted that Oudh was the area of greatest Swarajist losses. A closer look at developments in two Oudh constituencies illustrates how the wind had turned against the Swarajists. In 1923, Jaikaran Nath Misra had successfully contested the U.P. Legislative Council seat from the Rae Bareli (non-Muslim) constituency as a Swaraj Party candidate. He was aided by a split among the _taluqdars_ of the district. Raja Jagannath Baksh Singh had stood as an independent candidate, but because of ill-feeling between the two groups, the group led by Raja Rampal Singh had secretly supported Misra. In 1926, the situation was entirely different. Raja Viswanath Saran Singh of Tiloi, one of the richest _taluqdaris_ in the district, decided to contest the elections. He started campaigning early in the year, and it was reported in April that he had gained the support of _taluqdars_ of both parties.[1] Later, he adopted the ICP label as well. In the face of this combination, the Swaraj Party candidate - if there was one[2] - would have been lucky not to lose his deposit.

The election to the central legislature from the Fyzabad division (non-Muslim rural) constituency was more interesting. Gauri Shankar Mishra, a lawyer from Allahabad who had been active among the _kisans_ of Oudh in the early 1920's, was first given the Swaraj Party ticket for the seat. But in July 1926, Nehru learnt of the intention of Daddan Saheb, a rich notable of Amethi, to seek election from Fyzabad. Nehru and the Swaraj Party Secretary, Sitla Sahai, were agreed that Daddan Saheb

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Rampal Singh. In 1926, Raja Sir Rampal Singh, Thakur Madho Singh and Babu Nath Mal of Agra were, with Madan Mohan Malaviya, members of the All-India Shuddhi Sabha; and the Raja of Tirwa was President of the Agra Provincial Hindu Sabha.

1 See report from Rae Bareli Correspondent, _Aj_, 5 April 1926

2 Ganga Prasad Pandey (Shukla?), who was in the list of Swarajist candidates announced in August and again in November 1926, appears not to have contested in the end; AICC Ps. G-52(i)/1926, Pts. I & II; Graham and Reeves' 'Elections Handbook for U.P.'

was greatly preferable to Mishra. Sahai commented:

> 'The Taluqdars will help him, Raja Rampal Singh and his party may also like this selection of ours. He is therefore a sure and self-paying candidate.'[1]

Nehru, therefore, wrote to Daddan Saheb suggesting that the Swarajist nomination could be changed. To make the offer more attractive, he offered a ticket for a provincial seat to Kunwar Rananjay Singh of Amethi (a relative of Daddan Saheb) as well. In the end, however, neither Daddan Saheb nor Rananjay Singh accepted the Swarajist invitation,[2] the former standing instead as an ICP candidate. The communal situation of 1926 left them in no doubt about the side on which their bread was buttered.

The communal situation, too, gave rise in Fyzabad to some of the vilest election propaganda of the entire campaign in the U.P. And the source from which it came made it more startling. Shyamlal Nehru, nephew of Motilal, brought up by him and trained as a lawyer, who had resigned from the central legislature together with Malaviya in early 1926, was an independent candidate for the Fyzabad seat in December 1926. He was refused an ICP ticket, but Malaviya evidently financed his campaign. In the course of this, he contributed greatly to Motilal's 'anti-Hindu' image, declaring Motilal responsible for preventing his 'Cow-Protection Bill' from being debated in the Assembly. The death of his mother in the course of the election campaign gave Shyamlal the substance of another slogan:

'माई मेरी मर गयी,
गाई मेरी माई है।'

(My mother is dead, The cow is my mother).[3]

Ultimately, Daddan Saheb won the election with ease. The 'final' Swarajist candidate, Thakur Hukum Singh, a pleader with

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1 AICC Ps. 13/1926 Pt. II, Correspondence between MN and Sitla Sahai, 24 and 27 July 1926.

2 AICC Ps. 13/1926, Pt. I, MN's correspondence with Daddan Saheb and Rananjay Singh, July-August 1926.

3 J. Nehru: A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 49-50

a small practice, who had been elected to the provincial Council from the Bahraich (non-Muslim rural) constituency in 1923, had neither the wealth and local influence, nor the arsenal of the Hindu Sabha, to compete with any hope of success.

The bitter electoral campaigns of the mid-1920's, and the communal feelings they aroused, clearly marked the politics of the province in the years that followed. It seems that this was an extremely important reason for the negligible part played by Muslims in the civil disobedience campaign, in spite of the exhortations of the Deoband ulema and of individual nationalist Muslim leaders.[1] Indeed the strength of the civil disobedience movement, and the parleys with Congress leaders into which the Viceroy entered, appear to have frightened the Muslims further. Tension between the communities was so great in some areas by this time that small provocations could lead to major riots. There were a number of examples of this in the period immediately after the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. An examination of the worst of these, the great communal holocaust in Kanpur, illustrates how strained Hindu-Muslim relations on the ground had become, as well as showing how great an impact a bloody communal riot could have on the psyche of the ordinary Hindu or Muslim on the street.

The protracted Gandhi-Irwin negotiations, and the resulting agreement of 5 March 1931, brought about a major change in the political situation of the U.P. Not only die-hard British Conservatives were confounded at the spectacle of a handsome British aristocrat receiving a 'half-naked fakir' on the steps of the Viceregal Lodge in Delhi. So were simple Congressmen in remote towns and villages, as they looked on with a thrill in their hearts. To them, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was nothing

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1 Halifax Colln., 24, Hailey-Cunningham, 26 April 1930; Hailey Colln., 20, Hailey-Findlater Stewart, 25 April 1931; FR April 1931, 2; PAI 31 October 1931; Syed Mahmud Ps., File 'From JN, 1931', JN-Mahmud, Nuwara Eliya, 30 April and 5 May 1931; Indian Annual Register, 1931, Vol I, pp. 34-5 and 38, Vol II, pp. 20-1. For the expenditure of the Kanpur TCC on 'Muslim porpaganda' in 1930-31, see above, p. 85.

short of a victory. Their colleagues would be released from jail and welcomed as heroes. Their newspapers would resume publication. The police, who had grown used to beating and abusing them would now listen to their speeches in silence. District officials would try to co-operate with them. The feeling of elation brought with it an increased confidence, a desire to carry all before them.[1] There were Congressmen who were convinced that now at last the Muslims must see their strength.[2] Among the Muslims, on the other hand, there was a general feeling of being let down by a Government they had supported throughout civil disobedience. Bitter comments were made about the fact that Muslim representatives had not even been consulted before the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed.[3]

Repercussions were almost immediate. A serious communal riot had already occurred in Benares on 11 February 1931. The incident which sparked off this riot was described by the District Magistrate of Benares as follows:

> '. . . the release of the members of the All-India Congress Committee . . ., coming as it did on Independence Day [26 January], was regarded by the people generally as a great victory for Congress, and Congress activities which had previously been on the wane immediately became more pronounced. Picketing was resumed with great vigour. Among other shops picketed in Benares was that of Agha Mohammad Jan, a well-known cloth merchant, who refused to close his shop at the dictation of Congress. The picketers were all Hindus, while Agha Mohammad Jan . . . was a Muhammadan. On February 10, customers coming to the shop were assaulted by the picketers and arrests were made by the police. That evening Agha Mohammad Jan was shot in a lane when returning from his shop.'[4]

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1 Hailey Colln., Vol. 20, Hailey-Findlater Stewart, 25 April 1931, notices this mood of triumph and elation.

2 See evidence of Maulana Abul Kafi, President of the Anjuman Islamia, Kanpur, in U.P. Police Dept. 1263/1931 (SRR), 'Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Communal Outbreak at Cawnpore' (hereafter, Govt. Kanpur Report), pp. 8-9.

3 Halifax Colln., Vol 26, Hidayat Husain-Lambert, Cawnpore, 5 March 1931 (enclosed with Lambert-Irwin, 16 March 1931).

4 Govt. Kanpur Report, p. 9. An appeal by a conciliation committee of prominent Hindus and Muslims in Benares said that the members

After the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, communal rioting broke out from 15 to 17 March in the city of Agra, and from 14 to 16 March in two villages in the Mirzapur district on the border with Shahabad district in Bihar. In Agra, one Muslim was killed, several Muslims and Hindus injured. The old quarrel over 'music before mosques' provided the immediate cause. Official intervention alone saved the situation on 15 March when Muslims objected to a Holi procession playing music outside a mosque. The next day, a crowd of Hindus attacked a Muslim marriage party, and a Muslim crowd retaliated by attacking another Holi procession, despite police warnings. Further rioting occurred on the seventeenth; Hindu students and a teacher of St. John's College quarrelled with a group of Muslim butchers, who then attacked them, and other groups joined as the fighting spread.[1]

In Mirzapur a large mob of Hindu villagers brutally massacred seven Muslims. The scene was a village Manchi, twelve miles east of Police Station Pannuganj in Tahsil Robertsganj, the immediate cause some meat sent by a Muslim <u>zamindar</u> to a Muslim tenant said to be a haunch of venison but believed by the Hindu villagers to be beef. For some reason, an armed police guard did not reach Manchi until 16 March, two days after the above riot. On its arrival, it found fresh rioting in progress in village Raiya (Raipur?) six miles from Manchi. The rioters went in search of the <u>zamindar</u>'s men, the <u>zamindar</u> having absconded, and followed them to a Brahmin's house where they had taken refuge. Allegedly, they had now acquired fire-arms, and another four Muslims were killed and two injured. There was no evidence of any political motive in these riots. But their timing itself is possibly significant: they may well have been a reflection of the growing communal unease which was spreading, apparently, even to some rural areas.

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had not in their 60-65 years seen such a riot as that which lasted from 11 February for 6-7 days, <u>Aj</u>, 27 February 1931.

1 Govt. Kanpur Report, p. 9; <u>Leader</u>, 21 March 1931, and <u>Abhyud</u>., 25 March 1931, for accounts of both the Agra and Mirzapur incidents.

Communal riots are like the influenza virus, catching easily; and the Benares, Agra and Mirzapur events affected Kanpur. Here, apart from the common Hindu and Muslim reactions to the settlement between the Government and the Congress, there were additional factors creating a specially dangerous situation.

The concentration and composition of Kanpur's population made for a volatile city, a fact that showed clearly in its politics. In population terms, this was the second city of the U.P., the municipality alone having 219,189 people in 1931. It was probably also the province's most overcrowded city, with a density of population approaching 84 per acre in some parts in 1934. Over 150,000 of the people in the municipality were Hindus and somewhat more than 65,000 Muslims. There were as well 130 Sikhs, 265 Jains and 2,825 Christians among other religious denominations.[1]

On the Grand Trunk Road and the main railway line between Delhi and Calcutta, Kanpur was the U.P.'s industrial and commercial centre and its fastest-growing city. By the third decade of this century, business and industry clearly dominated both the life and the politics of the city. Kanpur was by then an important centre of the textile industry, and had smaller concerns dealing with leather goods, oil, engineering materials and cycles, and so on. The depression at the end of the decade caused a cut-back, and the 1920's generally were not years of great expansion in industry or commerce. Yet during that decade, twenty-six new factories were registered under the Indian Factories Act;[2] and through the high prices and relatively stable

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1 Census of India, 1931, Vol. XVIII, Pt. II, pp. 38-40; Pioneer, 16 May 1934, Kanpur Municipal Board Report for density of population. The following account of socio-economic conditions in Kanpur is based on U.P. Census Reports for 1921 and 1931; Cawnpore District Gazetteer (by H. R. Nevill, Allahabad 1909); D. N. Majumdar and others: Social Contours of an Industrial City. Social Survey of Kanpur, 1954-56 (London 1960); U.P. Police Dept. File 1263/1931, Govt. Kanpur Report and Sale's 'Report on Cawnpore Communal Riots', dated 16 April 1931 (hereafter, Sale's Report); and AICC Ps. 68/1931, Congress Kanpur Report.

2 Census of India, 1931, Vol. XVIII, Pt. I, p. 142

conditions of the period, men of industry and commerce continued to enrich themselves and consolidate their position. To a great extent the men thus accumulating wealth were Hindus, though Muslims were said to share in two limited but fairly lucrative fields - the leather trade and haberdashery.[1]

The industries of Kanpur employed 23,000 workers by 1921,[2] many of them men from outside the district. Over the next decade the gain on balance of migration was nearly 41,000. Even for the Depression years of 1931 and 1932, the Chamber of Commerce reported an immigration figure of 700 per annum.[3] In 1931, then, 414 of every 1,000 persons living in the Kanpur municipality were men born outside the municipality. The transitory nature of much of Kanpur's population could be gauged from another fact as well: it had the lowest proportion of women to men among all the cities of the U.P., 696 to every 1,000 in 1931. Men working in the mills, or looking for jobs, accounted for most of the shifting part of the population. Attempts made to create a stable industrial labour force in the city, through the provision of housing and other facilities, met with little success in the 1920's and 1930's.

In addition to these elements, Kanpur attracted 'men with reasons to disappear', as officials described them.[4] It had its share of the goonda and badmash tribe, groups that abound in any large Indian city today, in the pay of wealthy men, willing

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1 Congress Kanpur Report, p. 178; Robinson: 'The Emergence of Muslim Politics in India . . .', Ch. 1, p. 7, notes that apart from one or two trading and moneylending communities (e.g. the Pathans of Shahjahanpur or the Saiyids of Jansath), Muslims owned few of the medium and none of the big trading and banking concerns in the U.P. See also U.P. Police Dept. 379/1936, Raghubar Dayal Bhatta-Chintamani, Cawnpore, 18 May 1936, which says that Hindu businessmen paid a major share of Govt. taxes in Kanpur.

2 Census of India, 1921, Vol XVI, Pt. II, pp. 425-31. All figures in this paragraph are from the Census Reports for the U.P., 1921 and 1931, unless otherwise specified.

3 D. N. Majumdar and others, op. cit. p. 25

4 Govt. Kanpur Report, p. 8

to perform almost any service for the money. Some of them engaged in cocaine smuggling, trade and gambling, and readily took to other underground activities.

One other factor of great importance in the political life of Kanpur was the presence of large educational institutions. These included the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic and Christchurch Colleges, which had for years past shown a special interest in militant politics, communal as well as nationalist.[1]

The result of this convergence of factors was a very strong Congress agitation in Kanpur in 1930. The availability of substantial funds gave the Kanpur Congress a head-start in the civil disobedience campaign. A Kanpur businessman, who was also an active Congressman, testified before the Government Commission enquiring into the causes of the riots:

> 'There is a general feeling that the local authorities did not choose to take immediate and stringent measures /when the riot broke out/ because they were displeased with the businessmen for helping the Congress activities and they wanted to show that without the help of the authorities they cannot protect their lives and properties.'[2]

From the city's student population came recruiting agents, 'shock troops' and (on occasion) wild enthusiasm. Finally, if the workers did not participate in the movement as a body, proletarian and lumpen-proletarian elements went a long way in swelling the crowds at public meetings and demonstrations.

In the latter half of 1930, the Congress agitation in Kanpur was beginning to get aggressive. '. . . vendors of foreign cloth,

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1 The D.A.V. College had become notorious for the 'revolutionaries' it produced. 13 of the 24 accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case in 1929 were from the U.P., and of these 8 were ex-students of the D.A.V. College, Kanpur. U.P. Police File 1504/1934 (SRR). See also Sale's Report for the role of what he calls 'Hindu Colleges' in the Congress campaign.

2 Govt. Kanpur Report, p. 4. See also Sale's Report and AICC Ps. for further evidence of such financial help. Ram Ratan Gupta, a leading trader of Kanpur, was also one of its prominent Congressmen. Kamlapat Singhania, partner in a leading industrial house of Kanpur, also provided the Congress with funds, and in the mid-1930's came out in open association with leading Congressmen.

country spirit and toddy were much harassed by bands of volunteers who used force to prevent anyone calling at the shop', the District Magistrate reported. 'Huge processions filled the city streets and sheer hooliganism was let loose upon the High Schools and colleges . . .'.[1] A senior police official, touring the province in August 1930, declared that in Kanpur, 'undoubtedly the movement is more firmly established than in any other city in the province . . .'. He expressed the fear that Congress Raj might swamp the place, and added,

> 'I am inclined to think that until a clash comes, and it will come, the administration will not function properly nor will the prestige of Government be restored.'[2]

This statement is significant, especially in the light of subsequent accusations that the Kanpur adminstration did nothing to quell the riots, indeed encouraged them. If local officials felt as this police official did, a Hindu-Muslim clash, when it came, could be used to restore the prestige of Government.

This potentially dangerous situation in Kanpur was made highly inflammable by the manifest hostility of leading local Muslims to the Congress. In the mid-1920's, Dr Murarilal Rohatgi and other Congress leaders of Kanpur had 'joined the Hindu Sabha mainly', they claimed,

> 'with the object of capturing it and we succeeded to a large extent. We were never enthusiastic about the object of the Sabha. We wanted to succeed in bringing a number of zealous Hindu Sabhaites to the Congress fold and the Sabha itself under the Congress influence.'[3]

But the motive was really quite unimportant.

> 'When they [the Kanpur Muslims] saw that practically all Hindu leaders had joined the Hindu communal organisations, their faith in the Congress began to diminish.'[4]

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1 Sale's Report

2 Hailey Colln., Vol. 19A, 'Note' by R. J. S. Dodd, 25 August 1930

3 Rohatgi's evidence before the Congress Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee; see Congress Kanpur Report, p. 172

4 Ibid., p. 170. It is significant, in this context, that Murarilal Rohatgi remained a member of the local Hindu Sabha until after the holocaust of March 1931.

There was also a growing feeling among Muslim politicians in Kanpur in the latter half of the 1920's that municipal affairs were being conducted increasingly on communal lines, so that the minority community suffered.[1] So widespread was this feeling in 1929 that Murarilal Rohatgi, President of the TCC, received not a singly Muslim vote in his contest for the Chairmanship of the Municipality against Hafiz Halim, a wealthy and well-respected Muslim of the city.[2]

In 1928 and 1929, Shaukat Ali and the Tanzim Committee were active in Kanpur, preaching against the Congress. In the latter year, the Tausih Jamiat-ul-ulema was also established there to further their endeavours. These events, coming after the communal propaganda and clashes of the preceding years, affected the poorer classes and the less prominent Muslims. The Commissioner of the Division reported in May 1930 that:

> 'In Allahabad and Cawnpore so far there is no general disposition on the part of Muslims to give up their attutude of aloofness from the movement. Both these cities have memories of communal trouble in the near past.'[3]

Muslim shopkeepers in Kanpur, it was later reported, deeply resented, and sometimes openly opposed, the Congress picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops.[4] Muslim Congressmen attempting to make public speeches in the city were 'howled down', while Muslim communalists were 'listened to eagerly'.[5]

News of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement compounded the general Muslim feeling of frustration and despair, The tinder was drier than ever; and to light it a match was provided by the

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1 Govt. Kanpur Report, p. 9.

2 Congress Kanpur Report, pp. 170-1, which also mentions the resignation of Dr. Abdul Karim, Joint-Secy. of the TCC, on this very issue.

3 U.P. GAD 241/1930, D.O. 199, Commissioner Allahabad-Chief Secy., U.P., 9 May 1930. There had been major communal riots in Kanpur in 1913, at the Machhli Bazar mosque, and in 1927, when the city was in turmoil for 2-3 days.

4 FR April 1930, 2; Govt. Kanpur Report, p. 6.

5 Loc. cit.

execution of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev in far-off Lahore.

Kanpur, like other places in the U.P. and India, had been agitated by the approaching end of these national heroes. On 7 March 1931, a meeting held at the Marwari School, and attended mainly by students, called for Bhagat Singh's release. On 21 March, when it became known that the petition of mercy on behalf of Bhagat Singh had been rejected, a hartal and a procession, beginning with 500 people and growing to 1,500 strong according to Government, were held. The Muslim shops did not join in the hartal.[1] This non-participation, coming as it did in the wake of the disturbances at Benares, was sufficient cause for alarm, especially in view of Kanpur's history of major communal riots.

On the morning of 24 March, news of Bhagat Singh's execution was received in Kanpur. Congress messengers went out to proclaim a hartal. There was much excitement, and students broke windows in shops and offices, necessitating police intervention. About 2 p.m. a quarrel arose on Meston Road between some Hindu Congressmen who wanted 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 Hindus and Muslims at the spot. Lathis and brickbats also appeared, and general rioting broke out to rage on, in one locality and another, for several days.[2]

It is not necessary to trace the course of these events in any detail. It would be useful, however, to isolate the elements most responsible for starting and continuing the riots, as far as this is possible. In Kanpur, as elsewhere, young men

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1 Sale's Report

2 For detailed reports on the rioting, see Pioneer, 27-30 March 1931; Leader, 28-30 March 1931; and Govt. and Congress Kanpur Reports; also Syed Mahmud Papers - File 'From Sundar Lal', Sundar Lal-Mahmud, Allahabad, 25 March 1936.

and students were prominent among those calling for a suspension of business and other protests against the executions.[1] Others involved in the early stages of the riot were petty shopkeepers, vendors, their servants, other servants out on errands, rickshaw-pullers and other groups associated with the market in an Indian city. The industrial labourers were at work in the mills until about 6 p.m. on 24 March. By that time the riot was raging. There was no evidence of criminal elements participating in any number to start with. The existence of these elements would seem to have contributed more to the spreading, persistence and intensification of the trouble than to its outbreak.[2] In the later stages, whole localities seem to have got involved. The residential areas of the 'respectable' naturally escaped most of the fury. The gwalas, julahas, riksha-walas, bangle-sellers, peons, mill-hands, unemployed immigrants from the villages, and so on, suffered. Anticipating the train to Pakistan, the tonga to Bengali-tola was ransacked and its passengers massacred. Thousands fled to the countryside.[3] Thousands, who could not, remained to belabour, abuse and kill and be belaboured, abused and killed.

Government's handling of these developments was criticised on all sides, a striking contrast to Benares and Agra where Owen and Darwin, the District Officers, were freely praised by local opinion for their action at the time of the riots.[4] In Kanpur, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs held separate meetings to condemn the attitude of the authorities; a meeting of Hindu merchants indeed laid the entire responsibility for the riots at their door.[5]

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1 Pioneer, 26 March 1931, report of Allahabad protest. Sale's Report mentions the involvement of students and youths of the Benar Sena in the Kanpur outbreak.

2 Govt. Kanpur Report, p. 8.

3 Pioneer, 29 March 1931 ff.

4 U.P. Police Dept. 1263/1931 (SRR), Notes by Jagdish Prasad, 6 April 1931 and G. B. Lambert, 10 April 1931; interview Jagan Prasad Rawat, Agra Congress leader, in Lucknow, 15 January 1973.

5 U.P. Police Dept. 1263/1931, telegrams of 5 April 1931 from Hindus and Muslims, and letter of 7 April from Sikhs.

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, one of Kanpur's most respected Congress leaders, who lost his life in the course of these riots, expressed similar sentiments in his last known letter. Refusing the offer of a lady to join him on his pacifying missions in troubled mohallas, he wrote:

> 'Not one of the Muslim leaders is stepping forward. The attitude of the police is very condemnable. The officials wish that the people may have it out amongst themselves . . . The riot would have finished yesterday, if the authorities had given even a little help . . .'[1]

The Government Commission of Enquiry itself arrived at such a conclusion. Their opinion bears quotation at length:

> 'It appears to us that the /District/ Magistrate was fatally slow in appreciating the gravity of the situation. The temple in Meston Road had a history behind it. This very spot, where the temple and the Machlibazar mosque stand facing each other, was the scene of the serious riot in 1913. Muslims and Hindus both had special memories and antagonisms connected with these shrines. The district magistrate knew this. He was not far from the spot. It was no time for him to turn aside and leave it. Had he taken a quick decision then, gathered a small force of police who . . . were available down the road and gone straight to the temple, he would almost certainly have beaten off the attack and saved the temple from being burnt. He could similarly in all probability have prevented the burning of the Bazaza mosque and the Sarrafa mosque too . . . the District Magistrate has told us . . . himself, that it was the news of the burning of the temple and the mosque that caused the sudden fury of passion which swept the riot out of control and carried it with unprecedented speed out into the farthest quarters of the city . . .'[2]

The provincial Government did its best to soften the blow to Sale, the District Magistrate.[3] He was transferred from Kanpur, a punishment that was easily the least important of the consequences of the riots.

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1 Congress Kanpur Report, p. 225, letter dated 25 March 1931

2 Govt. Kanpur Report, p. 23

3 Hailey Colln., Vol. 21A, Hailey-Dawson, 7 June 1931.

The direct losses resulting from the riots were truly severe. Government estimated the number of killed and wounded as 290 and 965 respectively.[1] Congress set them higher: 400 and 1,200. In addition, Congress reported 500 buildings gutted, including 23 mosques and 37 temples, the restoration of which would cost at least 5 lakhs of rupees; movable property worth at least Rs. 20 lakhs looted or destroyed; a 'general exodus' and the 'utter dislocation' of business and normal life.[2]

The psychological impact was worse. The Muslims, smaller in numbers, with apparently larger losses in the riots,[3] were inevitably most alarmed. Hafiz Hidayat Husain, B.A., Bar-at-Law, C.I.E., a distinguished lawyer of Kanpur, member and leader of a so-called 'centre party' in the U.P. legislature, a strong supporter of the Simon Commission, and later a delegate to the Round Table Conference in London, typified the reactions of the educated Muslim who was loyal to the British at this time.

> 'The butchery committed on the Cawnpore Moslems', he wrote to a Muslim leader of the Punjab, 'is unthinkable in the present age. 32 Mosques have been destroyed at least. 300 Moslems, most of these decrepit old men, women and children have been either massacred or burnt to ashes . . . Not one Moslem has been left in Mohallas which are predominantly Hindu . . . The Police was /sic/ most callous. Khan Bahadur Ghulam Hasnain is the Deputy Superintendent in charge of the city. He refused to give any aid to the Moslems who were marooned . . . There was no government, settled or unsettled, in Cawnpore for 3 or 4 days. Even now no Moslem is safe. The prosecution is being managed by Sirdar Bahadur Kishen Singh /a Sikh/ and no Moslem is free from anxiety, he may be arrested at any time. Hindus are being let off by the Hindu Judge on bails of 10,000/- in murder cases while bail of 40,000/- is asked from the Moslems so that we are undergoing the greatest imaginable

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1 U.P. Police Dept. 1263/1931, Teleg. No. 92/Z, UPAO-India Home, Lucknow, 14 April 1931

2 Congress Kanpur Report, p. 312.

3 The exact figures were never determined. Sale reported that of the 965 wounded, 368 were classified Hindus, 292 Muslims, and 305 could not be classified. At an earlier stage, however, of 148 dead, 48 were said to be Hindus, 100 Muslims. U.P. Police Dept. 1263/1931.

'privations. I do not think the Nawab of Chattari can help you or us much, for in the Council the Finance Member [a British Official] deals with Communal questions . . .'[1]

Here was an educated man, who had worked closely with the British, expressing loss of faith in the British ability to protect Muslims and their interests. A Muslim, the Nawab of Chhatari, alone could do this, and he was unfortunately powerless. The note of despair was only too clear.

The response of 'apolitical' Muslim villagers, to whom fleeing families brought news of terrible manslaughter, was one of greater alarm. There were reports of further atrocities committed against Muslims in different parts of the district.[2] There was a chain reaction of suspicion and fear. On 6 April 1931, Kanpur city was reported quiet, though Hindu bazaars were still closed. In the rural areas of the district, however, there was still panic.[3]

Besides, news of Kanpur spread rapidly and, as always, in exaggerated form, beyond the confines of the district, through the press, the post and the railways. Muslims elsewhere felt something of the terror through which their Kanpur brethren had passed, something of their sense of isolation and insecurity.

In Kanpur, and outside, an increased bitterness of feeling, a greater Muslim hostility to Hindus and vice versa, was the result. If few Muslims had participated in civil disobedience in 1930-31, still fewer did so when civil disobedience was resumed in 1932.[4] Thus was the idea of Muslim 'separateness' spread further among the 'masses', especially in the towns. Thus, also, was the Congress' aim of representing the nation as a whole made more difficult to attain.

The secular Congress leadership found itself completely

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1 U.P. Police Dept. 1263/1931. Hidayat Husain-Sir Fazl-i-Husain, Kanpur, 16 April 1931.

2 Ibid., note accompanying Hidayat Husain's letter.

3 Ibid., Note by Jagdish Prasad, 6 April 1931.

4 See Svatantrata Sangram ke Sainik for the different U.P. districts.

at sea in the face of the growing problem of communal antagonism. During the years covered by this study they adopted a series of expedients in response to the peculiar historical circumstances, moving, as a historian has aptly put it, 'from one tongue-tied position to another'.[1] Indeed, the acute communal problem appears to have crept upon them unawares, an indication perhaps of how suddenly it arose in its new, virulent political form.

In 1926, the Nehru wing of the U.P. Congress had to bow to pressures on the ground in the end and appeal for communal Hindu support. At the same time, the need to retain Muslim support, which had earlier enormously strengthened the Swarajist position, as much as a belief in secular nationalism, made it impossible for the Swaraj Party to espouse an openly communal platform. Motilal Nehru observed, in a post mortem of the 1926 elections, that:

> 'Whilst Pandit Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai constantly harped upon Hindu interests, I began almost every speech by telling Hindu audiences that the political rights of both communities were identical and that the Congress stood for the protection of both against a foreign bureaucracy, giving each community perfect freedom in matters of religion.'[2]

Early in 1926, Motilal Nehru and other Swarajists had vigorously opposed the involvement of the Hindu Sabha in the elections.[3] Sampurnanand, a Swaraj Party candidate from Benares, and himself a man with close Hindu Sabha connections, declared that the Hindu body performed a vital role in the sphere of social and religious reform, but should not try to get involved in politics.

> 'The Congress can protect all legal rights of Hindus', he wrote, ' and does so. The consequence has been that

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1 J. A. Gallagher: 'Congress in Decline: Bengal, 1930 to 1939' in Gallagher, et al (eds): Locality, Province and Nation, p. 303.

2 MN Ps. (NML) 'Statements': Statement to the press regarding causes of Swarajists' defeat in the 1926 elections, 10-12-26.

3 PAI, 27 March 1926; Abhyudaya, 20 March 1926.

> 'the Muslims have grown discontented with the Congress - because it refuses to do anything unjust - and have set up their own political parties. But this is no reason for us to follow suit and introduce politics into the Mahasabha. This organisation has enough on its hands already; there is no need to make Muslims its guru /teacher/. . .'[1]

While there seemed to be no settled policy on the subject, there was in the first half of 1926 a move by certain prominent Swarajists to dissociate themselves from the Hindu Sabha.[2] As late as 1 June 1926, Jyotishankar Dixit, at the time General Secretary of the U.P. PCC and an active organiser in the Swarajist camp, could write to Motilal Nehru:

> 'I have tendered my resignation from the Secretaryship of the Provincial Hindu Sabha. The reason being pure and simple that in the coming elections our position must be clear and defined . . .'[3]

About this time, however, with the communal temperature distinctly high, there was a definite attempt to scale down the secular image of the Swaraj party. In June itself, the CWC laid down that a Congress move for the abolition of separate electorates could come only after Hindu and Muslim legislators agreed on the subject, but conceded a free vote for Congressmen on motions on the subject introduced by non-Congressmen.[4] In July, Sri Prakasa, the organiser of the Swarajist campaign in the eastern districts of the U.P. and hemself the party's candidate for the Benares-Gorakhpur Assembly seat, wrote to Nehru:

> 'I beg that you will please not put down Dr Sapru's suggestion re. Hindu-Moslem entente as a plank of our platform. It is too dreadful . . .'[5]

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1 Ibid., 13 March 1926

2 See, e.g., PAI, 20 March 1926, account of Hindu Sabha meeting, Allahabad, 7 March 1926.

3 AICC Supp. Papers 15/1926. In July Dixit, with Gauri Shankar Mishra, another General Secy. of the PCC 'defected' to the ICP; AICC Ps. 13/1926, Pt. II, Sitla Sahai's letters of July 1926; Abhyudaya, 21 August 1926.

4 AICC Ps. 57(ii)/1926, MN-Rangaswami Iyengar, 25 June 1926.

5 See AICC Ps. 13/1926, Pt. I, corresp. between MN and Sri Prakasa, July 1926.

Nehru did not disagree. Indeed, he went further than Sri Prakasa. In Bihar he succeeded in getting the Hindu Sabha to adopt the entire list of candidates nominated by the Swaraj Party. Then he set out to do this in the U.P. The plan was to capture the annual conference of the provincial Hindu Sabha, by using a provision in the Sabha's constitution whereby any 20 Hindus in the mofussil could elect delegates to the conference. Swarajists who had been closely associated with the Hindu Sabha, such as Sampurnanand and Anandi Prasad Dube, were put in charge of the operation, and money was allocated for the purpose.[1] Unfortunately for the Swarajists, their plot was discovered.[2] The Malaviya group which controlled the Hindu Sabha filled the conference with its own men. The Secretary of the Swaraj Party wrote forlornly of the dishonesty of the old office-bearers who refused entry to anyone suspected of Swarajist sympathies and enrolled as members anyone who would vote for them, 'students from Benares Hindu University and men from different districts', as he described them.[3] Nehru's hopes were dashed to the ground; and by a final touch of irony, the Agra provincial Hindu Sabha and the Malaviya men controlling it formed an election board to 'protect Hindu interests' at the very meeting at which the Swarajists had hoped to capture the Hindu Sabha and to elect A. P. Dube as President.[4]

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1 AICC Ps. 13/1926 Pt. II, Sitla Sahai-MN, Allahabad, 13 July 1926, notes that each delegate would cost 6/4/-, and also that Rs. 400 had been allocated. Ibid., Sahai-MN, 21 July 1926, asks for another Rs. 200.

2 Abhyudaya, 31 July 1926, wrote editorially: 'It is learnt that the Swarajists are secretly trying to establish their control on the Hindu Sabhas, and in particular on the U.P. provincial Hindu Sabha . . . The entry of the Swarajists into the Hindu Sabhas is good, but the object they have in wanting to gain control of them is despicable. To win the elections they have grown concerned about the Hindu Sabhas today.' The Malaviyas' informer seems to have been Gauri Shankar Mishra.

3 AICC Ps. 13/1926 Pt II, Sitla Sahai-MN, Allahabad, 2 August 1926.

4 Leader, 11 August 1926, account of 1 August meeting.

In later months, efforts continued to mobilise influential Hindus to support the Swarajists. Raghupati Sahai wrote from Gorakhpur in October, demanding that Swami Satyadeva give the Constituency a week in order to counter the propaganda of Malaviya and Birla. Motilal Nehru wired the Aj press (Benares) in November:

> 'Print immediately one thousand copies Manifesto of Sanyasis Benares published in recent issue of Aj against Malaviyaji's party and send by special messenger to Nandkumar Sahai . . .'[1]

In general, the Swarajists were forced to change their style substantially. Their leader now became 'a true Hindu'[2] and the Swaraj Party 'as good a Hindu body as one could want'.[3] Nehru's own performance at a crowded election meeting in Pratapgarh in November reveals the shift of emphasis clearly.[4]

The chief point in Nehru's speech was a purely nationalist one. He condemned C. Y. Chintamani, the editor of The Leader and the Liberal candidate from the Pratapgarh constituency, because he had opposed Gandhi's non-co-operation movement. Moreover, as a Minister in the U.P. Government, he had helped 'the miserable Aman Sabhas' and the police in their effort to check the Indian national movement. Nehru was aware that Raja Sir Rampal Singh, the Taluqdar of Kurri Sidhauli, a friend of Chintamani, was urging local men to support him. So was Madan Mohan Malaviya, but, said Nehru, this was amazing in view of the fact that in 1923 Malaviya publicly disapproved of Chintamani's actions as a Minister. As a further black

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1 AICC Ps. 13/1926 Pt. I, telegrams between Raghupate Sahai, Sitla Sahai and MN, October and November 1926; and AICC Ps. 10/1926, telegram MN-Manager, Aj Press, 26-11-26.

2 PAI, 25 September 1926.

3 Halifax Colln. (IOL) Vol. II, Irwin-Birkenhead, Simla, 23 September 1926.

4 The following account of the Pratapgarh meeting is based on MN Papers 'Miscellaneous', Speech at Pratapgarh 23-11-26. For other examples of the new style of Swarajist propaganda, see, e.g., Aj, 13, 15, 25 November 1926.

mark against Chintamani, Nehru pointed out that despite his many years in the province this 'Madrasi' gentleman could not understand or speak the local language. If they were going to elect Chintamani, he said, 'They might as well elect a European or for the matter of that a Chinaman as their representative.' This was getting nearer the heart of the audience, but not, as the questions revealed, near enough.

Three questions were asked of Nehru after his speech. Why had he not joined the Hindu Sabha? Had he prevented Babu Sangam Lal, MLC, from moving a resolution relating to 'music before mosques'? What had he done to help Hindus in the Allahabad Ramlila? Nehru spent a long time explaining his position on these matters. Regarding the 'music before mosques' resolution, he said that it would only have handed over to the British the decision on whether music could be played in one region or another.[1]

> 'My advice as a lawyer is that no individual or community is entitled to interfere with processions taken along the public thoroughfares with or without music . . .'

About the Allahabad Ramlila Nehru said that though himself in high fever and unable to participate, he had supported the Ramlila Committee's move for a Satyagraha if there were 5,000 volunteers. On the other hand,

> 'Malaviyaji made long applications to the Collector, Governor and Governor-General to which he received curt replies and this ended the great fight which Malaviyaji had undertaken to protect the right of the Hindus to take out their Ramlila procession. Now I put it to you to say in whose hands those rights are safe, in the hands of those who stand by them at all risks or those who depend on long petitions and are satisfied with short answers rejecting them.'

These were not far from the words of a Hindu enthusiast. That much Nehru had conceded to the communal atmosphere of 1926, and for the moment he won loud and prolonged applause. But Nehru's efforts to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity, his close

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1 The resolution asked for an enquiry into established local custom in different places.

association with well-known Muslim political figures, his own untraditional life-style were widely known. Added to that was ICP propaganda based on this very knowledge. In the event, the Swaraj Party's effort to pacify Hindu feelings led only to its falling between two stools.

Nehru's unity plank could scarcely bridge a gap between Hindu and Muslim public men, who were poles apart at this time. In retaining touch with the Muslim side, he lost contact with the Hindu. In trying to retreive his position on the Hindu side, he only eroded faith on the other.[1] The feeling of frustration was so great that Nehru actually considered retiring from public life.[2]

Later, in the build-up to the civil disobedience campaign of 1930, Congress leaders especially at the local level, used every available means to mobilise support. The Hindu slant of some of their propaganda, noticed in an earlier chapter, was natural enough. But in the general mobilisation effort, there was also a fairly open association of Hindu communal organisations with the Congress, surely a grave matter considering the desire to keep the Muslims in the national movement.

At the local level, the Congress-Hindu Sabha association could be a purely coincidental one. The Arya Samaj and the Hindu Sabha had been prominent in propaganda for the uplift of untouchables throughout the 1920's. Gandhi, and Lajpat Rai's Lok Sevak Mandal, had also taken up this work. To the unsophisticated townsman and villager, this may well have appeared as a continuation of the work of the Hindu organisations.

The experience of Bhainsa Bazar, a village in Basgaon tahsil, Gorakhpur, illustrates this. In November 1929, Ganesh Prasad Pandey, Secretary of the Tahsil Congress Committee, wrote of the excellent organisational work done in the village. A Village

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1 In 1923, the Swarajists won 8 seats in the U.P. Councils from the Muslim constituencies. In 1926, the number was reduced to three.

2 J. Nehru: A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 50.

Service Association had been established, and it was running a girls' school, a library, an infirmary, a publications division, and a music league among other things. The Hindu Sabha and the Congress, Pandey noted, were in the village from before. There were now plans to open a khaddar bhandar for khadi propaganda, and to start a fortnightly magazine Gram Sevak (Servant of the Village).[1] In this kind of situation, Hindu Sabhaite and Congressman were not easily distinguishable.[2]

But there were instances of deliberate Congress- Hindu association, apart from the coincidence of similar work. At the Kumbh Mela (a twelve-yearly bathing festival) held at the sangam in Allahabad in January 1930, sadhus and swamis were prominent in the several nationalist meetings and processions that were held. Among them was Baba Raghavadas, the Gorakhpur Congress leader; and together with talk of 75,000 cows being slaughtered daily, and of the need to protect their religion as Swami Ramanand had done in the time of Aurangzeb, there were calls to rid the country of its slavery.[3] It is notable also that Arya Samaj, Arya Mitra Sabha, Arya Kumar Sabha and Hindu Sabha branches in various places supported the call for civil disobedience.[4]

If these appeared to be independent moves by communal Hindu organisations and groups to support the Congress campaign, there was also evidence of Congress leaders themselves seeking such Hindu support. In 1928-29, when the official Congress moved to revive and strengthen the nationalist volunteer board, the Agra Provincial Hindu Sabha was also taking vigorous steps to improve volunteer organisation. The Sabha decided to establish physical training centres in different parts of

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1 Abhyud., 23 November 1929

2 Of course there was not always a distinction. Even prominent Congressmen had joined the Hindu Sabhas in some numbers in the mid-1920's, as we have seen above.

3 PAI, 1 February 1930.

4 e.g., PAI, 17 August 1929.

the province. Six Svayam Sevaks were sent to the famous Hanuman Vyayam Pracharak Mandal, Amrawati (Berar) for training. Also, the Hindu Mahasabha appointed Harihar Rao Deshpande to help in the physical training programme of the Agra provincial Sabha.[1] In January 1929, a physical training centre was established in Gorakhpur, Deshpande toured various districts of the U.P., Gorakhpur, Basti, Azamgarh and Meerut, propagating the scheme.[2] Later in the year, physical training camps were started in different areas: in Pratapgarh, a camp financed and run by the Raja of Kalakankar, in Ghazipur, and at the Kashi Vidyapith in Benares.[3]

The Intelligence Department reported on the organisation and activities of these camps:

> 'The Lajpat /Rai/ camp of physical exercise at Benares has come to an end and that at Kalakankar /Partabgarh/ also will soon be closed. It is intended to start in the near future a camp at Bhadri, in the Partabgarh district, another in the Jalaun district, and a third in the Magh Mela at Allahabad. The moving spirit in these matters is Sardar Narbada /Prasad/ Singh of Allahabad. At the Kalakankar camp training in the effective use of spears and knives as weapons of offence appears to have been a noteworthy feature.'[4]

Narbada (Narmada) Prasad Singh was not only a prominent Hindu Sabha man, General Secretary of the Agra Provincial Hindu Sabha in 1929. He was also a well-known Congressman, member of the U.P. PCC in 1925-6, a leader of the Malaviya group in the Allahabad Congress in 1926 and 1927, shortly to be 'Dictator' of the Handia Tahsil Satyagraha Committee (Handia was the Tahsil where the Allahabad Congress concentrated its initial efforts in civil disobedience), and later Secretary of the Allahabad DCC.

Still more striking evidence of Congress association with the Hindu Sabha physical training efforts was to come. In August 1929, Sri Prakasa, then General Secretary of the U.P. PCC,

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1 Abhyud., 19 January 1929

2 Abhyud., 9 February 1929

3 Abhyud., 20 July 1929; PAI, 12 and 19 October 1929.

4 PAI, 2 November 1929.

Narendra Deo, an important Congress leader working in Benares, and Secretary of Jawaharlal Nehru's Independence for India League, Nand Kumar Deo Vasishth, Secretary of the U.P. Congress Volunteer Board, and Birbal Singh, another prominent Congressman from Benares, visited the Lajpat Physical Training Camp at Ghazipur. They were impressed by the organisation of the camp, and the training imparted, and they published a statement of their appreciation. The statement welcomed the idea of training youth to work together as a disciplined force, and declared that the provincial Hindu Sabha had filled a great gap by taking up this work. It added that if the District Boards in different areas took advantage of this Hindu Sabha programme, a sufficient number of physical training instructors could soon be got ready and physical training centres opened from place to place.[1] This was not the kind of message calculated to reassure Muslims, even if the message contained a reference - as this one did - to the presence of 'two Muslim gentlemen' in the camp. The fact that appreciation of Hindu Sabha work came from the highest quarters of the U.P. Congress only made it worse.

The association of senior Congress leaders with Hindu Sabha ventures is especially remarkable in view of the fact that the Congress was also making a strenuous effort at this to win the support of the Muslims at large. In 1928 and 1929, there was a determined effort to associate prominent Muslims with all Congress activities. Abul Kalam Azad, Ansari, Shuaib Qureshi, Masud Ali Nadvi and others were present at the Benares All-Parties' Conference in January 1928.[2] Shuaib Qureshi and Ali Imam were among the members of the Committee which drew up the Nehru Report. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was Secretary of the All-Parties' National Convention at Calcutta in December 1928.

Congress efforts to win Muslim support through Muslim leaders were evident from Ansari's report to Motilal Nehru in

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1 Abhyudaya, 31 August and 14 September 1929.

2 Abhyud., 21 January 1928.

September 1928:

> 'I have been writing and sending telegrams to Musalman friends all over India to start organised campaign in support of the Constitution /i.e. the Nehru Report/ and against the senseless and unreasoned opposition started by Maulana Shaukat Ali and his party . . .'[1]

Later, Jawaharlal Nehru urged Sherwani to perform a similar task.

> '. . . Zahur Ahmad has issued another leaflet', he wrote to Sherwani in July 1929. 'I wish some counter leaflets might be issued. Otherwise the Muslim population of Allahabad will not even know that there is another side. Could you not issue a simple leaflet in which reference could also be made to the coming conference of the Muslim Nationalists . . .'[2]

The Muslim Nationalist Party itself was a Congress creation by which it was hoped to rally nationalist Muslim forces. It proved a futile venture however,[3] remaining a party of Muslim leaders who had close links with the Nehrus since the early 1920's. Towards the end of 1929, as we have seen, several of these Muslim leaders themselves withdrew from frontline Congress activity.

During these years, Congress leaders also tried to secure the support of 'traditional' Muslim leaders. Motilal Nehru solicited Syed Sulaiman Nadvi's help at two conferences being held in Delhi, in October and November 1928, to discuss the Nehru Report. '. . . a dialogue with the ulema will certainly

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1 AICC Suppl. Ps. 105/1928. Ansari-MN, Delhi 19-9-28. Nehru himself wrote of 'intensive propaganda carried on among the Muslims at considerable expense', MN Ps. File G-1, MN-Gandhi, Allahabad, 24 November 1928.

2 AICC Ps. G 40/1929, Pt. I, J. Nehru-Sherwani, 22 July 1929; see also Kidwai's Statement to the Press in Pioneer, 28 October 1928 for an example of such counter-propaganda. Congress propaganda among Muslims continued into the civil disobedience period. See, e.g. p. 85 above.

3 It was symptomatic of this futility that the Nationalist Muslim Party, first established in April 1929, did not hold its 'first meeting' until 27 July 1929; JN Corresp., with R. A. Kidwai, Kidwai's circular dated Allahabad, 15-7-28; The Pioneer, 29 and 31 July 1929.

be held', he wrote. 'In order to meet them, we have no one but you and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.'[1] The fatwa issued by the Deoband ulema, when civil disobedience began, favouring opposition to the Salt Tax, was itself evidently issued at the instigation of Congress leaders.[2] That it had little effect was partly due to circumstances outside the Congress' control, but partly also to the short-term expedients that the Congress had adopted for electoral and other purposes over the last few years. By these expedients, the Congress leadership had driven itself into a tight corner, and all it could do now was to adopt a policy of 'do nothing'.

Fearful of the outbreak of further communal clashes, Congress leaders proceeded with extreme caution during the civil disobedience period.[3] They continued their efforts to maintain peace on the occasion of religious festivals.[4] Appeals for Muslim support they left mainly to the Muslim leaders still with the Congress. Above all, they seem to have taken a conscious decision to keep out of areas with large concentrations of Muslims, who might be inflamed by civil disobedience propaganda.

The pattern of arrests in Allahabad district certainly suggests this (See Ch. 4, Table II). It seems significant that there was a concentration of large Muslim-owned villages in the doab region, from where the smallest number of satyagrahi prisoners came, and especially in the Allahabad tahsil. Here

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1 Private Colln. held at the Shibli Manzil, Azamgarh, MN-Suleiman Nadvi, 16 October 1928. (I am grateful to Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman of the Shibli Manzil for translations from the Urdu).

2 Halifax Colln., Vol 24, Hailey-Cunningham, 26 April 1930.

3 Both the Govt. Kanpur Report and the Congress Kanpur Report noted the anxiety of the Congress leadership to avoid a clash. Govt. also noted that an important section of the Congress leaders was strongly opposed to the publication of the Congress Kanpur Report, for fear that it might inflame communal opinion again, FR, May 1933, 1.

4 See, e.g., FR, May 1932, 2.

and in Manjhanpur, the early 1920's had seen major disturbances as a result of Kurmi and Ahir tenants revolting against their Muslim landlords. What were basically agrarian conflicts assumed a communal form, as Bayly has pointed out in his study of the district, and the Kisan Sabha therefore began to avoid the area.[1] It appears that in the early 1930's, Congress adopted the same policy - perhaps another factor contributing to the very small Muslim participation in civil disobedience. It was hoped perhaps that militant anti-British agitation, completely setting aside the problem of communal antagonism, would automatically solve the latter.

No such thing happened, of course. Indeed, the riots of early 1931 worsened the situation and led the U.P. Congress leadership to skirt the communal problem even more meticulously than before.

The 1931 U.P. Political Conference, held in Mirzapur in May, called on Congress Committees to work to prevent communal trouble. The 'Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee' appointed by the Congress also made a series of recommendations to tackle the communal problem.

> It called for 'a more complete scheme of Swaraj' to convince Hindus and Muslims alike that the Congress strives impartially for the moral and material good of all, and does not favour any one community or section at the expense of another, Hindu or Muslim, landholder or tenant, capitalist or labourer.'[2]

More concretely, it suggested the establishment of a Standing Congress Board to work for Hindu-Muslim unity; the disqualification of any member of a communal organisation from election to a Congress Committee; the exposing of the policies and methods of communal leaders; the abolition of separate electorates; and the acceptance by Hindus and Muslims respectively of cow-sacrifice and music-before-mosques.[3]

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1 Bayly: 'The Development of Political Organisation in the Allahabad Locality', pp. 151-2 and 360.

2 Congress Kanpur Report, p. 327.

3 Ibid., pp. 327-33.

This was, patently, asking too much. Muslim leaders would never accept the last two of these conditions, especially after the experience of the previous decade. The Congress too could not carry out the Committee's recommendations. Any 'more complete scheme of Swaraj' was bound to make choices between Hindu and Muslim, landholder and tenant, mill-owner and labourer. That was precisely the Congress' dilemma; and it was a dilemma made more intractable by the conditions of the Depression, when the U.P. Congress had either to let down a suffering tenantry or appear to rent-receivers to be working against them. In 1931, the Congress' limited campaign on behalf of the tenants was itself given a communal colour by big Muslim landlords and their representatives. The Rafiq-i-Hind wrote, for example, that

> '. . . in Bara Banki district, . . . the Muslim zamindars alone have been made a target of the kisan agitation /led by the Congress/. The kisans in villages owned by Muslim zamindars have been incited to such an extent that they have started social boycott of the Muslim zamindars and have stopped the menials from serving them.'[1]

In this situation, the reaction of the Congress leadership in the U.P. was to ignore the communal problem altogether. There was not a single reference to Hindu-Muslim relations in the resolutions passed by the numerous meetings of provincial Congressmen from 14 June 1931 to the end of December 1934.[2]

At the national level, too, the frustrations of the Congress' position were evident. They were seen in the Nehrus' attempt, at the time of the drawing up of the Nehru Report, to shelve the effort to pacify Muslim leaders and start pushing them instead.[3] Gandhi's refusal, at the Round Table Conference,

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1 NOP, 27 June 1931. At this point, according to the Govt. reporter, Hindu papers generally complained about the high-handedness of the zamindars, while Muslim papers pleaded their cause and opposed Congress and the 'no-rent campaign', see NOP, 20 June and 5 December 1931.

2 From newspaper and other reports, I have been able to trace 23 official meetings of provincial Congress leaders during this period.

3 page: 'Prelude to Partition . . .', p. 162.

to take part in discussions on the communal question except in the role of mediator - strikingly reminiscent of the attitude of the British in India - testified further to the Congress' difficulties.[1] Finally, the Congress reactions to the Communal Award of August 1932 revealed its utter helplessness. Except for a small, but important, group of Congress leaders who condemned the Award in no uncertain terms - and soon afterwards deserted the Congress on this issue[2] - the party neither accepted nor rejected the Award.

The Congress effort to steer a middle course between Hindu communalism and what were now fairly wide-spread Muslim demands did nothing, however, to solve the problem.[3] This became evident when the party returned to the electoral arena in 1934. In the elections to the central legislature that year, the official Congress won 12 of the 15 seats from the U.P., including

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1 Ibid., p. 243.

2 Malaviya and Aney, the leaders of this group, resigned from the Congress Parliamentary Committee and the AICC in 1934. They formed a new Congress Nationalist Party declaring that 'The nation is greater than the Congress' and calling for total opposition to the Communal Award. The situation seemed reminiscent of 1926, and Malaviya's closest followers in the U.P. followed him into the new party. See Abhyudaya 17 and 24 September, and 8 October 1934; The Leader 24 September and 11 October 1934; FR July 1934, 2, August 1934, 1 and September 1934, 2.

But much water had flowed down even the slow-moving Ganga and Yamuna in the intervening years. The civil disobedience and the 'no-tax' campaigns, with their populist appeal, had left their mark. The Congress' prestige was now greater than before and so was central control of its organisation. Altogether there were few 'defections' from the Congress. In the elections that followed the 'secular socialists' rode roughshod over the 'communal conservatives'. (See below).

3 At the local level, in any case, the official Congress still made certain concessions to communal Hindus. A number of Congressmen who were concurrently members of the Hindu Sabha were allowed to hold office in Congress organisations, despite a stipulation to the contrary in the 1934 Congress constitution. An example was Babu Bansgopal of Fatehpur, Secy. of the DCC and member of the PCC several times after 1931, and a member of the U.P. Legislative Assembly and of the AICC in 1937. Again, in Agra, at the time of the 1934 elections, Congressmen propagated the story that Hriday Nath Kunzru, the Malaviya candidate, was a Kunjru and not a Hindu at all; Leader, 11 November 1934.

four from Muslim constituencies.[1] But the nationalist Muslims who won in the latter had all chosen to stand on Muslim Unity Board rather than Congress tickets. The fact that the nationalist Muslims were well represented on the Congress Parliamentary Board, providing five of its twenty-five members, made no difference. Khaliquzzaman, one of the Muslims on the Parliamentary Board explained:

> 'The Communal Award being there, the elections were to be on the basis of separate electorates and as such I was fully convinced that Muslim candidates on the Swaraj Party /Congress/ ticket would have no chance.'[2]

In the 1936 elections to the provincial legislature, the position became clearer still. Khaliquzzaman co-operated with the far from progressive or pro-Congress Raja Ali Ahmad Khan of Salempur to revive the U.P. Muslim League. Their efforts were aided by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and other Congress Muslims, all of whom felt that no Muslim candidate put up by the Congress could win in an election fought on the basis of separate electorates.[3] This opinion was well-founded; in 1936 no Muslim was returned on a Congress ticket in the U.P. Kidwai himself was defeated in the Gonda Muslim constituency by an unknown Lucknow lawyer, Ghulam Husain, nominated by the landlords' National Agriculturist Party.[4] It was striking evidence of the extent to which anti-Hindu, and anti-Congress, feelings had spread among the Muslims in the preceding decade.[5]

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1 FR November 1934, 2.

2 Khaliquzzaman: Pathway to Pakistan, p. 129, and pp. 123-4 for members of the Congress Parliamentary Board. Aj, 22 November 1934, Editl., also declared that Muslim voters would heed Muslim leaders alone.

3 National Herald, 2 November 1972, part of a serial 'Life and Times of a Gadfly. Story of Rafi Ahmad Kidwai' by 'Rafian', a man closely associated with Kidwai for most of his public life.

4 Ibid., 3 November 1972; Hardy: The Muslims of British India, p. 224.

5 In 1926, as a Swaraj Party candidate, Kidwai had been elected to the central legislature from the Lucknow and Fyzabad Muhammadan Rural constituency.

If electoral campaigns under separate electorates, and the hope of short-term gains, had contributed to this, so had the Congress effort to close its eyes to the communal problem. By 1934, Jawaharla Nehru and others like him in the Congress had obviously realised this. Feeling the strain of extended communal disagreement and tension, they now made a direct assault on the communalist position. Vociferous condemnation of the Hindu Mahasabha and other communal bodies,[1] and the 'Frontier Gandhi' Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's much flaunted tour of the U.P. in support of Hindu-Muslim unity,[2] typified the new approach. Nehru proceeded to attack communal parties with the 'economic' weapon:

> '. . . are they blissfully ignorant of the hunger and unemployment that darken the horizon of the masses as well as of the lower middle classes', he wrote. 'The Muslim masses are probably even poorer than the Hindu masses but the "Fourteen Points" say nothing about these poverty-stricken Muslims . . .'[3]

This emphasis on economic questions[4] was potentially important for a solution of the general Hindu-Muslim antagonism. A 'mass' struggle based on the political and economic demands of the 'masses' was indeed a good way of overcoming the poor Muslim's (or, for that matter, the poor Hindu's) suspicion of the Congress. Partly for reasons discussed in the last chapter, the Congress had neither properly prepared nor launched such a struggle. Instead there had been a conscious policy of withdrawal from the Muslim masses in the early 1930's. The Congress' overwhelming success in the U.P. Hindu constituencies in 1936, and its complete failure in the Muslim, convinced Nehru that

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1 JN Corresp. B-112, JN's corresp. with S. A. Brelvi, November-December 1933. JN Autobiography, pp. 458-9 and FR, November 1933, 2, for JN's attack on the Mahasabha; Leader, 3 December 1933, 7 January 1934 for attacks on communalism generally.

2 FR, December 1934, 1 and Leader, 2, 3 December 1934.

3 The Leader, 7 January 1934.

4 JN Corresp., B-112, JN-Brelvi, December 1933; Report of the 49th Session of the Indian National Congress, Lucknow - April 1936 (Allahabad n.d.), p. 17.

this policy must be reversed. There followed the Congress' 'Muslim mass contacts' programme, under the direction of the Muslim socialist, Mohammad Ashraf. On account of recent experience, however, the new programme had to be drawn up as a separate one for Muslim 'mass contacts'. Besides, its social and economic basis was never really clear. All told, it proved both too little and too late. Its one perceptible result was a further closing up of Muslim ranks; even nationalist Muslim politicians looked on it as a move to undermine their support in the Muslim areas. Khaliquzzaman, for example, wrote to Nehru on 28 November 1937:

> 'You will remember that in May last, when the Bundelkhand election was being fought I wrote to you in detail the dangers which I apprehended in the Muslim mass contact movement, and I think that the present situation /of growing communal bitterness and conflict/ is the result of that policy of the Congress. No one can deny the Congress the right to contest Muslim seats even during the existence of the Communal Award and the separate electorates, but in the larger interests of the country I think it would have been preferable to leave the Muslims to send their representatives from their own platform so long as they stood by separate electorates.'[1]

By the mid-1930's, then, the Congress appeared to have played out all its cards as far as the Muslims of the U.P. were concerned. It could still, perhaps, have regained Muslim confidence by a radical reorientation in the socio-economic content of the nationalism it preached, but such a reorientation was next to impossible. Alternatively, the communal problem could perhaps be tackled by a pacific policy, letting tempers cool in the inflamed areas, and adopting an exceedingly conciliatory attitude towards Muslim leaders. Here, unfortunately, the U.P. Congress leadership, highly confident after its successes in the 1936 elections, proved dogmatic and adamant.[2] This

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1 Pathway to Pakistan, p. 175; see also Hardy: The Muslims of British India, pp. 227-8.

2 The U.P. Muslim League, with its large contingent of nationalist Muslims, was refused more than one seat in the Congress ministry being set up in 1937 on the grounds that this was their due share on the basis of the number of League members elected. For the impact of this on Muslim leaders in the province, see Khaliquzzaman Pathway to Pakistan, pp. 156-167 and 179; Hardy: The Muslims of British India, pp. 225-6.

provided the occasion for Muslim leaders in the U.P., not excluding the nationalist Muslims, to look for outside support to preserve 'Muslim interests' which not only they but thousands of ordinary Muslims in the province had come to regard as vital but insecure. So the ultimate makers of Pakistan gained their first major foothold in the heart of ancient Hindustan.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

This study of the development of nationalist politics in the 1920's and 1930's, in a province which was among the most prominent in the nationalist activities of this period, reveals areas of strength and patterns of conflict that proved to be of considerable significance for the future of India. The evidence we have considered indicates the problems faced by the Congress in its attempts to represent all sections of the Indian 'nation', its changing responses to these problems, and the extent of its success.

Two factors were directly responsible for the strength of the Congress organisation in the years between the two World Wars. One was the presence of a hard core of committed workers, mainly educated men from independent professional and commercial backgrounds and from rent-receiving families. The second was the availability of financial support from the bigger men of commerce and industry. For both groups, those involved in trading and manufacturing enterprizes and those involved in education, law, journalism and other small-scale urban enterprizes (in addition, of course, to those seeking such involvement), there had been a long but sure process of alienation from British rule. The events of the First World War and the years immediately following had provided a catalyst, and precipitated a fairly general hardening of views against imperial rule. For sections of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie these years provided a striking demonstration of the need for a Government which could secure protection, a fair exchange rate and also state aid in the setting up of basic industries. For the lower middle classes in general,

they brought new pressures, of rising prices, for example, and of the growing number of educated men for whom suitable jobs could not be found. In addition there was the humiliation of unfulfilled promises and the horror of Jallianwala Bagh, which deeply disturbed these and other groups in Indian society.

The immediate post-War years, therefore, saw the establishment of a permanent organisational base for a popular national movement: however much tactics and slogans changed in the decades that followed, the basic motive force behind the movement remained the same.

This core of organizers and financiers of the national movement was, of course, only a starting point. It was strengthened by support from many different quarters. The events of the 1920's and early 1930's showed that the Congress' openly and aggressively anti-British platform was broad enough to accommodate groups of several diverse social and economic interests, yet specific enough to have strong emotive power. Our examination of the civil disobedience movement in the U.P. indicates the existence of support for the nationalist struggle far more general than the numbers of those jailed, or membership of Congress or its volunteer organisations, would suggest. Sympathy for the movement was found even among groups whose economic interests were, directly or indirectly, adversely affected by the movement. In this context, it may be more profitable to view the economic situation of men as a limitation on the kinds of political activity they could pursue, rather than as the direct cause of their involvement in nationalist activities and agitations.

Economic demands could, in any case, be expressed by other methods, through Landlord Leagues and Chambers of Commerce, through deputations to the Viceroy and petitions to the King, and of course through independent representation in the Councils. At the level of the 'masses', equally, the wrath of men and women distressed by rising prices could be directed against the landlord and his agents or the local shopkeeper. It required

the mediation of a nationalist ideology, or at least of a nationalist party appearing to represent their interests, to channel these diverse grievances into anti-British agitation. It was in this process that nationalist propaganda and mobilisation efforts were of special significance.

Nationalism has often expressed itself in racial or religious terms, or, as in the case of most European national movements of the nineteenth century, in linguistic ones. Both a racial and a religious appeal formed important parts of Congress propaganda in the 1920's and 1930's. The extent of either is difficult to quantify. The effects of both were fairly obvious. Numerous observers noted the heightened racial animosity during the build-up to civil disobedience, and in the course of the campaign itself, clearly a crucial factor in the groundswell of support for the Congress movement at this time. Appeals on grounds of religion, made extensively by Congressmen and Khilafatists in the early 1920's and to some extent by Congress campaigners even in the late 1920's and early 1930's, likewise furthered the process of mobilisation for anti-imperialist agitation.

In the rural areas, racial and religious propaganda was supplemented by other means. Among these was a certain amount of 'constructive', social service work, which was invaluable for the establishing of new contacts. Within the broad nationalist appeal made by the Congress there was also room for limited appeals on specific economic issues. This economic aspect of the Congress' appeal became especially important when the slump in prices created conditions of great hardship in the rural areas. Though the importance of the Congress' 'constructive' work, or of its racial and religious propaganda, cannot be denied, the evidence suggests clearly that large numbers of small rent and revenue payers responded to the Congress' call for civil disobedience at this time primarily because of the Congress' appearance as the Trade Union of the kisans.

Certain aspects of this general Congress appeal could, however, have untoward consequences, by fostering a sectional consciousness of one kind or another and creating pressures which put the Congress' own broad, nationalist platform in jeopardy. This was most obvious in the case of the religious appeal which had the secondary, but significant, effect of contributing to the growth of two separate Hindu and Muslim communities, of encouraging organisation on communal lines and of making followers responsive only to the appeals of leaders from their own communities. The Kanpur riot of 1931 strikingly demonstrated the enormous tension that had by then come to characterize the relations of ordinary Hindus and Muslims in the towns of the U.P. It revealed also how events on the ground, involving and harming thousands of simple and innocent men and women, quite unconcerned with constitutional issues, could lead to a total loss of faith among the smaller Muslim community in leaders hailing from any other community, Hindu, Sikh or British.

In the 1920's, under the separate electorates and restricted franchise of the Montagu-Chelmsford constitution, nationalist politicians had been especially free in their use of a religious appeal to cut across the diverse interests of the various enfranchised classes. The 1926 election campaign in the U.P. was particularly marked by the rival claims of candidates in the Hindu constituencies that each was the 'purer Hindu' or at least the better protector of Hindu interests. These provoked identical claims on the Muslim side of the electoral fence, and served to increase communal antagonism on the ground. By the mid-1920's, a more or less permanent state of communal tension was a feature of the urban situation over much of northern India. The outbreak of a large number of communal riots in the area during these years testified to this. Together, these events created increasing pressure on the minority community's leaders to fight for the interests of their community first. In 1928, then, when the Congress proposed the removal of safeguards

and special representation available to the Muslims under the existing constitution, the Muslim leadership across the board lined up in opposition to the Congress. From that point onwards, the Muslim community at large remained outside the mainstream of Indian nationalism, going on in the end to create an independent stream of Muslim nationalism.

A similar 'pressure from below' developed in the rural areas in the course of the civil disobedience campaign in the U.P., or, more precisely, during the 'truce' that intervened between the two phases of this campaign. At this time, the independent and sometimes violent protests of large groups of poor and middle peasants revealed to Congress leaders the real extent of their distress and necessitated a Congress choice between maintaining a balance among the different rural classes, rather in the manner which the U.P. Government claimed as its own at the time, and taking a clearer stand in favour of the poorer and more oppressed sections of rural society. To some extent, at least, the Congress leadership gave in. It adopted a seemingly more 'radical' posture, and went on to launch a 'no-tax' campaign, knowing full well that this would become primarily a campaign for the non-payment of rents to landlords. Yet the change in the Congress' position at this time was more an apparent than a real one, and the reorientation in its approach to socio-economic questions small. The party continued to solicit the support of tenants and landlords, and more generally of all classes in Indian society. The Harijan movement also revealed the persistence of a piecemeal approach in the Congress' tackling of problems facing the socially and economically depressed.

It was precisely at moments of conflict between different interests represented in the national movement that the Congress' general nationalist appeal proved a stumbling block. As nationalist organisation was extended to new areas, and as new political and economic crises occurred, bringing with them new agitations and promises and slogans, 'national' consciousness

of a kind arose among groups and classes hitherto untouched by it. Nationalist slogans and symbols were widely accepted, but very differently interpreted by different groups.

Sometimes they acquired a particularly fanatical aspect in the hands of the newly converted. Thus increasing pressures were brought to bear on the nationalist leadership. The conflicts of interest between diverse groups that crowded on to the nationalist platform cried out for resolution. For a variety of reasons, however, the Congress leadership proved extremely reluctant to make any choices in this regard until very late in the day, and, even then, its decisions left it in an ambiguous position. Among these reasons was the class composition of the Congress leadership and cadres, and an evident lack of clear thinking in the Congress camp on vital questions of social and economic change.

The problems created by the absence of a well-thought-out programme of action vis-a-vis such questions were revealed only too clearly in the Congress' approach to the communal problem. What emerges from the evidence we have examined for the U.P. is a party which was clear enough about a secular nationalist goal, but totally unclear about the steps to be taken in reaching that goal. Consequently, the Congress found itself pushed from one tight corner to another, each seemingly more disastrous than the last.

There were evident political differences between the majority of 'political' Muslims and the majority of 'political' Hindus in the U.P. by the 1920's, and even earlier. The Congress tried to underplay these differences through appeals for Hindu-Muslim unity, and by papering over the divisions. In the agitation against the British proposals for a new Indian constitution and during the crucial period of civil disobedience, the 'papering over' policy was wholeheartedly adopted. To no avail; blocking out the sunlight does not banish the sun.

By the 1930's the communal problem had become more intractable, and the prospect of a political settlement more

remote, as a consequence of much increased communal tension and conflict at the local level. Here also, the Congress had no settled or detailed plan of action. Sectional 'Hindu' appeals and propaganda by prominent Congressmen in the 1920's were followed at the beginning of the next decade by the ceasing of nationalist propaganda and activities in areas of Muslim concentration, to be succeeded in turn by an appeal to the Muslim 'masses' over the heads of Muslim leaders. This tortuous progress was scarcely calculated to inspire confidence in either Muslim leadership or Muslim 'masses'. The results were, predictably, disastrous.

The constraints placed on the national movement by the class position of the Congress leadership are also fairly obvious from our study. In general, Kautsky has written:

> 'The movement, led by intellectuals, against the aristocracy and for industrialization has . . . taken the form of what is usually called "nationalism" where colonialism has appeared as it most immediate enemy.'[1]

The Indian national movement after the First World War, led by the intelligentsia, financed chiefly by sections of the Indian industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, and ultimately opposed to the traditional, landed 'aristocracy' of the country, appears at first sight to conform to this pattern.[2] Yet, we have seen not only the hesitant approach of the U.P. Congress leadership to the struggles of industrial workers, but also their reluctance to openly espouse the cause of tenants against their landlords. This reluctance was noted even during the worst period of the economic crisis created by the World Depression. It is possible to argue also that religious symbols

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1 J. H. Kautsky (ed): Political Change in Under-developed Countries: Nationalism and Communism (New York 1962), p. 26.

2 Barrington Moore (Jr.): Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (Lord and Peasant in the Makings of the Modern World), pp. 371-8, suggests that an alliance between intellectuals, commercial classes and the peasantry provided the thrust of the Indian national movement.

and slogans were used as a means of reaching the 'masses' by a nationalist leadership which was unable to appeal to them on a class basis.[1]

The fact was that class war could scarcely be encouraged by Congress leaders and workers whose own interests would suffer from it. In the early 1930's, personal experience of widespread misery in the villages and the pressure of independent actions taken by large numbers of desperate tenants led to the adoption of a more 'radical' posture by the Congress leadership, and to an increase in 'socialist' thinking in the Congress camp. In 1934, when the CSP was established, this new left-wing party gained a large number of adherents from among the Congress leaders in the U.P. But, for a large number of these men, this was merely an emotional commitment, meaning little in terms of concrete political action. When such action was finally taken, in the form of a new tenancy law introduced by the Congress ministry formed in 1937, it was far from being 'socialist' in nature; all landlords paying an annual revenue of Rs. 250 or less were included among the 'poor' who were to be protected by the Act! Even before then, the demands of electoral politics had brought back the U.P. Congress to a position of wooing the landlords, and the terms 'socialist' and 'non-socialist' had themselves become catch-phrases in the bitter individual and factional rivalries that broke out at this time in the efforts of Congressmen to get themselves elected to places on Congress Committees, local boards and the provincial and central legislatures.

In the light of this evidence, some of the propositions regarding the development of the Indian national movement, between the two World Wars, outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, may be re-examined. Developments in what was supposed to be one of the most prominent areas in 'radical' and 'left-wing' nationalist politics provide no support for

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1 Cf. P Addy and I. Azad: 'Politics and Culture in Bengal' (New Left Review, No. 79, May-June 1973).

the view that the Congress took a radical turn in 1928 or even in 1934. It would appear also that Governmental repression and unwise decisions on the part of individual Congress leaders are both insufficient explanations for the decline of the nationalist agitational campaigns. More fundamental factors were to be found in the internal, structural weaknesses of the Congress movement. The nationalist leadership proved unable to bridge the gap either between Hindus and Muslims, or between itself and the scarcely differentiated 'masses' whose support it solicited. In the U.P., by the time of the civil disobedience campaign, there was an evident fear of the possibility of communal trouble and a consequent effort to keep agitation out of communally inflammable areas. There was also the continued fear of social disruption, which resulted in the Congress effort to keep a tight rein on the agitation it encouraged in the rural areas. In other words, where the structure of the movement threatened to collapse, the leadership felt constrained to try and control popular forces, thus putting a damper on nationalist agitation as a whole. The holding back of the agitation of poor and middle peasants, against their depressed conditions and the oppression of their landlords and the Government, proved a particularly important factor in the decline of the civil disobedience movement in the U.P.

The view that the Indian nationalist leadership adopted a policy of 'pressure-compromise-pressure' to extract concessions from the British has the merit of taking into account the constraints placed on nationalist actions by the class position of the Congress leadership. Patently, from the standpoint of the Congress leaders, agitation had to be popular but controlled. This view errs, however, in attributing to this leadership a conscious, calculated strategy for progress towards its proclaimed goal. The evidence from the U.P. suggests, rather, that even in the late 1920's and early 1930's, when the organisation of the Congress had been firmly established and popular agitation was no longer a journey into the unknown,

the Congress leadership muddled through from one position to another as the pressures and the frustrations mounted.

Finally, much of the evidence from the U.P. contradicts the view that proposals for constitutional change gave rise to nationalist agitations, and that once the nature of the change became clear such agitation was rendered superfluous. British constitutional initiatives, and the structure of government which they introduced in India, certainly formed an important component of the pressures and circumstances which shaped the development of nationalist politics in the 1920's and 1930's. But there were other forces at work too, sometimes more immediate and pressing, such as the violent protests of distressed peasant groups, the feelings of suspicion among masses of Hindus and Muslims in the towns, or the enraged actions of the revolutionary terrorists and other young men and women.

It is important to remember, besides, that the organisational and electoral wings of the Congress were fairly distinct in the 1920's and early 1930's. Those who participated in the Swarajist Council programme played only a minor part in the civil disobedience movement of 1930 to 1933. Those who provided the active leadership of the civil disobedience movement had been out of the limelight for most of the 1920's, engaged in 'constructive', 'nation building' activities. For the former the Montagu-Chelmsford constitution had provided a platform, which could be used for nationalist propaganda and agitation, and for other purposes. For the latter, the constitution provided nothing: they had to create their own platforms and to work in areas quite untouched by the British administration or its constitutional innovations.

Many of the Congress leaders may have been concerned above all about the nature of proposed changes in the constitutional set up, and keen to stop popular agitation when this seemed to be of no further value in this context. But neither the rise nor the decline of popular agitations could be determined by

them alone. We have already observed that the internal, structural weaknesses of the national movement were themselves largely responsible for the decline of such agitation. Moreover, in at least one instance of the rise of a popular nationalist agitation, the resumption of civil disobedience in the U.P. in November-December 1931, the evidence suggests that the independent actions of popular forces (in this case, large groups of distressed tenants) played a crucial part.

One other problem with the view that British constitutional initiatives occasioned nationalist agitations is that it, too, like another interpretation of the development of nationalist politics discussed above, presumes that the nationalist leadership had a properly planned and elaborate programme of action for advance towards their objective - the objective, in this view, being 'power'. The evidence from the U.P. does not bear this out. Indeed, it was partly for the reason that the Congress leadership in general was unclear about the strategy to be followed that the British held the initiative for much of the period under study. If the Congress gained the upper hand, it was only because sympathy for the nationalist cause was extremely widespread, and because the nationalist leadership was willing to bend, at least to some extent, to the pressure of popular forces.

In the long run, the Congress leadership was pushed into a position where it had to sacrifice elements of its broad, nationalist platform. During the 1920's and 1930's different conglomerations of forces led the Congress to spell out its programme in some detail, to reveal more clearly the social content of the nationalism it preached. One result was that, while the Congress extended its organisational efforts and while control at the centre of the organisation was tightened, paradoxically the social depth of the movement actually contracted. The fact of larger arrests in the civil disobedience campaign than in the earlier non-co-operation movement simply reflected the stronger Congress organisation and, particularly in 1932,

a firmer Government policy in dealing with the agitation. Interestingly, it was opposed, in the U.P. and elsewhere, to the fact of a much smaller Congress membership and a much less enthusiastic response to the call for volunteers.

On the whole, the evidence suggests that by this time, the range from which the Congress drew its support in the U.P. had narrowed considerably. At the same time, within this narrower range, the U.P. Congress had greatly consolidated and strengthened its position. The process might be described as one of the gradual transformation of a movement into a party:[1] the tendency was quite evident during the period under study, though the process was still far from complete at the end of the period.

In sum, the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the Indian national movement may be said to have increased over these years. The evidence adduced in this study suggests that, about the late 1920's, the graph indicating the extent and scale of support for the movement bifurcates. By the mid-1930's, one fork is pointing towards a Congress government of self-governing or independent India, the other towards the confused and vacillating policies of that government and, rather more vaguely, towards Partition.

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1 The growing intra-party squabbles and strifes was perhaps one indication of this transformation.

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