

SIX

NATIONALIST MOVEMENT AND THE GUJARATI PRESS

AS INDICATED IN THE LAST CHAPTER, we shall proceed now to examine the nature as well as the growth of the Gujarati press in relation to the political occurrences in the country since the year 1919. These occurrences took the shape of -- mass-movements against the Government. They were launched by the Indian National Congress and were organised by Mr M.K. Gandhi (Gandhiji) around whose personality they centred. We shall delineate therefore, first, the stages whereby Gandhiji was acknowledged as the leader to organise such mass-movements, and, shall mention incidentally the references in the Gujarati press to Gandhiji's activities and views from time to time and shall trace thus the background to the changing nature of the Gujarati press by about 1922. As an adjunct to that background we shall make particular references to the Gujarati journal that Gandhiji was editing. We shall then proceed to study, as that is the main task in this chapter, the nature and the growth of the Gujarati press vis-a-vis the different phases of the -- nationalist movement.

Gandhiji was born in Porbander — Gujarat — in 1869. After being called to the bar in London in July 1891, he sought enrolment to the Bombay Bar and decided to practise in the

courts of the Kathiawad Political Agency. But, he proceeded to South Africa instead. There he came in contact with Indian residents hailing from all parts and belonging to almost all castes and creeds of India. These Indian settlers, even as all Asians, were not granted certain facilities and were denied -- certain rights by the South African Government. Gandhiji took up that issue. He started the Natal Indian Congress to organise Indians to fight for their rights in 1894.¹ His activities became known in India. The tenth session of the Indian National Congress meeting at Madras during December 1894, adopted a resolution in which it said that it 'sympathised with the Indian settlers in South Africa'.² Gandhiji came to India towards the middle of 1896. He tried to contact the Indian press to secure its support for his activities in South Africa. The 'Pioneer' of Allahabad was the first to take cognizance of Gandhiji's views editorially. The 'Times of India' from Bombay asked for 'an inquiry into the allegations' Gandhiji had made in a pamphlet that he had circulated. Gandhiji then met M.G. Ranade, Badruddin Tyabji, Sir Pherozshah Mehta and others to acquaint them with the conditions of Indians in the British colonies. Gandhiji's public lecture was arranged in Bombay under the presidentship of Sir Pherozshah Mehta at the Gowasji Jehangir Institute. Gandhiji then proceeded to the other parts of the

¹ Tendulkar D.G., Mahatma, Vol. I, p.51.

² Besant Annie, op.cit., pp.197 and 204.

country meeting personalities like Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Dr Bhandarkar and persuading editors of journals like the 'Hindu', the 'Madras Standard', the 'Amrit Bazar Patrika', the 'Bangbasi' and the 'Statesman' to plead for the cause of the Indian settlers in South Africa. Mr Saunders, editor of the 'Englishman', placed his office and the journal at Gandhiji's disposal. Mr Saunders allowed Gandhiji the liberty of making whatever changes Gandhiji liked in an editorial on South Africa.³

The activities of the Indians in South Africa gathered momentum after Gandhiji's return there towards the end of 1896 because Gandhiji had adopted a programme of staging a 'passive resistance movement' against the Government. From the Reports on the Native Papers during that period it appears that references to the South African agitation were made by journals like the Rast Goftar, the Bombay Samachar, the Jame Jamshed and the Gujarati.⁴

Gandhiji returned to India in December 1901. He attended the seventeenth session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta under the presidentship of Sir Pherozshah Mehta. Gandhiji spoke there on the South African issue.⁵ The Congress adopted a resolution expressing 'concern over the condition of Indians in South Africa.'⁶ Gandhiji then proceeded to South

³ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., pp.55-57.

⁴ Report on Native Newspapers, December 1896 to December 1897.

⁵ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., p.69, and Besant Annie, op.cit., pp.340-341.

⁶ Besant Annie, Ibid., p.347.

Africa in December 1902.⁷ The eighteenth session of the Indian National Congress met in Ahmedabad that year. Mr D.P. Thakore spoke on a resolution regarding South Africa. He narrated his own experiences and spoke about the work being done there by Gandhiji.⁸ Again, the Congress meeting at Surat in 1907, adopted a resolution about the South African issue and Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea cabled Gandhiji saying, 'our sympathies and support: Courage'.⁹ Mr Gopal Krishna Gokhale had referred to Gandhiji in the following words in a public speech in 1909 :

'The indomitable Gandhi, a man of tremendous spiritual power, one who is made of stuff of which great heroes and martyrs are made'.¹⁰

This speech of Mr Gokhale was reported by the Gujarati, the -- Bombay Samachar and the Rast Goftar. They had commented that 'Gandhiji was the lone Gujarati who was espousing the cause of the Indian settlers in the British Colonies'.¹¹ The Buddhi Prakash had published in 1909 an article by Mr Ranjitram Vavabhai Mehta. The article being a review of events during 1908, said, 'This province could produce a leader-thinker who is leading the Indians in their fight against the whites'.¹² --

⁷ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., p.72.

⁸ Official Report on the Proceedings of the Eighteenth Session of the Indian National Congress, 26, 27, 28 December, 1902, Ahmedabad, ■

⁹ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., 107, and Besant Annie, op.cit.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.134.

¹¹ Report on the Native Papers for November and December 1909.

¹² Buddhi Prakash, February, 1909.

During the course of these events, Gandhiji had written a book, 'Hind Swaraj', in Gujarati. The Bombay Government had issued orders to proscribe that book in March, 1910.¹³

Gandhiji finally left South Africa and returned to India on January 9, 1915. His arrival was notified in the Gujarati press. After his landing, the Gujarati in its issue dated -- January 10, 1915, published a biographical sketch of Gandhiji, devoting six columns thereto under the caption, 'Deshbhakta Satyagrahi Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi' (The Patriot Satyagrahi M.K. Gandhi).¹⁴ The Hindustan edited by Mr Ranchhoddas Bhavan Lotwala writing under 'Welcome to Gandhi' expressed, what it termed as, 'a fervent hope that Gandhiji would use his matchless weapon of passive resistance for securing the freedom of India'.¹⁵ The Rast Goftar said, 'A jewel of Gujarat is returning to India after rendering great services to his brethren in South Africa'.¹⁶ The paper added, 'we have been reporting the activities of Mr Gandhi since long.... He joins now the ranks of Dadabhai and Gokhale'.¹⁷ The Samalochak said, 'The noteworthy event of the month of January is the return of Mr and Mrs Gandhi to their homeland----. The place of Mr Gandhi is unrivalled among all the patriots produced by our land so far'.¹⁸

¹³ Tendulkar, D.G., op.cit., p.132.

¹⁴ Gujarati, dated 10-1-1915.

¹⁵ Yagnik Indulal, Atmakatha (auto-biography), Vol.I, p.181.

¹⁶ Rast Goftar, dated 17-1-1915.

¹⁷ Ibid.,

¹⁸ Samalochak, January, 1915.

A reception was held to honour Gandhiji at Bombay on January 12, 1915, three days after his landing on India. Sir Pherozshah Mehta presiding over the gathering referred to the work done by Gandhiji. Bombay's Gujaratis also held a reception welcoming Gandhiji. Mr M.A. Jinnah presided over the function and paid tributes to Gandhiji.¹⁹

Gandhiji then proceeded to Porbandar, his home town, to meet his relatives. On the way he was acquainted by one person with the custom cordon put up by Government at Viramgam which then divided the Kathiawad States from the rest of Gujarat under direct British administration. Gandhiji was told, it is reported, that the custom arrangements created hardships to the travelling public. It is reported further that Gandhiji had assured that person that he would move in the matter.²⁰ Gandhiji then returned to Ahmedabad. He was honoured there by the local people on February 12, 1915. Again Gandhiji proceeded to Jetpur (Saurashtra) where an address was presented to him at a public gathering. Gandhiji was referred to (for the first time) as 'Mahatma' (great soul) in that address.²¹

Gandhiji after his return to Ahmedabad decided to stay

¹⁹ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., pp. 193-195.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 196 Gandhiji had written to the Government for relaxing some of the arrangements. It is reported that those communications being of no avail, Gandhiji had talked about it to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, later in 1917 and subsequently the severity of the Viramgam customs cordon was relaxed.

²¹ Ibid., facimile, pp. 215-216.

permanently there and set up an 'Ashram' at Kocharab — a -- suburb of Ahmedabad on May 25, 1915.²² Thence he used to move about in the country, during the course of which he went to Bihar. He was acquainted with the working conditions in the indigo plantations. Gandhiji took up the issue on behalf of the plantation labourers. The Government issued a ban on his entry into certain parts of Bihar. Gandhiji defied the ban in April 1917.²³ Meanwhile, his acquaintance with the Gujarati leaders and organisations was increasing and he was invited to preside over the second Gujarat Educational Conference held at Broach during October that year.²⁴ Again, in November that year he was invited to preside over the Gujarat Political Conference held at Godhra.²⁵ By that time Gandhiji was elected as the president of the Gujarat Sabha — a political organisation functioning in Ahmedabad since the 1880's.²⁶ Soon after that, Gandhiji was called upon to intervene in a dispute between the mill-agents and the textile workers in Ahmedabad. The workers

²² Ibid., p. 207.

²³ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., pp. 248-249.

²⁴ Yagnik Indulal, op.cit., Part II, pp.32-40 and the monthly Navjivan ane Satya, November 1917.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 46-55 and Navjivan ane Satya, December, 1917.

²⁶ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., Vol. I, facimile, p. 248. Gandhiji as president of that body had organised a signature campaign in Gujarat for presenting a petition drafted as per the congress-League Scheme, to the Government, on the Montague-Chelmsford proposals.

had been advised by Gandhiji to go on a strike and subsequently Gandhiji had undertaken a symbolic fast in March 1918 to resolve the deadlock.²⁷ Immediately after that, Gandhiji was invited to attend to the grievances of the peasants in the Kheda District. The peasants there were reluctant to pay their revenue dues as famine-like conditions were prevailing in that area. Gandhiji took up the matter by organising the peasants and secured relief for the peasants of Kheda from the Government.²⁸

In February 1919, the Government intended to pass two bills known as the Rowlatt Bills. One of them meant to be introduced in the Council, provided for a change in the penal law by stipulating a court of three High Court judges to try cases which were characterised as of a revolutionary nature. The other one was a temporary measure intended to deal with the situation arising from the expiry of the Defence of India Act. Under that, the possession of a document deemed to be seditious in nature and the intention to publish or to circulate such an one was made punishable with imprisonment.²⁹ These measures intended to be passed by the Government had created widespread comments in the press. Meetings were held as a mark of protest against the bills.³⁰ Gandhiji declared

²⁷ Ibid., p. 270.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 271-273 and Parikh Narhari, Kheda Satyagraha. (Ahmedabad 1920)

²⁹ Government of India, India in the year 1919, pp. 24 f.

³⁰ Ibid., and Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., pp. 292-293.

his opposition to the Rowllat Bills by calling them as 'an unmistakable symptom of a deep-seated disease in the governing body'.³¹ Pursuant to his stand in opposing the bills, Gandhiji started collecting signatures on a pledge which he called the 'Satyagraha Pledge' purporting to show resentment against the Rowlatt Bills. He also constituted a 'Satyagraha Sabha' in Bombay and created a band of persons which would break the existing prohibitory orders by selling proscribed literature and by publishing an unregistered newspaper called the 'Satyagraha'.³² Gandhiji was to proceed to the Punjab for attending protest meetings. He was prevented from doing so on April 10 and was removed to Bombay on April 11, 1919. The news of -- Gandhiji's internment led to disturbances and the Government declared martial law in Ahmedabad on April 12, 1919.³³ On the same day firing was resorted to on crowds which had gathered at the place called the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar in the Punjab. It is reported that several hundred persons lost their lives as a result of the firing.³⁴ Disturbances were reported also from Nadiad, Anand, and Viramgam where loss of life and property took place.³⁵ Gandhiji declared his disapproval of the disturbances. He also declared his resentment at the

³¹ Ibid., p. 293.

³² Ibid., p.302.

³³ Government of Bombay. Source Material for A History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol.II, (1885-1920), p. 755.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 313.

³⁵ Government of Bombay, Source Material, op.cit., pp.754-755.

Government actions and called upon the latter to set up an inquiry.³⁶

Gandhiji persisted in his demand for an inquiry into, what he termed as the 'Punjab wrongs'. He made an issue out of that and joined it with the Khilafat movement. He then declared on July 28, 1920, that a Non-Cooperation movement against the Government would be launched on August 1, 1920. Tilak passed away on that day. Gandhiji, however, had written earlier to the Government about his move and had surrendered the decorations etc. that Government had granted him on June 15, 1915 for his services to the Empire.³⁷ A special session of the Indian National Congress was convened at Calcutta in the first week of September 1920. Gandhiji moved a resolution on Non-cooperation as a means to 'remedy the Khilafat and the -- Punjab Wrongs and to attain Swaraj'. That resolution was passed by a majority of 1855 votes against 873.³⁸ In December that year at the thirtyfifth session of the Congress held at Nagpur, Gandhiji moved for an alteration in the Congress creed which became then, 'The attainment of Swaraj by peaceful means'.³⁹ Gandhiji had discarded his dhoti, shirt and cap to don a loin-cloth and had got his head shaven clean in September 1921.⁴⁰

³⁶ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., 319.

³⁷ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., Vol.II, p.1.

³⁸ Ibid., p.17.

³⁹ Ibid., p.37.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 80-81.

When the thirtysixth session of the Indian National Congress met at Ahmedabad during December that year, Gandhiji was -- declared to be the 'executive authority' of the Congress movement that was contemplated, in a resolution adopted unanimously in that regard.⁴¹

Gandhiji's activities were covering wider and wider canvass since his arrival in India in January 1915. Events around him were moving more extensively and faster than their description on paper here. The press was trying to keep pace with them, yet. We have put off frequent references to that, however. We shall now sum up the press contents pertaining to Gandhiji during the period under reference. We find that,

- (1) Gandhiji's activities in and outside Gujarat were reported by the Gujarati journals published from Bombay, Surat, Broach, Baroda, Kheda, Nadiad and -- Ahmedabad. The activities (organising meetings, raising funds, setting up of institutions) in Gujarat were covered by the correspondents or editors of the journals on the spot. Information on the latter i.e. Gandhiji's activities outside Gujarat were procured through the news agency (Associated Press) or sometimes telegraphically,

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.95-97.

- (2) The Gujarati weeklies used to publish a weekly round up of Gandhiji's activities. They quoted the speeches made by Gandhiji more elaborately than did the dailies,
- (3) The monthlies (e.g. the Navjivan and Satya or the Vasant or the Samalochak) published still more in detail Gandhiji's statements and commented upon them.
- (4) The space devoted to the news about Gandhiji's programmes was a column or two in the dailies and the weeklies during 1915-1916. Since Gandhiji's activities in Champaran (Bihar), his fasts during the labour dispute in Ahmedabad and his participation in the agitation of the peasants in Kheda, the news about Gandhiji's activities was reported in greater detail by the Gujarati press.
- (5) Since Gandhiji formed a committee to agitate against the Rowlatt Bills (the Satyagraha Committee in Bombay e.g.) and since he put forth his views about non-cooperation and boycott of foreign goods for the attainment of Swaraj

according to the Congress creed, words spoken by Gandhiji were published -- extensively by the Gujarati press.

(6) Articles pertaining to Gandhiji's views, those dealing with Congress policies as directed by Gandhiji etc. used to be published in the weeklies, monthlies and the Diwali Numbers of almost all the Gujarati journals. Photographs of the Congress leaders were being published with Gandhiji in more prominence in these Special Numbers,

(7) Poems (longish ones at times) began to be published in the Gujarati journals. These poems were purporting to explain the implications of Swaraj, Boycott and ASAHAKAR (Non-Cooperation) as envisaged by Gandhiji.

The above resumé of the press contents during 1915-'22 which has been made so brief and rather compressed is meant to suggest that on a perusal of the Gujarati journals (and the Reports on the Native Newspapers) we notice a gradual increase in (i) the frequency of references in the different Gujarati journals to Gandhiji's activities, (ii) the frequency of publication of Gandhiji's views, and (iii) the

space allotted to the news pertaining to Gandhiji as well as to his statements.

We have kept out of reference, however, the contents of one Gujarati weekly which was run by Gandhiji himself. We shall turn to that now.

Gandhiji after his arrival in India in 1915 used to write sometimes for the English daily the 'Bombay Chronicle' which was started by Sir Pherozshah Mehta and was edited by B.G. Horniman.⁴² Gandhiji contributed sometimes to the English monthly 'Young India' with which Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Umar -- Shobhani and Shankerlal Banker were associated. Articles by Gandhiji were published in the Hindustan of Mr Ranchhodas Bhavan Lotwala as well as in the Gujarati monthly Navjivan and Satya edited by Indulal Yagnik.⁴³ After Gandhiji settled in Gujarat and after his participation in the different public activities Gandhiji, it is reported, felt the need of a Gujarati journal with a view to publishing his views elaborately and -- extensively.⁴⁴ He put that proposal before Shankerlal Banker and Indulal Yagnik. Both were associated with the Navjivan and Satya, the Gujarati monthly, in which Gandhiji had been writing occasionally. They took up Gandhiji's proposal and

⁴² Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., Vol.II.

⁴³ Ibid., Hindustan, Diwali Number, 1915. Navjivan and Satya, September, 1917.

⁴⁴ Gandhi M.K., Autobiography, p.473. (Eng. Transl. Desai Mahadev Reprint: 1948)

decided to convert their monthly into a weekly. It was decided to publish the proposed weekly under a new name 'Navjivan' from Ahmedabad under the editorship of Gandhiji.⁴⁵

The first issue of the journal, the Navjivan, was out on September 9, 1919. Gandhiji as the editor said, 'There is no dearth of journals in Gujarati at present-----'. But, being a Gujarati by birth and a Gujarati in deed, I aspire to be absorbed into the life of Gujarat, for I can serve the country only by doing so-----'. This will be the first occasion when I shall be known publicly in Gujarat as an editor-----'. I wish that the Navjivan reaches the huts of the farmers and the weavers (because) I am going to write in their language; I am going to pray that the Navjivan be read by the women folk as well'.⁴⁶-- Gandhiji had announced in the same issue that it was the solemn resolve of all associated with the Navjivan to say whatever they felt, no matter what restrictions Government had enacted for the press.⁴⁷

The Navjivan in its issues during December that year took up the Khilafat and the Punjab issues in view of the thirty-fourth session of the Indian National Congress due to meet at Amritsar (Punjab), and, after the session concluded gave details in its issues during January 1920, about the resolutions adopted

⁴⁵ Yagnik Indulal, op.cit., Vol.I.

⁴⁶ Navjivan, dated 19-9-1919.

with the text of the speeches made thereon.⁴⁷ Gandhiji wrote in the successive issues of that journal about the demands made by the Congress and explained the implications of those demands.⁴⁸ In the last week of July 1920, as we had mentioned earlier, Gandhiji had declared that the first of August that year would be observed as the inauguration day of the Non-Cooperation movement that he had contemplated. The Navjivan since then was full of articles on the implications of such a movement and particularly of the 'triple-boycott' that -- Gandhiji had been suggesting.⁴⁹ The subsequent issues (September-October 1920) of the Navjivan were full of information about the special session of the Indian National Congress held during the first week of September that year. In each of these issues Gandhiji explained elaborately his stand on the non-cooperation resolution.⁵⁰

The weekly frequently gave information about the tours undertaken by Gandhiji and published in details the speeches made by him from place to place. In addition to that the Navjivan used to include articles on Swadeshi, Khadi, Spinning, Satyagraha, and cow-protection -- some written by Gandhiji,

⁴⁷ Navjivan, dated 7, 14, 21 and 28 December, 1919, and 4, 11, January 1920.

⁴⁸ Ibid., dated 4-1-1920.

⁴⁹ Ibid., dated 25-7-1920 and 5-9-1920.

⁵⁰ Ibid., dated 12-9-1920 and 19-9-1920.

some contributed by his associates. In between, Gandhiji used to address a special appeal to the Gujaratis. He used to -- request those who were literate to read aloud the Navjivan to those who were not capable of reading.⁵¹ Gandhiji had expressed his satisfaction that the Navjivan was read so extensively by the people of Gujarat.⁵²

Again, in November and December 1920 the Navjivan -- contained articles written by Gandhiji, each one of them -- explaining the Non-cooperation movement that Gandhiji had contemplated. These aimed at clarifying Gandhiji's stand on the movement and the programmes suggested by Gandhiji. Again, its issue dated December 22, 1920 was full of information about the thirtyfifth session of the Indian National Congress due to meet at Nagpur that year.⁵³ When the Congress was in session, arrangements were made to procure telegraphically the news about the business transacted at Nagpur.⁵⁴ The Navjivan during January 1921 was full of details about the resolutions made and the speeches delivered at the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress.⁵⁵ When that body held its thirtysixth

⁵¹ Ibid.,

⁵² Ibid.,

⁵³ Ibid., dated 12-12-1920.

⁵⁴ Ibid., special supplement dated 30-12-1920.

⁵⁵ Ibid., dated 2, 9, 16, 23 January 1921.

session at Ahmedabad during December 1921, a whole issue of the Navjivan was devoted to the news etc. about that.⁵⁶ Again, full texts of the speeches of the participants in the discussions of the resolutions moved and adopted, and, the particulars about the arrangements made for the delegates as well as the names and assignments of the congress volunteers were published in those issues.⁵⁷ It appears from some notices appearing in the Navjivan during those days that arrangements were made to sell single copies of that weekly at large through hawkers in the city of Ahmedabad and that these copies were soon exhausted; reprints had to be issued to meet the demands.⁵⁸

Gandhiji was running an English weekly, the 'Young India' at that time. Some articles written for that journal were -- published in Gujarati in the weekly Navjivan. Gandhiji had -- written an article, 'Tampering with Loyalty' in September 1921. That article was published in the Gujarati weekly Navjivan dated October 2, 1921, under the caption 'Rajdroha' (Rajdroha means sedition in Gujarati).⁵⁹ Again, Gandhiji had written an English article, 'The Puzzle and its Solution' in the 'Young India' in December 1921. That was published in Gujarati in the Navjivan dated December 15, 1921 under the heading 'Viceroy ni Munzvan' (The Dilemma before the Viceroy).⁶⁰ A third article

⁵⁶. Ibid., dated 25, 28 and 29 December 1921.

⁵⁷ Ibid., dated 1, 8, 15, 22 January 1922.

⁵⁸ Ibid., dated 18-12-1921.

⁵⁹ Ibid., dated 2-10-1921.

⁶⁰ Ibid., dated 15-12-1921.

appeared in the 'Young India' during February 1922 under the -- title 'Shaking of the Manes'. It appeared in the Navjivan dated February 26, 1922, under the heading 'Hoonkar' (Roaring of the Lion).⁶¹ The Government which was watching these writings of Gandhiji decided to launch prosecutions against Gandhiji, the editor, and, Shankerlal Banker the publisher, of the 'Young India' for, what the Government termed as 'seditious' writings. Subsequently, Gandhiji and Banker were arrested in the second week of March 1922. They were charged with contravening section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code, were produced before a magistrate for committal proceedings and were tried on March 18, by Mr C.N. Broomfield, I.C.S., the District and Sessions Judge at Ahmedabad. The Sessions Judge convicted and sentenced Gandhiji to six years' and Banker to one year's imprisonment. Banker was to pay, besides, a fine of one thousand rupees or was to undergo imprisonment for six months more in default. The Navjivan which had earlier published the articles in -- Gujarati reprinted them once again during the pendency of -- Gandhiji's trial (on March 16) in a special supplement which was brought out to give the details about Gandhiji's arrest and trial.⁶²

⁶¹ Ibid., dated 26-2-1922.

⁶² Ibid., dated 16-3-1922.

II

Gandhiji had planned a symbolic mass movement in the Bardoli Taluka of the Surat District in Gujarat immediately preceding his trial and conviction. As we were reviewing the initial stages of the Gujarati weekly Navjivan that Gandhiji was running, we had kept aside any references to that movement. We propose to refer to it now with a view to depicting the -- nature of the Gujarati press and to tracing its growth in -- relation to the proposed Bardoli Movement.

Since the Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress in December 1920, news had been current in the country that Gandhiji would launch a Civil Disobedience movement somewhere in the country as a mark of protest against the policies of the Government. Gandhiji himself had declared that in July that year and had been suggesting that by saying, 'We are -- approaching a crisis',⁶³ (July 31, 1920). He visited Bombay towards the end of October 1921. While speaking before some members of the Congress there, Gandhiji declared that he would

⁶³ Navjivan, dated 31-7-1920.

shortly launch such a movement in the Bardoli taluka of the Surat District. He declared further that the movement would be guided by him.⁶⁴ When preparations for the movement were being made, the British Prince landed in Bombay. The Prince's reception was officially boycotted by the Congress⁶⁵ and -- people had been advised to observe a 'hartal' as a mark of -- protest against the Prince's arrival. During the organisation of the 'hartal', clashes ensued between some Congress volunteers and some Parsi and Christian shopkeepers who refused to join -- the anti-Prince demonstrations.⁶⁶ Pursuant to such an atmosphere, Gandhiji declared postponement of his proposed Civil Disobedience movement.⁶⁷ By the end of 1921, however, widespread arrests were made in the country. Those arrested included C.R. Das, the president -- elect of the Indian National Congress to be held in December that year at Ahmedabad. Motilal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru.⁶⁸ The -- Gujarati press which had been giving news about these arrests was throwing hints that Gandhiji would be arrested at any -- moment from then. Meanwhile met the thirtysixth session of

⁶⁴ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., Vol.II, p.88.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 89-90

⁶⁶ Ibid.,

⁶⁷ Ibid.,

⁶⁸ Navjivan, dated 21/28-12-1921.

the Indian National Congress at Ahmedabad. The session adopted a resolution approving the launching of a non-cooperation movement and vesting Gandhiji with the 'exclusive authority' for the conduct of that movement.⁶⁹ The Gujarati press published elaborate accounts of the whole session and had made comments on the coming mass-movement.⁷⁰ The Navjivan^{had} written welcoming the movement.⁷¹ The Gujarati said, 'The Congress session at Ahmedabad was unique — was indicative indeed of a personal triumph of Gandhiji'.⁷² It added 'We can say that presently the Indian National Congress and Shreeyut Gandhi have been -- interchangeable terms; the congress means Shreeyut Gandhi and Shreeyut Gandhi means the aim of independence of the Congress'.⁷³ Some papers termed Gandhiji — the sole authority to conduct the movement — the 'Betaj Badshah' — an uncrowned king.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, the revenue authorities of Surat District published, what they termed, an 'Explanation' on January 18,

⁶⁹ Official Report of the Proceedings of the 36th Session of the Indian National Congress, December, 26, 27, 28, 1921, Ahmedabad.

⁷⁰ The Bombay Samachar dated 3-1-1922.

⁷¹ Navjivan, dated 4-1-1922 and 11-1-1922.

⁷² Gujarati, dated 1-1-1922.

⁷³ Ibid.,

⁷⁴ Ibid.

1922, addressed to the people of Bardoli and 'advising' them not to join any campaign for non-payment of revenue dues.⁷⁵ That was published in full and criticised by Gandhiji in the Navjivan dated January 29, 1922.⁷⁶ Soon after that met the conference of the peasants and local workers at Bardoli and decided to launch a Civil Disobedience movement as conceived by Gandhiji.⁷⁷ Gandhiji addressed an 'open letter' to the Viceroy on February 1, 1922, explaining his stand on the -- Bardoli issues and declaring what he termed as the 'inevitability of the movement'.⁷⁸ The Gujarati press had started -- giving the day to day happenings on the front page in big -- types. Especially, Gandhiji's letter was featured by the -- press very prominently. Almost all the dailies picked up one sentence or the other of the letter and quoted it in the headlines. The Gujarati featuring the letter said, 'the Gujarati press has plunged itself headlong in this jung (fight)'.⁷⁹ The Bombay Samachar pledged its support to the movement;⁸⁰ the Hindustan exhorting the people 'to support the movement found

⁷⁵ Navjivan, dated 29-1-1922.

⁷⁶ Ibid.,

⁷⁷ Navjivan special supplement dated 2-2-1922.

⁷⁸ Ibid., dated 5-2-1922.

⁷⁹ Gujarati, dated 5-2-1922.

⁸⁰ Bombay Samachar, dated 5-2-1922.

fault with the Government for 'their policy'.⁸¹ The Bombay Samachar publishing the news about the progress of the movement commended the 'firmness of the people'.⁸² Comments were published by the Sanj Vartman, the Prajabandhu, the Prajamitra and Parsi, the Gujarat Mitra etc.⁸³ The press comments can be summarised as follows :

- (i) The Government is obstinate,
- (ii) The Government has been coercing the people,
- (iii) Such violence on part of the Government cannot be tolerated by the people,
- (iv) The movement which is inevitable is one more feather in the cap of Gandhiji.

The Viceroy sent his reply to Gandhiji's letter and Gandhiji sent his rejoinder on February 7, 1922.⁸⁴ Hardly had that reached the Viceroy, the morning papers the next day gave news about disturbances pursuant to the Civil Disobedience call at Chauri Chora village in the Gorakhpur District of the United Provinces (the present Uttar Pradesh). It was reported that some twentytwo police constables seeking refuge in a police chowky were burnt alive by crowds on February 5, 1922.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Hindustan, dated 5-2-1922.

⁸² Bombay Samachar, dated 7/8-2-1922.

⁸³ Report on the Native Papers for the week ending 5-2-1922.

⁸⁴ Navjivan dated 12-2-1922.

⁸⁵ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., p.110.

Gandhiji declared that he could not allow violence to be --- associated with his movements and hence he had ordered suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement. Gandhiji clarified⁸⁶ his contentions in the Navjivan dated February 19 and 26, 1922. He said, 'it was not possible to continue the movement in view of the shock that he had sustained on account of what had -- transpired at Chauri Chora'.⁸⁷ It appears from the biographies of some of the Congress leaders that Gandhiji's decision caused widespread criticism both from the people and the press in the different parts of India.⁸⁸ The reactions of the Gujarati press as a whole were as follows :

- (i) 'Gandhiji deserves congratulations ~~for~~ his bold action in calling off the movement',⁸⁹
- (ii) 'Gandhiji's step is far-sighted',⁹⁰
- (iii) 'Gandhiji's step is indicative of the righteousness of the struggle of the Indian people : of the backing that we get from our religious teachings'.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Navjivan, dated 19/26-2-1922.

⁸⁷ Ibid.,

⁸⁸ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., pp.116-119.

⁸⁹ Bombay Samachar, dated 14/16-2-1922.

⁹⁰ Sanj Vartman and Hindustan, dated 13-2-1922.

⁹¹ Jame Jamshed and Prajamitra ane Parsi dated 14-2-1922.

Similar comments continued to appear till the end of February that year. At times these comments included elaborate refutation of the arguments advanced in some section of the press which did not agree with Gandhiji's act of suspension of the movement.⁹²

No sooner did these controversies subside than Gandhiji was convicted for writing allegedly seditious articles. The trial was reported verbatim by almost all the dailies and the weeklies in Gujarati. The Bombay Samachar devoted a full page to the statement made by Gandhiji during the trial. It published an article (quoting the Navjivan) under the caption 'Hoonkar nun Karan! the cause of the 'Lion's Roaring'.⁹³ Other journals which had reported the judgment said that the section on sedition (section 124-A, I p.c.) had been misused by the Bombay Government and that with Gandhiji in the jail, the Government had exposed themselves to violence : almost all the Gujarati journals published the appeal that Gandhiji had addressed to the people to remain peaceful.

As we have been observing, a rapid succession of events had been taking place in the country since the year 1919. That had been coinciding with the emergence of Gandhiji as the --

⁹² Report on the Native Papers, February, 1922.

⁹³ Bombay Samachar, dated 20-3-1922. 'It has written : 'The Lion in the Sessions Court'.

national leader and of the Indian National Congress as the national organisation with a larger following. We have been tracing that chain of events with a corresponding depiction of the changes evinced by the Gujarati press in its writing pertaining to Gandhiji, the Indian National Congress and pertaining to the proposed mass-movement. We had kept aside -- references to the growth of the Gujarati press in relation to these events. We shall refer to that now.

As mentioned in the table number 14, there were thirty-six Gujarati journals with a total of 74,900 copies (dailies : 24,000 copies and the weeklies etc. : 50,900 copies) in circulation by the year 1918. As the tempo of political happenings in the country mounted, the year 1919 recorded a growth of the Gujarati press. That is, it recorded a circulation of 82,046 copies per issue of the different Gujarati journals (dailies : 25,700 copies and the weeklies etc. 56,346 copies) as per table number 15. That went on increasing and by the year 1920, there were thirtyseven Gujarati journals with a total circulation of 1,03,646 copies per issue (dailies : 30,900 copies, weeklies etc. 72,746 copies) as per table number 16. To put it in other words, when the Indian National Congress was contemplating a mass-agitation as proposed by Gandhiji in 1920, the Gujarati press showed an increase of about twenty thousand copies per issue in circulation within one year from 1919. And, after the Indian National Congress met in Ahmedabad in December 1921, and more particularly since a mass-movement was proposed to be launched in Bardoli early

in 1922, the Gujarati press got a fillip and it showed a further increase of more than twenty thousand copies per issue in circulation as mentioned in the table number 17. It can be observed from this table that there were thirtysix Gujarati journals with an aggregate circulation of 1,23,690 copies per issue. These included six dailies — The Hindustan, the Jame Jamshed, the Prajamitra and Parsi and the Sanj Vartman (all the four anglo-Gujarati), and, the Bombay Samachar, and the Akhabare Islam (exclusively Gujarati) all together with a total number of -- 31,000 copies per issue in circulation. All the six Gujarati dailies were issued from Bombay. There was one bi-weekly — the Kathiawad Times which was an anglo-Gujarati journal from Rajkot. Again, there were twentynine weeklies. Of these, fifteen were anglo-Gujarati — nine from Bombay, two from Surat, one from Navsari, two from Ahmedabad and one from Rajkot. The weeklies included, besides, fourteen exclusively Gujarati — one from Navsari, four from Surat, one from Broach, two from Baroda, one each from Kheda, Ranpur and Viramgam and three from Ahmedabad.

The Reporter on the Native papers has not given sufficient information about the Gujarati monthlies in circulation at that time. However, from one source⁹⁴ we could gather that among the several Gujarati monthlies in circulation at that time

⁹⁴ Diwali Numbers of these journals preserved in different libraries.

were the Veesami Sadi, the Gunsundari, the Streebodh, the Samalochak, the Gujarat Shala Patra, the Buddhi Prakash, and, the journals like the Shreemali Shubhecchhak and others addressed to certain castes and sects. The circulation figures of these monthlies are not available.

As regards the contents of the Gujarati press at that time, the dailies contained news, among other things, about the political happenings in the country. When the leaders of the Indian National Congress were arrested during October-December 1921, the dailies published prominently the news about the arrests from every part of the country and commented in their editorials on the policy of the Government. The weeklies used to publish the weekly round-up of the news under different headings such as 'Desh man thai raheli Dharpakdo (the arrests being made in the country)' or 'Kon kon pakadayun (who has been arrested)'. In some instances the weeklies published the latest -- information about some arrests or the latest statement of some political leader if such information or statements were procured just before they went to the press. The dailies used to procure the news through the news agency if that originated from outside Bombay and through their respective reporters or correspondents from Bombay city or nearby. The weeklies included the speeches or statements of the political leaders but, in greater details than the dailies. The weeklies contained, again, exhaustive comments on the political happenings in the country and the

comments were full of arguments one way or the other. One more feature of the weeklies in this regard was the publication of special articles pertaining to the political issues in the -- country. From the monthlies we could peruse through it appears that some of them devoted exclusively to politics contained a monthly review of the political scene as well as special articles on the current topics. Some of the monthlies which were 'general interest magazines' (as they put it) or which were literary -- journals also gave the month's news and comments on the political events in the country. They all referred to the views of Gandhiji in their comments. So did the caste and sect periodicals, their special feature in that regard being the publication of poems pertaining to Gandhiji. At the same time it needs to be mentioned here that though the main preoccupation of the Gujarati press was politics, the dailies, weeklies and the monthlies all contained stories, poems, tit-bits, literary criticism and above all advertisements in varying spaces. We should also like to mention here that almost the whole of the Gujarati press followed the practice of bringing out special numbers on certain -- occasions and some of the journals continued, also, the practice of gifting away novels to their subscribers.

We shall now turn to another mass-movement launched by Gandhiji and study along with that the Gujarati press.

Gandhiji was released from det^eention on February 5, 1924, after he had undergone a surgical operation. He assumed the

editorial responsibility of the Navjivan and the 'Young India' in the first week of April that year.⁹⁵ He continued to review the political situation in the country and to spread his views through these journals. The Gujarati press was coming more and more under his influence. This is evidenced, not only by the increasing space devoted by the Gujarati journals to Gandhiji's views and activities, but, also by perusing through the reports of the two conferences that the Gujarati Journalists held -- (December 1925 and December 1927 -- both in Ahmedabad) wherein it was declared that the 'press corps in Gujarat were under the total influence of Gandhiji'.⁹⁶

By the beginning of the year 1928, the Government of Bombay had proposed to raise the land revenue assessment in the Bardoli Taluka of the Surat District by 22 %.⁹⁷ The land-holders of that area disapproved of that increase. They then -- approached Gandhiji and appraised him of their grievance.⁹⁸ Gandhiji agreed to help organise a no-tax campaign in that area. He addressed an appeal to the peasants of the Bardoli Taluka on February 5, 1928, in which he said that the name of 'Bardoli' connotes 'Swaraj' and vice versa.⁹⁹ He advised the peasants

⁹⁵ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., Vol.II, p.163 and Navjivan, dated 6-4-1924.

⁹⁶ Reports of the First and the Second Gujarati Patrakar Parishad, December 1925 and 1927.

⁹⁷ Desai Mahadev, Bardoli Satyagraha.

⁹⁸ Ibid.,

⁹⁹ Ibid.

'to show their strength in the civil resistance movement' and named Vallabhbhai Patel as their 'Sardar' (leader) for the conduct of the movement.¹⁰⁰ The Navjivan had been reporting the progress of the movement.¹⁰¹ Gandhiji devoted one whole issue of his weekly to Bardoli matters. He published in it the full text of the letters exchanged between Vallabhbhai Patel and the Governor of Bombay.¹⁰² The Gujarati press had already started reporting news about the activities in Bardoli. The Bombay Samachar commenting upon the issue blamed the Bombay Government for what it termed as 'an unjust levy'.¹⁰³ The Sanj Vartman quoted the arguments of Vallabhbhai,¹⁰⁴ the Gujarat -- Mitra said that 'Bardoli was agog with activities'.¹⁰⁵ The Jame Jamshed exhorted the people of Bardoli to 'keep up their pledge',¹⁰⁶ the Sanj Vartman reiterated Gandhiji's advice to the Satyagrahis of Bardoli.¹⁰⁷ The Gujarat said that the demand of the people of Bardoli was just and hence 'victory will undoubtedly come to the people'.¹⁰⁸ Some papers advised Government to act judiciously

¹⁰⁰ Navjivan, dated 19-2-1928.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., dated March, April 1928.

¹⁰² Ibid., dated 4-3-1928.

¹⁰³ Bombay Samachar, dated

¹⁰⁴ Sanj Vartman, dated 5-3-1928.

¹⁰⁵ Gujarat Mitra, dated 5-3-1928.

¹⁰⁶ Jame Jamshed, dated 31-3-1928.

¹⁰⁷ Sanj Vartman, dated 30-3-1928.

¹⁰⁸ Gujarati, dated 1-4-1928.

and wisely; some emphasised the demand of the Satyagrahis to set up an inquiry into the matter.¹⁰⁹

The Government made arrangements to confiscate the properties of those who did not pay up their revenue dues. They had deployed a special police force for the purpose. Government had also set up a publicity bureau to publish from time to time hand-outs. In these hand-outs, it is reported, Government gave their version of the revenue assessment issue.¹¹⁰ The congress workers had also set up their information office. They daily issued Patrikas (leaflets) from that. These they distributed at large in the District and sent some to the newspaper offices in Surat, Broach and Bombay. It is reported that more than 10,000 leaflets were distributed everyday.¹¹¹

Government started taking action against those who did not pay up their revenue as per Government assessment. By May 1928, the number of confiscations of property increased, and many peasants' properties were taken over by Government.¹¹² Vallabhbhai then addressed an appeal to the people to raise funds for rendering monetary assistance to the Bardoli Satyagrahis.¹¹³ Gandhiji reiterated that appeal through the

¹⁰⁹ Report on the Native Papers for the week ending 1-4-1928.

¹¹⁰ Desai Mahadev, op.cit., pp.126-128.

¹¹¹ Ibid.,

¹¹² Desai Mahadev, op.cit., pp. 113 f.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Navjivan.¹¹⁴ He said, 'The present Satyagraha is a Yagna—— a sacrifice — which needs offerings'. He called upon the people to donate to, what he termed as, the 'Satyagraha Fund'.¹¹⁵ That appeal was published by journals throughout Gujarat. The Prajabandhu and the Navjivan opened a 'Bardoli Satyagraha Fund' and started collecting contributions. They also devoted special columns to the publication of the periodical collections received for the fund. It was reported by these journals that more than Rs.1,99,857 had been collected for that fund by June 1928 and that the figure surpassed four lakhs of rupees by August that year.¹¹⁶

When the movement was in progress, some members of the Bombay Legislature from Gujarat, including Mr K.M. Munshi (who was returned from the University Graduates' Constituency), resigned their seats to show their protest against the Bombay Government's policy in Bardoli.¹¹⁷ The Sanj Vartman wrote words in praise of Mr Munshi and added, 'The Government cannot crush public spirit; it cannot dampen the spirit of the Satyagrahis anymore'.¹¹⁸ The Bombay Samachar wrote a lengthy --

¹¹⁴ Navjivan, dated 13-5-1928.

¹¹⁵ Navjivan, dated 13-5-1928.

¹¹⁶ Prajabandhu and Navjivan from May 15, 1928 onwards.

¹¹⁷ Desai Mahadeo, op.cit., pp. 141-43.

¹¹⁸ Sanj Vartman, dated 18-6-1928.

editorial in which it said, 'The Legislative Council must show its strength now. Its remaining members should, by following the members from Gujarat, bring the Government to book ----; ministers and members should tender their resignations if -- Government does not come to proper senses'.¹¹⁹ Under these circumstances, Government agreed to set up an inquiry into the revenue assessments and the Satyagraha was called off in August 1928.¹²⁰ The announcements was carried by all the Gujarati dailies and weeklies with comments. The Pratap said, 'The victory is great as well as memorable'.¹²¹ Other journals such as the Deshbhakta, the Nootan Gujarat, the Sanj Vartman and the Gujarati paid tributes to the Satyagrahis, to the -- Government and to Vallabhbhai who, they all said, 'emerged as a true Sardar (leader) of the people of Gujarat'.¹²² It may be noted here that Gandhiji had brought out one whole issue of the Navjivan named as the 'Bardoli Ank -- the Bardoli Special -- Number' in which he paid tributes to the people of Gujarat for the support that gave to the movement.¹²³ Again, it may be mentioned here that the Sanj Vartman, the Bombay Samachar and t

¹¹⁹ Bombay Samachar, dated 19-6-1928.

¹²⁰ Desai Mahadeo, op.cit., and Navjivan dated 12-8-1928.

¹²¹ Pratap (weekly from Surat), dated 11-8-1928.

¹²² Issues of these journals from August 10, 1928 to September, 1928.

¹²³ Navjivan, Bardoli Ank, dated 11-8-1928.

the Gujarati published the photographs depicting the different stages during the Bardoli Satyagraha Movement.

III

And now on to the third mass-movement.

The fortyfourth session of the Indian National Congress which^{met} at Lahore during the last week of December 1929, resolved to change the creed of the Congress by construing the word 'Swaraj' in article one of that body's constitution to mean 'complete independence — Purna Swaraj'.¹²⁴ That resolution had authorised the All India Congress Committee to 'launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of -- taxes'.¹²⁵ That had become a starting point of a series of -- events culminating with a mass-movement against the Government. We shall proceed now to review these events and to study their effects on the nature of writings in the Gujarati press in that regard. We shall also see as to what extent they affected its growth as well.

¹²⁴ Sitaramayya B. Pallabhi, History of the Indian National Congress, part I. *Bombay: 1946*

¹²⁵ Ibid.

When the Congress Session had met at Lahore, the Gujarati dailies and weeklies were full of reports about it. Then followed comments on the resolutions and speeches made there. The number of editorials on the main — Independence — resolution of the congress was more than that pertaining to any other subject. The main forte of discussion was the interpretation of the term 'Swaraj' with reference to 'dominion status'. Commenting upon that, Gandhiji in the Navjivan dated January 5, 1930 had explained that the word Swaraj meant 'absence of dependence of India on anyone in any matter'.¹²⁶ The Bombay Samachar thereupon published the following words in bold type on its front page in its -- issue dated January 9 :

'Congress na Tharavthi Bhadki Uthelu Britain'
(Britain has been alarmed due to the Independence Resolution of the Congress).¹²⁷

Gandhiji wrote again in the Navjivan dated January 12, on the independence resolution. In that issue he also reported his speech before students of the Ashram in which he had said,

'I do not know what form the Civil Disobedience movement will take ----. I am desperately in search of some effective formula however'.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Navjivan, dated 5-1-1930.

¹²⁷ Bombay Samachar dated 9-1-1930.

¹²⁸ Navjivan dated 12-1-1930.

The subsequent issues of some of the dailies were full of hints that Gandhiji might be arrested at any time from then. Some of the press headings were :

'Gandhiji ni Dharpakad na Vagata Bhankara'

'Gandhiji ni Dharpakad Thavani Vaki'.¹²⁹

Gandhiji then wrote to the Government and putforth a list of some 'demands' (these were eleven including repeal of the salt tax) which, in an article, he characterised as the 'soul of Independence' and a 'test of true Swaraj'.¹³⁰ Quoting these words the Bombay Samachar and the Gujarati wrote editorials on February 16, 1930 and the Gujaratmitra and Darpan on the 18th while the Prajabandhu had been writing similarly since the 13th of that month. The gist of all these comments can be summarised in the following words picked up from the weekly Gujarati dated February 16, 1930 :

'The responsibility for the current unrest lies entirely with the British Government ---. (But), people would not put off their contemplated movement inspite of the steel frame of the bureaucracy'.¹³¹

Gandhiji then wrote in the Navjivan dated 23rd of that month

¹²⁹ Bombay Samachar, dated 12-1-1930.

¹³⁰ Navjivan, dated 7-2-1930.

¹³¹ Gujarati dated 16-2-1930.

saying, 'If I am arrested, people must continue the programme of Civil Disobedience'. He wrote again on March 2 in that journal saying that he proposed to break the salt law in --- contravention of the Governmental restrictions in that regard. He then sent a letter to the Viceroy explaining his stand on the current issues and published the full text of that communication in the Navjivan dated March 9. He had also announced that on the 12th March he would begin to track on foot a distance of 241 miles from Ahmedabad to Dandi where he proposed to collect natural salt in contravention of the prohibitory regulations with a view to put into action Civil Disobedience.¹³²

Gandhiji's letter was published by the Gujarati dailies and weeklies with big headings along with editorial comments. Some of the headings were :-

'Gandhiji ni Viceroy ne Hradaydravak Appeal' ¹³³
(A heart-moving appeal by Gandhiji to the Viceroy),
'Gandhiji nu Sarkar ne Akhrinamu' (Gandhiji's ¹³⁴
ultimatum to the Government),

While, the editorial comments were, 'still there is time for the Government to act judiciously' : 'the present movement

¹³² Navjivan, dated 9-3-1930.

¹³³ Bombay Samachar, dated 6-3-1930.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

is a Mukti Sangram for Bharat (freedom fight for India) in which Gujarat must make its offerings': 'Gujarat will not lag behind this time'.¹³⁵ On the day of Gandhiji's March, the Bombay Samachar splashed the news on the front page in bigger types :

'Tapasvi Ram Panchvati chhodi Lanka Leva Vichare Chhe' (The penancing Ram abandoning his hermit-abode in Panchvati sets out to take Lanka).¹³⁶

Gandhiji had started as scheduled on the 12th of March with a batch of 78 'Satyagrahis'. Almost all the Gujarati dailies had sent their correspondents to cover the news about Gandhiji's March, with those of English dailies and foreign correspondents, some of whom were walking along with the 'Satyagrahis'.¹³⁷ The editor of the Sandesh who covered the news informed that he had brought out special supplements in a bigger (demmy) size to publish the news about the distance traversed by the marchers, about the manner in which people used to receive the marchers in their respective villages and especially about the utterances made by Gandhiji from

¹³⁵ Sanjvartman, Bombay Samachar, Prajabandhu, Gujarati from 6-3-1930 to 12-3-1930.

¹³⁶ Bombay Samachar, dated 12-3-1930.

¹³⁷ Some of the correspondents who covered the distance with the Satyagrahis narrated this in an interview.

time to time. He informed that the demand for news had increased so much that he used to issue four and at times six special supplements a day.¹³⁸ The Khedavartman did the same thing and so did -- the Pratap of Surat.¹³⁹ In Bombay at that time all the Gujarati journals were giving news about the march but Ranchhoddas Bhavan Lotwala's journals were writing against the Civil Disobedience movement and were characterising the movement as a 'mild' step. It is reported that some people in Bombay had called a meeting to express their disapproval of these writings in Lotwala's journals.¹⁴⁰

Gandhiji reached Dandi on April 5, 1930. He went to the seashore the next day and picked up natural salt declaring that 'everyone was free to prepare and sell salt no matter what the Government did', and that 'people throughout the country should break the salt law and should willing court arrest if that be the consequence'.¹⁴¹ The newspapers which gave news of Gandhiji's defiance of salt law also displayed news about similar acts of defiance from almost all parts of the country. The Navjivan which had been publishing the news about Gandhiji's

¹³⁸ Bodilwala Nandlal in his autobiography (Man Mat Ban).

¹³⁹ The Ex-editor of Pratap in an interview.

¹⁴⁰ Bombay Samachar, dated 25-3-1930.

¹⁴¹ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., (Vol.II), p.

march and the reports of his speeches since he set out on March 12th gave in greater detail the information about the arrests and lathicharges from throughout the country.¹⁴² It was issuing supplements for the purpose. In one of them was published on the front page in bolder types, a message from Gandhiji -- saying :

'I congratulate Gujarat : I want still more from the people; let there be bonfires of foreign cloth, let there be picketing of liquor shops; let the schools, colleges and courts be ransacked'.¹⁴³

Gandhiji then proceeded to Dharasana where the Government salt depot was situated. But he was interrupted and was arrested on May 4, 1930 at Dharasana.¹⁴⁴ That led to a number of demonstrations and arrests in the country. The comments in the Gujarati press from May 5, 1930 onwards¹⁴⁵ can be summarised as follows :

- (i) Mahatmaji has contributed his mite : It is upto the people now to show their strength.

¹⁴² Navjivan, dated 13-4-1930.

¹⁴³ Ibid., dated 15-4-1930.

¹⁴⁴ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit.

¹⁴⁵ Report on Native Papers, during May 1930.

- (ii) A fund should be raised to help continue the Satyagraha.
- (iii) People should stick to their pledge.
- (iv) (But) non-violence as preached by Gandhiji should not be abandoned.

Having seen so far the nature of news and comments appearing in the Gujarati press regarding the nationalist movement, we shall turn a while to see the growth that the Gujarati press had attained by the middle of 1930, that is, when the nationalist mass-movement had gathered further momentum.

Table number 18 depicts that. It can be observed from this table that there were ninety one Gujarati journals — eleven dailies, seventyone weeklies and nine fortnightlies with an aggregate of 2,08125 copies per issue in circulation by that time. Data about the monthlies in circulation during 1930 are not available as in the case of previous years. The dailies had reached a circulation figure of 36,500 copies per issue, while, the weeklies had touched a total of 1,62,875 and the fortnightlies that of 8750 copies per issue in circulation by that time. It is to be noted that the Gujarati dailies were published now, not only from Bombay, but, in addition, from Surat, Nadiad and Ahmedabad too. As regards the weeklies, it is to be noted that they included eleven which were addressed to the religious sects and castes viz., the Khoja Socialist,

the Ismaili, the Memon Sudharak, the Aftabe Islam and the Din - addressed to the Muslims; the Bombay Jain Yuvak Sangh Patrika, the Jain Adarsha, the Jain Pravachan and the Veer Sashan meant for the Jains; the Audidya Mitra and the Lohana Samachar -- addressed to the castes. The weeklies included, besides, the Moj Majah and the Katariyun Gap -- humorous magazines, and the Be Ghadi Mauj, the Chitrapata, the Cinema Rangbhoomi, the Ghadi Bhar Mouj and the Natak Cenima and Pakhand Prakash -- entertaining ones, devoted exclusively to cinema films. The fortnightlies included two meant for the workers -- the Motor Driver and the B.B. & C.I. Railwayman, one sectarian one, the Jain Samachar, one traders' journal the Vepari Mitra and one caste journal the Anavil Sevak. Of the monthlies that we could procure for perusal, several were caste journals, some like the Stree Bodh were women's magazines, some were meant for children (e.g. Baljivan) and one was meant for the youngsters -- the Kumar.

So, that was the position of the Gujarati press with several magazines catering to special groups and interest. Yet the main trend of writing continued to be in support of the nationalist movement.

We had kept aside any reference to the Government's attitude towards the press. We shall turn to that now.

When the press reports and comments in the country were attaining the magnitude as illustrated above, the Government

promulgated an ordinance — Ordinance II of 1930 — under Section 72 of the Government of India Act of 1919. That ordinance revived the Indian Press Act of 1910 which had been repealed earlier in 1922.¹⁴⁶ Under the ordinance, which, according to the Government was meant to 'Provide for the better control of the Press', magistrates were empowered in their discretion, to demand securities of not less than Rs. 500 from any person keeping a printing press. It may be recalled that keepers of printing presses were required to make a declaration under section 4 of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867. From the publishers who were required to make a declaration under section 5 of the 1867 Press Act (just mentioned), magistrates were empowered under the ordinance to demand securities. Powers to declare such securities forfeited were -- conferred upon the magistrates when it appeared to the local Governments that any matter published was likely to have a tendency, directly or indirectly, whether by influence, suggestion, allusion, metaphor, implication or otherwise to do certain things which would bring into hatred or contempt the Government.¹⁴⁷ As the ordinance became operative the Prajabandhu of Ahmedabad suspended publication, as the editors put it, 'before securities were demanded'.¹⁴⁸ The Navjivan also closed down officially

¹⁴⁶ Barns Margareta, op.cit., pp.370-371.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.,

¹⁴⁸ Prajabandhu, dated 16-6-1930.

but efforts were made to continue publication of a sheet or two of Navjivan. That was done by issuing cyclostyled copies of the journal from July 1930 onwards. These cyclostyled sheets contained news about the occurrences taking place in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement in the country in general and in Gujarat in particular. In the sheet issued on July 27, 1930 it was said, 'We are not in a position to issue many more copies of the Navjivan presently. We request our readers, therefore, to read over aloud the contents of this sheet to as many people as possible. It is our further request to those who listen to that to spread the information to others and so on'.¹⁴⁹ It may be recorded here that under the ordinance, Rs. 2,47,000 were -- collected from 130 newspapers in the country and that the ordinance was allowed to expire on October 27, 1930 only when the Indian Press Emergency Powers Act of 1931 -- which was not -- different from the ordinance, was passed.¹⁵⁰

During this period, a Round Table Conference had been convened in London by the British Government to discuss the Indian problems. Pursuant to that negotiations took place between Gandhiji and the Government and Government issued orders to release Gandhiji and the other congress leaders by the last week of January 1931.¹⁵¹ The Prajabandhu had recommended^c --

¹⁴⁹ Navjivan, dated 27-7-1930.

¹⁵⁰ Menon K.B., Press Laws in India, op.cit.

¹⁵¹ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit.,

publication from November 16, 1930 and so too had the Navjivan by the middle of March that year. Gandhiji proceeded to London to attend the Round Table Conference on August 29, 1931. The news about the proceedings at that conference was supplied to the press by the Reuter's news agency. The Sanj Vartman had sent its own correspondent to cover the news from London.¹⁵² The press during those days was full of news about the conference proceedings. It was full of comments which exceeded in space allotted to the news obtained from London. Gandhiji -- returned to India by the end of December 1931. He was arrested, again, on January 4, 1932.¹⁵³ The Indian Press Emergency Powers Act of 1931 was already in operation then. The police raided the office of the Navjivan on January 14, 1932.¹⁵⁴ The Prajabandhu which had recommended publication since November 16, 1930, closed down again from January 10, 1932.¹⁵⁵ However, the management of that weekly made arrangements to issue a single sheet daily newspaper called the Gujarat Samachar from January 16, 1932. The editor Mr Indravadan Thakore informed that the management did so to supply the reading public with the latest news.¹⁵⁶ The daily contained only news and no editorials or comments. It may be

¹⁵² Shukla Yagnesh in an article on S.B. Kapadia in the Diwali Number of the Navchetan, 1956

¹⁵³ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., p.

¹⁵⁴ Gujarat Samachar, dated 14-1-1932.

¹⁵⁵ Prajabandhu, dated 10-1-1932.

¹⁵⁶ Thakore Indravadan-ex-editor, Prajabandhu and Gujarat Samachar during an interview.

noted here that the circulation of the new dailies in Ahmedabad (the Sandesh and the Gujarat Samachar) was increasing rapidly as did that of the Bombay Samachar in Bombay.¹⁵⁷ It is reported that to cope up with the demand, the Bombay Samachar had to be published on a newly purchased rotary printing machine.¹⁵⁸

The mass-movement under reference culminated in the -- release of Gandhiji and the other Congress leaders. Before we record the events pertaining to that, we shall refer to the -- Gujarati press as it stood by the end of the year 1932.

Press details for that period are given in table number 19 (the names of the Gujarati journals and the places of their publication are given : the figures of their circulation are not available). It appears from this table that there were in all two hundred and seven Gujarati journals of varied periodicity including eleven dailies, one bi-weekly, sixtyeight weeklies, four fortnightlies, one hundred and two monthlies, six bi-monthlies, thirteen quarterlies, and, one half-yearly and an annual journal in circulation at that time. These were published from twentysix different places. The different -- Gujarati journals contained news (mainly political), comments pertaining to local, political and literary matters, commercial

¹⁵⁷ Thakore Indravadan, op.cit., and Brahmabhatt Pralhad and Desai Pushkarrai Sakarlal in an interview.

¹⁵⁸ Shukla Yagnesh, op.cit.

information (share market quotations and commodity prices), religious and caste matter, and, matter that entertains (ti-bits pertaining to cinema films, stories and poems) and that instructs (educational, agricultural and that pertaining to health and -- hygiene) all mingled up with advertisements. It may be noted -- here that during the period under reference, a more clearcut -- specialisation of the interests had been effected in the Gujarati press. That specialisation is indicated by table number 20. It can be seen from this table that there were fiftyseven periodicals which published mainly news and other matter referred to above. It appears, besides, that there were thirty six Gujarati journals, addressed to different sectarian interests (Hindu : 12, Jain : 8, Muslim : 5, Parsi : 10 and one journal meant exclusively for the Indian Christians). We also find that there were thirty four Gujarati journals meant for different castes. Again, there were four journals meant for labourers, two meant for the Harijans, five meant for women, eight meant for children, eight pertaining to education, six pertaining to health and hygiene, five pertaining to cinema films, two propagating the cause of Khadi, twenty-three publishing stories, poems and literary matter, two meant for trade and commerce, five pertaining to the native states' problems, eight pertaining to agriculture, one giving information about the library movement and one publishing random -- miscellaneous matter.

To sum up the events succeeding the movement now, Gandhiji had undertaken a fast for twentyone days during detention to get

some 'injustices' done to the Harijans redressed. Subsequently he was released. All other Congress leaders were also released and the British Parliament had passed the Government of India Act which came into operation in 1937 and under which a Congress Ministry started functioning in the Bombay Province. It may be mentioned here that the Bombay Government (newly functioning) had restored the securities of some of the papers. But, the Navjivan did not reappear under the same name. Gandhiji started, instead, the Harijanbandhu --- a Gujarati weekly from Poona. It may be noted again, that Mr Belgamwala who was running the Bombay Samachar had purchased a big rotary machine for printing additional copies of the Bombay Samachar when the Civil Disobedience movement was in progress. He had incurred some debts for that purpose. When the movement was over Mr Belgamwala could not support himself nor could he feed the rotary machine. He had to dispose of his establishment as a consequence to Messers Cama Norton and Company, the present proprietors of the Bombay Samachar.

IV

To the different mass-movements launched by Gandhiji against the Government, one more was added with the passing of the resolutions by the Indian National Congress in August 1942, asking

the British to withdraw from India. Our task remains now to examine the nature of the Gujarati press with reference to this mass-movement known as the 'Quit India Movement' and to give a picture of its further growth. Hostilities were declared on September 3, 1939, between Britain and Germany, involving again, India too. Those who were running the Gujarati press had known from the past experiences the interest that the reading public evinced in the news about the war. They were aware of the fact that the information about the war was in greater demand than before because of the effects that the war had on the Indian economic and more particularly on the political condition. And, now that the war news was supplied by the news agency (the -- Associated Press of India in collaboration with the Reuter's News agency which was working on the global level) more rapidly than before, and, also because the bigger printing machines -- (mostly cylinder and in some cases the rotary machines) could print their copies more speedily, with the latest information, and, in bigger types, some of the Gujarati newspapers brought out special supplements. These supplements announced in big headline the outbreak of war and published along with that the text of announcements made by Mr Chamberlain the prime minister in Britain and by Lord Linlithgow, the viceroy, in New Delhi.¹⁵⁹ The newspaper headlines and comments pertaining to the war during September 1939 were :

¹⁵⁹ Janmabhoomi, Bombay Samachar and Sevak, dated 3-9-1939.

- (i) Polland has been a sufferer at the hands of the Nazis,
- (ii) German action is blind and brutal,
- (iii) Herr Hitalare Chhadachok Kareli Vachan-bhangni, parampara par prakash (A search-light on the series of open breaches of promises by Herr Hitler),
- (iv) German Jahajo par British Vimani Fojoe Karelo Hallo (The British air force attacks ~~on~~ the German ships),
- (v) Lokshahi Juthono Germanono Samno Karvano Nirdhar (Determination of the democratic forces to meet the challenge of the Germans).

That is, the nature of writings in the Gujarati press on the European war evinced a support of Britain against the Nazis in the initial stages as in the case of the world war I.

Now, the nationalist sections in the country viewed the situation in a rather different vein and wanted the people also to view it similarly. Hence the working committee of the Indian National Congress meeting at Wardha during September 8-15, 1939, passed a resolution saying, among other things, that the British Government should declare their war aims in regard to 'Democracy and Imperialism' in clearer terms. That resolution had asked the

British Government to indicate the place of India in any order envisaged.¹⁶⁰ That resolution was commented upon by Gandhiji in the Harijan dated September 15, 1939 and its Gujarati version was published in the Harijanbandhu next week. Gandhiji said,

'The statement (of the working Committee) is a manifesto ----. All that is required now is an honest action to implement the declaration of faith in democracy made from British platforms. Will Great Britain have an unwilling India dragged into the war or a willing ally cooperating with her in the prosecution of a defence of a true democracy ? The Congress support will mean the greatest moral asset in favour of England and France. The Congress fights not with violent but with non-violent means, however imperfect, however crude the non-violence may be'.¹⁶¹

This statement and the Congress resolution were published by the Gujarati newspapers with big headings some of which read :

- (i) 'Tamari Neeti saaf saaf shabdo man janavo'
(Declare your policy in categorical terms),
- (ii) 'Britain ne Gandhiji ni chetavni'
(Gandhiji's warning to Britain),

¹⁶⁰ Sitaramayya B. Pattabhi, op.cit., (Vol.II).

¹⁶¹ Harijanbandhu, dated 18-9-1939.

- (iii) 'Ahimsa no antim vijay nishchit chhe'
(The ultimate triumph of non-violence is certain),
- (iv) 'Congressse Kareli Spashta Vaato'
(The Congress talks plainly).

That is, the nature of writings in the Gujarati press on the Indian political situation tallied with the view-point of the nationalist sections in the country. On October, 22, 1939, the Congress called upon all ministries run by that party in the provinces to resign their offices by the 31st of that month. It also called upon the legislatures in such provinces to adopt a resolution asking Britain to declare her 'war-aims'.¹⁶² While all the Gujarati newspapers published this news with big headline, some of the dailies and weeklies wrote editorials in which they expressed 'concern'.¹⁶³ Gandhiji had commented upon the matter in the Harijanbandhu. He had said, 'The resignations of the Congress ministries was a necessity. But, the next step is by no means clear ----. Congressmen seem to be expecting some big move'.¹⁶⁴

Vallabhbhai visited Navsari on March 10, 1940. He talked

¹⁶² Sitaramayya, op.cit., Vol.II.

¹⁶³ Janmabhoomi dated 24-10-1939, Bombay Samachar dated 25-10-1939.

¹⁶⁴ Harijanbandhu, dated 31-10-1939.

at length at a public meeting on the Congress stand vis-a-vis the British Government. Reports of his speech were captioned¹⁶⁵ as:

- (i) 'Gallam Tallan Have Nahi Chale'
(Dilli dallying will not be tolerated now),
- (ii) 'Be Biladioni mafak ladhavi marochho'
(You are making us — Hindus and Muslims — quarrel like the two cats as in the fable),
- (iii) 'Amaara zaghadanu mool tamechho'
(You are the root cause of our quarrels).

Soon after that, the Congress decided to launch a Satyagraha by individuals who were to propagate against the war efforts of the Government and were to court arrest as a consequence.¹⁶⁶ That started with the arrest of Vinoba Bhave on October 31, 1939 following the arrest of almost all Congress leaders in the country.¹⁶⁷ Vallabhbhai was arrested in Ahmedabad on November 17, 1940¹⁶⁸ followed by many congressmen in Gujarat

¹⁶⁵ Pratap, Gujarat Mitra ane Darpan, Deshi Mitra, Janma-bhoomi dated 11-3-1939.

¹⁶⁶ Sitaramayya, op.cit., Vol.II. *Bombay 1947*

¹⁶⁷ Tendulkar D.G., op.cit., Vol.IV.

¹⁶⁸ Gujarat Samachar, dated 18-11-1940.

who offered Satyagraha and courted arrest. The Gujarati newspapers had made arrangements to publish the names of the individual Satyagrahis, the details about their background, the notices that they had served on the Government and the manner in which they courted arrest. By December 1941, about 20,000 congressmen throughout the country were held in detention, but, they were all released by the beginning of 1942.¹⁶⁹ Before we proceed to review the course of events taking place in that year, a brief mention needs to be made of the Gujarati journals published at that time.

Gujarati dailies were twentytwo (though table no.21 shows 31 dailies; we have taken 22 for reasons mentioned below) at that time; the bi-weeklies were two while, the weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies were ninetyfour, eighteen and seventyseven in number respectively, by the beginning of 1942. The dailies included nine from Bombay — the Bombay Samachar, the Jame Jamshed, the Sanj Vartman, the Janmabhoomi, the Vande Matram, the Matrubhoomi, the Muslim Patrika, the Rozname and the Bharat Samachar; six from Surat — the Gujarat Mitra ane Darpan, the Deshi Mitra, the Gujarat, the Pratap, the Jaybharat and the Vafaadar; two from Baroda — the Raj Huns and the Jay Gujarat; five from Ahmedabad — the Gujarat Samachar, the Sandesh, the Prabhat, the Sevak and the Rozgar. All the twentytwo dailies were exclusively in Gujarati. We have excluded from this list two Gujarati dailies

¹⁶⁹ Tendulkar, D.G., op.cit.

published from Karachi (Sind) and one from Rangoon (Burma) (The Government Reports have included them, however, in the list but we could not procure them for perusal). We have excluded, moreover, nine others which had been registered as dailies but on perusal they were found to contain mainly if not only the market quotations of cotton from the New York Cotton Market. We may suggest here that in the next chapter we propose to refer to such dailies. The two bi-weeklies were the Kathiawad Times and the Sayaji Vijay from Rajkot and Baroda respectively. Among the -- ninetyfour weeklies registered, fortyfive including the Gujarati, the Hindustan and Praja Mitra, the Kaisare Hind and the Khilafat were published from Bombay; eleven including the Deshbandhu and the Dandiyo were from Surat, five including the Nav Gujarat, and the Praja Mandal Patrika from Baroda; one — the Arya Prakash from Anand; one — the Kheda Vartman from Kheda; two — the Gujarat Times and the Karmabhoomi from Nadiad; sixteen including the Gujarati Punch, the Prajabandhu and the Nav Saurashtra from Ahmedabad; one — the Jain from Bhavnagar; two — the Phoolchhab and the Bahurupi from Ranpur and one each from Wadhawan and Bhuj (Kutchh). Among the ninetyfour weeklies; twentythree were found to be devoted exclusively to cinema news while twenty-two (some perused, some judged from their names, some from their references in other journals) were found to be addressed to -- different castes or sects. Again, three weeklies were devoted

to crossword puzzles which were run by some Gujarati dailies;^{*} one was devoted exclusively to detective stories and one to market quotations. The eighteen fortnightlies included the Bhageeni Samaj Patrika, the Sirohi Sandesh and six others from Bombay; the Jyotirdhar and one more from Ahmedabad, and, one each from Bulsar, Surat, Kheda, Bhavnagar, Jetpur, Songadh, Dhoraji and Anjar (Kuchh). Of these eighteen fortnightlies, one — the Jyotirdhar was the organ of some social reformists in Ahmedabad, two were trade-bulletins, one was a cinema magazine and the rest were meant for different castes or sects. We could procure particulars about the Gujarati monthlies as well. These included the Navrachana and thirteen others from Bombay; the Yuvak, the Stree-Jeevan, the Kumar, the Rekha and six others from Ahmedabad; two from Surat; one — the Patidar — from Anand, the Sharda, the Gunsundari, the Pustakalaya, the Gram-jeevan and fourteen others from Baroda; the Samaj Sheekshak -- and two others from Navsari; the Jyoti, the Gharshala and fifteen others from Bhavnagar; three from Rajkot and one each from -- Mehsana, Visnagar, Patan, Jamnagar, Wadhwan, Jetpur, Gondal,

* Gujarati dailies like the Janmabhoomi had started crossword puzzle competitions. The puzzle, its probable clue and the final results were published in that daily. That attracted the attention of many readers; more so because the newspaper used to announce that the winners would get quite a large sum as a prize and the weekly edition 'Pravasi' complimentary for six months in addition to that. That must have helped augmenting circulation of the newspaper. It may be noted that such practices are being followed to date and they do help growth ^{the} of the press.

limbdi and Junagadh.

The dailies were of a uniform size — twentytwo inches lengthwise and seventeen inches breadthwise with seven columns each, printed on bigger size cylinder or rotary machines. They contained mainly news procured through the news agencies and through their accredited correspondents. In some cases the dailies published weekly sections addressed to women, children or devoted to health and hygiene and to religious discussions. The weeklies and the bi-weeklies such as the Gujarati, the Praja-bandhu, the Gujarati Punch and the Sayajivijay* used to give -- weekly round-ups of the news, comments and literary articles. The monthlies like the Rekha were devoted to political and literary comments while others were full of diverse matter. The weeklies were generally seventeen inches lengthwise and eleven inches breadthwise while the monthlies were generally nine by six inches length and breadthwise. It may be mentioned here that all these Gujarati journals — dailies, bi-weeklies, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies contained advertisements which occupied considerable space. What is noteworthy is that by the time the world war II began newspapers, including weekly and other periodicals had struck roots even in small towns and

* The Sayaji Vijay (now defunct) was widely read in the former Baroda State area as the authentic supplier of the latest news about postings, transfers and other state affairs.

taluka places and in remote areas such as Kutch. The spatial expansion had thus been completed, after nearly 100 years when the Gujarati press began to crawl in Bombay.

We shall turn to the course of events now.

By the beginning of 1942 the war situation was becoming unfavourable to Britain because the British possessions in South East Asia were slipping off to the Axes.¹⁷⁰ The war news at that time was reported by the Gujarati press in the following manner which indicates the change in the nature of reporting war-news after the nationalist sections in the country became more active. The reporting provides besides, a contrast to that during world war I when the nationalist sections had not grown so influential.

(i) 'Britain ne boom padavvani German yojana'

(German plans to gag Britain).

(ii) 'Japani sainyoni aage kuch'

(Further advances made by the Japanese troops).

(iii) 'Sathi sainyoni lagaataar piche hath'

(Successive retracts of the Allied forces).

Under these circumstances, the war-cabinet in Britain announced their decision on March 11, 1942 to send Sir Stafford Cripps to India 'for consultations with the Indian leaders and for finding

¹⁷⁰ The Annual Register, January 1942. (Mitra: Calcutta.)

out some solution to meet the emergencies created by the war situation'.¹⁷¹ The announcement was made by the British -- Premier, Sir (then only Mr) Winston Churchill in the British Parliament. It was reported in India by the Reuters news agency. It was reported and commented upon by the Bombay Samachar by saying, 'The arrival of Cripps is a Davpetch (a manoeuvre)': Cripps was coming to India to mislead the leaders (undha pata bhanavava) and that the proposals must be devoid of any substance (Dam Vagarni)'.¹⁷² Similar comments were made by the Gujarat Samachar and the Vande Matram. It may be noted in this connection that the newspaper comments in other parts of India were just similar. Reporting that, Maulana Azad, the then Congress president, says in his autobiography that Sir Stafford Cripps had made a reference to that in a note to him (Azad).¹⁷³ The negotiations lasted from March 22 to April 11, 1942 when Sir Stafford Cripps left India after an announcement of the failure of the negotiations was made.¹⁷⁴ But, some of the Gujarati newspapers which had made special arrangements to procure intelligence about the negotiations between Sir Stafford Cripps and the Congress leaders

¹⁷¹ Ibid., March, 1942.

¹⁷² Bombay Samachar, dated 12-3-1942.

¹⁷³ Azad A.K., India Wins Freedom, p. 42. (*Orient Longmans: India*
Reprint: 1959.)

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

had started writing since March 30, in the following words :

- (i) 'Crippsji bhens laya ke bada paap'?¹⁷⁵
(Cripps had defied expectations).
- (ii) 'Cripps yojanathi kusump kayami banshe'.
(The Cripps plan will create a permanent
conflict between the Hindus and the
Muslims).¹⁷⁶
- (iii) 'Cripps yojana swikarashe nahin'
(The Cripps proposals will not be accept-
able).¹⁷⁷
- (iv) 'Cripps yojana ange sattavar abhiprayo'
(Authentic comments on the Cripps plan).¹⁷⁸

Gandhiji had been writing on all these issues in the Hari-
jan. On May 11, 1942, he wrote an article in that journal cap-
tioned, 'To Every Briton'. Gandhiji had requested (as had the
Congress in a resolution adopted earlier) Britons to support
him in his demand for a withdrawal of British rule from India.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Bombay Samachar, dated 31-3-1942.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., and Janmabhoomi, dated 1-4-1942.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., dated 3-4-1942.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., dated 4-4-1942.

¹⁷⁹ Harijan, dated 11-5-1942.

That article appeared in the Harijanbandhu dated May 18 under the heading 'Angrejo Jav' (Britishers Quit). The Gujarati press which had been quoting Gandhiji's articles in the Harijan and the Harijanbandhu¹⁸⁰ took up these words in their subsequent writings. Again, their reporting¹⁸¹ of the war news was in the following words :

- (i) 'Dhari deshoni aage kuch'
(Forward march of the Axes).
- (ii) 'Britain ni haroni parampara'.
(A series of defeats for Britain).
- (iii) 'Al Alamin sudhi pahonchela Germano'.
(The Germans have reached upto Al Alamin).

In view of the situation, the Congress resolved on July 14, 1942, to request for the withdrawal of the British rule from India and to launch a struggle under the leadership of Gandhiji, should negotiations between the Congress and the Government fail.¹⁸² This resolution was published by all the Gujarati dailies in big headline and was commented upon from that day onwards. The -- Bombay Samachar said, 'Delhi had been shaken due to this resolution',¹⁸³ and the Janmabhoomi and the Vande Matram said, 'still

¹⁸⁰ Harijanbandhu, dated 18-5-1942.

¹⁸¹ Bombay Samachar, Janmabhoomi, Gujarat Samachar, Sandesh, Sevak, and Vande Matram from May 20, 1942 to July that year.

¹⁸² Sitaramayya, op.cit.

¹⁸³ Bombay Samachar, dated 16-7-1942.

there is time for Britain to enter into a compromise with -- India.¹⁸⁴ Then these papers published the following words of Gandhiji,

'Bhale mari ane bijaoni dharpakad thay'

(Let me and others be arrested).¹⁸⁵

and added that Bombay would not 'lag behind in such an eventuality'.¹⁸⁶ Then followed a series of addresses by Vallabh-bhai Patel in Ahmedabad and Bombay from July 25th to August 3rd. These addresses were given the front page treatment and were published,¹⁸⁷ under different headings which read as :

(i) 'Taiyar Raho' (Be prepared).*

(ii) 'Chopadio ne talan marido',

(Lock up your books etc.).

¹⁸⁴ Janmabhoomi and Vande Matram, dated 2-8-1942.

¹⁸⁵ Janmabhoomi, dated 4-8-1942.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁸⁷ Different Gujarati dailies from July 25 to August 3, 1942.

* It may be mentioned here that these Gujarati captions were picked up verbatim from the leaders' speeches by the correspondents who were travelling with the leaders. These correspondents conveyed the verbatim reports telephonically to their respective newspapers. That preserved the import and innuendo of the Gujarati words spoken by the leaders. When the speeches etc. are procured through the newsagency (which supplies them in English), or even telegraphically (which again is not in Gujarati but in English), the translators in the newspaper offices translate them in their own way — even submerging the intended meaning. This fact has been mentioned here to show how the technical factors affect the nature of writings in the press.

- (iii) 'Sardarni Gujaratne hakal,
(A clarion call of Vallabhbhai to Gujarat) '.
- (iv) 'Koi pan bhog aapva taiyar raho,
(Get ready to ^{make} ~~give~~ any sacrifice) '.
- (v) 'Agni parikshano samay have aavi pahouchyo chhe,
(The moment for an acid test has arrived) '.
- (vi) '1919 no jamano jeevto karideva Sardarni hakal),
(Vallabhbhai's call to revive the days of 1919) '.

Along with that, the Janmabhoomi, the Vande Matram and the Bombay Samachar published the photographs of the different congress leaders reaching Bombay during the first week of August and this practice of the press was making the news more lively and the situation tenser. In some instances these newspapers published the utterances of these leaders on their arrival. The All India Congress Committee met as scheduled on August 7 and 8. It adopted a resolution asking the British to quit and to declare India free. That meeting concluded late at night on the 8th and soon after that the Government declared the Congress organisation as an unlawful association and arrested Gandhiji and Congressmen throughout the country in the early hours of the 9th.¹⁸⁸ The news about these arrests etc. was given by the All India Radio in its English News Bulletin at 8-0 a.m. That had led to a

¹⁸⁸ Annual Register, August, 1942.

series of disturbances involving lathi-charges, tear-gas shelling and firing by the police throughout the country. The Gujarati newspapers gave that news on the afternoon of the 9th in special supplements, and on the 10th and onwards ~~others~~ reported the disturbances etc. from all parts of the country.

So far we have kept aside any detailed reference to the Government's attitude towards the press during the period under review. We shall turn to that now so as to show how the nature of writings in the press was affected by the Government.

When hostilities were declared early in September 1939, the Government had passed the Defence of India Act¹⁸⁹ and the rules inter alia which, among other things, provided for 'a precensorship of material published in the press relating to certain matters'. The penalty for imprisonment on a breach of the restrictions was extended to five years. The Press (Emergency Powers) Act was also amended 'to provide against conveying of confidential information to enemy or the publication of any report which might be construed as inciting to the commission of an act which could be defined as prejudicial under the Defence of India Rules'.¹⁹⁰ In 1940 Gandhiji launched the 'Individual Satyagraha Movement'. The Government had issued a notification¹⁹¹ according to which, 'the Publication of any

¹⁸⁹ Gazette of India Extra Ordinary and Act XX of 1939.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.,

¹⁹¹ Natrajan, op.cit., p.167.

matter calculated directly or indirectly to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war and to publish accounts of speeches, meetings etc. calculated to that effect' were prohibited. Soon after that, however, an understanding was reached between the Government of India and a conference of the editors (which later became the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference). As a result of that understanding the Government notification was withdrawn and a system of Press Advisors was set up in all the provinces with the Chief Press Advisor at the Centre and publication of news was to be made in consultation with the Advisors.¹⁹² When the Indian National Congress adopted its August resolution asking the British to withdraw from India, the Government of India issued a fresh notification on August 8, 1942.¹⁹³ In that notification it was said, 'the printing or publishing of any factual news (which expression shall be deemed to include reports of speeches or statements made by the members of the public) relating to the mass-movement sanctioned by the All India Congress Committee or relating to the measures taken by the Government against that movement, except news derived from official sources or from the Associated Press of India or the United Press of India or the Orient Press of India or from a correspondent regularly employed by the newspaper concerned and whose name stands registered with the District Magistrate of the District in which he carries on his work, shall be prohibited'. The Government

192 Ibid.,

193 Ibid.,

issued a press note¹⁹⁴ too. It said :

'The declaration of various Congress committees to be unlawful associations renders liable to prosecution under the -- Criminal Law Amendment Act any one who assists their operations. It follows therefore, and, this is a matter with regard to which in the circumstances no previous warning to the press or consultation with advisory committees was possible --- that the editor of any newspaper who supports or encourages the mass movement sponsored by the bodies referred to above, or who opposes the measures taken by Government to avert or suppress that movement, will be guilty of an offence against the law. Moreover, the publication of factual news, both by the selection of events reported and by the manner in which they are displayed, can do even more to advertise and thus support, the movement than editorial comment thereon'.

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'The responsibility of the Press is, however, as great as its undoubted influence, and in order to ensure that, that responsibility may be exercised in a manner that will not bring the press into conflict with authority, Government consider it necessary,

- (a) to exercise a measure of control over the origins of factual news relating to the movement so as to

194 Hindustan Times (Ed.) The March of Events (1942), Delhi p 73 f

secure that what is published is derived only from recognized and responsible sources, and

(b) while imposing no direct control over the expression of editorial views, to leave editors themselves in no doubt as to the limits beyond which it will not be in their own interests to go.

(But) Government wish it to be clearly understood that they do not propose to allow any newspaper to continue to -- publish matter, whether it takes the form of news or views, which, in their opinion, will encourage the movement or incite people to take part in it or which will excite popular feelings in favour of the movement or against the measures that Government will be compelled to take to combat it'.

The notification and the press note have been quoted here at length to indicate the nature of news and views the press -- could publish as regards the mass movement that had commenced since the arrest of Gandhiji and other Congressman in August 1942. The notification was withdrawn after some months when again the Government and the All India Press body had reached an agreement regarding certain points. But, in between restrictions¹⁹⁵ were imposed as will be seen from the following instance.

Professor Bhansali of Wardha (a follower of Gandhiji more on the spiritual than political plane) wanted some incidents in

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 473.

Chimur and Ashti (in the Central Provinces; now in the Madhya Pradesh) to be investigated into by the Government. He had proceeded on a fast since November 11, 1942 to press his demand. The Central Provinces' Government had issued a circular prohibiting newspapers from publishing news about the fasting professor. With the approval of the Government of India, the C.P. Government had circulated their letter to the other provincial Governments as well. Accordingly, the Government of Bombay issued prohibitory orders against publication of any news about the fast of Bhansali. We would like to mention in this connection that the Gujarati newspapers ¹⁹⁶ used to publish on their front page a block showing a lamp (Deepak) with a glowing wick. That wick was shown growing dimmer every day. The suggestion was that the fasting professor continued to survive though his condition was sinking day by day.¹⁹⁶

We have mentioned these two instances — the one of -- sudden Governmental restriction and the other of the adoption of a subtle method of communication of intelligence just to show that the newspapers continued to publish factual news as per -- Governmental prescriptions and within the framework of law, yet, the innuendoes were understood by the people who carried on their agitation till Gandhiji was released in March 1944. The subsequent events were, the cessation of war in Europe and release of the Congress leaders, all followed by a series of constitutional discussions culminating in the transfer of power to India on

¹⁹⁶ The idea was conceived by Samaldas Gandhi — editor of the Gujarati daily Vande Matram and was gradually adopted by all the Gujarati dailies from middle of December to January 11, 1942.

August 15, 1947.

That concludes this chapter on the mass-movements and the nature and growth of the Gujarati press. We shall make a few observations now.

A section of people in Gujarat had been acquainted with the activities of Gandhiji even before he landed in India. The Gujarati press gave publicity, accordingly, to Gandhiji when he arrived home and when he toured about the country. As Gandhiji's activities began to cover a wider sphere, the Gujarati press -- began to give more information about him. It started publishing, not only news about Gandhiji's activities, but also his views to meet the demand of a wider section of the people. The nature of writings in the Gujarati press changed thereby (and also because Gandhiji provided the Gujarati press with the terminology about his views through the Navjivan) and came to be in tune with Gandhiji's ideas. That was acting, also as a factor in the growth of the Gujarati press. To put it differently, any Gujarati -- journal not keeping pace with Gandhiji's activities and views would be subjected to popular censor and would be extinct. This is illustrated by the criticism that Ranchhodlal Lotwala's journals had to meet when they were not aligning themselves with Gandhiji's views.

When Gandhiji launched the mass movements in Bardoli, the Gujarati press gave news about that and expressed its views -- accordingly. Herein its writings remained persuasive. ~~The press~~

The press put forth arguments in support of those movements. But, when the mass-awareness was greater and when Gandhiji launched mass-movements in 1930 and 1942, the Gujarati press had to meet the public requirements by giving more and the latest information. It adopted therefore the method of issuing supplements, that of publishing photographs and adopted also the technique of supplying information through crisp headings printed in bold type on the front page to keep the inquiring public abreast of whatever was transpiring. It had also to adopt the subtle and suggestive technique of publishing the wick and lamp to communicate information. Here again the technique of giving information through headings etc. had to be in keeping with the popular feelings. The headings had to be so worded that the reader may not only know what was happening but may also derive a satisfaction by reading it. The press headings pertaining to the mass-movements and especially those pertaining to the world war II amply justify our contention. In the latter instance, the communication of information had to be such as to provide a vicarious pleasure to the common man who would rejoice in the set-backs received by the British. Again, that the headings could express the views of the press more readily and explicitly than the editorial comments, was a fact known to the Government as well. The prohibitory -- orders issued by the Government in this regard substantiate our contention.

The above being the depiction of the changes in the -- nature of writings in the Gujarati press, mention needs to be

made of the factors operating on the growth of the latter. One of the factors in this regard, was the interest roused by the two world wars. We saw that the circulation of the Gujarati press increased during the war periods despite many a control, restrictions and regulations imposed by the Government. The other factor in this regard was the growth of national consciousness. As we saw, in the four years of hectic political activities during 1918 and onwards in India (particularly in Gujarat) the newspaper circulations were increasing by leaps and bounds. In four years, the total circulation (excluding monthlies) jumped from 74,900 to 1,23,600 copies, a 75 % increase — almost phenomenal. And, one more factor, to repeat once again, was the nationalist movement that the Indian National Congress had -- launched under the leadership of Gandhiji since 1922 onwards. These movements created an interest in the reading public which became more and more eager to know the different occurrences as well as to read the views of the political leaders in that -- regard. The Gujarati press which was publishing such news and other matter secured a wider and larger clientele consequently. It grew numerically (and, spatially too) in circulation. It may be mentioned here that along with this growth of the Gujarati press, the interest of the people in the nationalist movements also increased and that in turn lent vigour and sustenance to the movements, and, so on. An effective factor in this regard, we may mention finally, was the increase in population and -- education in Gujarat. (Population figures for the Gujarat

Division excluding Kutch, Saurashtra and the Greater Bombay area for 1931-1941 worked at 8,707,802 with 19.81 per cent literacy, according to the census report for 1951). That facilitated, not only the increase in the number of copies of the Gujarati journals but also in the specialisation and variety of the Gujarati journals catering to the different interests and sections, political and otherwise. While the press during the Gandhian era was dominated by Gandhiji's personality and devoted space to the -- nationalist movement and Gandhian programme, it also developed an all sides rounded personality, presenting not merely political news and views, but literary and educational matter. It also devoted considerable space to commerce and economic affairs. This is understandable because a stable readership cannot be built up on a constant overdose of politics. Indeed, the political pill would not often than not require to be coated with the sugar of literary and other matter to make it palatable to the average reader.

We saw in this chapter, finally, that the changes in the nature of the Gujarati press (change in the method of supplying information as per popular expectations on the nationalist movement through headings, pictures etc.) met with Governmental opposition. The different restrictions imposed by the Government in that regard were meant to check the press from giving any publicity to the mass-movements -- a fact that substantiates our contention that the press stands subjected to the Governmental policies.

That concludes this chapter on the nationalist movement and the Gujarati press. We shall proceed now to the next -- chapter wherein it is proposed to give a picture of the contemporary Gujarati press in relation to all the different social factors delineated so far.