

FREEDOM STRUGGLE
IN
HARYANA AND
CHAUDHRY RANBIR SINGH



Dr. B.D. Yadav
Gian Singh

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M.D. University, Rohtak

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CHAUDHRY RANBIR SINGH CHAIR
MAHARSHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY
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CHAUDHRY RANBIR SINGH HARYANA AND FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN

Dr B.D. Yadav
Gian Singh

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भूपेन्द्र सिंह हुड्डा
BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA



मुख्य मन्त्री, हरियाणा,
चण्डीगढ़
CHIEF MINISTER, HARYANA
CHANDIGARH

FOREWORD

It is indeed a matter of great pleasure for me that Chaudhry Ranbir Singh Chair in M.D. University, Rohtak has drafted a research work on the topic entitled : **The Freedom Struggle in Haryana and Chaudhry Ranbir Singh** for the publication. It is well known fact that my father, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and grand father, Chaudhry Matu Ram were greatly influenced with the Gandhian ideology based on truth and non-violence. On the invitation of my father and grand father, many national leaders such as Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, C. Raja Gopalachari, Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Sarojini Naidu and others visited the Haryana region in general and Rohtak in particular. Gandhiji laid the foundation stone of both the Schools at Rohtak, namely, Jat Anglo-Sanskrit High School and Vaish School during the Non-Cooperation movement.

All efforts were made to bring the peasantry and other communities into the main stream and awaken them realising their responsibilities towards the liberation of India. My father and grand father worked for the socio-culture awakening through new mode of education in the district. Besides, both of them continued to work for the upliftment of the peasantry and the down-trodden sections of the society which had been suffering since time immemorial.

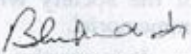
It is worthy to mention here that my father was awarded rigorous imprisonment six times and kept in

eight jails of the then Punjab during the freedom struggle. The writers have covered all the political activities in a very detailed way.

It is quite true that the freedom struggle is a Saga of heroism and sacrifices made by the Indian people and ultimately succeeded in attaining freedom on midnight of 14-15 August, 1947, when the whole world was asleep but India fulfilled her promise of 'tryst with destiny' as stated by our late Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru in his historic speech delivered on the eve of India's independence.

Though India achieved freedom but the division of the country that resulted into mass killing, arson and looting had despaired the Indian people. The communal riots had flared-up at many places in Haryana but more especially in Gurgaon, Rohtak and Panipat areas. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh then had accompanied Gandhiji along with Dewan Chaman Lal, Shri Ram Sharma, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargwa, Yasin Khan etc. visited these places where communal riots had hit the social fabric. All these leaders appealed to all the communities to maintain communal harmony. The young generation should follow the foot-steps and derive inspiration from these freedom fighters and national builders in making India a big power in the world and this monograph may help them with a perspective.

I appreciate the efforts made by M.D.University, Rohtak and the writers for the publication of this research work which would be valuable and inspiring to the general readers interested in knowing the details of the freedom struggle in Haryana in general.


(Bhupinder Singh Hooda)



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PROLOGUE

It is a matter of great pleasure that a research monograph has been published on the role played by Chaudhry Ranbir Singh in India's freedom struggle. I feel that Chaudhry Ranbir Singh's crusades during the movement need to be highlighted in a more broader and detailed manner and in proper historical perspective under the aegis of the Research Chair. The people of Haryana in general and young generation in particular would know and understand through this publication about many lesser known events, incidents, movements, personalities, strategy, dynamics etc. at regional level. It is fact that the contribution of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh has hitherto remained largely hidden and unknown.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh actively participated in the freedom struggle when it was at its peak under the leadership of the Indian National Congress and worked for it whole heartedly. When dotage had rendered his father, Chaudhry Matu Ram, politically incapacitated, young Ranbir Singh himself took the reins and led the movement. It is indeed true that there were many streams pushing the anti-imperialist movement in India and thus contributing according to their own capacities. But the Indian National Congress was the major organization under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and host of others which devised a novel mechanism for the struggle based

x // Prologue

on truth, non-violence and *Satyagraha*. India's freedom struggle also inspired the other third world countries where too the anti-imperialist movement started taking concrete shape. The credit largely goes to the Congress leadership and its unique methodology initiated and experimented in South Africa and elsewhere.

I firmly believe that this research work would be immensely useful in understanding and evaluating the role of the people from this part of the country during the latter part of the freedom struggle in right perspective.

I highly appreciate the efforts of my colleagues Prof. B.D. Yadav and Sh. Gian Singh for preparing such a comprehensive work of truly valuable research. In the end, I express my gratitude to Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Haryana, for writing a learned foreword to the publication.

I am sure that the readers would find this research work to be authentic, useful, and interesting.



(R.P.Hooda)



CHAIR-PERSON

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FOOTNOTE-EXCLUSIVELY

On behalf of the Peeth, a few words more in lieu of the intent. At the outset, Peeth underscores the dictum that a nation which tends to forget the pangs of slavery it suffered in history can not appreciate the value of freedom too for long, may relish slavery instead for a smaller benefit in bargain and the hard won independence is sure to slip by and loose its relevance consequently. Modern Indian history tells a tale: when a cunning trader in East India Company landed on its shores, none here suspected evil in him. Soon arms came to add muscles to the cunningness of a trader for subduing a nation of vast resources duly enriched by simplicity of a peasant. The British rulers then not only plundered its resources for long but played havoc with its culture, mores and ethos while trying to over turn its social fabric torn asunder, replacing it by a totally alien structure to obliterate its uniqueness; became self-declared masters of this nation and killed its spirit of creativity. That they did ruthlessly. Hence, the endeavour to re-invent our past constantly has no other option to rely upon. It also is imperative that the nation remembers its forefathers in gratitude for the price they willingly paid for gaining freedom from such an alien rule. It is due to them that we in a sense breathe free today.

One thing is beyond dispute. The Indian Nation had lost its spirit and sense of purpose as a colonial possession of British capital for long. Its natural course of growth was

thwarted under its heels. Ultimately, the whole nation was up in 'arms' or fought battles in diverse forms for freedom; even those who saw something good in British rule on false notions of historical course of dubious nature saw some good in independence. Factually speaking, the outfall of British rule in India proved more detrimental than what meets the eye. The claimed positive 'benefits' of this historical mission to civilise the brutes of East turned out to be an arrogance of colonisers par excellence. India survived. Reasons are many and need specific efforts to be underlined in a systematic manner by scholars of intent so that cobwebs of sponsored history are cleared away.

It is truism to underline that Haryana region had suffered worst at the hands of British rulers for its robust sense of freedom, uncompromising valour and grit it had inherited from its pastoral and agricultural background of a secular living, imbued habitually with a strong sense of justice born out of a democratic conduct in self-rule. The mass uprising in 1857 against an alien rule symbolised this character in abundance and the failure of this struggle ultimately had invited an unprecedented butchery of this spirit. The land was either occupied or turned barren, its people were left to serve as menials or its foot soldiers to fight colonial wars on behalf of these new masters. The region in particular was bled white for its 'crime' to fight for independence; it however rose again by first decade of twentieth century in anger and determination to challenge the supremacy of these masters. The country became an Independent Nation, though with a mauled spirit at the hands of butchers that ruined its resources and Haryana region with the experience of a brute state structure to contend. The psyche of the masses stood bruised and brutalised.

With this background, all those who ventured again for freedom, more so in Haryana region truly deserve fulsome kudos for their courage and grit. Evaluation of

their role has to take into account the specifics of the situation available then. Here lies the pioneering work that Chaudhry Matu Ram did to till a barren land with the spirit of a peasant seeped in optimism for a good crop. Arya Samaj provided him a timely grounding to work upon, handing over the baton to his son when age demanded it. Rural Haryana did find a foothold in the struggle and played it well thereafter, keeping the immediate past behind.

The present study in following chapters was thus over due. It though does not claim total wisdom, neither it is free from drawbacks, if any. The Peeth undertook the job as a first step for evaluation of independence struggle since 1857 onward and the role that Haryana played in this direction as also the role of its stalwarts such as Chaudhry Ranbir Singh. True, much has been written by now on the freedom struggle and the role of its leaders. Likewise, divergent opinions on evaluation also are many. Still, much remains to be done as British rulers had played havoc with its history. They were successful in sponsoring a flawed angularity as how to read the facts and implanted an alien view on the events of colonial pursuits. This is more so with the tale about Haryana since the mass uprising in 1857. Similarly, it had a galaxy of fighters who deserve proper evaluation. The list of such unsung commoners and their heroes is long enough and the task is daunting. But no nation worth its salt can ignore this duty to its past for the sake of future.

A peasant family from Rohtak district did attract attention both of its admirers and adversaries alike that had plunged whole heartedly in the freedom struggle at the call of time. Chaudhry Matu Ram embraced the first stirrings and later his sons imbibed the values of social obligation. One of them, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh decided to carry the baton to the last and he did it admirably. The

persona of junior Chaudhry has a uniqueness for the times that takes him to the pages of history. Pursuant to the rule, history of the times shaped his character. His intervention was at local level, as it should be, while his vision was national with a broad rational frame, having a liberal democratic attitude to life. He inherited the baton of struggle from the elderly hands of his father, the late Chaudhry Matu Ram who was deeply imbibed by a late runner renaissance appeal of Arya Samaj in Haryana region to start with. He worked up the rocky land in rural Haryana that had paid an unusually heavy price for its role in the uprising of 1857 against foreign rule. To bring out the peasantry in struggle for freedom movement in the background of a brutal repression, perhaps unparalleled in civilised human history let loose by British rulers after the failed uprising against their regime, made the task daunting. And he did it admirably with much verve.

It may be worth remembering that the elder Chaudhry lived in an age that drew inspiration of a renaissance kind from the reformist movement of Arya Samaj in the religious domain. Renaissance proper was late to arrive in Haryana region, but its need was intensely felt. When Arya Samaj led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati reached the doors of the region, it caught the imagination of usually secular peasantry especially in joint Punjab rather than his place of origin in Gujarat and became an unwitting tool of secular norms of behaviour with clean conduct in life style. A deep quest for education spread far and wide due to its efforts. Chaudhry Matu Ram did not lose time and came forward to carry the message with much vigour. This helped in the growth of national consciousness among the people at large and the urge for freedom came in tandem. Fear complex of brutalised state started wearing thin. History placed the onus on him and he did serve it. Later his son, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh took

the baton from him at the appropriate moment to carry the campaign. It was the pioneering job that the duo of father and son performed to bring rural Haryana in the mainstream of freedom struggle again against heavy odds.

One such hurdle was a state sponsored campaign to lure away each and every employable rural youth from the freedom movement by offering government job. Rural Haryana by then was sapped out of its resilience and its economy stood shattered by well orchestrated and deliberate policies of the colonisers. In addition, special efforts were made to wean away the peasantry away from the struggle by aggressively offering much delayed relief necessary for its very survival in a ruined economy.

Despite all such difficulties, Chaudhry Matu Ram and later his son, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was able to sow the seed of hope in time. History cast the duty on them and they performed. Like many, they did not shirk it for personal reasons. Family members were helpful and not a chain to withheld in self interest. Beauty lies here. Rural Haryana awoke to the call and joined hands with the urban population in the struggle for freedom. After, 1947 he did his best to make the land fertile with all the limitations of working within the frame of political establishment that developed in the country as well as in the region he was working at the grass root.

The present study is the first necessary step to understand the historical period in the life of Haryana and the role that the late Chaudhry Ranbir Singh played at a crucial period in the history of Haryana region in quest of freedom. It will perhaps help advance the effort to unravel the multi-facet personality of this unique freedom fighter.

With hope and optimism in human endeavour, the following chapters tell a tale.

Gian Singh

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For a beginning, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh Chair at the University proposed two monographs to be published in the first year of its work. The one, namely **The Freedom Struggle in Haryana and Chaudhry Ranbir Singh** was assigned to Prof. B.D. Yadav, Dept. of History, M.D. University, Rohtak. to investigate the role of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh in India's Freedom Struggle.

The relevant material/sources available in research institutes, libraries and Archives were consulted on the subject. Besides, I was fortunate for having long discussions and recording earlier the interviews of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh. I could gathered a lot of informations about many events, incidents, movements, personalities, official, non-official, organizational functioning, strategy etc. Besides, Shri Inder Singh, the elder son of Late Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, was kind enough to tell us about many aspects related to the multiple activities of his father. I am very grateful to him for sparing his valuable time spending with us and throwing light on many new aspects of his life. The interviews of Shri Ram Sharma (Rohtak), Ram Sharan Chand Mittal (Narnaul), Ram Kishan Gupta (Dadri), Chaudhry Ram Singh Jakhar (Rohtak) and many officers of Azad Hind Fauj such as Col. Ran Singh Ahlawat, Capt. Risal Singh (Dhandhlan), Capt. Kanwal Singh (Mandothi) and Sh. Lalti Ram (Dubaldhan), taken earlier, were of much help that are utilized in this research work.

The editors are highly grateful to Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Haryana for his benign help and encouragement and for sparing his valuable time to write a foreword for this book.

We are also grateful to Shri Deepender Singh M.P., Prof. R.P.Hooda, Prof. K.C.Yadav, Dr. Rajbir Singh, Dr. K.S. Sangwan, Dr. Manmohan Kumar for taking keen interest in the publication of this research work under the auspices of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh Chair at the University. We are most grateful to Prof. R.P.Hooda, Vice Chancellor, M.D. University, Rohtak, for writing Prologue for the book.

Special thanks are due to Sh.Sushil Kumar and Sh.Surjit Misree who not only went through this work but also shared their ideas with us in order to enable this research work in the present form. It won't suit the practicality if we fail to mention the names of Lokesh and Pratibha who in more than one way both directly and indirectly helped in preparing this research monograph.

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Thanks are also due to Rajesh Kumar 'Kashyap', Dharamvir Hooda and Sneh Kumar who rendered valuable assistance in many ways in preparation of this work in time, while working in the office of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh Chair, M.D. University, Rohtak.

B.D.Yadav

PREFACE

The study and construction of local As well as regional history is *sine quo non* for analytical understanding of national history in a country like India. History cannot stand on head but it has to be screened like a pyramid. The knowledge of the regional history is necessary to delve deep into the uniqueness of Indian history wherein one region differs from the others in climate, soil, topology and other social, natural conditions. But the issues of polity and economics remain almost the same until and unless some drastic steps are taken. When the East India Company came and strengthened its position in the country, it brought about major changes in administrative and economic structures which created great resentment and widespread anti-British feelings among the Indians.

Two major steps introduced by the E. I. C in this period proved to be the last nail into mounting dissatisfaction among the Indians. One was Macaulay's historic Minute in favour of new education policy of 1835 as well as discontinuing of *Persian* as the Court language. The other was the enforcement of Permanent Settlement coupled with the 'Principle of Eminent Domain'. The settlement and the principle taken together sanctified individual ownership over land so far held in common, while the State was declared as a sovereign authority to lord over natural resources in the country that made the colonial power as master of the situation.

The Macaulay's thrust in education gave rise to a new class of loyal citizens by consent and individual right in land provided a strong socio-economic foundation for a loyal landed gentry having middle class orientation to grow, preparing a loyal social base for the alien *Raj* lacking in social acceptance. The dynamics of the first, however, gave a push also for a cosmopolitan field of knowledge available at hand while the other opened a grim chapter of ruination and misery for the peasantry surviving till then on family labour in agriculture. Famine started visiting regularly with devastating effects for the common man in rural India.

The rising discontentment against the oppressive foreign rule that brought widespread ruin and misery resulting into relentless war in 1857. Popularly known as the 'First War of India's Independence', it was a cumulative effect of Indian anger. However, when the revolt failed due to superior fire-power and administrative intrigues, the British *Raj* unleashed an unparallel reign of terror with devastating effect that subdued the population. Haryana region for its sterling role in this war had to bear the brunt of this terror inviting ruin and devastation. It was a period of systematic but swift changes, both administrative and juridical to consolidate its grip on the nation. The whole socio-economic, administrative, juridical and cultural textures available earlier were altered for a lasting effect.

In the meantime, a new developed class of awakened gentry as a product of new education system and alien culture introduced here keeping in view of their administrative and economic interests. This class succeeded in establishing Indian National Congress in 1885. It started gradually gaining momentum against the exploitative and oppressive policies of the *Raj*. Like other

regions, the Congress leadership in Haryana also started actively participating in the struggle which continued till the attainment of *Swaraj* in 1947. Chaudhry Matu Ram, Dr. Ramji Lal, Ranbir Singh, Neki Ram Sharma, Shri Ram Sharma, Sham Lal *Satyagrahi* and a host of others were the towering personalities who started championing the common cause here. This monograph is an effort to bring out the role that Chaudhry Ranbir Singh played in freedom struggle in Haryana region.

The oppressive nature of British rule especially after 1857 suppressed the perennial grit of the people for ever. Steps taken one after the other designed to overhaul social, political, judicial and administrative structures was too alien to the cherished values and mores that alienated broadly the native populace. Peasantry was in ruin. During 1905-07, it took to streets when S. Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai gave vent to their woes in composite Punjab visiting Haryana region also organising militant campaign on issues close to the peasantry. After the First World War, anti-imperialist struggle especially among the nations of the third world gained momentum. The Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi devised new methods of struggle based on truth, non-violence and *Satyagrah*. The people of India and beyond not only watched closely and keenly but also followed the Gandhian methods. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh as the true follower of Gandhiji actively participated in several movements launched under his leadership. Gandhiji had left a profound impact on India's freedom struggle and its leadership, including the new generation in Haryana.

In history, one finds rare examples when several generations participated in their national struggle and reconstruction. The Hooda family of Sanghi in Haryana is one that has this privilege. Leaders like Chaudhry Matu

Ram, his brother, Ramji Lal Hooda and his son, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, actively participated in the freedom struggle and, subsequently, in the nation-building process. Later, his grandson, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the present Chief Minister of Haryana and his great grandson, Deepender Singh, the parliamentarian, are still continuing this heritage to serve the common cause i.e. the prosperity of the people of Haryana State.

It is worth mentioning here that following the path shown by his great father, Chaudhry Matu Ram, the younger Chaudhry his brothers -Dr. Balbir Singh and Fateh Singh along with other family members remained staunch followers of Arya Samaj which was against the religious superstitions, social evils prevalent in the then society. They worked hard and with zeal for the socio-religious reforms to rid the society of its dead wood. The slogan, 'Back to Vedas' was inspired with the urge to bring about national unity and to kindle national pride and create consciousness among the people of Haryana. It played a progressive role in the reconstruction of the society and stood for equal rights of men and women in socio-economic matters. Most of the leaders of Haryana in pre and post independence eras were ardent followers of the values and virtues advocated by the Arya Samaj. Chaudhry Matu Ram and his descendants ardently appreciated the value of education and laid a network of Schools and Colleges both for boys and girls. It is, undoubtedly, true that Arya Samaj had played a progressive role in spreading education, and work for the growth of national fervour and spread its message on socio-religious matters.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and his father Chaudhry Matu Ram believed that education was the only way for social transformation and political awakening among the

people. They took to the cause of education for the masses in the regions of Haryana which remained educationally backward for a long time. Chaudhry Matu Ram was a pioneer as far as the growth of educational activities in Rohtak district was concerned. It is well known that he was a leading personality in founding the Jat-Anglo Sanskrit High School at Rohtak. He was chosen and remained a unanimous choice for the office of President of Management Committee of the School for a long period. The teachers and the students of this School actively participated in the Non-Cooperation movement and adopted the agenda of national education on independent national lines. Like his father, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh also advocated for the spread of mass education among the rural-folk of this region and founded a High School at Kharkhauda, a tehsil of the district, in 1946. He had played a leading role in establishing Government Medical College and Hospital at his home town, Rohtak, in 1956 when he was a member of Lok Sabha, representing the Rohtak Parliamentary constituency.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh continued the legacy as far as the participation in the freedom struggle led by the Indian National Congress was concerned. National leaders such as Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Mohammad Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Patel, Bhulabhai Desai, Govind Ballabh Pant, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Asaf Ali, Sarojni Naidu and galaxy of other great men kept on visiting Haryana in order to mobilise people for the national struggle. In Haryana Chaudhry Matu Ram, Ranbir Singh, Neki Ram Sharma, Shri Ram Sharma, Sham Lal, Duni Chand, K.A. Desai, Rao Mangli Ram, Badlu Ram, Balwant Rai Tayal, Mool Chand Jain, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, Com. Lachhman Das, Mange Ram Vats and several others came forward to undertake the onerous task

and develop a good working relationship with the national leadership. They worked hard to strengthen the campaign.

When Congress Committees at national and provincial levels were declared unlawful and their family members were shadowed and harassed by the C.I.D. officials, in the face of coercive methods, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh never lost patience and continued his struggle with passion and perseverance. He remained in the vanguard of the freedom movement against the mighty British Empire. Highlighting the basic trends of the freedom struggle in Haryana, it is necessary to probe other related aspects along with specific role of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh therein. Efforts have also been made to analyse the impact of forces unleashed by the British rule like the growth of education, increased network of communication and the politicisation of the society in Haryana.

Morris-Jones, a noted political scientist, has characterized aspects of political-culture of India as modern, traditional and saintly. In this context, it is pertinent to mention here that the language of politics in Haryana was dominated by the traditional idiom which witnessed the dominance of caste and peasant based mobilization which at times led to parochial tendencies in Haryana's politics. In spite of the colonial rulers introducing democratic polity that led to infuse universal and secular idiom of politics, there were only a handful of regional leaders who imbibed the modern idiom of politics. In this context, the ideology and role of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh become necessary to analyse in this study as he tried to transcend the traditional idiom of caste based politics into modern and secular idiom of politics. They laid emphasis on an all embracing policies transcending the caste considerations.

Post 1857, the elite structure in Haryana was peculiar in the sense that the increasing influence of rural-based political elite and its collaboration with the colonial regime was conspicuous. It often led to greater articulation of interest oriented goals in political persuasion. Obviously, this elite structure was bound to create some such perspectives that were strongly inclined towards accepting the charismatic leaders having deep emotional roots in the traditional symbols of authority such as religion, caste, joint family and village community.

During the hey-day of Unionist party, there were several peasant leaders who remained sympathetic towards colonial ruler's policies. It was not easy to win them over to join the national movement which was actively being pursued by the nationalist leaders especially after the tragic event of *Jallianwala Bagh* incident in which hundreds of innocent people were victims of General Dyer's highhandedness. This study has also highlighted the historical forces and trends in the midst of which many personalities acted in ways which often depict a coloured picture of the basic truth. Throughout the study, an attempt is made to highlight socio-political base of the leadership which was active in social and political regeneration of Haryana region. The efforts made by Chaudhry Ranbir Singh created a conducive and favourable climate for the spread of nationalist ideology in Haryana.

In view of this, an attempt has been made to discuss the features of Haryana's freedom struggle and how during the course of this struggle, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh decided to promote the national interests and ideology deriving inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders. In this respect, the

contribution of those who had devoted themselves to the cause of freedom struggle and created conducive climate for the promotion of nationalist ideology have adequately been given due consideration in proper historical perspective. The present volume would fill-up that gap by highlighting the contribution of this illustrious leader in Haryana's freedom struggle. Though, several sketchy biographies on his personality have also come out but there is dearth of study on this aspect. Many research institutes, Archives and libraries have recently acquired some more research material from different quarters but scholars have yet to consult these newly acquired materials. An effort is made to consult the newly acquired materials/ sources for proper analysis in the interest of this work.

The research methodology has been based on the proper assessment of historical material with analytical approach in historical perspective. The research material preserved by the National Archives of India, Janpath Road, New Delhi; Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi; Documentation Centre of Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi; Haryana and Punjab States' Archives, Panchkula and Patiala; Secretariat Libraries of Haryana and Punjab, Chandigarh; Parliament Library etc. have been fully utilized. I express a sense of gratitude to the authorities of these research institutes and libraries for allowing me to consult the research material preserved therein. All the sources have been corroborated and compared and critically analysed after verifying the authenticity as far as the role of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh in the freedom struggle is concerned. After considering all the aspects, the conclusions have been drawn on the basis of scientific analysis.

I hope this work/book would immensely be useful in understanding the over-all view of freedom struggle in Haryana in which Chaudhry Ranbir Singh played an important role. Since, he generally remained away from the lime light and kept aloof from self publicity and propaganda, his role and contribution in various fields too remained un-evaluated. Due to his steadfastness to the cause, his unwavering devotion to the organisation, participation with zeal, patience and perseverance, he remained popular in high Congress circles till last. His life story is undoubtedly interesting and instructive but also is a source of inspiration to the younger generations. He was a true Gandhian in spirit and life style, whose relevance is lasting. The ideology and methodology of Gandhian struggle remains a beacon light in the strife-torn and conflict driven world today. By following this approach and path shown by the great leaders, the *persona* and deeds of Chaudhry Ranbir Singh would remain an inspiring saga for the people of India in general and Haryana in particular.

Prof. B.D. Yadav

CHAPTER - I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Haryana, as a separate state came into existence on the political map of India on 1 November, 1966. It was denied this status by the first State Re-organisation Commission in 1956. Haryana then became the seventeenth and one of the smallest States of Indian Union with an area of 44222 square kilometers and a population of 8.9 millions.¹

Referring to the significance of Haryana in India's ancient and medieval times, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, said: "Here were sung the first hymns of our *Aryan* forefathers. This was the land of *Mahabharata*. Beginning with Kurukshetra, some of the great battles of our land have been fought in this region. But the people of Haryana have been as much men of peace as warriors. They have proud achievements to their credit as agriculturists and craftsmen - I give the assurance that the Union Government will give prompt consideration to all programmes that will lead to the prosperity of its people".² Gulzari Lal Nanda, the Union Home Minister in his message said : "November 1 (1966) marks the end of a long journey. It also marks the beginning of another new journey" for the newly created State and the people of Haryana.³ The prophecies made by Smt. Indira Gandhi and Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda became

true within a few decades. The State became one of the most progressive and prosperous States of the country in a short period.

A query of interest begs the question as to why the word Haryana was chosen as a proper epithet for the State. It has its own history. The word Haryana has a historical significance and background. It was greatly influenced with various geo-political factors, which have a direct bearing on the lives of people living in Haryana region. There are ample sources literary (classical), archaeological, views of the modern scholars, and oral traditions which throw sufficient light on its denomination. In the *Rigveda*, there is a mention of Haryana as an adjective with the name of King Vasuraja who ruled over this region.⁴ The *Skanda Purana* is another literary source in which *Kumarika Khanda* as a new chapter was incorporated in the 9th century. This source refers to *Hariyala* as a regional denomination which probably stands for Haryana consisting of around five lakh villages in its territory.⁵ The third source is the *Vaman Purana* composed in the 7th century, indicates that *Bhudanaka* was a *Janapada* of *Uttarapada*⁶ which had fertile land, probably denoting Haryana region. Some modern scholars like Dasrath Sharma also agree with this view that *Bhudanaka* was a region which included the present district of Gurgaon, a part of Alwar and Bhiwani tehsil.⁷ The *Maha Purana* is another source which was composed in 10th century by poet Pushpadanta, a resident of Rohtak. He has used the word *Hariyan* probably for the same region.⁸ A poet of the 11th century, Shridhar, has also used *Hariyan* in his literary commentary for the same region, now known as Haryana.⁹

The epigraphic sources such as inscriptions do throw light on the word Haryana. The Badaura inscription which was composed in the 13th century explicitly indicates that

an ascetic named Isanasiva, the son of Varnasiva, belonged to Simpha-Pali in Haryana country.¹⁰ Bijolia inscription composed in 12th century recorded a word *Haritanka*,¹¹ synonym of Haryana. Another inscription of Chahmana known as *Parsasti* also describes the term *Haritanka* in which ruler Arnoraja is described as "carrying arms into the *Haritanka* upto the Sindhu and the Saraswati rivers and that his soldiers' march rendered waters of river Kalindi (Yamuna) muddy and the women of *Haritanka* country shed tears."¹² Qutub-ud-din Mubarakshah's (Khalji dynasty) Ladamu inscription recorded that Delhi was a big town in the country of *Haritanka*, probably a corrugated word for Haryana.¹³ Palam Baoli inscription of the 13th century also refers to *Hariyanka* for the present Haryana region. An inscription of Tomars now available in Delhi Museum recorded that Tomars were ruling over Haryana.¹⁴ Various names such as *Hariyan*, *Hariyala*, *Hariyanka*, and *Haritanka* were used for Haryana in many epigraphic sources. It can be said that the word Haryana which came into prominence signifies the tract of a land which was abundant in 'greenary and vegetation'.

The third types of sources are those which were composed and edited during the colonial regime. The writing of *Imperial Gazetteers* began in 1881 and its first series appeared in 1883-84 at national and provincial levels. The multi-volume sets of the *Imperial Gazetteers of India* were edited in which all sorts of information have been given for imperial interests based on oral traditions, discussions with the traditional elites and available literary sources. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Volume XIII, records that "the word Haryana is probably derived from *Harita* (green) as it was green land full of forests."¹⁵ *The Gazetteer of Hissar district* records that "traditionally the name of Haryana was attributed to Raja Harish Chandra who ruled over this land in most ancient times."¹⁶

The fourth category consists of different scholars' views who have interpreted this aspect in their own perspective. Dr. Buddha Prakash wrote that the region of Haryana was inhabited by *Abhiras* during the post-*Mahabharata* period and after their name, it became *Abhiryana*, inhabited by the Aryans that came to be called *Aryana* which, later on, converted into Haryana.¹⁷ The author of *Tarikh-i-Zila Rohtak*, Maharaj Krishan, is of the opinion that the word Haryana basically originated from *Haran* (robbery) as the region is said to have been teeming with the anti-social elements in the pre-Mughal period.¹⁸ Another scholar, Rahul Sankratyayan, traces the word *Haridhanyaka* prominently used in the ancient Indian literature for the region and in the later period, it came to be known as Haryana.¹⁹ Acharya Bhagwan Dev admits that the people living in this region worshipped *Hara*, i.e. Lord Mahadev, the greatest among the gods. It is generally believed that he is the destroyer of all the living-beings. The worship of this God is still popular among the people of Haryana.²⁰ The British scholar, F. Wilson, has argued that the region was full of greenery and vegetation, therefore, it came to be known as *Haryalban*, a variant form of Haryana.²¹

V.S. Agarwala who has made a detailed study of *Vaman Purana* mentions that this region was known as the *Kuru Jangala* and *Kurukshetra* while the former corresponds to Rohtak, Hissar and Hansi. Kurukshetra consisted of the region between the rivers *Saraswati* and *Drasadvati* has been located in the north of *Kuru Jangala* with its centres at Thanesar, Kaithal and Karnal.²² Kurukshetra was one of the greatest pilgrimage centres since times immemorial. Many travellers have also mentioned its prominence as a pilgrimage centre in their travel's accounts. This region is also known as *Srikanth Janapada* and Thanesar as its capital

situated on the bank of *Sarasvati* River. All the contemporary sources such as Ban Batt's *Harschar ta*,²³ and Huan Tsangs *Si-Yu-ki*²⁴ (his travel's accounts), Rajasekhara's *Kavyamimansa*²⁵ and Somdev Suri's, *Yasastilaka Champu*²⁶ provide ample information about its prominence, territorial designation, flora-fauna and other aspects in details.

The first half of the 18th century India witnessed the downfall of Mughal Empire and the emergence of East India Company as a powerful force in India. The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 led to a long struggle for succession among his unworthy successors. The Mughal Empire, however, had subdued the Sikh powers in 1716 but failed to check the rising tide of the Marathas. After capturing Gujarat, Malwa and Bundelkhand, the Marathas suddenly knocked at the door of Delhi in 1737.²⁷ Then came the stunning blow of Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739. The Mughal Empire which kept on flourishing "a gorgeously dressed corpse fell down like a house of cards only 31 days after his (Aurangzeb) death". Kabul along with a large territory of east of the *Indus* was lost that weakened the defensive barriers of India on the north-west front.²⁸

Such was the political situation when Marathas appeared on the scene. The Marathas then moved towards the eastern India - Orissa and Bengal. In between, the Mughal empire experienced another great shock when Ahmad Shah Abdali, an Afghan invader, captured two frontier provinces of Lahore and Multan.²⁹ In such a situation, Ahmad Shah, Mughal emperor, had no other option except to seek Marathas' protection and made an agreement with them in April 1752. In lieu of the agreement, the Marathas got the right of revenue collection from Punjab, Sind and Doab in addition to the *Subedari* of Amer and Agra regions. The Marathas in exchange

assured the protection of empire to the Mughals against internal and external inroads. The main reason behind this political instability was that the emperor happened to be the fountain head of all powers, be it an appointment, promotion, dismissal or allocation of transfer of *jagirs*. So the entire imperial edifice stood on a "patron-client relationship" existing between the empire and the ruling class.³⁰

The weakness of the Mughal empire made several regional powers such as Bengal an independent suba while its only ties with the former remained only in name. Siraj-ud-daula, the Nawab of Bengal, confronted the East India Company and seized its factory at Cassimbazar along with Calcutta on 16 June, 1756. Robert Clive captured Calcutta again and allied with Mir Jafar in order to dethrone Siraj-ud-daula. It resulted into the battle of Plassey on 23 June, 1757. This battle put to an end to Muslim rule in Bengal; the foreign master of the sword had become its king maker.³¹ In 1760, Mir Qasim replaced Mir Jafar and started organizing a confederacy with Shiya-ud-daula, Nawab of Awadh and Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor. The Company's army ultimately defeated the allied armies at Buxar on 22 October, 1764. This battle was more decisive in results than the battle of Plassey. The Company emerged as a territorial and political power in Bengal and made supremacy gradually over the whole of India.³²

The East India Company keeping the situation in view made an alliance with some of the native states and many were subsequently annexed. It was the diplomacy of colonial masters who made persistent efforts and manoeuvres for empire-building process in Indian sub-continent. Commenting on the chicanery politics of the Company, an English scholar, Ramsay Muir, has observed:

"Never was the Empire less powerful than the result of design of the British empire in India."³³

The situation in the regions of Haryana was no better as there was a general decay and disintegration. It had become a hunting ground for free-booters and adventurers. It was, indeed, no man's land as the Marathas and the Sikhs were in constant conflict for the supremacy. Such political situation made the life of the people of Haryana quite insecure and formidable. During the same period, an Irish adventurer, George Thomas appeared on the political scene of Haryana. He subdued the Sikhs and established his supremacy over the region and made Hansi his capital. This region included Ghaggar in the North and Beri in the South; Meham in the East and Behadara in the West. This region had 800 villages along-with some of the towns such as Hansi, Bhiwani, Hissar, Fatehabad and Tohana. He formed a town, Georgegarh, after his name which is now called Jahajgarh. He has been regarded as 'the Raja of Haryana.'³⁴

After 1803, the regions of Haryana experienced around half a dozen changes in its administration catering to the tastes, conveniences and whims of the colonial masters. After the Treaty of Surji Anjangaon (30 December, 1803), the regions of Haryana i.e. Panipat, Sonipat, Samalkha, Ganaur, Haveli Palam in the North and Nuh, Hathin, Tizara, Bhora, Tapukara, Sohna, Rewari, Indri and Palwal in the South came under East India Company. All these regions were attached to the province of Bengal under the charge of a resident administrator and termed as 'assigned territory'. The other regions were given to various other *sardars* and chieftains.³⁵

The civil administration of the 'assigned territory' was put under a Commissioner in 1819 when the North-Western Province was formed with Agra as its

headquarters in 1833. The districts of Delhi, Gurgaon, Hissar, Rohtak and Panipat were put under a Division known as Delhi Division. Every district was kept under a magistrate-cum-collector for running the administration smoothly. The districts were further divided into *tehsils*, *zails* and villages and placed under *tehsildars*, *zaildars*, *lamabdars* and *muqaddams* respectively. The *lamabdars*, *muqaddams* and *chaukidars* helped the *patwaris* in the collection of land revenue from the villages.³⁶

The policies framed by the administrators of the Company were aggressive and unscrupulous in nature. When Dalhousie annexed a large number of native states by fraudulent means, princely chieftains opposed and stood against the British *Raj*. The administrative system set-up by the colonial masters became unpopular due to their arrogance and callousness in dealing with the people. It has rightly been pointed out by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who was an eye-witness to the whole affair in these words: "Their pride and arrogance led them to consider the natives of India as undeserving human-beings".³⁷ Their new laws along with the essential knowledge of English did disappoint the Indians who could not get any opportunity in higher services- be it civil or military administration.

The colonial masters dishonoured the native institutions like the village communities and the informal *Panchayats* which were the centres of all social and economic life of the villages. The village life centred around the self-sufficiency, stability, internal cohesion and highly organised system of self-governance. Perhaps, it was this peculiarity of self-sufficient structure of the village that preserved the civilization of India since times immemorial, despite, many invasions and government³⁸ headed by the colonial masters. Charles Metcalfe, the then

Resident at Delhi, studied the composition, functions and significance of the village communities and village *Panchayats* in the rural set-up of the region. He appreciated the self-sufficient and independent character of the villages and called the village communities as 'Little Republics'. As resident, he came to know about the agrarian problems, the system of land revenue assessment and introduced new modes of revenue collection etc. accordingly. He appreciated the judicious functioning of the 'village Republics'. The abolition of these 'Republics' shook the faith and confidence of people.³⁹

The Britishers interfered in the affairs of socio-religious institutions and practices which created acute resentment among the traditional and orthodox people. The new rules of inheritance, marriage and succession were not appreciated by the local people. A British scholar, Malcolm Lewin, has rightly remarked: "We have insulted their caste, we have abrogated their laws of inheritance; we have changed their marriage institution; we have ignored the most sacred rites of their religion; we have delivered up their pagoda-property to confiscation, we have branded them in official records as heathen".⁴⁰ The abolition of *sati* system and female infanticide and introduction of widow remarriage, age of consent bills greatly annoyed the orthodox Hindus. Refuting the contest between modernity and tradition as alleged by the administrator-scholars, an Indian nationalist frankly admitted: "It was no simple a contest between modernity and tradition - that constant quarrel, as a Spanish proverb says, between beauty and chastity - but a confused struggle in which the proud people felt that they were being humiliated and depressed."⁴¹

The other aspect was the economic exploitation of Indians by the colonial regime. The Industrial Revolution

produced multiple goods in a very large scale but earlier, the Company exported Indian manufactured goods. The balance of trade was always in favour of India but now the situation began to change. Robert Martin Montgomery who became Lt. Governor of Punjab, later on explicitly admitted that the British commercial policy was most injurious to the Indian interests. He further wrote : "We have done everything possible to impoverish still further the miserable beings (Indians) subject to the cruel selfishness of English commerce.. Under the pretence of Free Trade, England has compelled the Hindus to receive the products of the steam-looms of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Glasgow & Co. at mere nominal duties; while the hand-wrought manufactures of Bengal and Bihar, beautiful in fabric and durable in wear, have had heavy and almost protective duties imposed on their importation to England."⁴²

One can frankly observe that the anti-people policies pursued by the British Government such as economic exploitation of the country, huge drain of wealth, destruction of indigenous industries, ruination of Indian economy angered Indian people extensively. The British crippled Indian trade and manufacture by imposing heavy protective duties in Britain while British goods were imported into India at a nominal duty.⁴³ R.C. Dutt, an economic historian of the colonial rule, pointed out that the end of company's rule (in 1858) did not bring any change as far as the economic policies of the British Government were concerned. The drain of India's wealth had increased fourfold. India suffered this steady and increasing drain and prepared herself for frequent and widespread famines, draught, epidemics and increasing burden of land revenue also made the economic distress more acute.⁴⁴

The land revenue policy and increasing demand of revenue made the plight of peasantry miserable. In fact, the oppressive policy compelled many peasants to desert their lands and even homes. However, some efforts were made by William Bentinck and Robert Martin Bird as far as the land assessment was concerned. Bird admitted that the prevailing land revenue system was most defective, corrupt, excessive and harassing to the peasantry. He also suggested the necessity of irrigation for the improvement and advancement of agriculture.⁴⁵ The construction of Western Yamuna Canal could not improve the economic conditions of the peasantry due to heavy water rates. It rather created some problems. It was eventually followed by the accumulation of *reh* and silt deposit. It created seepage and water-logging problems resulting into a series of lagoons and stagnant marshes. Malaria became a serious health-hazard for Karnal and Panipat areas.⁴⁶

The other factor of discontent was the natural calamities such as famines, epidemics, draughts and diseases which had worsened the condition of the people. The *chalisa* famine occurred in 1783 (*samvat* 1840) completely ruined the area of Hissar.⁴⁷ The famines of 1803-4, 1813-14, 1816-17, 1825-26, 1832-34, 1837-38 severely affected the entire region of Haryana. Besides, the epidemic of 1841 and 1843 caused heavy casualties and thus further added to their woes. In 1851-52, famine again occurred and the company did not provide any help to the peasantry due to the absence of any definite policy of relief to the victims.⁴⁸

Before the advent of Britishers, the judicial administration throughout India was very simple, speedy, cheap and impartial. The village *Panchayat* was the sole agency which was deemed as the fountain-head of the entire judicial system. The *Panchayat's* decisions were

deemed as the voice of God as these were impartial, cheap and prompt. All elders of the village decided the cases with honesty, integrity, efficiency and judiciousness. Even William Bentinck, Governor-General of India, admitted about the inadequacy of British system: "In fact, there is no law. The people are at mercy and caprices of their immediate superior, who is often times a very young assistant, with little knowledge and discretion and perfectly disqualified for so great a trust."⁴⁹

The conditions prevailing in the region as that time were extremely fluid. Robert Martin Montgomery, Lt. Governor of Punjab, also observed: "The inefficient administration of justice is an admitted evil. The costliness, the procrastination, above all, the perjury and corruption made our civil and criminal courts notorious." The then judicial system due to the absence of a complete set of civil and criminal laws became prey to bribery and corruption among the judges. The entire system was based on "despotism, high-handed corruption, inefficiency, judicial slackness and the terror of the police *Raj*".⁵⁰

The introduction of Western culture through the English language and proselytisation struck at the roots of traditional Indian orthodox belief. In addition, the permission given to the Christian missionaries in 1813 to come to India, confirmed the suspicion that the British Government was determined to convert Indians to Christianity. The interference in socio-religious matters - *sati* and infanticide, the legislation of widow remarriage, the right of inheritance to Christian converts and the introduction of judicial system, railways and telegraphs were looked with suspicion by the Indians. All these factors created discontentment among all the sections of society against the British *Raj*.⁵¹

All these factors mentioned above coupled with intentional or other endeavours of the British were instrumental in giving rise to distrust and dismay among the people, including that of Haryana region. The first spark of revolution ignited at Ambala on 10 May, 1857, where soldiers of Native Infantry revolted. Similar incidents took place at Meerut on the same day i.e. 10th May when soldiers revolted and reached Delhi to end the British rule.⁵² The news of uprising spread throughout the region of Haryana. The adjoining areas also revolted under the leadership of Sadruddin, a Meo peasant of Pinaghwā, against the British regime and finally destroyed all the symbols of the British rule in the district. Rao Tula Ram, his cousin Gopal Dev, along with Rao Kishan Singh, Rao Ram Lal, General Abdus Samad Khan and Muhammad Azim Beg made a confederation against British regime. It is important to tell that the princes, peasants and soldiers of Haryana fought against the *Raj*.⁵³ The adjacent chieftains did not raise their voice against the barbaric British *Raj*.

Like other districts, the situation in Rohtak district was seething. All imperial symbols were destroyed. Bisarat Ali, a *Risaldar* of British army, and Sabar Khan, a peasant leader, controlled the situation. Both the leaders were supported by the Ranghar sepoys of the British army and Tafzal Hussain, an emissary of Bahadur Shah, the Mughal emperor. The civil population and military personnel belonging to the Ranghar community joined together and accepted the leadership of Bisarat Ali who belonged to Kharkhauda. They freed all the concerned adjoining areas.⁵⁴ After that, they attacked Rohtak but could not succeed.

However, Tafzal Hussain joined them at Rohtak and the situation immediately changed. The army of William Loch, Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak district, could not

face the challenge posed by the revolutionaries. He immediately left the town in order to save his life as the *Tehsildar*, Bakhtawar Singh and Thanedar, Bhure Khan were killed in the struggle.⁵⁵ The town of Rohtak was under the control of revolutionaries. Col. Malleson, an administrator-scholar, wrote that he was surprised to see that all the people of Rohtak had sympathy with the Mughal Emperor. The loyalist elements that were getting benefits from the *Raj* started opposing them in the changed situation. For the Britishers, chaos and anarchy prevailed everywhere.⁵⁶

The 60th Native Infantry of Ambala came under William Loch to Rohtak, on 28 May, 1857. He succeeded in re-occupying Rohtak but 5th Native Infantry revolted against him on 10 June, 1857. All the sepoys of 5th Native Infantry reached Delhi. Strenuous efforts were made to regain the situation in the district. Consequently, Lt. W.S.R. Hodson was sent with big force to help the district administration on 15 August, 1857. Major-General Wilson, along with his platoon, also reached Kharkhauda on the same day. The revolutionaries gathered in the big compound of *lambardar* of Kharkhauda in order to consolidate their position. The British army met with a stiff resistance there with the revolutionaries.⁵⁷ According to Hodson: "They (Indian revolutionaries) fought like devils"⁵⁸. Bisarat Ali was also killed in this struggle.

Geographically the position of Rohtak district was important for the British from many angles. Firstly, it had its proximity to Grand Trunk Road which joined Delhi and Punjab. Secondly, all the armies passed through the district while going from Delhi to Punjab or vice-versa. Thirdly, the revolutionaries of Rohtak were not only a challenge to the authorities of the district but also to Delhi authorities due to its proximity. In such a situation, the

control over the district of Rohtak was deemed significant by the Britishers in order to strengthen its strategic position.⁵⁹

After controlling Kharkhauda and its adjoining areas, Hodson reached Rohtak town to face Sabar Khan. He divided his army into three parts. One part was stationed at left, the other on the right and the third on main gate of the town. Sabar Khan attacked the British army in the morning of 17 July, 1857. Both sides consolidated their positions but Hodson left the town for plain areas where frontal attack could be launched.⁶⁰ It was his strategy to move the enemy in the plain for further struggle. He was successful in his plan but not in a position to fiercely attack the revolutionaries. In meantime, the army of Jind State arrived and joined Hodson's army. His position became unchallengeable. He later mentioned it in his autobiography that there was no war-fare material left with them and they camped near a village which was friendly to them. Keeping the situation in view, all the local *chaudhries* supported them and re-occupied the Rohtak town. After the fall of Delhi, it was not impossible for them to maintain peace, tranquillity and to collect revenue therefrom.⁶¹

In Hissar, Hansi and Sirsa also, the people revolted against the British. Mohammed Azim, Nur Muhammad Khan, Lala Hukam Chand Jain, his nephew, Faqir Chand Jain and Meena Beg were the principal leaders spearheading the movement of revolutionaries. They killed 12 Europeans including John Wedderburn, the Deputy Commissioner of Hissar, his wife and son on 29 May 1857.⁶² In Tosham, some of government officials were killed and treasury was looted.⁶³ The British ruthlessness and its anti-people policies generated this mass discontentment.

At Panipat the people fought under the leadership of Imam of the Shrine, Bu Ali Kalandhar, tenaciously but were defeated. Imam was arrested and executed. Peasants in Ladwa, Pehowa, Pundri, Kaithal, Asandh, Ballah and many other villages opposed atrocities of the *Raj* and refused to pay land revenue to the British officials. Except for some parts of Ambala, Thanesar and Jind State, the whole of Haryana became free from the British control by the end of May 1857.⁶⁴ In the words of the James Cave-Browne, a contemporary British official: "Hurrianah that land of fertility was in a blaze."⁶⁵

After the fall of Delhi and arrest of Bahadur Shah Zafar along with his wife and royal princes in September 1857, the situation started worsening. The old Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah, in a short court-martial trial was found guilty of declaring war against the British Queen and massacre of British Residents and royal princes were shot dead before his eyes. He was sent to Rangoon (Burma) along with his wife where he died in captivity on 7 September, 1862.⁶⁶

Rao Tula Ram, Abdus Samad Khan, Mohammed Azim and others fought jointly against the British army but failed to check the onslaught. They fought bravely but due to organized adversary and new war-fare technology of the British, they could not win this decisive battle. After this battle, all the regions of Haryana once again came under British *Raj*. The revolt came to an end on 16 November, 1857. Great administrative territorial changes were made thereafter. Some of the regions of Haryana thereafter were attached to the Punjab province in 1858.⁶⁷ Kanaud and Narnaul were given as a reward to Patiala; Dadri to Jind and Bawal, Kanti and Kanina to Nabha state.⁶⁸

The administration was adopted on the Punjab pattern where all powers remained vested in the Deputy

Commissioner who acted as a magistrate, a collector and a civil judge in the district. Thus it was the centralization of powers. The districts were placed under two Divisions - Delhi and Hissar. Delhi, Gurgaon and Panipat were put under the Delhi Division while Hissar Division consisted of Sirsa, Rohtak and a portion of Jhajjar state.⁶⁹ The Commissioners were the head of their individual divisions and their headquarters were at Delhi and Hissar respectively.

The population of the districts was as follows :

District	Area	Village/Town		Population		Total
				Male	Female	
Rohtak	1811	Villages	473	245,368	208,779	
		Towns	13	50,856	48,606	5,53,609
Gurgaon	1938	Villages	1152	302,043	267,546	
		Towns	8	36,874	35,385	641,848
Karnal	2398	Villages	857	296,172	148,121	
		Towns	6	39,999	38,329	622,621
Ambala	2570	Villages	2215	510,198	416,733	
		Towns	11	78,074	62,258	1,01,12,63
Sirsa	3004	Villages	630	1,21,451	1,00,861	
		Towns	5	17,240	13,723	2,53,275
Hissar	3540	Villages	624	4,28,065	2,23,062	
		Towns	7	76,118	40,205	7,67,45,0 ⁷⁰

What Brahmo Samaj and Ram Krishna Mission could do in Eastern India and Ganesh festival and Shivaji cult did in Bombay Presidency, Haryana region lacked till Arya Samaj stepped in. The Aligarh movement too greatly contributed to the awakening among the Muslims in

North-Western Provinces. The Arya Samaj, was founded at Bombay on 10 April, 1875, by Swami Dayanand and it became a popular movement among the Hindus of Punjab.⁷¹ The first branch of the Samaj founded in Haryana region was at Rewari in 1880 when Swamiji visited it. Chaudhry Matu Ram, the illustrious father to Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, joined the Arya Samaj in 1881. The Samaj infused and imbibed the spirit of self-reliance and self-esteem among the people. Swamiji preached that "good government is no substitute for self-government."⁷²

Swami Dayanand's first visit to Ludhiana in Punjab took place in March 1877. The tenets of Arya Samaj in Punjab were introduced at Lahore on 24 June, 1877. In his speeches, he denounced idol worship, child-marriage, infanticide, untouchability, favoured widow remarriage and female education. He praised the *Vedas* as repository of all knowledge of the cosmos, past, present and future.⁷³ He criticised the role of Christian missionaries who according to him posed a threat to the dissemination of Vedic thought. He firmly believed that *Vedas* inculcated monotheism and the *Puranic* mode of Hinduism was irrelevant and illogical. Swamiji's brief stay and his "lectures had aroused such national spirit among the people that three hundred people joined the Arya Samaj and the numbers are daily increasing."⁷⁴

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, the luminous freedom fighter and Arya Samajist observed that the Samaj became quite popular in Haryana as Hinduism was not rigid. Both the Brahmins and the peasantry in Haryana were to some extent liberal in their outlook and behaviour as compared to the other provinces. Lala Lajpat Rai brought many Haryanvis such as Swami Shraddhanand, Bhagat Phool Singh, Peeru Singh, Matu Ram, Ranpat Singh, Basti Ram, Yudhister etc. into the Arya Samaj. But, later on, Chaudhry

Ranbir Singh, Acharya Bhagwan Dev, Swami Bhisma Dev also became prominent Arya Samajists who made the Samaj popular in Rohtak district in particular and Haryana in general.⁷⁵

Lalal Lajpat Rai had started his public life from Haryana though, he was born at Jagraon (Punjab) in 1865. Lalaji did a lot towards the propagation of the ideals of Samaj when incidentally his father joined at Rohtak as a teacher. Some sceptics, however, try to reason out as to why the farming communities, especially the Jats, the most martial among them had the domineering urge to join the Samaj. Arya Samaj generated in them impeccable sense of self pride and warrior like instincts by giving them their due individual identity.⁷⁶ Swamiji inculcated a new sense of awakening through the process of Sanskritization. All the Arya Samajists visited villages along with their *Bhajan-Mandalis* for the propagation of its teachings and ideals. But they desisted from over-riding their assigned duties. However, they assailed and criticised the social evils which were keeping the village society backward. Their workers organised *prabhat pheries* - a community processions - for preaching the message of the *Vedas* through group singings.⁷⁷ However, they assailed idol worship. They propagated *Vedas* and the eternal truths therein. Their deliberations full of patriotic sentiments created nationalistic feelings among the masses and the number of Arya Samajists began to swell briskly.⁷⁸

In Hissar district, Churamani, a lawyer, Lala Chandu Lal, Lala Hira Lal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Dr. Ramji Lal Hooda, a close family member of Chaudhry Matu Ram, left nothing to chance in popularizing Arya Samaj among the masses. Its branch was formed in 1886 with Chandu Lal as its President. Lala Lajpat Rai praised Chandu Lal as a noble son of Haryana, a great patriot and a courageous

man who commanded great influence and popularity in the region. The Arya Samaj thus became popular amongst the younger generation and broadened their common vision. The meetings of Samaj were apparently religious but these became political indirectly since it preached nationalism and opposed the colonial rule.⁷⁹

Besides Rohtak and Hissar, the branches of the Samaj were also founded in Ambala, Karnal, Panipat, Gurgaon, Bhiwani, Kalka, Sohna, Radaur etc. Like the Arya Samaj in Punjab, the Arya Samajists in Haryana were also divided into two groups-College Party and Gurukul-Party whose centres were in Hissar, Karnal and Rohtak districts respectively.⁸⁰ The Arya Samaj decried the untouchability and other social evils and propagated for the adoption of *Gun* (Character) *Karam* (action) and *Swabhav* (nature).⁸¹ It started *Shuddhi* and *Sangthan* movements in order to prevent the lower caste Hindus from proselytisation and purify them for their re-inclusion into the Hinduism. The confidential reports of all the district authorities in Haryana reveal that it was the only socio-religious cult in the beginning but it aroused a sense of sturdy nationalism later.⁸² The Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon in his report wrote: "There are no religious societies established here except the Arya Samaj which is established in several places. This is the only religious movement which has spread during the last 10 years. The number is increasing gradually. Many *Ahirs* have commenced following the principles of the Samaj. One great result of its spread has been the diminution in expenditure on marriages and other occasions which is move in the right direction."⁸³

First *Gurukul* in Haryana region was founded at Kurukshetra in 1911 and followed by *Gurukul* at Matindu (1915), Bhainswal (1918), Jhajjar (1924), Khanpur Kalan (1928) etc. Besides, a number of *Kanya Pathshalas* were also

started at several places in order to promote female education in the region.⁸⁴

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had a word of praise for Arya Samaj in founding orphanage, widow homes, *Gurukuls*. In an interview while alive, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was not happy that Arya Samaj was split in two wings. In 1893, Arya Samaj branched out on issues of Non-Vegetarianism Vs. Vegetarianism and Anglicized Vs. Sanskrit-based education. The moderates were known as the 'College Party' consisting of Hans Raj, Lala Lajpat Rai etc. who were for establishing Dayanand Anglo-Vedic institutions while having a somewhat sporadic interest in Congress politics. The other group known as the 'Gurukul Party' led by Lekh Ram, Munshi Ram (latter Swami Shraddhanand) was a militant group and founded *Gurukul Vishwavidhyala* at Hardwar. They emphasized proselytization through paid preachers for *Shuddhi*.⁸⁵ They spread education through *Gurukuls*.

The general trend however was towards a shift from 'Arya Dharam to Hindu Consciousness' and 'a consciousness, which to some extent has communal orientation.'⁸⁶ From 1900 onwards, Samajists went in for large-scale *Shuddhi* or mass purification of the so-called lower castes and Muslims. With them as with trading groups, Arya Samaj had thus become something like a channel for Sanskritising process. It gave a fillip to enormous and sudden increase in their members.⁸⁷

Now Arya Samajists started taking keen interest in the national activities which had upset the government. More than a hundred Arya Samajists attended the Congress Session at Lahore in 1900. Such a trend was intolerable to the government which asked the Criminal Intelligence Department to probe in-depth the activities of the Arya Samaj that had emerged as the "greatest enemy"

of the Raj. The department in its reports openly admitted that it was "the most dangerous anti-British movement."⁸⁸ All the Lt. Governors such as Sir Mackworth Young, Sir Denzil Ibbetson, Sir Michael O'Dwyer,⁸⁹ Sir Lepel Griffin, Sir Robert Egerton, along with Valentine Chirol,⁹⁰ editor of the *Times* (London), Hans Kohn,⁹¹ a British scholar, also expressed similar views.⁹² Many officials such as *zaildars*, including Chaudhry Matu Ram (Sanghi), Chaudhry Zalim Singh (Bahu Akbarpur), Chaudhry Devi Singh (Bohar) etc. were Samajists and worked for it in their respective domains. The government notified through confidential circular that "no applicant educated in any Arya Samaj institution should be recommended for government employment or taken in any district office."⁹³

The Deputy Commissioners ordered the local officers to be vigilant and 'keep an eye on them'.⁹⁴ The Seditious Meetings Act was promulgated in order to stop its increasing activities especially in Rohtak and Hissar districts.⁹⁵ The Arya Samajists argued that it worked for the socio-religious and national reconstruction through lectures, meetings and pamphlets. However, it criticised the orthodoxy prevalent in Hindu social structure and thus created a feeling of self-reliance, progressive outlook and prospects of social mobility.⁹⁶

Besides Arya Samaj, another important organisation that came into being was the Sanatan Dharam Sabha. It was founded by Din Dayalu Sharma at Jhajjar in 1886. The main objects of the Sabha were reformation and re-awakening of Sanatan culture, eradication of social evils, promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi languages, establishment of educational institutions aiming at spreading the lofty ideals of traditional wisdom.⁹⁷ Its branches were formed in all the towns of Haryana with the purpose of combating the increasing influence of the Arya Samaj. Panditji

established an organisation, Rifa-i-Am with the object of social service. Both the Hindus and Muslims were its members. In order to propagate its objects, a journal named *Haryana* was started. He studied Sanskrit and Hindi as a disciple of Swami Naryan of Varandavan. He started *Mathura Akbhar*, an urdu weekly, for the propagation of Sanatan Dharam's aims.⁹⁸ It attacked the contemporary social evils such as the dowry system, child marriage, prostitution, use of tobacco and liquor. Babu Balmukund Gupta was a close associate of Din Dayalu. He assisted the later in the organizational tasks and propaganda work. Both of them were very intelligent and had knowledge of Persian, Urdu and English languages.⁹⁹

Din Dayalu Sharma and Balmukund Gupta who had attended the second session of Indian National Congress at Calcutta in December 1886 were very impressed with its deliberations and arrangements. On the pattern of the Congress, they decided to establish Sanatan Dharam Sabha but quickly converted it into Bharat Dharam Mahamandal as an all India organisation at Hardwar in 1887.¹⁰⁰ In its inaugural session, many prominent leaders such as Col. Henry Steel Olcott of Theosophical Society, Raja Harbans Lal of Sheikhpura, Ramjas, Diwan of Kapurthala State, Babu Balmukund Gupta, Pt. Ambika Dutt Vyas and others lectured on many socio-religious aspects. It became an all India organisation dedicated to ameliorating the Hindu ethos. Its deliberations were held at Hardwar, Mathura and Lahore.¹⁰¹

In Haryana region, this organisation became popular due to the efforts of Pt. Chander Bhan, Nathu Lal, Harbans Lal Sharma (Jhajjar); Lala Sohan Lal, Hargolal Sharma, Neki Ram Sharma (Hissar); Lala Ganda Ram (Ambala Cantt) Goswami Ganesh Dutt and Mauli Chandra Sharma, son of Din Dayalu Sharma.¹⁰² These leaders established its

branches in towns such as Bhiwani, Hissar, Sirsa, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Safidon, Rewari, Palwal, Kaithal, Rohtak, Beri and Gurgaon.¹⁰³ They toured different regions to make it popular.

The leaders of this movement started opening educational institutions in order to create socio-political awakening among the people. Hindu College, Delhi, Sanatam Dharam College, Lahore (now at Ambala), Vishudhananda Vidyalaya, Calcutta, and Marwari Vidyalaya, Bombay, were established for the educational growth throughout the country.¹⁰⁴

The main thrust was laid on the learning of Sanskrit and Hindi languages. The Sabha urged the Indian and Provincial Governments to give preference to the use of Hindi in courts so as to enable the Hindus get employment opportunities in government jobs. For general awareness, it encouraged the establishment of libraries and reading rooms in towns and villages.¹⁰⁵ They also urged the people to use neither tobacco, liquor nor solemnise child-marriage. The extravagance on litigation and participation of the female folk-dancers at marriages were also decried by these leaders. Some orphanages, *dharamsalas* and temples were also built at several places in Haryana and Punjab.¹⁰⁶

However, Sanatam Dharam differed in many ways with the Arya Samaj but it succeeded in exercising some salubrious influence on the people of Haryana.¹⁰⁷ Both the organisations made efforts to eradicate the prevailing social evils from the society. They brought the people together on a common platform and inculcated the ideals and values of ancient Indian culture through exchange of views, discourses and deliberations. Though both the organisations dramatically were opposed to each other on certain basic issues, the leaders of both organisations

presented identical views on economic, social and political aspects and the impact of the British on Indian social order. The Sabha became popular only in those sections of the society where Arya Samaj did not succeed in exercising its influence. Both the Sabha and Samaj held British rule responsible for all those ills which were attributed to the British rule in India.¹⁰⁸ The twin organisations succeeded in eradication of social evils and bringing political consciousness among the people. The *Mahants* of Asthal Bohar (Rohtak) rendered valuable services to strengthen and deepen ideals of Hinduism as preached by the Sabha.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh on his part frankly admitted that the growth of education, literature and the press in the region remained quite slow since the British did not want the growth of these important aspects of social life. After the Revolt of 1857, Haryana was tagged with the Punjab province and reorganization of administrative set-up also took place. In the fields of education and literature, neither the provincial government nor the private agencies showed any interest for a long time. However, the British had occupied Haryana region for a pretty long period as compared to Punjab and other regions but the pace of the education remained the slow.¹⁰⁹ The *Makhtabs* and *Madarsas*, Sanskrit and *Nagri Pathshalas* and Gurumukhi schools preached only religious instructions. Besides, there were several *Mahajani* schools which served the needs of the trading classes. Thus, the growth of the western education remained quite slow. The English officials frankly admitted that their system was "possibly not suited to an agricultural people of the region."¹¹⁰

Efforts were made by William Fraser during 1816-1823 but could not succeed due to shortage of funds.¹¹¹ It became possible only after Charles Woods Despatch in 1854 when some *tehsildari* schools were established in

Delhi,¹¹² Gurgaon¹¹³ and Rohtak¹¹⁴ districts. All these schools had middle classes and instructions were imparted both in *Hindi* and *Urdu*. The Middle Schools were started at Jhajjar and Bahadurgarh (Rohtak district); Gurgaon and Palwal (Gurgaon district); Sonapat and Najafgarh (Delhi district); Shahabad, Ladwa, Thanesar, Kaithal, Sadhora and Ropar (Ambala district); Panipat (Karnal) and Hansi (Hissar dist.). High Schools were opened in important towns like Rohtak, Delhi, Rewari, Bhiwani, Jagadhari and Karnal.¹¹⁵

After the implementation of Hunter Committee report, some evident progress in education began to take place in this region too. The Punjab University was established in Lahore in 1882 as the fourth University of the country. During 1900-1901, the number of primary and other schools and scholars in the district was as follows:¹¹⁶

District	School	Scholars
Rohtak	98	5097
Hissar	105	5085
Gurgaon	128	5139
Ambala	180	9133
Karnal	203	5373

The above table shows that Rohtak district had less number of schools as compared to other districts. Ambala district had maximum number of scholars while the number of schools was less. The other districts had to some extent similar number of scholars. It shows that literacy rate was very low. The Punjab province did not witness such an impact of western education as Bengal, Bombay and Madras had. These provinces came under the colonial rule quite early while Punjab was in the list very late. The literacy rate in the districts of Haryana was as under:¹¹⁷

District	Male Percentage	Female percentage	Total Percentage
Karnal	4.3	0.1	2.4
Gurgaon	4.9	0.1	2.6
Rohtak	5.0	0.1	2.7
Hissar	5.0	0.1	2.7
Ambala	7.5	0.4	4.3
Delhi	8.0	0.6	4.6
Punjab Province	6.5	0.3	3.6

The above table shows that Delhi had the highest literacy rate and was 5th of 28 districts while Karnal had the lowest literacy rate. The second position was occupied by Ambala district where it was 4.3%.

The major sufferer of this dichotomy was the peasantry which could not pay for the education of their wards due to low resources. The new education was quite expensive and ordinary people did not have means to bear the cost. Thirdly, the parents did not show any interest and engaged their children in agricultural pursuits to enhance their field produce. Fourthly, the government too was quite indifferent to the same. Fifthly, the private agencies and individuals showed very little interest. Only Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharam Sabha made some efforts but they too did not succeed much¹¹⁸ The plight of female education was quite deplorable and only Delhi district had highest literacy rate i.e. 0.6% while the other districts had the lowest.

The freedom fighters like Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Shri Ram Sharma, Ram Singh Jakhar etc. accepted that there was virtually no institute of higher education located

anywhere in the Haryana region. The youth had to go either to Delhi or Lahore for higher education. St. Missions College, Delhi College, Hindu College were the oldest Colleges located in Delhi and Govt. College, D.A.V. College and S.D. College, were situated in Lahore. There was no College in Haryana region till 1940. Students had to face horrific persecution and spent enormous money while pursuing higher education in Delhi and Lahore. The first intermediate College was founded at Rohtak only in 1927¹¹⁹ where as other regions and presidencies had Colleges and even Universities in the 19th century. Primary, middle, and high schools along with two teachers training schools at Delhi and Ambala were available only in Haryana region. Probably, the empire did not relish the idea of educating the peasantry of this region having their imperial interests in mind. The pace and tempo of education was slow especially in the south-east Punjab regions now called Haryana. The main reason was the paucity of funds as the following statistics available in the *Gazetteers of Haryana districts* (1910-11) indicate¹²⁰:

District	Amount (in Ruppes) spent during 1901-02
Rohtak	44047
Hissar	44863
Gurgaon	44836
Karnal	53650
Ambala	72615

The above table shows that Rohtak, Hissar and Gurgaon districts were provided quite low amount for the growth of education. Ambala district received higher amount as compared to the other districts. The leadership manned by Lala Murlidhar, Beni Prasad, Duni Chand,

Janaki Dass etc. at Ambala was equally alive to the growth and promotion of education. That is why Ambala stole the thunder and had the highest literacy rate. The new education, media and organisational growth in the district was equally responsible for resurgence and popularity of the leadership throughout Punjab.¹²¹ May be, the rulers nursed grievance against Rohtak for its role in 1857 and wanted to penalise it for the same till long.

What Amartya Sen observed about a decade ago regarding the literacy and backwardness, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had already envisioned in the forties holding the *Raj* responsible for such a messy situation knowingly depriving the region of its legitimate right to education. Due to slow growth of education, literary activities could not be developed. Despite this, Haryana still produced many prominent scholars of Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu languages who brought laurels to the region. They included Babu Balmukund Gupta, Din Dayalu Sharma, Madhav Prasad Misra, Bishambar Nath Sharma, Tulsi Ram Dinesh, Basti Ram and others during the early phase of the 20th century. These scholars inculcated the feeling of self-reliance, self-respect, nationalism and denounced the anti-people attitude of the colonial masters.¹²² The impact of slow growth of education had its toll on the growth of press as well. Due to small number of readers, periodicals and dailies could not be published at a large scale. Only a few journals were in circulation representing the local and sectional interests only. Most of the periodicals were published in Urdu which was the common *lingua-franca* at that time.¹²³

Some of the prominent towns and cities though witnessed the publication of weeklies and monthlies mostly in Urdu. The *Sadiq-ul-Akhbar*¹²⁴ was a monthly which gave prominence to the religious matters only while

another caste organ *Ahir Patrika*¹²⁵ published from Rewari highlighted only the caste sentiments of *Yadavas*. The *Jyotish Martand*¹²⁶ published from Gurgaon provided the knowledge of astrology and fortunes of the human-beings. The *Jat Sepoy* and *Jat Gazette*¹²⁷ generally published the regional, military, political, social, economic, cultural aspects only. The latter became popular during the Non-Cooperation movement when it opposed many oppressive policies of the government. But when Sir Chhotu Ram left the Congress in 1920, the tone of the paper changed drastically.

The *Thakur Patrika* and *Brahmin Samachar*¹²⁸ published from Hissar and Jagadhari highlighted only castes and sectional issues of respective communities in their periodicals. The *Cantonment Advocate* published only the general problems faced by the people of Ambala.¹²⁹ The newspapers and journals which started highlighting the political issues came afterwards. The *Jat Gazette* and *Haryana Tilak* were only two important papers started by Chaudhry Chhotu Ram and Shri Ram Sharma in 1913 and 1923 respectively from Rohtak district.¹³⁰ Besides, Babu Balmukund Gupta was another famous journalist of Haryana associated with many famous papers published from Lahore and Calcutta.¹²⁹ During his hectic political activities Chaudhry Ranbir Singh started publishing a Hindi weekly titled, *Hindi Haryana*.

Some of the papers such as the *Hindustan* (Kalakankar), *Sudarshan*, *Koh-i-Noor* (Lahore) *Bharat Mitra* (Calcutta) *Sri Venkateshwar Samachar*, *Abhudyta* (Lucknow) and *Chunar Samachar* (Chunar) were in circulation in Haryana as their editors, sub-editors were directly or indirectly associated with this region. All these papers provided some columns to political developments going

on in the country and people became aware of such developments.¹³¹

The literary, press and socio-religious organisations - like Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharam Sabha in Haryana region - helped in removal of backwardness and solved to some extent the problem of identity crisis and made the people of Haryana politically awakened. As a result, a group of educated people came up to take an active interest in social issues and the national politics.

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121. Several scholars such as B.T. McCully, B.B. Mishra, Aparna Basu, Anil Seal, S.R. Mehrotra, Sophia Collet etc. have given due weightage to the English education not only in creating political consciousness but also leadership which spearheaded the freedom struggle.
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CHAPTER-II

EARLY LIFE AND CAREER

Allan Octavian Hume, father of the Indian National Congress, had predicted in 1894 that if England was involved in any war, the Indians would lend their "united and ungrudging support to the British people".¹ He had expected that the time would surely arrive when British people would look towards their colonial subjects for whose betterment he had been fighting for a long time. That time, according to him, would arrive when "a great war will be India's opportunity - opportunity for providing that if in period of peace, she clamours - at times some what angrily - of equal civil rights, in the hour of war she is ever ready and anxious to accept equal military risks." The prediction made by Hume came true (in 1914) after two years of his death (in 1912). At the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Madras in December 1914, all the Congressmen firmly resolved to stand by the empire "at all hazards and at all costs".² The leaders of Indian National Congress gave up their demand of reforms and remembered only their sacred and solemn obligation to the great power which they expected would take them to their cherished goals.³

The New Statesman, a prominent London based newspaper, averred that Hume, William Wedderburn, Henry Cotton and other supporters of the Congress

movement viewed that there should be a fair partnership, beneficial both to the rulers and the ruled, based on 'brotherhood not on subjection and exploitation'. All the Congressmen urged the government that it was only the creed of self-government that would result into greater cooperation and understanding between India and England.⁴ The scheme of reforms prepared by Congress and Muslim League leaders (in 1916) was "the latest, most complete and most authoritative presentation of the claims of the leading Indian political organisations" so thought the British bureaucracy. The outbreak of the World War brought in its trail the spurt in prices, scarcity of goods, forced recruitment and war loans creating further disenchantment. The famines occurring in many parts of India added to the misery of the people. The events taking place in the Western world such as Russian Revolution, and grant of Dominion Status to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa further stimulated national activity.⁵

The war created new hopes among the Indians never experienced before the heady days of the partition of Bengal followed by *Swadeshi* and Boycott movements. It was expected that Britain's difficulty would be 'India's opportunity'. This opportunity came, however, in quite different ways with varying degree of success through Indian revolutionaries working in the Western world and by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant with their Home Rule Leagues in India. Both the streams had their own different views regarding India's freedom struggle but the Indian revolutionaries made violent endeavours to oust the colonial regime. To revolutionaries, the war presented an opportunity to drive out the colonial regime. England's adversity was to be India's opportunity.⁶ The Home Rule Leaguers believed in constitutional and a nation-wide

agitation in order to attain Home Rule or *Swaraj* in India in line with Irish nationalists.⁷

In such a political atmosphere as a background, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was born at Sanghi village in Rohtak district on 26 November, 1914.⁸ Before his birth Chaudhry Baldev Singh, Headmaster of Anglo-Sanskrit Jat High School,⁹ Rohtak, and others happened to visit Sanghi village for the collection of donations from the villages of Rohtak district. Baldev Singh and Chaudhry Matu Ram was the duo to make the desired collection for running the school. Having finished their lunch, both Chaudhry Matu Ram and Baldev Singh were busy planning their strategy for the collection.¹⁰ Just in between, an infant's cry interrupted their parleys. Chaudhry Matu Ram happily informed Baldev Singh and others that it was his baby's cry that had just been born.¹¹

Chaudhry Matu Ram saw heaven wards, highly grateful to the Almighty for this rarest of rare gift at a time when they were planning to leave for a welfare mission. Master Baldev Singh gleefully told Chaudhry Sahib that with this happy omen, they would not find any difficulty in the success of their campaign.¹² They set out on their collection campaign from the nearby villages. Everywhere wherever they went, the villagers donated to them liberally in cash and in kind (cereal). Most of the people preferred to give in kind as money circulation was hardly accessible among the peasantry at that time. Despite their poor economic condition, the peasantry, however, gave donations eagerly for a just cause.¹³

Being a responsible and respectable man of the region, Chaudhry Matu Ram had quite a busy schedule - having been actively involved in the activities of Arya Samaj and Management of Anglo-Sanskrit Jat High School. He had to shoulder the great responsibility of the school

as Chaudhry Chhotu Ram and Chaudhry Lal Chand being in the minority left the Management Committee.¹⁴ Cooperative efforts were needed for running the school. In such a situation, Chaudhry Matu Ram had to work with dedication and responsibility. Due to sole efforts of Chaudhry Sahib, this school was converted into an institution of national education which Chaudhry Chhotu Ram and Lal Chand had opposed.¹⁵ The majority of members of the Management Committee was with Chaudhry Matu Ram who remained all in charge for a long period.

Two groups emerged in the meeting of the Management Committee of Jat School. One group was headed by Chaudhry Matu Ram and Master Baldev Singh while the other was led by Ch Lal Chand and Ch Chhotu Ram. Shri Ram Sharma who was an eye witness to the stormy meeting of Management Committee of Anglo-Sanskrit Jat High School at Rohtak who has mentioned about it in his memoirs thus: "I saw that the meeting of Jat School Committee in which Chaudhry Chhotu Ram and Ch Lal Chand opposed (the disaffiliation of the school from the Punjab University, Lahore) the proposal of its conversion into national educational institution but, despite their opposition, the resolution was passed with the majority. Chaudhry Matu Ram was presiding over the meeting. The Committee of the Vaish High School did so immediately. However, efforts were also made to withdraw the governmental affiliation of Gaur High School but could not succeed."¹⁷ Mahatma Gandhi laid the foundation stone of both Anglo-Sanskrit Jat High School and Vaish High School on the request of Chaudhry Matu Ram and Shyam Lal during the Non-Cooperation movement.¹⁸

Chaudhry Matu Ram's unsparing social engagements left little time for him to pay adequate attention to meet

the emotional needs of his off-spring. As Chaudhry Sahib has also recorded this aspect in his autobiography: "My father always kept on busying in the common welfare activities. He had to work for the activities of the Arya Samaj and shoulder the responsibility of Anglo-Sanskrit Jat High School also. Besides, he had also initiated the programme of social reforms. He was hardly accessible to us. The other children of the village kept on sitting on the shoulders of their fathers. And we! It did not seem good for us. Whenever we complained all this to our father, he touched our body with parental caress and our all anger and anxiety vanished away immediately."¹⁹

Chaudhry Bhim Singh of Kadipur village and Chaudhry Peeru Singh of Matindu village were two others very close to Chaudhry Matu Ram who played a predominant role in all the functions and commonweal activities of the region. Their close association, later on, flowered to matrimonial alliances²⁰ which continue till this day. This 'trio' was fully instrumental in organizing a *Mahapanchayat* at Barona village, near Kharkhauda, Rohtak district, on 7 March, 1911. Around 50,000 Jat community leaders from the neighbouring areas of Delhi, Gurgaon, Hisar and princely states like Jind etc. attended the meeting of *Panchayat* to sort out the socio-cultural matters which had become increasingly burdensome and unbearable for the community which barely existed on the abysmal sub-human subsistence level. In order to relieve this section of peasantry from unwanted and injurious social bindings, this *Panchayat* had to take some concrete decisions which were at the same time meant for the betterment of the common people also.²¹

In the deliberations of the *Mahapanchayat*, Chaudhry Matu Ram and Peeru Singh represented Hoodas and Dahiyaes respectively. As the tradition goes, being senior

in age and experience Chaudhry Bhim Singh was requested to preside over the meeting of *Panchayat* which discussed some of the current contemporary issues and passed some 28 resolutions which were of important nature directly related to common people such as promotion of education, use of new technology for the improvement of agriculture, prohibition on display of vulgar dances and music assemblies on auspicious occasions and fairs, meeting of strangers by women-folk, fixing of marriage age, limitation on marriage parties, dowry, gifts, extravagance on marriages, rituals, ceremonies, beggary, widow remarriage and other social evils and wrong practices and traditions prevailing in the society.²²

It is worth mentioning that some of the issues decided by this *Mahapanchayat* seem to be insignificant in the present context but were 'very important and path-breaking' in the given situation available then. Strenuous efforts were made by 'the trio' to implement all the decisions for the improvement of the social order. Anglo-Sanskrit Jat High School at Rohtak was established in pursuance of the decisions of this *panchayat*. Besides these, the Arya Samajists were also active in preaching the ideals and teachings of Arya Samaj in the villages. Their efforts did not go waste but brought fruitful results in discarding of the some rites, rituals, customs and practices from the society.²³

Education was not considered an important aspect during those days but only the conscious people knew its significance. Majority of the people believed that a boy might be spoiled if he was admitted to college. There was a general impression among the people that post-matric education would not be beneficial as many youth had spoiled their lives having fallen in bad company. This

impression restricted the expansion of higher education among the youths. The parents of young Ranbir Singh did not believe in such a dictum but kept on propagating that education was the only apparatus of social transformation in the country.²⁴ His mother, though, was not literate but belonged to a respectable family. Her father was a *Subedar*, a non-commissioned officer in the military. In those days, the rank of *subedar* was considered the highest as no Indian could be promoted beyond this rank in the colonial military. It was possibly the highest rank for the Indians in the Indian military. The bureaucratic opposition to the Indianisation of the command chain in the army was the main reason in this context. Training and appointment of Indian officers started hesitatingly and selectively in 1931 only after the first Round Table Conference.²⁵

It is indeed true that family is basically first school for a child where it learns the basics. The overall development of visionary and personality aspects entirely depends upon the upbringing of a child in the family. The mother always plays an important role in moulding and developing the personality of a child who spends most of the time among family members and especially in the lap of one's mother. Besides, there was no medical facility available to the people living in the villages. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh writes that there were three main diseases prevalent in those days in the region i.e. fever, and problem relating to the eyes' and stomach.²⁶ The family had preventive medicines such as zinc-lotion for the eyes, *deshi* tablets for fever and home-made ginger for stomach problems. Many villagers suffering from such deceases visited their house for these local medicines. His mother was too generous to distribute all these medicines free of cost to the needy ones. Being an elder woman of wider experiences in the village, many other women visited their

house for guidance and counseling whenever situations demanded. She was a kind hearted woman who never said 'no' to any one in need or giving any house-hold articles and even money to any one in the village.²⁷

At six years of age in 1920, Ranbir was admitted to the village school which ran classes up to the fourth standard. Being an Arya Samajist, his father preferred education to be imparted to every child. The school-education in those days had real value and some standard due to extensive involvement and dedication of the teachers. The teachers often punished the students in order to create fear among them so that they could do their studies and home works regularly and effectively. Likewise the teachers did punish the young Ranbir sometimes but on the whole he was treated liberally due to his father's status in the district.²⁸ Majority of the parents were not in a position to provide education to their wards due to hard economic conditions and ignorance. The growth of education was basically instrumental in creating awakening among the peasantry.²⁹

Ranbir Singh completed his primary education from his village school. The primary education being up to 4th standard of the Middle or High schools often admitted students in the 5th standard. Only cities and towns had such facilities of high school education. He wanted to seek admission in Jat Anglo-Sanskrit High School, Rohtak, which was almost his own school. Having passed 4th class with good marks, he had gained immense confidence and respect of the villagers.³⁰ Hearing the news of passing his 4th standard with good marks, Bhagat Phool Singh, a famous Arya Samajist and founder of *Gurukul* at Bhainswal, sought his admission to the institution nursed by him.

By the time, a number of Girls' schools at different places in the Haryana region had also been started.³¹ Swami Dayanand founded the Arya Samaj in order to revive Aryan culture and promote education among the children so that they could attain self-confidence and cultural and civilisational values. It is, indeed, true that the development of an over-all personality solely depends on the cultivation of right kind of ideals. His *Satyarth Prakash* was meant to reveal Aryan culture and other virtues and ethos of ancient Indian cultural for bringing about social change. Swami Shaddhanand, Bhagat Phool Singh, Chaudhry Matu Ram, Dr. Ramjilal, Chaudhry Peeru Singh, Chaudhry Bhim Singh, Chaudhry Ranpat Singh, Pt. Basti Ram made strenuous efforts for the establishment of *Gurukul* schools in Rohtak district.³² They knew that India had been the centre of *Gurukul* mode of education since ancient times so its revival was deemed essential for high moral character, values, ideals and even patriotism. The establishment of *Gurukuls* at Matindu, Jhajjar, Khanpur Kalan etc. became possible for the expansion of education due to their efforts.³³ Besides, private schools had been started by the volunteer organisations in the region.

In the district of Hissar, Dr. Ramji Lal, elder brother of Chaudhry Matu Ram, played an important role in not only making the Arya Samaj a popular movement but also in creating awakening among the peasantry. His efforts were even appreciated by Lala Lajpat Rai in these words: "He instilled feelings of patriotism among the thousands of Jats and encouraged them to go for the common welfare programmes. No one could take his place in his (Jat) community" as was undertaken by him.³⁴ The official reports explicitly indicate that it was, however, a socio-cultural movement in the beginning but, later on, it became "the most dangerous anti-British movement".³⁵ The

Diaries of Dr. Ramji Lal show that Arya Samaj gave great preference to the female education in Hissar and Rohtak districts also.³⁶

The Arya Samajists of Haryana were of the firm view that without education their dream of social reconstruction would not be fulfilled. They deemed education as the most pious work which would reconstruct social structure and ethos. Keeping these aspects in view, the foundation of the *Gurukuls* began throughout Haryana. It is a known fact that the colonial masters did not show any interest for the growth of new education for a long period because of their imperial interests. Meanwhile, Bhagat Phool Singh accepted Swami Brahmanand as his *dharma guru*³⁷ and apprised him of his feelings about the importance of education. Respecting his feelings, Swamiji said: "I respect your feelings from the core of my heart. It is my advice to you that you should establish *Gurukuls* in which children could be admitted for education which is for the universal welfare of humanity. You can mould a child as you like. You should also start an ideal *Gurukul* like *Gurukul Kangri* in Hardwar. All this would lead to the well-being of the Aryan community".³⁸

Chaudhry Matu Ram and Bhagat Phool Singh had a fine sense of camaraderie as both were true Arya Samajists. Bhagatji wished young Ranbir to be admitted to his *Gurukul* at Bhainswal, while Chaudhry Sahib wanted his son to be admitted to Jat Anglo-Sanskrit High School, Rohtak, which was administered by himself. Persuasiveness and Arya Samaji values ultimately prevailed upon Chaudhry Sahib so convincingly that he had to accept Bhagatji's request. Moreover, he had a deep feeling for his friend and respected his feelings. Young Ranbir was admitted to *Gurukul*, Bhainswal for post-primary education in 1924.³⁹ The education and

atmosphere in the *Gurukul* was different from government and private schools. The schedule at the *Gurukul* was always jam-packed from early morning till late in the night. Yogic exercises and different games were given top priority for maintaining good health. Patriotic songs were also sung by the youth in the *Gurukuls*. The Arya Samaj believed in social equality and advocated the freedom of movement and professional mobility based on action (*karam*) and nature (*swabhava*).⁴⁰

While *Gurukuls* provided traditional mode of education, the Anglo-Vedic institutions provided both the modes i.e. western education and traditional education depending upon the preference of a student. Government schools were run by the District Boards which were allowed to open middle schools in those villages where inhabitants constructed the buildings and deposited Rs. 8000/- with the District Board. The two conditions were hardly met by the villagers due to economic hardship in those days. The construction of building and a deposit of Rs. 16,000 were required for opening high schools in the villages.⁴¹ But such a big amount was really difficult to arrange at that time.

Chaudhry Matu Ram, Peeru Singh, Bhim Singh and other activists showed keen interest in such schemes of the District Board. They paid visits to the villages especially on the eve of *Rabi* crop for the collection of money. Both the collective and individual efforts were made for the growth of education in the district of Rohtak.⁴² This was the reason that Rohtak district remained ahead of other districts of Haryana region in the matter of education. Despite all these efforts, education was not easily available to all the needy. It became possible only in the post-independence period when government reduced not only the fee but also provided other facilities to the scholars.⁴³

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Young Ranbir became so involved in the atmosphere of Gurukul that he forgot the other aspects related to his personal life. He worked hard and did all the *yogic* exercises for maintaining good health.⁴⁴ Describing the atmosphere, teachers and his eye problems at Gurukul, Bhainswal, he writes in his Memoirs: "Sanskrit was given too much preference. I became well versed with it in a very short period. Other subjects were good also to me. Bhagat Phool Singhji loved me very much. Other teachers also loved me. In all, everything remained good. But when I entered into fifth class, some dental problem followed me. Teeth-ache always gives pain and affects the proper functioning of the whole body. I had to face all this as I could. I went to Rohtak for the cure. There was no big improvement. I had to leave the Gurukul in such a situation. I was student of fifth class at that time".⁴⁵

Ranbir Singh was admitted to Vaish High School, Rohtak, where atmosphere was full of nationalist fervour. The school was disaffiliated from the Punjab University, Lahore, during the Non-Cooperation movement and came under national mode of education. At the foundation-laying ceremony of the building for Vaish High School on 16 February, 1921, Gandhiji along with Lala Lajpat Rai was present at Rohtak and after that the latter presided over a meeting at *Ram Lila* Ground, Rohtak, where Gandhiji and other leaders addressed the meeting presided by Chaudhry Matu Ram and attended by more than 25,000 people.⁴⁶

During this campaign, efforts were made to make the Non-Cooperation movement a grand success. Gandhiji at all his meetings continued to observe that if the Indian people continued their movement peacefully, *Swaraj* might come within a year.⁴⁷ The Congressmen were hopeful and cooperated with national leadership by all means. The

Tribune, observing on the visit of Gandhiji in Haryana, wrote that his visit left a profound impact on the people and it was "a march of democracy in a backward rural city".⁴⁸ During his sojourn at Vaish High School, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh enjoyed the open atmosphere of the school, town and also worked hard to come upto the level of urban students as he had come from the Gurukul background. He also became popular among the teachers for his good behaviour and studious nature. This school had already been converted into national school earlier.⁴⁹

The Lt. Governor of Punjab, Micheal O'Dwyer conducted an enquiry into the *zaildars* and *lambardars* activities and their involvement in making Arya Samaj a popular movement in the Punjab province. The recruitment drive for military was also going on at that time in the region and many leaders were supporting both morally and materially to the government. Times were really hard. Bare living was a problem. The cost of living increased due to rise in the prices of rice, barley and other cereals. Even the cost of salt rose more than three times.⁵⁰ The Congress leaders opposed the repressive policies of the colonial rulers and resigned from the government services. Chaudhry Matu Ram and other like minded compatriots declined to help in the military recruitment drive.⁵¹ He was not after any medal or *murabba* and joined the Non-Cooperation movement on the call of Gandhiji with zeal and confidence. At the same time, he continued to make persistent efforts for Jat Anglo-Sanskrit High School which emerged as an important educational institution in the district.⁵²

Chaudhry Matu Ram along with his compatriots like Chaudhry Devi Singh (Bohar), Chaudhry Zalim Singh (Bahu Akbarpur) Chaudhry Akhe Ram (Mitathal) etc. was found actively involved in the activities of Arya Samaj by

the government officials. For the district administration "it was no less than a revolt. It is believed that the Deputy Commissioner, Rohtak, had recommended that Chaudhry Matu Ram be given some exemplary punishment for this 'grave offence'. But, better sense prevailed and the higher echelons desisted from making an issue out of a low-key affair".⁵³ It can rightly be observed that some unwanted activities of the British bureaucracy such as the arrests of Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh, Balgangadhar Tilak, Annie Besant etc. had already discredited the colonial masters' behaviour. Their arrests created great hue and cry not only in the political circles and press in India but also became a matter of hot discussion even in the British Parliament. All these matters averted his arrest and any action proposed to be taken against him by the administration was dropped. Pt. Neki Ram Sharma wrote an article, *Vipati Par Vipati* (calamity after calamity) which was published in Maulana Azad's paper *Abhudya* (Allahabad).⁵⁴

The Indian Government Act, 1919 and the Rowlett Bills were other steps which created great despair among the nationalist rank and file. Besides, the government had already promulgated the Defence of India Rules under which the police could arrest anyone and no one could appeal, and engage lawyer for his defence in the courts. The Rowlett Bills had also the similar provisions which were greatly resented by the Congressmen throughout India. Almost all the nationalists denounced the Bills as "wrong in principle, unsound in its conception and dangerous in its operation".⁵⁵ They argued that the Bills were "unprecedented or unparalleled in any other civilized country"⁵⁶ and unjustifiable, unnecessary and inopportune.⁵⁷ Congressmen all over urged the government "to drop altogether" these 'Black Bills' which

were creating a wave of anger. The press also kept on decrying their introduction as a "blunder of colossal magnitude."⁵⁸ Under these Bills, government could take action against any person allegedly engaged in any anti-government activity or movement. The main provisions of these bills were:

- (i) That such person shall execute a bond for good conduct for a period not exceeding one year;
- (ii) (He) shall remain or reside in any area specified in the order;
- (iii) (He) shall notify his residence and any change of residence as ordered;
- (iv) (He) shall abstain from any act, which, in the opinion of the local government, was calculated to disturb public peace or was prejudicial to the public safety; and
- (v) (He) shall report himself to such police officer and at such periods as may be specified in the order.⁵⁹

In the mean time, young Ranbir Singh passed his matriculation examination in 1933. He was eager to do graduation which was deemed as a matter of great status and significance in those days. He sought admission to F.Sc. equal to intermediate standard in newly established Government Intermediate College, Rohtak.⁶⁰ During this period, Civil Disobedience movement was going on and most of time he spent on attending processions and meetings keeping the nationalistic fervour high. Despite all odds and hazards, he passed F.Sc. examination with non-medical subjects. He could not continue his studies further at Rohtak as there was no degree College throughout the region of Haryana. Delhi and Lahore were the only cities where higher studies could be pursued.⁶¹

He preferred Delhi due to its proximity to Rohtak. He got admission in Ramjas College, Delhi, for his graduate studies.⁶²

When he was studying in Delhi, he was engaged for marriage. His father after intimately knowing about the family background and qualities of his would be bride, Hardai, decided to marry him. His father did not consult him nor deemed it prudent to know his wish/choice in this regard. There was a general trend prevailing in the contemporary social order that allowed parents to be under no obligation to consult their sons and daughters about matrimonial purposes. The real responsibilities were shouldered by the *Brahmins* to search for the proper grooms to be engaged for marriages.⁶³ The second-marriage (popularly known as *gona*) used to take place after two to five years depending upon the concurrence of both the families and physical growth of bride and the bridegroom both. Ranbir Singh's father by passed the tradition of asking the *Brhamin* to search for the suitable bride. He acted the way he deemed proper. Chaudhry Hardwari Singhji, a famous family of Dumarkha village of Jind district, became his father-in-law with the condition that marriage would be solemnized only after the completion of the graduation.⁶⁴

Young Ranbir Singh who had passed F. Sc. examination with non-medical subjects did not prefer this stream now. He chose Economics and Sanskrit which seemingly had no connection but this combination was significant from many other points of view. One was related to economy which, according to Karl Marx, linked with an individual from his birth to death. The other was related to the ancient Indian cultural ethos whose knowledge should be imbibed by every Indian. Times were politically calm. Worries about food etc. pestered him

no more.⁶⁵ Now sufficient time could be devoted to studies as he was bereft of any huge company of friends as was the case at Vaish High School, Rohtak. After his graduation course, he returned to his village where auspicious occasion of his marriage was waiting for him.⁶⁶

In shaping the destiny of young Ranbir, his father's role was immense. He had learnt a lot from his parents and especially from his father. Many qualities of his father greatly influenced him as he was a person of wider experiences and broader thinking. He admitted to it in his *Memoirs* also :⁶⁷ "I owe every thing to my father. He made me what I am (today). Not only when he was alive but even when he was gone, for many years I felt as if he was around me (as) a friend, philosopher and guide, in flesh and blood, showing me the way I should follow, guiding me what to do and what not to do. His was, truly, a very, very strong influence on me"⁶⁸ and throughout his life also. When he was a child, he was told by his father to know the difference between right and wrong. He kept on telling so many aspects relating to the solution of any problem whenever and wherever arose in his life.⁶⁹

Answering all queries relating to his life, he himself observed in his autobiography "that my father was my 'school'. I got my 'education' from here. I learnt to make a difference between truth and untruth, between right and wrong, in short, between justice and injustice, between chalk and cheese. Most importantly, I learnt to take my own decisions."⁷⁰ He was very convinced about his father's technique in solving even the most difficult problems. He followed those values and ideals throughout his life which made his life easy and smooth. In theory it seemed all very simple but was awfully difficult in practice. Whenever he faced any problem, he went straight to his father⁷¹ who often suggested "working hard and finding

the truth and then acting truthfully in its light". That gave him strength to take decisions, which many a times, were not liked even by his near and dear ones. When we used to ask him as to why did he annoy 'his men' unnecessarily? His reply would invariably be: 'It is a temporary reaction. It will vanish, don't worry. And in most cases it would'. He always believed in the famous dictum. '*Satya ke hare har hain, satya ke jite jeet*'. (Truth must triumph. That's everybody's victory).⁷²

Like his father, his mother Smt. Mam Kaur, too was equally important to Chaudhry Ranbir Singh in developing a perspective about things in life. Though she was illiterate yet she had an in-depth insight about every aspect of life including behaviour and experience which made her to some extent semi-literate. Describing her many qualities of head and heart, Chaudhry Sahib had an immense praise for her: "She was an extra-ordinary lady, though she had very little of schooling. In those days, women were, as a practice, not sent to school. She had robust commonsense and was cool and unflappable."⁷³ She was devoted to social service and had worldly wisdom in her thoughts. She knew all her responsibilities and fulfilled them 'with extreme care and affection.' He further wrote: "Guests in our house were a permanent feature. She used to cook for them and arrange for their stay". She had devotional virtues which broadened her thinking that enabled her to offer her considered opinion on many important aspects in a frank and fair manner whenever any one came to seek her advice.⁷⁴

Among the rural-folk, elderly women with sound family background and in-depth knowledge always gather admiration even today. Chaudhry Sahib always had great respect for his mother because of her kindheartedness and broadmindedness often reflected in her behaviour. He

further emphasises: "Butter-milk was always doled out free but our mother never hesitated in sharing even milk – she would frankly say, 'your child is weak, give him milk to drink, take it from me'. The word 'no' was foreign to the lexicon of her kind heart in such matters."⁷⁶ His father quietly suffered in privation but did not let others to know about it as he admitted in his *Memoirs*: "On the contrary, he supported my mother's charitable acts for he was convinced that benevolent acts are essential. He frequently exhorted us about such values. What we observed throughout our upbringing left a lasting impact upon us. Consequently, our family still cherishes that attitude of selfless service."⁷⁷

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was greatly impressed by the personality and charismatic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Indian National Congress spearheaded India's freedom movement under his dynamic leadership for more than two decades. He was immensely influenced with *Satyagraha* tactics applied by him in almost all the movements.⁷⁸ He was fully convinced that it was a legitimate form of political action by the people against the injustices of the state, an active mass resistance to unjust rule. Summing up his entire philosophy of life, he frankly admitted that the only virtue he wanted to claim was 'truth and non-violence'. In his *Autobiography*, Gandhiji wanted to acquaint India with the method that he had tried in South Africa. He further wrote: "*Satyagraha* ...is an absolutely non-violent weapon ...I have no doubt that the British Government is a powerful Government, but I have no doubt also that *Satyagraha* is a sovereign remedy."⁷⁹ Chaudhry Sahib being an ardent follower of *Satyagraha* tactics, left his service joined the freedom movement at the call of Gandhiji. Besides, the leadership impact and the nurturing values of the family goaded him

to go ahead without any second thought to the decision already taken firmly in 1941 on the eve of the Individual Satyagraha movement.⁸⁰

Chaudhry Ranbir was a great admirer of Jawaharlal Nehru who became the first Prime Minister of independent India. He played a decisive role not only in national movement but in the reconstruction of India as he told the author in an interview. Nehru was a charismatic mass leader; though, he was born, brought up and educated in the aristocratic fashion. He was, undoubtedly, the most significant leader after Gandhiji.⁸¹ He was influenced by Fabian Socialism during his student days in Britain. He had renounced material comforts to accept the austere and moral ways of Gandhiji and rose in Indian politics primarily because of these aspects. Nehru suffered imprisonment many a time during the national movement.⁸² His presidential address at Lahore Congress in 1929 was remarkable in the sense that it provided him the opportunity to declare the need for *Puran Swaraj* in unequivocal terms.⁸³ There is no exaggeration to say that "India's struggle for freedom would not have had the dynamism and certainty, not that international content which it possessed; if Gandhi gave it the moral tone, it was Nehru who gave it the intellectual bias."⁸⁴

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh appreciated Nehru who had firmly believed in the concept of modernisation, socialism, nationalism, secularism, planning and industrialisation, parliamentary democracy, Non-alignment movement and *Panch Sheel* as these were the fundamental tenets of his internal and external policies.⁸⁵ Nehru gave the highest priority to Five Year Plans and also assigned an essential role to the private sector in the development of economy.⁸⁶ He laid the foundation for orderly development of science and technology. He was for modern industrial

development as the new monuments like locomotive works, fertilizer factories, dams, power plants etc.⁸⁷ After planning and industrialisation, his great concern was to take India on the road to parliamentary democracy. He firmly believed in democratic and human values, the dignity of an individual and civil liberty.⁸⁸ His approach and policy of international relations brought dividends to India in getting international support. His Non-alignment, *Panchsheel* and efforts towards world disarmament brought laurels to India. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh applauded Nehru for laying a strong foundation in the fields of planning, industry, science and technology and higher education and called him "the architect of modern India."⁸⁹

When India became independent, Nehru's 'tryst with destiny' implied the establishment of democracy with socialism and secularism as its integral parts. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and other Congressmen throughout India were happy to see the proud moment, when Jawaharlal Nehru delivered his famous speech at midnight hour of 14-15 August, 1947 which was reminiscent of the midnight hour of 31 December 1 January, 1929-30. One was the dawn of a new era while the other was the dawn of independence.⁹⁰ In an interview with the author, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh told that both the speeches - Lahore Congress, 1929 and midnight speech of 14-15 August, 1947 were quite remarkable speeches ever delivered by any world leader on the eve of their declaring and attaining independence.⁹¹ In his famous speech, Nehru stated: "long years ago, we made a 'tryst with destiny' and now the time comes, when we shall redeem our pledge.... A moment comes which comes but rarely in history, we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of the nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."⁹²

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CHAPTER-III

FREEDOM STRUGGLE,
1885-1940

The national awakening in the later half of 19th century led to the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. It was, indeed, a landmark as far as the freedom struggle was concerned. There are several views regarding its foundation. In the early days, Raja Rammohan Roy, a Calcutta intellectual, started denouncing certain undesirable aspects of the Company's rule.¹ He began a modest constitutional agitation advocating for the separation of powers (executive and judiciary held by the district magistrates), freedom of press, trial by jury and the Indianisation of the services. Later on, the Young Bengal movement also took up cudgels in favour of the same. Prof. Nand Lal Chatterjee and Prof. Sita Ram Singh giving their observations about the birth of the Congress held that it was 'a child of Russophobia'.²

Another view-point is that the Indian National Congress was founded by A.O. Hume with the consent of Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, as a 'safety valve' for the rising discontent among the masses. The Marxist scholars like Rajni Palme Dutt disagree with this view and dub it just a myth. He wrote that the Congress came into being simply at the behest of the government so that it could be used as a weapon to safeguard the colonial interests.³ But in the

course of time, the Congress developed two-fold character i.e. cooperation and confrontation as and when so required.

Lala Lajpat Rai, an extremist leader of the Congress, has mentioned the 'safety-valve' theory in his book *Young India* published in 1916. Writing about its foundation, he argued that it was 'a product of Lord Dufferin's brain' for safeguarding the British rule "from danger than with that of winning political liberty for India. The interests of the British Empire were primary and those of India only secondary".⁴ The scholars like C.F. Andrews and Girija Mukerji fully agree with the 'safety valve' theory because it had helped to avoid the useless bloodshed.⁵ William Wedd-erburn, a close associate and biographer of Hume, has provided the historical proof of this theory through the reading of seven volumes of secret reports gone through by Hume at Simla in the summer of 1878. After that he was fully convinced with the existence of 'seething discontent' which was causing a vast conspiracy among the lower classes to end the colonial rule in India.⁶ Except Wedderburn, no other scholar has found the seven volumes of secret reports in any of the Archives either in India or in England.

Some of the scholars such as J.C. Bagal,⁷ P.N. Singhi Roy,⁸ B.B. Majumdar⁹ and S.R. Mehrotra¹⁰ have given credit to prevailing popular organisations established in several provinces by the educated classes. The first political platform founded at Calcutta in October 1851 was the British Indian Association, which encouraged the educated classes of Bombay and Madras Presidencies to found "a society of their own having the same objects in view but carrying on operations independently."¹¹ In a letter to prominent citizens of Bombay and Madras, Devendranath Tagore, the Secretary of the British Indian

Association, further wrote. "It must be obvious to you that the representations which are to be made to the British Parliament, with reference to the approaching termination of the East India Company's Charter, would have great weight if they were made simultaneously by the Natives of every part of British India or by a Society having just pretensions to represent them."¹² The educated classes of Bombay and Madras founded the Bombay Association and Madras Native Association in 1852. Later on, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, (1870), Western Indian Association (Bombay, 1873), India League (Calcutta, 1875), Indian Association (Calcutta, 1876), Madras Mahajan Sabha (January, 1885), Bombay Presidency Association, (September, 1885) were formed in several provinces by the newly emergent educated people in their respective presidencies.¹³

The Indian Association organised a national conference in Calcutta in December 1883 for interchanging of views on many vital questions which were "then agitating the national mind and for the settlement of a common programme of action in relation thereto". The questions related to the industrial education, civil service and its holding of examination in India, raising of minimum age to 22 years, separation of executive and judicial functions, raising a national fund, establishment of representative assemblies in India in the interest of good governance and the advancement of the people, repeal of Arms Act, expressing regret over the Ilbert Bill. The leaders of the British Indian Association, Mahomedan Association and Mahomedan Literary Society did not attend the conference. Educated Indian from 45 different places of the country and belonging to various classes and creeds deliberated upon the most vital questions of national interests.¹⁴ This was indeed a very significant

event when Indians met for the first time to discuss national burning issues. It would not be improper to say that the national conference of 1883 deserves to be called "the precursor of the Indian National Congress" and "the first session of the Indian Parliament."¹⁵

The Indian Association denounced the reduction of age from 21 to 19 for the civil service examination in 1876 by Lord Salisbury, Secretary of State for India. The main aim was to make it more difficult for Indians to 'come and compete in Westminster'. The educated Indians had opposed the reduction of the age-limit from 22 to 21 in 1866 as being prejudicial to their chances. They could not be expected to accept the move for any further reduction in age limit. They treated it as another clever and cruel move of British Government to restrain them from entering and competing for the Indian Civil Service and decided to oppose it tooth and nail.¹⁶

A public meeting of the Association was held on 24 March, 1877 in the Albert Hall, Calcutta in which all the speakers denounced Salisbury's action. A memorandum was prepared to submit to the British Parliament through Lal Mohan Ghose. Surendranath Banerjee was deputed to travel all over the country to mobilize support in favour of 'the memorial'. Banerjee in his capacity as delegate toured the chief towns of northern India - Lahore, Amritsar, Meerut, Delhi, Aligarh, Agra, Lucknow, Kanpur, Allahabad, Banaras and Patna - where he had to create public opinion against the reduction of the age.¹⁷ The branches of Indian Association were also formed in Lahore, Amritsar and Ambala in 1877. The first political organisations of importance were formed in Punjab and Haryana in order to awaken political consciousness among the people. He again visited in 1881 when he brought not only printing press but also staff at the request of Sardar

Dyal Singh Majithia, the landlord of Lahore, paving way for the publication of the *Tribune*.¹⁸

The emergence of the Indian National Congress in 1885 marked a new beginning in the annals of India's freedom struggle. Thus, Congress owed its emergence largely due to the vision and initiative of a retired Civil Servant, Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912). He joined the services of the East India Company in 1849 and largely served in the North-Western Provinces (present Uttar Pradesh) in several positions. He was fully convinced that some definite action was called for to counteract the growing discontent among the people. There was no other way except the common and national platform for redressing the grievances of the people through the authorities. India neither possessed an opposition party (as in England) nor any other platform of public opinion through which the grievances could be ventilated. Motives behind creating such an organisation have become a subject of heated controversy among the scholars of different streams in the historiography on the birth of Indian National Congress. Keeping away of these controversies, it can be safely stated that Hume had proceeded to India nurturing with a concept of 'right and justice'.¹⁹

After getting premature retirement in 1882, Hume was at liberty to act the way he liked. In an address to the graduates of Calcutta University on 1 March, 1883, he made a soul stirring appeal to them by saying: "Whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves."²⁰ He then embarked upon the necessity of an organisation. He further reminded them: "Scattered individuals, however, capable and, however, well-meaning, are powerless singly.

What is needed is union, organisation and to secure these, an association is required, armed and organised with unusual care, having for its object to promote the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India. If only fifty men, good and true, can be found to join as founders, the thing can be established and the future development will be comparatively easy."²¹ This appeal went not in vain but the required and capable men came forward to initiate the movement from all parts of India.

Hume had started meeting the prominent Indians secretly in order to discuss his plan with them. He visited almost all parts of India where he persuaded the journalists about the invigoration of the movement which he had in mind. He had personally met the Madras leaders during the conference of the Theosophical Society in 1884. Besides, the Indian Association had already held its conference in the last week of December 1883. The Bombay province lagged behind in holding such a conference where delegates from other provinces could assemble. Hume, in a letter to the Secretary of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, Sitaram Hari Chiplonkar, told the real aim of his movement. He told that his *gurus*, the theosophists, had advised them at Adyar thus: "we have great national objects to gain and these we can only secure, by unanimous efforts and by presenting at all times an unbroken front to our adversaries. We must sink all personal prejudices, on selfish aims and aspirations."²²

Having discussed the plan with them, Hume wanted to take practical steps towards 'linking', or creating a national platform which he characterized as a matter of vital importance. He did not elaborate his idea nor did he tell anything in advance about his visit to various provinces. He spent most of his time from November 1884

to April 1885 visiting various parts of India. He proceeded to England from early August to mid-November 1885 during which he consulted many leading Britishers such as John Bright, James Bryce, Joseph Chamberlain, Ripon, John Morley, Dalhousie, R.T. Reid, John Slagg and Florence Nightingale about Indian affairs. He also succeeded in getting due coverage in English papers about Indian affairs and interaction thereof.²³

Hume returned to India in early December 1885 and engaged in the preparation of holding a conference at Poona in the last week of December 1885. The outbreak of cholera on the eve of the conference forced the organizers to shift its venue to Bombay. The first meeting of the Indian National Congress was held on 28 December, 1885, in the hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, Bombay. Seventy two delegates from all parts of the country attended this historic session of the Congress consisting of barristers, journalists, teachers, merchants, land-owners, bankers and religious reformers.²⁴ Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee was unanimously elected as the President of Bombay session. The significant issues deliberated upon were the expansion of the legislative councils, holding Civil Service examinations in England and India, raising age limit for candidates of this examination, enquiry into Indian administration by a Royal Commission, reduction of military expenditure etc.²⁵

The Indian National Congress during its session in Bombay firmly believed in moderation and loyalty to the British Crown. No doubt, it had a small beginning but it kept gaining momentum and continued enjoying the larger support of the educated Indians. Two delegates Lala Murlidhar and Munshi Jawala Prasad, lawyers of Ambala, and Satyanand Agnihotri, a Brahmo Samaj leader from the Punjab also attended the first session of the Congress.²⁶ A

Calcutta based newspaper, *Reis and Rayyet*, gave enough coverage to the representatives who expressed their gratitude to their Bombay hosts. Murlidhar from Ambala created a stir and sensation both by his appearance and by his speech: "With his Punjabee coat and trousers and glittering Cabulee turban, he represented an imposing figure.... He was essentially a *Punjabi* speaker, full of enthusiasm and spirit and no little sarcastic humour.... He kept the Congress in a continued roar of laughter." In the last of his speech, he brought down the hall "by laying at their door the charge of theft and robbery. They had stolen and robbed his heart".²⁷ It can be safely concluded that the delegates of the Congress were obviously conscious of two things. Indubitably, it was a historical event as well an integral symbol of their unity emerging as a nation in the making.

In 1886, the session of the Congress was held at Calcutta where three Haryanavis - Lala Murlidhar of Ambala, Pt. Din Dyalu Sharma of Jhajjar, editor of the *Kohinoor* (Lahore) and Babu Balmukund Gupta of village Gudiyan (Rewari) attended this session. The most significant feature of this session was that the number of delegates increased six fold i.e. 434.²⁸ Pt. Din Dyalu Sharma and Babu Balmukund Gupta were highly impressed with the deliberations and arrangements made for the successful holding of the Congress session.²⁹ The third session of the Congress was held at Madras under the Presidentship of Badruddin Tyabji. Murlidhar along with eight other delegates of Punjab attended this session and addressed the delegates: "I can say from the bottom of my heart that (Queen's) sympathy and... good wishes are always yours. Be wise, be moderate and above all, be persevering and the success... will assuredly be yours."³⁰ All the speeches, resolutions and even press-notes were

prepared by Hume who remained busy throughout the year for the organisational work at hand.

The Congressmen decided to hold the fourth session at Allahabad but the provincial authorities did not relish it and put many hurdles in the way of Congress organisers. Auckland Colvin, Lt. Governor of North-Western Provinces, sent a secret circular to every public office prohibiting government employees to raise subscriptions and work for the promotion of the Congress. Not content with this, he even instigated *talukdars*, landlords and Muslims to desist from participating in the Congress movement. It became quite difficult for him even to find a suitable location for lodging and boarding of the delegates at Allahabad. The local authorities rejected all beseeching regarding the Session. At last, the Reception Committee succeeded in securing Lowther Castle on rent. A Muslim gentleman with a liberal mind-set and national leanings happened to be its proprietor.³¹ Pt. Ajudhianath, the Chairman of the Reception Committee at the Allahabad Session, however, was able to hold the session despite the insurmountable hardships created by the provincial government.³²

Lala Lajpat Rai, a prominent lawyer of Hissar, joined the Allahabad session for the first time making his political debut which afterwards became a rallying force. He assailed the colonial government's anti-people attitude on reforms not acceding to their genuine demands delivering his whole speech in *Hindustani*.³³ He criticised Sir Syed Ahmed Khan for opposing the legislative reforms as the latter had unfounded apprehensions of the *Hindus* on their numerical strength. Rai said: "The most loyal of Indian Mohammedan who now stigmatizes us as traitors, 30 years ago demanded for India reforms of the same character as we now after 30 year of education and progress pray for

in the resolution."³⁴ The resolution was passed at this session with a thumping majority. Lala Murlidhar, Chhabil Das, Gauri Shankar from Haryana region also attended this session of the Congress.³⁵

Murlidhar continued regularly to attend sessions of the Congress. He laid great stress on the use of *Swadeshi* goods. It was so because the British factory made goods had rendered the poor hapless artisans unemployed and half-starved. It would also help a great deal in stopping the drain of Indian money to foreign countries. He was not happy with the Congress organisers for using foreign items in the Congress *pandal* such as chandeliers, lamps, chairs, tables as well as with the Congressmen's outfits and general deportment.³⁶ He further said: "Every rupee you have spent on European-made articles is a rupee of which you have robbed of your poor brethren, honest handicraftsmen who can no longer earn a living"³⁷ The other issues raised by him at different sessions of the Congress were the jury system, separation of executive and judicial functions, raising the status of the Chief Court to a High Court in Punjab, economic drain, inflow of British goods to Indian markets, lack of industrialisation, export policy, intoxicant policy, poverty, taxation system, reforms in legislative councils, use of *Swadeshi* goods, Punjab Land Alienation Bill, Official Secrets Act, Calcutta Corporation Act, Indian Universities Act, Arms Act, partition of Bengal etc.³⁸

The British Government passed the Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900 in order to check the transaction of lands from the peasantry to the moneylenders etc. The government passed this Act first to save the peasantry from the clutches of the moneylenders who had become not only rich but a politically influential class in Punjab. This move of the government was essentially meant to

create a wide gulf between the peasantry and the money-lending class. The government wanted to create agriculturist lobby on which the government could fall back for support in dire need. The educated class now started opposing and agitating against the government's policies in the province. The other motive of the government was to reduce the litigation in order to minimize the importance of the lawyers in the society. The lawyers had been earning a lot accruing to the disputes between the peasantry and the money lenders. They that way supported the Congress agitation to enjoy hegemonic politics of the province.³⁹

In Haryana, the bulwarks of Congress activities were the *urbanites* who comprised of the educated and professional middle class. They joined the Congress in greater numbers and rendered moral and financial assistance to it. The Act had more political overture than economic. The delegates of Haryana and Punjab raised this issue at Lucknow Congress session in 1899 and a Committee⁴⁰ was instituted by its President, R.C. Dutt, a retired ICS officer, who had spent most of his time working in the revenue department of the Indian Government and had in-depth knowledge of different contours of Indian economy. The Congress passed a resolution against the Bill and dubbed it as a move of 'divide and rule policy.'⁴¹ It was rather a clever move on the government's side to check the moneylenders, 'an ever-increasing political danger' and to provide relief to the poor peasantry. The Congress in its Lahore session of 1900 again opposed the Bill that prompted the Arya Samajists to enter into provincial politics. The bill brought the money lending class and Arya Samajists to the Congress fold whereas the peasantry class further drifted away from the Congress.⁴²

The Congress had held 21 sessions between 1885 and 1905 at various cities in India. During these sessions some of the important issues discussed were the separation of executive and judicial functions, taxation system, officials high-handedness, economic policies, poverty, expansion of legislature councils, technical education, *Swadeshi* and boycott, Land Alienation Act, foreign policy, partition of Bengal etc. During this period, some political awareness came into prominence only in Ambala, Hissar and Rohtak. The Congress was predominated by the educated middle class as the following table shows:⁴³

Total Number of Delegates from
Haryana and Punjab, 1885-1905

S.No.	Professions	Number
1.	Lawyers	58
2.	Bankers	8
3.	Doctors	7
4.	Contractors	7
5.	Journalists	2
6.	Businessmen etc	27
	Total	109

The above table shows that it was the middle class which spearheaded the anti-British agitation in Haryana. The Land Alienation Act and the partition of Bengal created conducive atmosphere but remained confined to holding meetings and passing resolutions only in major towns of Haryana. This period of twenty years can best be called a period of sowing the seeds of nationalism here too. The whole credit for this goes to the moderate leadership of Haryana that tirelessly kept encouraging nationalism deep down.

Like the Punjab Land Alienation Act Amendment Bill, Punjab Limitation Act, 1904, Transfers of Property Act, 1904, Punjab Pre-emption Act, 1905, the Colonization of Government Lands Punjab Bill 1906, further weakened the position of moneylenders. The leaders mobilised the support for anti-government activities. The efforts were made to check any further fragmentation of the land. The Colonisation of Government Lands Punjab Bill, became law on 5 March 1907, despite the strong opposition and popular agitation by the then leaders. Similarly the enhancement of the land revenue assessment in Rawalpindi district and also the occupiers' water-rates in the Doaba Canal increased the tension.⁴⁴ The natural calamities like the plague greatly caused the rise of the death rate to 62.1 per thousand in 1907.⁴⁵ The highest death record due to plague, wrote Lord Minto Viceroy, "raised all sorts of wild suspicion against us; that we are poisoning the wells and are determined to kill off a percentage of the people." The plague swallowed 54,000 people in a week in the Punjab province and by 1910 around two million lost their lives on the whole.⁴⁶

The economic hardships followed by the plague created great resentment among the people against the government. K.K. Athavale and Pindi Das, editors of the *Punjabee* and *India* respectively were imprisoned for publishing revolutionary articles in their papers. Some students on the way welcomed and garlanded both the editors being escorted to jail.⁴⁷

The political situation in Punjab was becoming serious day by day and needed the earliest remedy as observed by the Lt. Governor of Punjab, Sir Denzil Ibbetson. He called it a *Nai-Hawa* (new wave) blowing throughout Punjab. The leaders of Punjab such as Sardar Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai were arrested in Lahore

while they were delivering the so-called 'seditious' speeches and published many articles in the papers. The arrests and the deportation of both the leaders stirred-up a heated commotion among the people in Haryana also. Incidents like this shook off their faith in constitutional methods. *The Tribune* commenting on the episode explicitly wrote: "The country does not approve of the adoption of methods which are today the least un-English and unworthy of a civilized government such as others."⁴⁸ Besides, Babu Balmukund Gupta, himself a renowned journalist and a critic, wrote a poem on the situation of Punjab. The poem 'Loyalty' portraying the actual sentiments of the people did have under-currents of sarcasm and satire:

“सबके सब पंजाबी अब है लायलटी में घकनाघूर,
सारा ही पंजाब देश बन जाने को है लायलपुर।
लायल हैं सब सिक्ख अरोड़े खतरी भी लायल हैं,
मेड, रहतिया, बनिये, धुनिया लायल ही के कायल हैं।

* * * * *
लायल सब वकील बरिस्टर जमींदार और लाला हैं,
म्युनिसिपलटियां वाले तो लायलटी का परनाला हैं।
खान बहादुर राय बहादुर कितने ही सरदार नवाब,
सब मिल जुलकर लूट रहे हैं लायलटी का खूब खबाब।

* * * * *
ऐसा गैरा नत्थू खैरा सब पर इसकी मस्ती है,
लायलटी लाहौर अब भूसे से भी कुछ सस्ती है।
केवल दो डिस-लायल थे वो एक लाजपत एक अजीत,
दोनों गये निकाले उनसे नहीं किसी को है कुछ प्रीत।”⁴⁹

The political scenario of Punjab could not afford to remain unaffected by the Bengal and the country's other parts also witnessed revolutionary fervour and surge. The echo of protest against the arrests of Sardar Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai was heard aloud not only in India but crossed the borders. Public meetings were held protesting

against the arrests at many places. Their arrests made them popular and Lalaji became a national hero over night. Everyone now started denouncing the un constitutional methods adopted by the British in the country.

The deportation of both the leaders filled the people of Punjab with seething discontent and dismay resulting into agrarian disturbances. Haryana region did not remain unaffected. The press and the leader of the public opinion in India and England denounced the deportations. *The Tribune* gave a due weightage to the views of a moderate leader, Gopal Krishan Gokhale, who affirmed that the government intended to make an impressive show of force and "struck at Lalaji simply because he was the most prominent political worker in the province."⁵⁰ Another famous paper, *Punjabee*, frankly admitted that Lalaji 'was the victim of an act of blind vengeance'.⁵¹ In London, Madame Bhikhaiji Cama, a revolutionary leader, issued a stirring appeal to her countrymen in India and abroad exhorting them and calling Lalaji 'a true patriot of India' and resented 'this atrocity'. She wrote an article on the deportation and asked the Indians to be bold and come out from the subjugation. She further wrote: "What is the good of talking about the glorious past of India, Persia and Arabia if you are living in slavery today? Brave Rajputs, Sikhs, Pathans, Gorkhas, patriotic Marathas and Bengalis, energetic Parsis and courageous Mohammadans...patient Hindus, children of great and mighty races, why are you not living according to your traditions? What is it that makes you live in subjection? Come out and establish liberty and equality under *Swaraj*. Come out for your own sake; come out for the sake of your children"⁵².

Neki Ram Sharma, a prominent leader of Haryana, wrote a lengthy article: *Vipati Par Vipati* (calamity after

calamity) which was published in the *Abhudya*, a nationalist paper published from Allahabad. The land revenue policy of the government was held responsible for such a situation in Punjab. Joseph, the Deputy Commissioner, Rohtak, warned him for his anti-British activities.⁵³ The Punjab Government adopted the repressive methods such as the prosecution of the press and putting ban on the papers, pamphlets, books, circulars etc. which had given vent to the arrests, deportations and prohibition of public meetings. The Seditious Meetings Act not only banned political activities but restrained people from the religious activities also. Despite the adoption of repressive methods, the government failed to crush the sentiments of the people in the regions of Haryana and Punjab. Indirectly coerced by the increasing opposition of leaders and press, both leaders were set free on 18 November, 1907.⁵⁴

John Morley was far from satisfied with the repressive measures of Lord Minto as he wrote: "We must keep order but excess of severity is not the path to order. On the contrary, it is the path to the bomb."⁵⁵ To assuage the conscience of Morley who was about to introduce reforms, Minto wrote: "As to the repressive legislation it is all important that it should precede your announcement of reforms... We must give the medicine first, and then do all we can to take the taste away. If we were to follow up your announcement with stiff legislation and deportation, we would make a fatal mistake."⁵⁶ The Morley-Minto reforms were passed in 1909. Two Indians were admitted into the council of the Secretary of State for India and one Indian each to the Executive Councils of the Governor-General and Governors. Jawaharlal Bhargava, advocate from Hissar and Rai Bahadur Ch. Lal Chand, Advocate from Rohtak, were taken as the members of Punjab

Legislative Assembly.⁵⁷ But the most distinct feature was the introduction of communal electorate. The Congressmen in the session of Lahore Congress, 1909, blamed the Muslim League for proposing that religion should serve as the basis for representation and was 'a most mischievous feature of the scheme' whose credit went to 'the bureaucracy having its revenge upon us for the part we have played in securing these concessions.'⁵⁸

The political activities during the years 1910-14 remained abysmally low as far as agitation or the participation of Congress was concerned. The prominent participants in the deliberations of the Congress were Lala Murlidhar, Lala Lajpat Rai, Lekh Raj, Lal Chand, Duni Chand, Madho Ram, Nanha Mal and Nanak Chand. etc. However, the princes and affluent people showed utmost loyalty to the British Empire with men and material. Haryana's contribution to the army personnel was 84001 up to 30 November, 1918 as the following table shows.⁵⁹

Recruitment Strength
(January 1915 to 30 November 1918)

Karnal	6553
Ambala	8341
Hissar	15461
Gurgaon	17180
Rohtak	22144
Native States (Haryana)	14322
Total	84001
Punjab Districts	361886
Total	445887

Four recruitment centres were opened at Delhi, Jhajjar, Rewari and Bhiwani. The government used

coercive measures for the enlistment of the recruits. The attempts were made to encourage loyalty as far as the recruitment was concerned. Some prominent persons from Punjab and Haryana rendered valuable assistance to the British in the recruitment to military. In war-funds and war-loans, the people of Haryana contributed much to the same direction as is evident from the following table.⁶⁰

District	War Loans in Rupees
Gurgaon	15,99,118
Rohtak	24,12,865
Karnal	24,45,226
Ambala	25,96,441
Hissar	82,90,016
Native States	12,90,000
Total	86,33,666

The above table shows that the princely chieftains, landlords and businessmen greatly helped the government to raise war-loans. However, all sections contributed according to their capacity. But, the peasantry had to suffer a lot after the war because of steep rise in the prices. Nearly 15,000 military personnel were cashiered in view of their demobilization. Such personnel were not only deprived of their subsistence but provided no other re-employment by the government after the war. Secondly in the post-war years, the rising prices and increasing taxes hit hard and caused great disaffection among the masses. The inflation without a proportionate increase in production had resulted in high prices and devaluation of money. Price of wheat and flour soared. The food-grains which were consumed by the masses had their prices enormously increased as the table given below indicates:⁶¹

Prices Before and After the War

Commodity	Retail price during fortnight ending 15 Dec. 1912 for a rupee		Retail price during fortnight ending 15 Jan. 1919 for a rupee	
	Seer	Chhatanks	Seer	Chhatanks
Wheat	12	4	6	9
Barley	15	13	8	3
Jowar	15	12	4	3
Bajra	12	3	4	2
Gram	15	1	7	7
Maize	16	3	6	6

The other necessary commodities such as salt, kerosene oil, coarse cloth increased by more than 75%. The black-marketers and hoarders made brisk business during the period as the attention of government had already got deflected towards the recruitment and raising war-loans from the people. Some measures, however, were taken by the government but their effects could be noticeable only in the towns. The people living in villages did not get any relief of the controlled system.⁶²

The Congress leaders had helped the colonial regime in the war with the hope of getting political concession 'such as the 'Dominion Status' after the war but government over-looked their genuine demands. During this period, the Congress began developing its roots in Haryana region. The District Congress Committee was established at Rohtak. Ch. Chhotu Ram and Lala Sham Lal were elected as its first President and Secretary respectively.⁶³ The Congressmen continued to attend the Congress sessions regularly and make it popular in

Haryana. At the thirty-fourth Session of the Congress held in Delhi in 1918, Chaudhry Matu Ram, Neki Ram Sharma, Lala Sham Lal, Daulat Ram Gupta, Chaudhry Peeru Singh, Sardar Buta Singh and Ch. Devi Singh (Bohar) participated therein.

The Congress leadership asked all the Provincial Congress Committees to widen the organisational horizon by shaping its branches at district and *tehsil* level. The establishment of the Committees at all these levels strengthened cohesion and consciousness among the people. The masses had to suffer during the war period due to methods of recruitment, war-loans, natural calamities, high prices, unemployment etc. Now the political atmosphere was surcharged with tension and the need of the hour required a leadership which could exploit the opportunity of mobilising public opinion against the colonial regime. Besides, the victory of Britain and her allies swelled their ego after the First World War. The people had expected that their claim for 'Dominion Status' would be duly considered. But they got the Rowlatt Bills and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform proposals in return as rewards. The Congress leaders denounced these "unworthy to be offered by England and unworthy to be accepted by India".⁶⁵ The Congress in its Delhi session in 1918 categorically denounced the reform proposals as "inadequate, disappointing and unsatisfactory". All the sections of society were upset and disillusioned due to stringent actions and pungent, inflammatory and irritating speeches of Lt. Governor of Punjab, Michael O'Dwyer, that "India would not be fit for self-government much before dooms day."⁶⁶

The Rowlatt Bills gave 'a rude shock' to Gandhiji. He termed these bills as 'unmistakable symptom of deep-seated disease in the governing body.' In such situation,

he deemed it prudent to give a clarion call for an all-India level agitation to demand withdrawal of the Bills. These 'Black Bills' (*kale kanoon*), created anti-British anger throughout the country. Almost all Indian papers denounced the Bills in severest terms. A famous paper of Punjab, *The Tribune* termed implementation of the Bills as a 'blunder of colossal magnitude'.⁶⁷ Gandhi who was greatly aggrieved with these Bills, gave a call to observe *hartal* throughout the country on March 30, subsequently, changed to April 6, 1919.⁶⁸

The protest meetings were held at many places where resolutions were passed urging the government to withdraw the Bills immediately. The first meeting was held at Ambala under the Presidentship of Sardar Jhanda Singh on 11 February, 1919, where apprehensions came to the fore that if the Bills were passed into laws they would be wholly subversive of the elementary and fundamental rights of the Indians.⁶⁹ Similar meetings were held at Hissar, Hansi, Rohtak, Bhiwani, Palwal and several other towns of Haryana where unanimous resolutions were passed for their immediate withdrawal. In order to oppose the Bills effectively, *Satyagraha Samitis* were constituted in almost every town of Haryana and it was resolved that if the Rowlatt Bills were passed, they would refuse to obey such laws in a peaceful and non-violent manner. The District Congress Committees showed anguish and agony by wearing black-badges. It soon became a nation-wide movement.⁷⁰

The prominent leaders of Haryana such as Chaudhry Peeru Singh and Sir Chhotu Ram led the movement. Swami Shraddhanand was also a source of inspiration in Haryana and *Arya Samajists* whole-heartedly supported the movement. This was the beginning of his political career through this movement. The news of the change of

date did not reach Gurgaon, Rohtak, Panipat, Karnal and Ambala. Consequently, *hartals* were observed on 30 March, 1919 but in many towns, the *hartals* continued from 6 to 10 April. During the same period, many untoward incidents took place at several places in Haryana.⁷¹

First was the firing at Delhi Railway Station on 30 March in which five persons were killed. The second one was the heroism of Swami Shraddhanand when he came to lead the procession the same day exposing himself to the great dangers. The third one was the arrest of Gandhiji at Palwal on 9 April on his way to Punjab. He was sent back to Bombay under tight police security. When the people came to know of his arrest, there was great resentment and unrest throughout Haryana.⁷²

The *Arya Samajists* and the educated young men were the main organisers of the *Satyagraha* movement. The leaders of the movement like Maulvi Bashir Ahmed of Delhi and Tola Ram of Aligarh visited Rohtak district and enlightened the public against the Rowlatt Act. The trading classes adopted the practice of dishonouring the *hundis* of those who were opposing the movement.⁷³ The last journey of a Christian missionary, Rev. Carlyon, delayed by about six hours as no carpenter of Rohtak prepared the bier and no labourer came forward to dig grave for the deceased.⁷⁴ In fact, the movement was so strong and so far reaching that no single private person in the Rohtak district was able to stand out against it.

In Ambala district, the meetings were held on 2-3 April, 1919, when leaders like Lala Tara Chand, Nand Kishore, Muhammed Hanif, Lala Murlidhar, Ganeshi Lal, Jhanda Singh, Dalip Singh Kalal, Beni Prasad, Duni Chand, Maulvi Sajjad Ali, Abdul Razak, Kazi Ali Mohammed Asim decided to observe *hartal* on 6 April. Speaking at a public meeting on 6 April, Lala Murlidhar 'grand old man

of Punjab' and a veteran Congress leader said: "Why is there a *hartal*? The reason is that whenever a member of a family dies, the other members of the family keep fast and suspend all business till the dead-body is taken out of the house. Now when the dead body of the Rowlatt Act is still in our midst, we have to suspend all business and remove the corpse from the house before the people can break their fast and resume business."⁷⁵ The resolution paying tribute to the martyrs of Delhi, Amritsar and Lahore was passed. Shortly after, the telegraph wires were cut on the Railway near Brara station. This was the only instance of wire-cutting in Ambala district.⁷⁶

The *hartals* were observed throughout the region particularly in Hissar and Bhiwani on 6 April, 1919. Sham Lal Satyagrahi and Bakshi Ram Krishan with the help of Hindu Club organised a *hartal* in Hissar. Neki Ram Sharma, K.A. Desai and Ram Kumar Bidhat, with the help of *Yuvak Mandal* led the movement in Bhiwani where a public meeting was organised to take a pledge to continue the agitation until the act was repealed. A resolution was passed in the meeting at which the citizens of Bhiwani strongly protested against the Rowlatt Act. The British Emperor was requested to repeal the same immediately. The meeting stirred the feelings of the people not only in Bhiwani but throughout Haryana.⁷⁷ *Hartals* were also observed from 6 to 10th April at all important towns of Haryana such as Ballabgarh, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Palwal, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Sonapat, Rewari, Panipat, Thanesar, Ambala, Jagadhari, Ladwa and Karnal.⁷⁸ On 11 April, 1919, a mass meeting was held at *Gaukaran Talab*, Rohtak where the sale of proscribed literature was advocated and a Joint Hindu-Mohammedan Committee was formed. In this meeting Chaudhry Matu Ram, Chaudhry Chhotu Ram, Lala Sham Lal, Naval Singh, Mian Mustaq Hussain, Daulat

Ram Gupta, Chaudhry Devi Singh (Bohar), Master Baldev Singh delivered speeches on the Rowlatt Act. The Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak wrote a letter to the Punjab Government urging it to cancel the licenses of lawyers but on the intervention of High Court of Punjab, the government orders were set aside.⁷⁹

The cold-blooded massacre took place on 13 April, 1919 when the British fired brutally on the unarmed and peaceful meeting at *Jallianwala Bagh*, Amritsar. This event not only intensified but changed the nature and character of the movement. Like other towns of Punjab, a number of violent incidents also took place at Ambala, Karnal and Rohtak. Attempts were made to damage Railway Bridge and wreck a mail train at Bahadurgarh. An attempt to wreck No. 4 Down Mail was also made to frill the onward journey of company of European wireless operators supposedly traveling by the train for Karachi. The telegraph wires were also cut between Rohtak and Samar Gopalpur and also at Gohana on 15 April, 1919. At Sonapat, a public meeting was held at *Imambara*. From 18th to 20th April, 1919, many attempts at damaging railway station, burning the Sikh Pioneer Depot of 1/34 and cutting a canal near Jat High School, were made at Ambala, Kaithal and Rohtak respectively.⁸¹

The Rowlatt Act followed by the *Jallianwala Bagh* incident created explosive atmosphere and upset the provincial government. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab, in a letter to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India, mentioned the situation of the province in general and incident of Rohtak in particular. He further wrote, "Rohtak as a great centre of *Arya Samaj* and also a great military district is reported very shocking though we have a staunch party of loyalists there," Consequently, immediate increase in the police

force was made. The arrangement for posting the special police guards was made at all the important sites.⁸²

The people were harassed by the officials who compelled them for *Thikri Pehra* (patrolling duty) for safeguarding the telegraphs and railways. A local defence scheme was also devised in case of any disturbance at Rohtak. The local authorities adopted certain other precautionary measures in the name of maintaining peace in the district. Mobile service of 16 seated motor buses was obtained so that the mobility of the troops could be ensured at Rohtak at any time.⁸³

Rohtak was deemed such a dangerous region of Haryana where an armoured train was made available for the General Officer Commanding, Delhi Brigade, in order to maintain peace and safeguard the railway line and trains in these areas. Doing so was also a deliberate attempt to demoralize the people and create fear in their minds. An aeroplane hovered over Rohtak, Sampla, Bahadurgarh, Sonapat and Gunaar in order to terrorise the people and ensure tranquility in the district. Besides, the people of Sanghi Kalan and Khadwali villages in Rohtak district showed their boldness in creating anti-British atmosphere. Even Chaudhary Lal Chand of Rohtak had to respect the sentiments of the Congress leaders and confess his inability to show pro-government sentiments through a loyal manifesto issued in his own name. Chaudhry Matu Ram, Chaudhry Peeru Singh, Tek Ram, Abul Aziz and Sagar Chand were the prominent leaders who had organised meetings in their villages and many of them were arrested under Defence of India Rules. The district authorities extended the Seditious Meetings Act to the whole of the region. Lala Kanshi Ram, Banwari Lal, Lala Munshi Ram, Lala Jawala Prasad, Lala Inder Sen, Mulana Abdul Aziz were imprisoned and sent to Central

Jail, Lahore. There were loyalists and informers also who were offered rewards for rendering assistance to the district authorities in suppressing the agitation at several places in Rohtak district.⁸⁵

The Rowlatt Bills agitation was perhaps the first all India agitation which created a new national leadership acceptable to the Indian people. Thus such situation was preparing the ground for the beginning of a new leadership under Gandhi throughout India. The feelings of nationalism began to widen briskly through these events during 1918-19. In fact, the Rowlatt Bills laid the foundation of an agitation whose intensity was unparalleled in the annals of contemporary India so far.

Anti-Rowlatt Act agitation helped the Congress leadership to achieve not only success but associate the Indian masses with the Congress organisation. Before the emergence of Gandhiji, Congress was an organisation of the educated middle class which continued to raise its own grievances before the colonial regime. After this agitation, two all India movements were started which further intensified the national movement. Mahatma Gandhi, who emerged as leader of Congress, deemed it an appropriate opportunity to unite both the communities i.e. *Hindus* and *Muslims*. He immediately plunged into the *Khilafat* movement. He urged the *Muslim* community to use non-violence and non-cooperation as weapons for fighting with the enemy and also appealed to the *Hindus* to stand by their *Muslim* brethren in such an hour of hard need.⁸⁶

The *Khilafat* was a protest movement of the Indian Muslims initiated against the hostile attitude of the Allies but more especially against the British Government which had deposed the Sultan of Turkey from the rank of *Khalifa* whom the Muslims highly respected. The Balkan nationalities which were under Turkey waged wars

against the Sultan of Turkey in 1912-13. The Muslim world feared that the Sultan of Turkey would be completely deprived of all the authority vested in him by the end of war. The Indian Muslims started *Khilafat* movement in May 1920 throughout India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. M.A. Ansari, Dr. Saif-ud-din Kitchlew, Maulvi Abul Bari of Lucknow, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali popularly known as Ali brothers and Dr. Syed Mahmud were prominent leaders of the *Khilafat* movement in India. Its main objects were to preserve the rank of *Khilafat* and maintain integrity of the Turkish empire.⁸⁷

Abul Rashid and Ghulam Beg Naurang, the pleaders, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a landlord, Hanif Khan and Hakim Shamin Ullah, businessmen, spearheaded this movement in Haryana region specifically in Ambala district. Laqaullah and Sufi Iqbal, landlords, Maulana Usmani and Sanaullah Usmani, *lambardars*, led the movement in Karnal district. In Gurgaon district, Abdul Ghani Dar, a leading businessman of Ghasera, Mohammed Yasin Khan, a landlord, Yakub Khan, an ex-*Jamadar* and a businessman made this movement popular. Bakshi Ahmed Khan, a Hakim of Jhajjar,⁸⁸ Zaman Ali, Haji Aladin, businessmen of Rohtak, Abdul Aziz, a shopkeeper of Gohana, Maulvi Mulhadan and Khair Mohammed Khan, businessmen of Jhajjar, Mohammed Shafi, a businessman of Bahadurgarh, Habibul Khan of Talao, and Maulvi Abdur Ghafar, a landlord, Jan Mohammed, a member of Municipal Committee, Rohtak, Mustaq Hussain, leading lawyer, spread the message of *Khilafat* in Rohtak district. Muhammed Usmani, a big businessman of Bhiwani, Nazi Beg Muhammed Ismail and Nadir Khan, landlords of Hissar, were the prominent leading lights of this movement in Hissar district.⁸⁹

The Amritsar Congress (1919) issued the *Khilafat* Manifesto in January 1920. Gandhi was possibly now in

search of such an opportunity when all the communities could coalesce into a popular national movement. He was consciously preparing all the communities to stand together for a concerted course of action. Following this strategy, he declared 19 March, 1920, to be observed as the '*Khilafat* day' throughout India.⁹⁰ This day was to be supportive of the Muslim brethren. The day began with the Morning Prayer meetings in the mosques. The women folk spent the day in *Salatu Tasbih* (*Namaz-i-Ibadat*) whereas male members organised public meetings and pledged to carry out the programme of the Central *Khilafat* Committee. The main programmes were to show sympathy with the *Khilafat* cause; and to urge the British Government not to dismember the Turkish Empire; and to revise the Turkish peace terms consistent with Muslim sentiments and the Islamic laws.⁹¹

The movement intensified in the rural areas also. The word '*Khilafat*' means 'opposition' but the government termed it as *Khuli-Afat* (open revolt). It took all feasible steps to suppress the movement. It did every thing possible encouraging the loyalist sentiments. The officials were instrumental in creating the *Kherkhuwa Majlis*, which acted as a loyalist organisation during the *Khilafat* movement. Its branches were established at Bhiwani, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Karnal. Despite this, organisation could not attract the attention of the people.⁹² The government arrested all the leaders in order to suppress the movement. Persons from outside were not allowed to meet the *Khilafat* leaders in jails. Even Gandhi and Ali brothers were not allowed to see them. Public meetings were banned and their *Khilafat* Committees were also declared illegal. But when the *Khalifa* was deposed from this rank in 1923, the *Khilafat* movement also began to lose its influence in India.⁹³

Before the withdrawal of *Khilafat* movement, Gandhi had already launched the Non-Cooperation on 1 August, 1920, against the Punjab atrocities, treatment of Turkey and the Disorders Inquiry Committee's report. The Indian masses lost the confidence in the colonial government. The Congress approved the Non-cooperation programme at the special session at Calcutta in September 1920 under the Presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai. The historic Non-Cooperation resolution was adopted by 1855 against 873 votes. Gandhiji explained that "the primary aim of Non-Cooperation is to rid ourselves of the feelings of helplessness by being independent of all government control."⁹⁴ The Congress decided to start two kinds of programmes during the movement. The first programme was to raise one crore of rupees for Tilak Swaraj Fund in memory of Balgangadhar Tilak who had died on 1 August, 1920 and the second was to raise a Volunteer Corps of one crore members.

In order to promote various boycotts e.g. social, legal, educational and economic, 20 lakhs spinning wheels were proposed to be distributed in order to spin cloth enough to replace the consignments from the foreign lands.⁹⁵ The Congress approved the following programmes at the Calcutta session:

- i) The boycott of law courts and establishment of national courts;
- ii) The boycott of government schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by the Government and establishment of national schools and colleges;
- iii) The boycott of election to central and provincial legislatures both by the candidates and voters;

- iv) The surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from the nominated seats in the local bodies;
- v) The boycott of foreign goods and adoption of *swadeshi* items;
- vi) The boycott of all governmental *darbars*, official and semi-official functions; and
- vii) The boycott of any service for Mesopotamia.⁹⁶

The first step towards the success of Non-Cooperation movement was to establish the propaganda committees for mass mobilization and arrangement of extensive tours of national, provincial and local leaders to all the district headquarters.⁹⁷ Next step was to start membership drive.⁹⁸ The third step was to organise big and impressive meetings and conferences to be addressed by the national and provincial leaders.⁹⁹ Later on, the programme to popularize *Khaddar* was adopted in order to stop the national sources from being drained out to the Western countries. *Charkha* in *Swaraj* flag was adopted as an emblem of the movement. All such programmes were actively pursued in Haryana region too.¹⁰⁰

A meeting for launching the Non-Cooperation movement was arranged at Ramlila ground, Rohtak on 8 October, 1920. Many national leaders attended the meeting. All the speakers exhorted the people not to cooperate with the colonial government which was dishonest to the core. Chaudhry Matu Ram, Sham Lal, Lal Chand Jain, lawyer, Daulat Ram Gupta, Chaudhry Chhotu Ram, Naval Singh, lawyer, Master Baldev Singh, Molar Singh, Mian Mustaq Hussain Khan etc. attended the meeting. Another meeting was held on 8 November, 1920 under the Presidentship of Rambhaji Datt Chaudhary, a prominent Congressman. The situation became quite

tricky when Chaudhry Chhotu Ram opposed the resolution of Non-Cooperation. His opposition was centred on the resolution concerning the payment of taxes, renunciation of titles, honours etc. He declared: "The peasants could not afford to indulge in the non-payment of land revenue. If they do so, Government would take their land and then what would they eat?"¹⁰¹

Majority of the Congressmen supported the resolution while others opposed it. Rai Bahadur Lal Chand, Chairman of Reception Committee and local leaders such as Neki Ram Sharma and K.A. Desai intervened to maintain peace and patience.¹⁰² Rambhuj Dutt had to postpone the conference to the next day. When the meeting was held next day, Chaudhry Chhotu Ram and his followers did not turn up and the resolution was passed¹⁰³ but unfortunately the Congress lost the support of a great peasant leader in the bargain.

It would not be out of place to mention here that the majority of the Congressmen of Rohtak left the Congress along with Chaudhry Chhotu Ram. Only a handful of Congressmen such as Chaudhry Matu Ram of village Sanghi, Baldev Singh, Headmaster, Jat High School, Rohtak and Devi Singh, a landlord of Bohar remained true to Gandhian ideology and movement.¹⁰⁴ Chaudhry Matu Ram knew it well that the decisions taken by the Congress leadership should not only be followed but propagated among the people also in order to intensify the Non-Cooperation movement in the district.

The Non-Cooperation movement began to gain momentum specifically in the cities and towns where educated elite supported and spearheaded the movement. The leaders urged the management committees and teachers of schools not to cooperate with the government in any way and to get disaffiliated their educational

institutions from the Punjab University, Lahore. The students were also asked to leave the government and aided schools and join the national institutions established under the auspices of Congress.¹⁰⁵ The students of Haryana studying at Delhi, Lahore and other places decided to leave the Schools and Colleges. Shri Ram Sharma (Jhajjar), Pt. Ramphool Singh (Rohtak) Lala Ajudhya Prasad (Dadri), Chandra Sen Vashishth (Gurgaon) Ishwar Dyal Takla, Suraj Prasad and Niyader Singh (Delhi) along with their other colleagues left Hindu College, Delhi. Deshbandhu Gupta (Panipat) Lala Janki Dass, Madan Gopal, Lekh Ram left Mission College (now St. Stephens College) and Ramjas College, Delhi and jumped into the movements. Many students of Haryana such as Mauli Chandra Sharma, Pt. Ajudhya Prasad, Shiv Narain Bhatnagar (Jhajjar), Ram Swarup Sharma (Gohana)¹⁰⁶ etc studying in different educational institutions in Lahore left their Colleges and joined the movement. Besides, Pt. Mohan Swami and Rao Mangli Ram left their schools at Bahadurgarh and became *Satyagrahis* of the movement.¹⁰⁷

The boycott of the government aided institutions continued. Gandhiji visited Rohtak on 16 February, 1921 to lay the foundation stone of Jat National High School in the presence of nearly 25,000 persons. There was a split between the members of the management committee of the school on the question of non-cooperation. One group favouring the resolution was led by Chaudhry Matu Ram and Baldev Singh while those who opposed non-cooperation resolution were led by Chaudhry Lal Chand and Chaudhry Chhotu Ram. Despite the opposition of latter group, Chaudhry Matu Ram who was presiding over the meeting succeeded in naming the school as National High School. Almost all the teachers and students hailed this decision. Chaudhry Matu Ram remained President of

the Management Committee of the school for a long period being the unanimous choice of the Committee. Ch. Chhotu Ram, however, continued to preach against the movement particularly against its call upon the students to leave the schools. He would say: "The movement was improper...."¹⁰⁸

The Vaish High School, Rohtak and Bhiwani were also turned into National Schools. The students studying in these National Schools joined the movement. The schools in Sonapat, Bahadurgarh and Hissar also followed suit. Many teachers left their schools. But in the districts of Ambala and Karnal, the boycott of schools was not a success. In short, Haryana could not become a citadel of the movement for boycott of educational institutions, due to local opposition and the absence of suitable substitutes for the existing schools.¹⁰⁹

Boycott of elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures scheduled to be held in November 1920 was another important feature of the on going movement. Many Congress candidates such as Dunichand, Sham Lal, Jugal Kishore, Sheoram Dass, K.A. Desai, Harnam Singh and some others withdrew themselves from the elections to Legislative Council.¹¹⁰ Neki Ram Sharma, K.A. Desai and Gopal Chand held several meetings in which the prospective candidates were urged not to contest the elections. Many candidates did withdraw from the elections fray. The voters of the urban areas did not show any interest in casting their votes. The voting percentage remained very low. Those who contested the elections were no-party men.¹¹¹

Responding to another aspect of the movement of boycotting the British courts, many leading lawyers such as Bakshi Ram Kishan, Lala Sham Lal Satyagrahi, Duni Chand, Shahjada Ram, Tarachand, Abul Rashid, Ghulam

Beg Naurang, Durga Charan (Ambala), Ram Chander Vaid, Dwarka Das, Mohammad Abul Majid, Jugal Kishore (Karnal) and Lala Sham Lal (Rohtak) abandoned their practice to actively participate in the movement. There was a provision about setting-up of the national court in the programme of the Congress but it became possible only in Bhiwani where K.A. Desai inaugurated the first and last national court on 26 May, 1921.¹¹² There is no evidence to show the number of cases decided by this court. However, Congressmen urged the people to set-up their arbitration court but the idea failed to materialise in the given situation.

So far as the renunciation of titles and medals was concerned, only a small number of persons came forward to do so. Lala Murlidhar, popularly known as the 'grand old man of Punjab' surrendered his title of *Rai Sahib* (1898), his *Sanad* badge and *Kaiser-I-Hind* (1904) for his public services. Mirza Nazir Beg, Ganpat Rai, Gokal Chand Arya, Naunkaran Dass and Banarshi Das Gupta (Bhiwani) surrendered their '*Kursi Nashini*' medals and certificates. Akhe Ram of Mitathal (Hissar) gave his recruiting badge and *Sanads* back to the government.¹¹³

Another salient feature of the Non-Cooperation movement was the adoption of *Swadeshi* and boycott of foreign cloth. Gandhi visited the region and appealed for a complete boycott of foreign clothes at all costs. At the request of Neki Ram Sharma, Gandhiji, Abul Kalam Azad, Pyare Lal, Kasturba Gandhi and others visited Bhiwani on 15-16 February, 1921 to attend a huge rally to be presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai. It was more than 30,000 strong crowd. At Gandhiji's appeal to liberally donate for Tilak Swaraj Fund, a large number of women came forward to offer currency notes, gold rings, bangles and other ornaments. Gandhiji appreciated the *pandal* which was

tastefully wrapped wholly in *Khadi* cloth. At the Ahmedabad Congress session, the same Bhiwani model of pandal which had been appreciated by Gandhiji in his paper, *Young India*, was adopted.¹¹⁴

Gandhiji gave a clarion call for adoption of *Swadeshi* articles and total boycott of foreign cloth. At the Bhiwani conference, Gandhi declared: 'Give me *Khaddar*, I will give you *Swaraj*'.¹¹⁵ A *Khadi* procession was taken out in Rohtak on 1 August, 1921. Similar processions were also arranged for advocating the adoption of *Swadeshi* and boycott of foreign goods at several places. At many places, cloth merchants pledged not to sell foreign cloth but only *Swadeshi* cloth. In Sirsa, Hansi, Hissar, Ambala traders agreed to boycott foreign cloth and gave in writing their solemn pledge not to place fresh orders till the end of December, 1921.¹¹⁶ In Karnal, a *Khadi* exhibition was arranged and prizes were distributed to the *Khadi* manufacturers weaving fine *Khaddar*. The cloth-dealers boycotted those cloth-contractors who failed to honour the boycott of foreign cloth. At Rewari, a wedding ceremony was postponed due to the refusal of a bridegroom to marry the bride clad in foreign fineries.¹¹⁷ It was indeed an interesting happening supporting the patriotic cause.

During the Non-Cooperation movement, spinning and wearing of *Khadi* became a symbol of patriotism. After their release from jail, Abul Rashid and Lala Duni Chand were welcomed by erecting 40 arches of *Khaddar*. One of these arches was made in the form of *charkha* where from the flowers of *Khaddar* were showered at them. Even the welcome address pasted above the gate was printed on *Khaddar*. To Gandhiji's pledge to collect one crore rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, the people at Bhiwani conference on 15 February, 1921, donated Rs. 60,000 while the Congressmen of Hissar could offer a token donation of only Rs. 100.¹¹⁸

The other programme of the movement was picketing at liquor shops. Rohtak and Karnal presented an important example when no bidder turned-up at the time of annual auctions of liquor selling. The picketers were handled roughly by the police. They were imprisoned for three months for not allowing auction bidding as a mark of protest against the police oppression¹¹⁹ the Jhajjar Congress Committee decided to picket the octroi posts. At the Municipal Committee office, the Union Jack was torn and the national flag was hoisted on the hall of the Municipal Committee by Shri Ram Sharma. He was arrested for dishonouring the Union Jack. In Sirsa, the people plastered the face of King Edward's statue. The Congressmen took out a procession in which two donkeys were displayed dressed in European attire.¹²⁰

A similar incident was witnessed at Rohtak also where a placard around the neck of a dog read: 'I am an Englishman.' The volume of such activities was rising day by day as the Viceroy of India, Lord Reading, admitted in December 1921 that the government was confused what to do in such a situation. There was no other way except to adopt repressive measures. The promulgation of the Seditious Meetings Act made the situation even worse. Some leading papers were also prosecuted. The Congressmen such as Bakshi Ram Krishan, Pandit Neki Ram Sharma, Shri Luxmi Narain, Sham Lal Hissar, Shri Ram Sharma of Jhajjar, Lala Murlidhar, Lala Duni Chand and Lala Goverdhan Das of Ambala were arrested. The loyalists and officials arranged anti-Non-Cooperation meetings at many places where the members of the *Aman Sabha* and *Rajbhagat Sabha* participated.¹²¹

When the movement was at its peak, violence erupted at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur district (U.P.), where 22 policemen were burnt by a violent mob on 5 February,

1922. Gandhi was aggrieved at this harrowing incident and immediately suspended the movement which was officially withdrawn on 12 February, 1922. The prominent leaders denounced Gandhiji for this abrupt action. They termed it as a 'blunder' on his part.¹²²

It would, however, be proper to observe here that though the movement failed as such it definitely led to the growth of the freedom struggle. The impact of the movement in Haryana was quite widespread and trenchant creating an atmosphere of hostility towards the colonial regime. The gulf between rulers and the ruled continued to widen. The Congress organisation became strong due to the formation of Congress Committees in every district. Around 210 Committees were formed in the districts of Rohtak, Ambala, Karnal, Hissar and Gurgaon which intensified the movement in Haryana region.¹²³

With the growth of the freedom struggle, communal consciousness also began to grow. Many communal riots occurred in some part of Haryana but more prominently at Panipat where Muslim community was in majority. All these riots shocked the national leadership of the Congress. Gandhiji adopted the strategy of observing 21 day fast to bring about rapprochement between the two sparring communities. Besides, unity conference and central national *Panchayat* were also established for the creation of communal harmony but both these organisation failed to do so. Such riots were not only instrumental in creating gulf between both the communities but the vital issue of freedom went into the background between 1923-1928.¹²⁴

The rise of Unionist party was a significant political development of these times. Punjab Legislative Assembly emerged as an interesting conglomerate of people of different groups mostly belonging to legal and

commercial professions and retired officers. The other members were from the rural background mainly belonging to Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities which were anti-urbanite Hindus and Sikhs. Out of the elected members, one-fourth legislators did not know English and some were illiterate.¹²⁵ All the leading ruralites irrespective of their castes and communities came together and formed the Unionist party. The ministers in Punjab were from different groups and parties (non-Congress) which had pro-government leanings. Towards the close of 1923, Lala Har Kishan Lal, Minister of Agriculture, resigned due to alleged undue interference of the Government of India into the Finance Department matters and for his evidence in favour of Sir Sankaran Nair in *Michael O'Dwyer vs. Nair case*.¹²⁶ Chaudhry Lal Chand, elected from Rohtak-Gohana seat, was appointed Minister of Agriculture but he was, subsequently, removed as a result of election petition filed by Chaudhry Matu Ram in Punjab High Court. He was later found guilty of adopting corrupt practices and had to resign from the ministry. Chaudhry Chhotu Ram was appointed later as a Minister by the new Lt. Governor, Sir Malcolm Hailey.¹²⁷

After joining the ministry, Chaudhry Chhotu Ram gave a new turn to the politics of Haryana. He made the Unionist Party quite popular in the rural areas where Congress did not fare well during the elections of State legislature in November 1926. The Independent Congress Party (Nationalist Party) which was formed by Lala Lajpat Rai, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Neki Ram Sharma also failed to muster the support of voters. The Swaraj party, according to Lala Lajpat Rai, had a dual mentality and had not adopted a straight course. All the parties were faction ridden except the Unionist. This was the reason why it continued to remain in power till the death of its leader in

1945. Chaudhry Chhotu Ram criticised the other parties which were predominantly represented by the upper sections of the society that hardly had any programme for the welfare of the peasantry.¹²⁸

After the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation movement and emergence of Unionist leadership, there was a lull in political environment of the province. The communal riots also created confusion among the people. The draft committee of Indian constitution headed by Motilal Nehru also challenged the superiority of the British who had said that Indians were incapable of even making their own constitution. Keeping the situation of dissension in view, British Government appointed the Simon Commission on 8 November, 1927 though it was stipulated to be appointed in 1929. The Simon Commission had no member from India. So the constitution of the Commission was criticized by the Indians as 'White men Commission'.¹²⁹

The All India Congress committee held its session at Madras in 1927 where it passed a resolution to boycott the Simon Commission. The other parties such as The All India Muslim League, the *Khilafat* leaders and even the National Liberal Federation also decided to boycott the Commission. Wherever the Commission visited, it was greeted everywhere with black flags and the slogans like 'Simon go back'. The Congress Committees held rallies for boycotting and condemning the Commission at Bhiwani, Gurgaon, Jagadhari, Rohtak and Jhajjar where resolutions were passed against the appointment of the Commission.¹³⁰

An incident took place at Lahore where Lala Lajpat Rai was assaulted by the police when he was leading a procession peacefully. This resulted into his death. His death on 17 November, 1928 created a great resentment

throughout India. Almost all the leaders denounced the death of Lalaji. The sudden death was considered as a great challenge and a big national insult as well. The youth pledged to avenge the death of Lalaji. This incident united all the political streams of India and was instrumental in generating an intense revolutionary zeal among the youth.¹³¹

The youth started mobilisation themselves and formed the *Naujwan Bharat Sabha* in many cities of Punjab and Haryana. It was already formed in March 1926 by Bhagat Singh, Dr. Satyapal and others at Lahore.¹³² The members of *Sabha* were Bhagwati Charan Vohra, Yash Pal, Sukh Dev, Jai Chand Vidyalkar etc. The *Sabha* debated on significant aspects of moral, literary and social matters. *Swadeshi* goods, unity, plain living, physical fitness, the Indian culture and civilization were some other important issues of the *Sabha*. The person who wanted to be its members had to sign a pledge that he would abide by the national interest more than by personal and community interests. The *Sabha's* aims and objectives were:

- i) To establish a complete independent Republic of the labourers and peasants of India;
- ii) To infuse a spirit of patriotism into the hearts of Youth of the country in order to establish a United Indian Nation;
- iii) To express sympathy with, and to assist the economic, industrial and social movements which, while being free from communal sentiment, are intended to take us nearer to our ideal, namely the establishment of a complete independent republic of labourers and peasants;
- iv) To organise the labourers and peasants.¹³⁴

The branches of *Sabha* were established in many districts like Ambala, Karnal, Rohtak and Hissar. The prominent leaders of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha were Gopal Das, Rajendra Singh and Sardar Singh in Ambala; Dev Raj in Karnal; Lachhman Das, Mange Ram Vats, Chandu Lal, Murari Lal, Ram Saran Das, Atma Nand and Daulat Ram Gupta in Rohtak; and Durga Das Gupta, Bhagwan Das Gautam, Lekh Ram, Thakur Shish Pal Singh, Radha Krishan Verma, K.A. Desai, Banwari Lal, Hari Singh, Mohan Chand, Chhote Lal and Bhagwati Swarup in Hissar.¹³⁵ Most of the leaders of the *Sabha* belonged also to Congress. There was not so much difference between the leaders of the *Sabha* and of the Congress and many leaders of the *Sabha* used to attend the meetings of Congress and support its activities. It could not become as popular in Haryana as it was in the Punjab. One reason was that its membership was limited as only a handful of youth came forward to participate in its activities.¹³⁶

The *Sabha* could not create dynamic leadership as the Congress had. Leadership qualities abundantly lacked among the youth at that time. Though they had established their organisations in many districts but it lacked organizational grit and strength. The creation of an organisation is not sufficient, it also needs proper organisational functioning. Most significant aspect for running an organisation is availability of funds and these revolutionaries had no funds for the growth of their activities.¹³⁷ They also failed in getting proper support of the peasantry and working class due to official oppression and brutalities. Haryana had no working class base due to the absence of industries like other cities of Punjab. It remained confined only to the educated middle class youth living in cities. There was hardly any difference between the functioning and activities of the Congress and

Naujawan Bharat Sabha in Haryana. The government tried to suppress the movement by every possible means.¹³⁸ The *Naujawan Bharat Sabha* was declared an illegal organisation and all its offices were raided and the literature published by the organisation was seized. The arrested members of the *Sabha* were badly treated in jails. Despite all these weaknesses, the *Sabha* made a significant contribution to the political advancement during 1926-30 as its leaders created anti-British feeling among the youth. However, the *Sabha* continued to mark its presence in different names in many districts of Haryana.¹³⁹

Another important revolutionary organisation which emerged was the *Kirti Kisan* Party. Sardar Santokh Singh, an Indian revolutionary in U.S.A. who was tried in San Francisco Conspiracy Case started a paper *Kirti*, the first Punjabi paper that advocated the interests of the working class in Punjab. The *Kirti-Kisan* Party was established to organise the workers and peasants in April 1928 at Amritsar. Sohan Singh Josh and M.A. Majid were elected Secretary and the Joint Secretary of the party. The second Conference of the party was held at Lyallpur in September 1928 where it opposed the forced labour and sought reduction in taxes and land revenue.¹⁴⁰ The third Conference was held at Rohtak on 10 March, 1929 where Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Neki Ram Sharma, Sohan Singh Josh, Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Duni Chand Ambalvi, Sardar Baldev Singh and others participated and changed its character. This organisation was suppressed by the repressive measures of the government as was the case with the *Naujawan Bharat Sabha*.¹⁴¹

The *Sabha* could not make much headway in Haryana. Only Hissar *Kisan Sabha* remained in the reckoning and protested against the payments of rent in kind, in place of cash to the landlords. Bhagat Singh and

Batukeshwar Datt who were associated with the *Naujawan Bharat Sabha* threw bomb in the Central Assembly, New Delhi, on April 8, 1929. This action motivated the youth to oppose the British oppression by such methods. Both the leaders surrendered themselves and many others were also arrested. Their statements in the courts and hunger strikes in the jail aroused the youths and created a patriotic fervour throughout India. Jatinder Sanyal who fasted for 62 days in jail died on 1 October, 1929 causing great resentment and building high patriotic pitch in the country.¹⁴²

The growth of revolutionary activities, establishment of Congress Committees at all levels, the political and industrial unrest, economic depression, oppressive attitude of colonial regime and concomitant resentment against alien rule and fervour for freedom were some factors which motivated the Congress leadership to take some concrete steps to dispel the political lullness throughout India.

Jawaharlal Nehru, despite the opposition of Gandhi, made a historic speech for *Purna Swaraj* (complete independence) at the annual session of Congress.¹⁴³ It was firmly decided that congress leadership would continue to issue instructions from time to time for the purpose of getting independence. Besides, the Congressmen were asked to resign from Central and Provincial legislatures. The other issues dealt were the participation in the Round Table Conference, the fundamental rights of the Indian States, communal question, plights of Indians in East Africa etc. It was also resolved that 26 January would be celebrated as an 'independence day' every year throughout India.¹⁴⁴ This session witnessed the emergence of youth leadership and intensified the struggle for freedom in India.

All the leaders of Haryana visited their respective areas where they reorganised the local committees and enrolled members of the Congress in Rohtak, Hissar, Kanral, Ambala and Gurgaon districts. All the tehsil and district headquarters celebrated 26 January 1930 as an 'independence day'¹⁴⁵ followed by a pledge :

"We pledge ourselves afresh to this great cause of India's freedom and to end the exploitation of our people and resolve to work to this end till success comes to our people. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever its connection with the British and attain complete independence."¹⁴⁶ The *Satyagraha Sabhas* were also organised for breaking the salt laws and enrolment of volunteers.¹⁴⁷

Gandhiji started his historic march from Sabarmati Ashram on 12 March, 1930 and reached Dandi on 5 April, 1930 where all the Congressmen violated the salt laws.¹⁴⁸ Boycott of foreign cloth was celebrated on 17 March, 1930 throughout Haryana. Picketing of shops and selling of foreign goods attracted the attention of the masses. The liquor sellers were socially boycotted and their houses were surrounded by the crowds in many districts.¹⁴⁹ The next aspect was the boycott of the educational institutions by students. This movement did not succeed due to opposition of parents and guardians. Besides, boycott of the law courts did not prove effective. The government adopted a repressive policy in order to subdue the agitation of the Congress. Despite the repression, the Congressmen continued to hold meetings and processions

and came forward to court arrest.¹⁵⁰ The Press Act of 1910 was revived and Gandhiji called this repression as *Goonda Raj*. Consequently, he was arrested on 4 May, 1910. The Congress party was declared an illegal organisation and banned the holding of public meetings and processions.¹⁵¹

The British Government decided to hold the Round Table Conference despite the opposition from the Congress. Gandhiji attended only II Round Table Conference. A large number of Congressmen were arrested and sentenced to varying period of imprisonment. Among those arrested were Shri Ram Sharma, Sham Lal, Rao Mangli Ram, Bharat Singh, Com. Ram Saran Das, Chandgi Ram, Ram Singh Jakhar, Badlu Ram, Mam Chand, Kanshi Ram, Smt. Kasturi Bai, Smt. Nanhi Devi, Darka Devi, Hazi Khair Mohammad, Mange Ram Vatsa, Mehar Singh Dangi, Daulat Ram Gupta, Sardar Tirlok Singh, Swami Atma Nand, Lala Mauji Ram etc. from Rohtak district.¹⁵² Around 20 persons were arrested from Rewari tehsil of the then Mohindergarh district and prominent among them were Phool Chand, Chiranji Lal, Onkar Prasad, Ramji Lal etc. All these Congressmen were sentenced to three to seven months of imprisonment.¹⁵³

From Rohtak district, the political leaders and activists such as Neki Ram Sharma, Mela Ram Moda, Noonkaram Das, Bidhi Chand, Ram Chander Vaid, Gokal Chand Arya, Ram Chander Shorewala, Jugal Kishore, Shishpal Singh, Ganga Ram, Bhagwan Das Gautam, Smt. Mohini, Mam Raj, Swami Raghunath Das, Amin Lal, Kalyan Das were sentenced to six months imprisonment in Hissar district. From Bawani Khera, Mussadi Lal; from Mitathal, Parsu Ram, Raghu Mal, Hemraj, Chanderjit Lal, Ganga Dhar and from Dadri tehsil of Jind State, Hari Singh Chinaria, Ram Kishan Gupta, Banarsi Das Gupta, Rajender

Prasad Jain and Mansa Ram were also sentenced for six months to one year.¹⁵⁴

Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on 5 March, 1931 and all the political prisoners were released, except those who were charged with violent activities. In this movement, a parallel administration was set-up by the Congressmen in Rohtak district. Sham Lal was appointed Deputy Commissioner, Shri Ram Sharma, Superintendent of Police and other Congressmen were *thanedars* etc. This administration issued a Gazette Notification which appeared in *The Haryana Tilak*. At the same time, Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukh Dev were hanged on 23 March, 1931 in Lahore Jail. Their executions created great resentment through out India. Gandhiji after his return from II Round Table Conference, London, resumed the Civil Disobedience movement.¹⁵⁵ Many leaders were arrested again and Gandhi was also arrested in January 1932. The total arrests made during the movement were:

The Arrested Congressmen in Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930-1933

District	Arrests
Rohtak	350
Hissar	93
Ambala	66
Karnal	45
Gurgaon	28
Total	582¹⁵⁶

The above table shows that despite the influence of the Unionist party in the rural areas and continuous oppression of the government, the participation of Haryana was quite satisfactory. It was suspended in May

1933 and the congress finally withdrew it in May 1934. Though the movement as such failed yet it marked a great step towards the growth of freedom struggle. Gandhiji did not favour the revolutionary activities but demonstrated the resentment of the people against the government policies and instilled the feeling of patriotism, self-reliance and sacrifice among the people of the land.

The Government of India increased the number of seats for the elected members in the Punjab Legislative Council. Out of the total of 175 seats, 22 seats belonged to the Haryana region. The Congress made all feasible efforts to win all the 22 seats. Shri Ram Sharma and Hardev Sahai were all in all and campaigned resolutely for the Congress in Haryana. Similarly, Sir Chhotu Ram and Rao Balbir Singh were the main leaders who propagated for the Unionist Party and the *Hindu Mahasabha* respectively in all regions of Haryana. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Jawaharlal Nehru came to Haryana and made extensive tours and addressed many public rallies. Swami Satya Dev, a prominent Arya Samaj leader also carried out election campaigns in Ambala and Jagadhri areas. Raja Narendra Nath propagated ideology and programmes of *Hindu Mahasabha* in support of their candidates. Madan Mohan Malaviya came to Haryana for the Nationalist Party's propaganda work during the elections.¹⁵⁷ The total member of candidates who contested and won from Haryana were as follows:

Name of the Party	No. of Candidates won
Unionist	12
Congress	4
Hindu Mahasabha	1
Independents	5
Total	22

The above table shows that the Unionist party got more than 50% seats for the first time. The Congress could not get popular support. Unionist leader, Sikander Hayat Khan, formed his six men ministry in which 3 Muslims, 2 Hindus and 1 Sikh were made ministers. Chaudhry Chhotu Ram and Chaudhry Tikka Ram were included in the cabinet from Haryana region.¹⁵⁹ Unionist leaders had campaigned for their candidates in Panipat, Rohtak, Rewari and Hissar.¹⁶⁰

The Unionist Party achieved success bagging 16 out of 29 seats. The number of seats for Haryana region were raised 22 to 29 in the house of 175 members of Punjab Legislative Assembly by Government of India Act, 1935. The Congress could not do well in Hissar district. The Congress and *Hindu Maha Sabha* won four seats each in Haryana as is evident from the following table:

Parties	Seats (Haryana)	Seats (Punjab)	Total
Unionist	16	83	99
Congress	4	14	18
Hindu Mahasabha	4	8	12
Congress Nationalist Party	1	-	1
Akali Dal	1	10	11
Independent	3	13	16
Khalsa Nationalist Party	---	13	13
Ahrars	---	2	2
Ittihad Millat	---	2	2
Muslim League	---	1	1
Total	29	146	175 ¹⁶¹

The Congressmen were not happy with the party's performance in these elections and they started organising political conferences in the regions. The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee held its first conference at Rohtak in March 1938 to strengthen its presence in Haryana wherein Bholabhai Desai, Lehri Singh, Gopi Chand Bhargava, Joginder Singh and Raizada Hansraj addressed. Many incidents of violence took place between the Congressmen and the Unionists during their meetings and the former decried such incidents in their meetings.¹⁶² Such incidents were denounced by the leaders.

In between, a famine occurred in Hissar and other parts of Haryana where there was acute shortage of fodder. The Congressmen formed *Qahat* Committee in order to help the famine-stricken people by raising funds for them. The President of the Congress, Subhash Chandra Bose, visited such areas like Satrod, Bhiwani, Rohtak and Hissar and urged the government to help the people so that cattle wealth could be saved from extinction in Haryana.¹⁶³ In between World War II began and political activities were shifted towards the war.

The outbreak of World War II in September 1939 put the question of India's political future into a new perspective. Lord Linlithgo, Viceroy of India, dragged India into the war without consulting the Indian leaders. The Congress leadership refused to cooperate in British war efforts. The Unionist, *Hindu Mahasabha* and Indian States supported the war. The Congressmen urged the people not to cooperate in the recruitment drive nor in the contribution of war fund.¹⁶⁴ The Congress decided to launch a *Satyagraha* in order to put pressure on the government so that it could accept their genuine demands. The *Satyagraha* Committees were formed throughout Haryana. The second step was to enrol members and

recruit the *Satyagrahis* for the ensuing struggle. Many meetings were held throughout Haryana in which people were urged not to contribute to the war fund nor to the recruitment to army.¹⁶⁵

The Congress Working Committee at its Allahabad meeting on 19-23 Nov, 1939 denounced the Government's reluctance to clarify its war aim with regard to India. It was alleged that the British were fighting the war for their imperialistic end and had no desire to give India independence. The Working Committee offered its cooperation in war efforts if the British recognised India's independence and "the right of her people to frame their constitution through a constituent assembly". It also appealed to the people to be prepared for a non-violent struggle against British Government.¹⁶⁶ The Individual *Satyagraha* movement was then started in October 1940.

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CHAPTER IV

ROLE IN INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA MOVEMENT

During World War II, some crucial developments like the fall of France, the massive invasion on England and Hitler's advance towards the Soviet Russia had created a general impression that Britain's defeat was inevitable. The Congress Socialist Party and Forward Bloc saw in Britain's troubles an opportunity to achieve freedom. The whole scenario on the war front underwent a sea-change when Germany attacked Soviet Russia and took the entire world by surprise. The Congress did try to throw slight shades of difference between the twin evils of Fascism and Imperialism in a different way. Jawaharlal Nehru affirmed that the justice was on the side of Britain, France and Poland but he was convinced that both Britain and France were the imperialist countries. The ongoing war was the result of inner contradictions of capitalism ever increasing since the end of the First World War. Keeping the contemporary situation in view, he believed that India should adopt a policy of benign neglect by striking a pace of neutral stance of neither going help to war effort till she achieved freedom nor taking advantage of Britain's difficulties by starting an immediate struggle against her.¹

Gandhiji slightly differed from Nehru as regarding the contemporary situation. Like Nehru, Gandhiji too agreed that both the sides had colonial interests but firmly held that India should not achieve her freedom out of 'Britain's ruin'.² The Congress leadership had to decide keeping in view the international politics, national situation, unity cum dissidence within the Congress and the pressure of the Indian Left. The Congress leadership had either to compromise or to confront with the British Raj. A section of the Congress expected that the British Government which was run over the democratic principles would ultimately make an honourable settlement in due course of time.³ This section was not in a hurry but consented to 'wait and watch'. The Left denounced this policy and urged to take immediate steps to launch a mass struggle keeping the nationalist fervour of the masses in view. Subhash Bose also encouraged the Left that if the Congress did not initiate any mass struggle it should be splitted. But some leaders of the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party did not favour the active endeavours of Bose.⁴

The Congressmen organized conferences in rural areas to dissuade the masses from assisting the government in the recruitment of army personnel. The Unionist Party members and Hindu Maha Sabhaites were denounced for their pro-government attitude by the Congressmen. In Rohtak district⁵ fourth political conference was organised at Jasawar Kheri, a village near Bahadurgarh, on 24-25 February 1940, where a massive crowd of 20,000 people converged to listen to the views of local Congress leaders. *The Jala Watan*, a newspaper, gave sufficient coverage to the proceedings of this conference chaired by Hari Singh, M.L.A. The people from the surrounding areas thronged there by singing

nationalist songs and waving flags in their hands. The prominent persons of the village such as Bharat Singh, Chaudhry Chandgi Ram, Chaudhry Paras Ram, Chaudhry Molar Singh, Chaudhry Keshra Singh, Chaudhry Dewan Singh, Chaudhry Chandan Singh, etc. made all arrangements for its success. A bullock-cart driven by 101 bullocks and tastefully decorated with colourful festoons was specially to ferry the prominent Congress leaders to the scene of action. Sardar Kishan Singh, father of Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chaudhry Kartar Singh M.L.A., Hari Singh M.L.A. were some such leaders sat in this bullock-cart which entered the *pandal* in the form of *Julus*.

All the leading Congressmen of Rohtak district such as Sher Jung, Shri Ram Sharma, Chaudhry Bharat Singh, Com. Mange Ram Vatsa, Chaudhry Lehri Singh, Sultan Singh Gupta, Maulana Abul Ghani Dar, Dewan Dilawar Singh, Lala Prithvi Singh, Pleader, Ram Chander Jain, Chaudhry Garib Ram, Pt. Devi Datt Vaidh, Chaudhry Bihari Singh, Smt. Kasturibai, Smt. Manni Devi, Chaudhry Jug Lal Kasni, Rao Mangli Ram, Mool Chand Jain, Chaudhry Mam Chand Jagsi etc. addressed the conference and urged for the adoption of Constructive Programme. The messages of Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, Govind Ballabh Pant, Purushotam Das Tandon, Sampurnanand were read out by Shri Ram Sharma.⁷ In this district conference, Sardar Kishan Singh, Chaudhry Lehri Singh, Maulvi Abul Ghani Dar, Chaudhry Behari Singh, Swami Sevanand, Chaudhry Garib Ram, Chaudhry Bharat Singh etc. spoke on the policies of the government using coercive methods for raising war funds. All the leaders praised the Congress organisation for its becoming popular in rural areas. The example of Sahib Ram was before them when he won bye-election on Congress ticket from Sirsa and Fatehabad constituency.⁸

The Congress ministries resigned in protest against the government policies. Launching *Satyagraha* movement was the only option left for the Congress leadership. The session of the Congress was held at Ramgarh (Bihar), 19-20 March, 1940, where Congressmen unitedly raised the issue of complete independence, weaving of *Khadi* and supporting other Constructive Programme. Addressing the Congressmen, Gandhiji said that all the Congress Committees in the provinces would become the *Satyagraha* Committees. He also vehemently emphasized to register people into Congress who firmly believed in the spirit of goodwill towards all the people.⁹ He opposed the existence of untouchability in any sense of rancour or discrimination in Indian society. All the Congressmen were directed to spin regularly in spare time and use *Khaddar* compulsorily. Hence, all the Provincial Congress Committees launched *Satyagraha* movement in their respective provinces. The drive for registration of Congressmen was started along with the formation of Congress Committees even at the tehsil level. As per instruction, all the Congress Committees were transformed into the *Satyagraha* Committees and this move added "an impetus to the *Satyagraha* movement."¹⁰

After getting instructions from the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, all the districts' committees of Punjab held conferences keeping the different objectives in view. Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated a provincial training camp for *Satyagrahis* at Lahore, on 23-30 May, 1940. The participants included M.L.As, Presidents of District and Tehsil Congress Committees were urged to start the constructive works and boldly faced the problems besetting the country. All the office-bearers of different districts and tehsils held similar meetings and organized camps in which they started mass enrolling of workers in

the Congress organisation. In all the districts of Haryana region, *Satyagraha* Committees were formed and the Congressman started enlisting the people as party workers and *Satyagrahis* and collecting the *Satyagraha* Fund for the movement.¹¹ Two important instructions were issued to them, (i) to launch Constructive Programme in their respective areas; and (ii) to remain non-violent during the movement. Newly enrolled members of the Congress signed the *Satyagraha* pledge. The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee asked Congress workers to address the gatherings in rural areas where the use of *Khadi* as a step towards the realisation of India was to be stressed.¹²

There were about 2900 primary Congress Committees in the whole of Punjab. These Committees made all-efforts to popularize *Khadi* by celebrating the National Week from 7 to 13 April, 1940. The Punjab branch of All India Spinners Association was assisted by Mira Ben and some districts and Tehsil Congress Committees to increase the sale of *Khadi* in the Punjab. A department namely the *Charkha* Department was formed in order to popularize *Khadi* and spinning throughout India.¹³ All these efforts led the competitive spirit among all the members of primary Committees. Besides, *Harijan* and Minorities Departments were founded. The removal of untouchability was deemed essential as it was a social evil. The upliftment of *Harijan* was a genuine programme initiated by Congress leaders. Though Gandhiji was born and brought up in a conservative and traditional family but he soon realised the agony of *Harijans* who had been leading unremittingly very formidable lives since times immemorial.¹⁴

Gandhiji had realised that the struggle with British was imminent in the given situation. He fully expected that the people would charter their own course of action to achieve freedom non-violently and sign a pledge:

"We believe that it is an alienable right of the Indian people as of any other people to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *Purna Swaraj* or complete independence."¹⁵ This sterling all-inclusive pledge formed the background and basis of the beginning of *Satyagraha* movement.

In this situation, Congressmen realised that the time had come to show the British that their patience was not the result of their weaknesses. Nehru in an article entitled: 'The Parting of the Ways' made it clear that "in this world of force, of bombing aeroplanes, tanks and armed men how weak we are! Why trouble about us? But perhaps, even in this world of armed conflict, there is such a thing as the spirit of man, and the spirit of a nation, which is neither ignoble nor weak and which may not be ignored, save at peril."¹⁶ Gandhiji decided to start *Satyagraha* on an individual basis only by selected persons in all the localities. The *Satyagrahis* were to declare publicly: "It is wrong to help the British war-effort with men and money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance". *Satyagraha* was started on 17 October, 1940.¹⁷

Vinoba Bhave, the *Bhoodan* leader, was chosen the first *Satyagrahi* by the Congress. He was followed by Jawaharlal Neru, Vallabbhai Patel, Maulana Azad and

other leaders. Nearly 30,000 Congressmen courted arrest during the year 1940-41. All these leaders were surrounded by huge crowds which applauded them when they appeared on the platform. The aim of the *Satyagraha* was to be kept 'at a low temperature and in very small doses.' Explaining, Gandhiji made it clear further in his letter written to Viceroy that the Congress opposed both the Nazism and British imperialism that "their objectives cannot be carried to the extent of their participation in the war. And since you and the Secretary of State for India have declared that the whole of India is voluntarily helping the war effort, it becomes necessary to make clear that the vast majority of the people of India are not interested in it. They make no distinction between Nazism and autocracy that rules India."¹⁹

The most significant factor here, as Gandhiji fully affirmed, was to prepare the people for the coming struggle which he had in mind. Secondly, he had to eliminate the opportunistic elements from the organisation. Thirdly, he had to educate and mobilize the people whenever they faced any such situation, they could fight non-violently in their lives. This was a message to fight against the evil.

It needs to be mentioned here that the Punjab Government had already prepared the list of prominent Congressmen in the province who would court arrest whenever required. The Superintendents of Police were asked by provincial authorities that whenever they received a code telegram 'APAOL' (Arrest Prominent Agitators of Lists) they could arrest without any warrant any person regarding whom there were "reasonable grounds for believing that he has engaged, is engaging or is about to engage in any revolutionary activity, a term which has a wide definition in the ordinance"²⁰. The

district authorities were directed that all feasible efforts should be made to arrest the *Satyagrahis* secretly without giving any opportunity of self-advertisements. Public prosecutors of all the districts were instructed to oppose applications for bail in the local courts. *Satyagrahis* who were not prominent were given one year rigorous imprisonment as was decided by the local authorities in connivance with the judicial magistrates.²¹

The Individual *Satyagraha* was to pass through four distinct phases. In the first phase, only the national leaders were to offer *Satyagraha*. In the second phase, members of Provincial Congress Working committees, All India Congress Committee and the Central and Provincial Legislatures were to decide about the *Satyagrahis*. In the third phase, only those Congressmen whose names would be suggested by the local Congress Committees were to offer *Satyagraha*. In the last phase, all the workers were allowed to go for the *Satyagraha*. All the *Satyagrahis* wherever they went, they shouted some such slogans as, "Don't Get your Sons Butchered for a few Paise by this Dishonest Government". "Better die for Independence of the Motherland than to die for the Satanic Government." "Long Live the Revolution." The government tried hard to suppress the movement by large scale arrests of *Satyagrahis* in quick succession.²²

On the call of Gandhiji, Congressmen started taking part in the *Satyagraha* movement. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh who was in government service decided to participate in the movement. Government service paled into insignificance before the supreme service of the motherland. There were no two opinions about this. His family tradition goaded him to deem national service as his top priority. His father, Chaudhry Matu Ram, had set the same patriotic example. Many prominent persons

including *lambardars* and *zaildars* also joined the movement.²³

There was a provision in the programme of Non-Cooperation movement that all the honours, titles, *sanads* would be returned back to the government and boycott the official functions.²⁴ Secondly, the feelings of nationalism was spreading like a wild wind and kindling people's hearts and souls against the British policies. Thirdly, the whirlwind tours of Gandhiji and other national leaders of Haryana region attracted the masses to take active part in the movement. Fourthly, it was Chaudhry Sahib's conscience that something should be done for the cause of nation. All these aspects compelled him to leave the service and join freedom struggle at that time when Gandhiji was advising all the countrymen to participate in the struggle. He did prepare many people to participate in the mass movement for the liberation of motherland.²⁵

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh decided on his own to actively participate in the movement launched by Gandhiji. He did not take advice of anybody nor did anybody suggest him to do so. After taking firm decision, he went straight to his father for getting his blessings. Though he was reluctant in telling his decision but the expression on the wrinkled face enjoined his son and applauded his decision by saying, "I am extremely delighted that my son is pledging for the nation. May almighty give you strength for rendering service to the motherland; take care of yourself and prestige of your ancestors."²⁶ At the same time, father warned his son by saying: "Congress at the central leadership level is a sound party but the provincial leadership is full of factions and frictions. There are some leaders in our district who are engaged in such type of petty politics. Many a time their attitude towards the rural-

folk is not proper. Keeping all these aspects in view, you have to understand things quite carefully." Ranbir Singh agreed with his father and assured him that he would work with honesty and would do no such thing as could defame him or the family.²⁷

After getting blessings from his father, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh went to Shri Ram Sharma, who was the President of Rohtak District Congress Committee. During their meeting former said: "It is my will that I should join the Congress and participate in the movement. You should get me imprisoned as there is a feeling among the general masses that educated *Jats* cannot give any sort of sacrifice. The urban people think that educated youth of the peasantry join Congress only for the sake of leadership. If they don't get leadership or any rank (in the organisation) they immediately left. Therefore, allow me to participate in Individual *Satyagraha*. I have come to you only for nation's cause."²⁸ Shri Ram Sharma was happy to know the feelings of a youth as his father was gone in the background due to old-age. During their dialogue, two things did emerge significantly as far as the politics of the province was concerned. The practice of honesty and sincerity were two qualities to be adopted in politics: this was the message for this youth of twenty seven. The Chaudhry Sahib assured Sharmaji that he would follow the true Gandhian principles and would never get entangled into any fractional politics.²⁹ He there upon paid subscription of four annas to Sharmaji on account of membership of the Congress.

This keenness for the movement by going to jail was manifestation of his ardent desire to show the people that the youth like him was ready to sacrifice for national cause. He once told the writer plainly that he was not after leadership but intended to render service to the

motherland. He wanted to be a *Satyagrahi* but could not become so without the consent and blessing of local leadership of the Congress. There was a big queue of *Satyagrahis* for getting arrested after seeking the approval of the local leadership. At the call of Mahatma Gandhi, the youth were getting themselves registered with the local Congress so that they could court arrest and go to jail.³⁰

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was an educated Congressman with a graduate degree that was hardly available for the Congress leaders at that time. Being a graduate, he was preferred as a *Satyagrahi*. Anybody could be *Satyagrahi* by writing a letter to the Deputy Commissioner and shouting slogan against the war, recruitment and war fund. The police would arrest any such person for doing so. During this period, he came close to Mool Chand Jain, a lawyer of Gohana town, who treated him well. He told the Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak about his activities as a *Satyagrahi*. But before he could do so, arrest was made at his village Sanghi and sentenced to one year imprisonment on 5 April, 1941.³¹ He was kept for some period in Rohtak Jail, but later was transferred to Ferozpur jail. He was offered 'B class' jail as he was a graduate but did not like this special treatment and preferred to live among the ordinary Congress *Satyagrahis* in jail.³²

In Rohtak district, other freedom fighters imprisoned during Individual *Satyagraha* movement were Shri Ram Sharma, Rao Mangli Ram, Bharat Singh, Charan Singh, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, Comrade Lachhman Das, Smt. Kasturibai, Sultan Singh Gupta, Smt. Munni Devi, Garib Ram, Ram Chander Singhal, Mehar Singh Dangi, Badlu Ram, Ram Singh, Preet Singh, Rao Sohan Lal, Kanhaya Singh, Badri Prasad Kala, Swami Basant of Asthal Bohar etc. All these Congressmen along with rank and file of the

party organised, directed and deepened the movement in the district during 1940-41.³³ In Gurgaon district, most prominent Congressmen were Banarshi Dass, Prabhu Dayal, Khushi Ram, Ganga Prasad, Dr. Satya Narain, Dr. Shanti Swarup, Ram Singh, Radhey Shyam, Bhola Ram, Babu Dayal Sharma, Hari Har Lal Bhargava etc. who participated in this movement.³⁴

In Karnal district, Dr. Radha Krishna, Man Singh, Madho Ram, Basho Ram, Mohammed Hussain, Chandgi Ram, Ram Swarup, Vishnu Datt, Banarshi Dass, Sadhu Ram, Chuhar Singh, Sukan Chand Azad, Bannu Ram Gupta were the *Satyagrahis* during the movement.³⁵ Khan Abul Ghaffar Khan, Badlu Ram Saini, Lala Hari Chand, Sardari Lal Sabnam, Thakur Singh, Rattan Singh, Multan Singh, Diwan Chand, Arya Nand, Master Ram Chander, Swami Basant Nath, Gauri Lal, Chandgi Ram, Bhopal Singh etc. were arrested from Ambala district during the movement. They delivered fiery speeches in their respective localities against the actions of the government. Mohammed Hussain, General Secretary, Karnal District Congress Committee, shouted anti-British slogans and delivered patriotic speech on 4 February, 1921, in which he urged the audience not to give any kind of help in the war which was "*haram* and give subscriptions for this war is a great sin and *haram* to become recruits for army was *haram*, *haram*, *haram*, i.e. thrice sinful." ³⁶

In Hisar district, prominent Congressmen who were imprisoned during Individual *Satyagraha* movement were Neki Ram Sharma, Sahib Ram, Balwant Rai Tayal, Ranjit Singh Vaid, Dada Ganeshi Lal, Ram Kumar Bidhat, Chhabil Dass, Smt. Chand Bibi, Smt. Bhagwani Devi, Dada Pat Ram, Ram Dayal Vaid, Comrade Hamid Hussain, Hardev Sahai, Jugal Kishore, Shyam Lal Satyagrahi, Bakshi Ram Kishan, Ram Sarup Bhajni, Pat Ram Verma, Akhe

Ram, Devi Sahai, Mangat Ram Gautam, Lekh Ram Chautala (father of Late Ch. Devi Lal), Lekh Ram of Dhingsra etc.³⁷

As per intelligence reports and contemporary news coverage, the region of Haryana did not lag behind other districts of Punjab. According to official estimates, the total number of *Satyagrahis* were 1615 in Punjab but Haryana's contribution was 476 as the following figure shows:³⁸

District	No. of Arrests in Haryana	No. of Arrests in Punjab
Hissar	8	1139
Rohtak	231	—
Ambala	97	—
Karnal	32	—
Gurgaon	28	—
Total	476	1139

The above table shows that a large number of *Satyagrahis* imprisoned during the movement was from Rohtak district despite hold of the Unionist leadership in the district. Ambala was the next district where 97 Congressman actively participated in this movement. Giving the features of the movement basing on government official reports and newspapers, Prof. Malhotra has rightly observed: "One special feature of the movement in 1941 was that its impact was no more confined to Lahore or Amritsar which had been the hub of political activities in the province. But the eastern part of the province (now called Haryana) showed greater enthusiasm than any other parts".³⁹ It explicitly shows that the participation of Haryana in terms of area and

population was not less than in any other parts of the province.

Mian Iftikar Ud-din, President Punjab Province Congress Committee, happened to tour some districts of Haryana to take stock of situation and create enthusiasm in terms of participation for the coming session of Indian National Congress. His other objective was to prepare Congressmen to face the challenges boldly in the near future. On November 15, 1940, he visited Karnal and, later on, Sonapat and Rohtak. After meeting the workers at Sonapat, Mian Sahib proceeded to Rohtak in the evening of November 15, 1940 where he met the members of the District Congress Committee. Mian Iftikar Ud-din, Shri Ram Sharma and others addressed a public meeting of the Congress workers.⁴⁰ However, his visit aroused little interest and certainly created no enthusiasm in Karnal and Rohtak districts. Mian Iftikar Ud-din had to postpone his tour on the receipt of further orders from Wardha about the extension of Individual *Satyagraha*. The Congress High Command directed Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava to come to Wardha to acquaint the national leaders with the situation of Punjab. On return from Wardha, he met provincial leaders to seek advice about the movement. Nehru was arrested after Vinoba Bhave began to gain popularity among the Congressmen in Haryana.⁴¹

The Tribune wrote several editorials on Nehru's arrest commending his role in intensifying the Individual *Satyagraha* movement. After Lahore session of the Congress where he had delivered historic speech and demanded 'complete independence', Nehru was becoming increasingly popular not only in Punjab but in other parts of the country also. As a token of respect, Congressmen celebrated 'Nehru Day' on 14 November, 1940, at many places in Haryana region. The Congressmen also

organized anti-British agitation in which they protested against the arrest of Jawahar Lal Nehru.⁴²

Mian Iftikar-Ud-din visited Ambala also to address a public meeting regarding the future course of action. Padam Parkash Azad, the Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, Ambala, was also arrested on the same day under Defence of India Rules. In a meeting of the P.P.C.C. on 23 November, 1940, a resolution was passed which reaffirmed that Congressmen should not submit to a policy which suppressed "the true expression of public opinion and which would lead to the degradation of people and their continued enslavement".⁴³ The Provincial Congress Committee passed another resolution in which it was firmly decided to stand by Mahatma Gandhi who was leading a non-violent and peaceful struggle for India's freedom. Though many 'sufferings and hardships' were inevitable in a final struggle yet the Congressmen were prepared to face these boldly.⁴⁴

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was very aggrieved to see the factional politics in the Punjab Congress Committee. Many Congressmen were with Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava and others with Dr. Satya Pal. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was in the group of Dr. Satya Pal earlier. Congressmen all over Haryana region were divided between these two groups. This fractional politics often became visible during the elections be it of District Board, Municipal Committee or of the Legislative Council Assembly. The politics of the Unionist party was also to some extent responsible for politics of dissidence in Haryana region.⁴⁵

The situation in the Punjab Congress circles was specially characterised by this dilemma. In such piquant situation, the High Command was urged to exempt Punjab from the Individual *Satyagraha* movement as was the case in Sind. The press in Punjab explained the reasons for

such an exemption.⁴⁶ First, Punjab had to make all arrangements for holding session of Congress and in such a situation, leaders would not be able to do justice with the holding and making the session successful. Secondly, Punjab was one of the four provinces where new constitution was still functioning and the Congress Party was the only opposition party in the legislature functioning as 'checks and balance in Punjab politics'. If Congress members of the legislature were arrested, the opposition would become negligible and the Congress interest would suffer irretrievably. The ruling party might pass some such acts which could be against the general interests.⁴⁷ Many Congressmen in Haryana were educated and knew the administrative functioning well. Both Shri Ram Sharma and Mool Chand Jain were well versed with legislative business but acted at variance with each other regarding the affairs of Rohtak District. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was enamoured of Mool Chand Jain and had great regard for him.⁴⁸

The Congress High Command often received complaints of Punjab Congressmen regarding the functioning of the Provisional Congress Committee. The Congress President, Maulana Azad, went to Lahore where he directed the provincial leadership that "no youth was to be accepted as *Satyagrahi* as his acceptance might make the movement disorderly and violent "which was against the principles of the Congress. He suggested a schedule to Congressmen to initiate the *Satyagraha* movement immediately. All the members of the Punjab legislatures were instructed not turn back towards the Assembly Chamber and look forward to the jail gates."⁴⁹

Maulana Azad cautioned them categorically that in the event of Gandhi's arrest, the Congressmen would themselves be responsible for carrying on *Satyagraha* at

their own level. Iftikar Ud-din started visiting all major districts of Haryana where he was to project the Congress views on *Satyagraha* movement due to the lukewarm attitude of the other parties such as the Akali Party, Hindu Mahasabha and *Majlis-i-Ahrar* etc. which had different views and were almost totally divided on this significant issue. After completing the tour of Haryana, he went to his native village, Baghbanpur (Lahore) and courted arrest to begin Individual *Satyagraha*. This is how the *Satyagraha* movement in the province was inaugurated.⁵⁰

The Individual *Satyagraha* movement was to pass through the four phases.⁵¹ Dr. Gopichand Bhargava followed Iftikar-Ud-din as the next *Satyagrahi*. Dr. Bhargava was a top ranking leader of the Punjab and also wielded decisive influence over the Congressmen in Haryana region. He was arrested on November 30, 1940. Movement was fast gaining momentum in the province. Significantly, this greatly charmed both the students in Colleges and Universities and employees working in different branches of the administration.⁵² It is evident from the official confidential reports that the activities of students erupted phenomenally after the arrests of Iftikar-Ud-din and Bhargava, Lala Duni Chand (Ambala), another responsible leader of Punjab, was nominated as an interim President of the Punjab Province Congress Committee. He held that a *Satyagrahi* should necessarily have full faith in non-violence; constructive programme; spinning regularly and wearing of *khadi* clothes.⁵³ Akalis were also approached to join the movement. They were enjoined upon to oppose the recruitment drive for the Army. Every district Congress Committee was instructed to maintain the tempo of the movement by urging the rank and file to lend their support to Individual *Satyagraha* in the province.⁵⁴

The Provincial Government kept a vigilant eye on the situation emerging at different places. Even ladies like Phagwati Devi, wife of Dunichand, fervently shouted anti-war slogans in Lahore city on 5 December, 1940. She was detained under Rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules. Sardar Gurmukh Singh of the same district was also arrested for his anti-war activities. Hamid Hussain courted arrest by delivering anti-war speech in which he criticised the recruitment policy of British Government in Karnal District. Pandit Neki Ram Sharma another prominent Congress leader of Hissar district offered himself for *Satyagraha* at Bhiwani.⁵⁵ He stirred the Congress workers. The official report acknowledged the enthusiasm among the people in these words: "Pandit Neki Ram Sharma created temporary enthusiasm at Bhiwani in Hissar district by making an objectionable speech and he has since gone to jail for a year and a half."⁵⁶

Sardar Sampuran Singh, a Congress leader of Punjab, in a very simplistic manner told Gandhi at Wardha that "no one in Punjab believed in non-violence except as a matter of discipline." It distressed Gandhi very much. This was treated as a most serious matter by Gandhiji who urged Abul Kalam Azad to find out for himself what Punjab thought of the Congress and fundamental issue of non-violence. After reaching Lahore on 27 December, 1940, Azad affirmed that after having met about one thousand Congressmen in the province, he was convinced that in the matter of non-violence, Punjab Congress workers were in no way behind Congress workers of any other province.⁵⁷ He was unhappy to note that a large number of Congressmen offering *Satyagraha* did not have "full faith in non-violence, for, only a few years earlier, they had rejected Gandhi's recommendation of changing the creed of the Congress from peaceful and legitimate means to

truthful and non-violent means." In an interview to a journalist at Lahore on 30 December, he denied that the absolute "non-violence was the creed of the Congress."⁵⁸

The situation in the regions of Haryana was different from other parts of the province. Rohtak and Hissar were nerve centres of political activities. The leadership of both these districts was quite active. They were carrying out whirlwind tours of all their respective areas. In the first phase leaders like Shri Ram Sharma, Lala Sham Lal (Hissar) and Sahib Ram offered themselves as the *Satyagrahis* for arrest at different places.⁵⁹ The table given below indicated the arrests of the first phase.

The Prosecutions during first Phase of Individual *Satyagraha*

	Oct. 1940	Nov. 1940	Dec. 1940	Jan. 1941	Total
Hissar	2	—	—	5	7
Rohtak	—	—	1	1	2
Gurgaon	1	1	—	—	2
Karnal	—	—	1	2	3
Ambala	—	1	—	1	2
	3	2	2	9	16 ⁶⁰

The above table shows that the number of persons prosecuted during the first phase of *Satyagraha* in Haryana was 16 and Hissar was on the top with 7. The second phase was expected to start from January 27, 1941. The first phase shows that the progress of *Satyagraha* movement in Haryana was not very encouraging. Among 16 only 4 Congress members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly from Haryana region offered themselves as

Satyagrahis for the arrest. There were 4 members from Haryana in AICC. The fourth member, Lala Duni Chand of Ambala, had, later on, resigned from membership of A.I.C.C. during the *Satyagraha* movement. Gandhi who had close association with Lala Duni Chand had to accept his resignation on health ground.⁶¹ In the initial phase, number of prosecutions was not encouraging but in next phases, the situation improved briskly.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh like many more in the Congress was not completely happy with the way party had become a divided house. Only few leaders were convinced with Gandhian leadership and his *Satyagraha* strategy. It was unfortunate that many Congressmen had least faith in Gandhian ways⁶² as had been frankly told by Sardar Sampuran Singh to Gandhi at Wardha. Besides, the Congress organisation of Punjab was factional ridden. Many Congressmen held Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava responsible for the failure of *Satyagraha* movement. Dr. Satya Pal claimed that if Gandhi entrusted charge of *Satyagraha* in Punjab to him, he would make it successful. His statement was given no weight-age by Gandhiji and, therefore, he resigned from the Congress. He accused Gandhi for dictatorial functioning and denounced the strategy applied in Individual *Satyagraha* movement.⁶⁴ In a press note on July 16, 1941, he wrote that he had resigned from the membership because he had no other alternative and "Mahatmaji's formula is either get under or get out. If one can't find himself in full agreement with the views of Mahatmaji, he cannot be allowed to remain in the fold of Congress....Mahatmaji has ordered that whoever differs from policy and programme enunciated and promulgated by him must not be permitted to remain within Congress. Had I not resigned I would have been expelled" (by Congress High Command).⁶⁴

Apart from factionalism, other reason responsible for the slow start, as explained by Chaudhry Ranbir Singh in an interview was the fact that there were many organisations and parties which were equally responsible for giving undue weight-age to their own interests. The regional parties like Unionist, Akali Dal did not like the non-violence strategy of Congress and continued to support recruitment drive to the army. Hindu Mahasabha and Forward Bloc remained away from giving support to the movement. *Majlis-i-Ahrar*, an opposition party, was divided on this vital issue. The provincial press was also against the movement. The papers continued to clamour for India's salvation through superior military power only.⁶⁵

The nationalist papers such as the *Tribune* denounced the policy of Congress party for asking M.L.As. etc. to court arrest. Such directions would not only demoralise workers but also go against interests of the nation.⁶⁶ Disagreeing with Congress strategy, the same paper further observed: "They will suffer equally grievously and in some cases irretrievably in the provinces in which the constitution is still functioning if all Congress members of legislatures resort to *Satyagraha* or even if there is a substantial reduction in their strength or their cumulative ability. Making the fullest allowance for the value of such action as a gesture of protest, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that it would be poor compensation for positive loss which the constituencies would suffer by the prolonged absence of their representatives from the legislatures."⁶⁷

Some groups and parties which supported the government's views sometimes directly or indirectly in Punjab were the *Zamindara League* in Haryana regions and the Unionist Party in Muslim-dominated areas of Punjab.

All the strongholds of peasantry looked towards their leaders and could go to any extent if their leaders wanted. Both these parties along with the government kept on dividing the masses by pursuing a policy of dividing the rural from the urban classes.⁶⁸ The Congress did not support the agitation against the Urban Immovable Property Tax Act and the Punjab Sales Tax Bill, nor did it seek support of the urban society in this regard.

The press in Punjab kept the significant issues alive and wrote editorials criticizing the Punjab Government for meting out harsh punishment to the *Satyagrahis*. The *Tribune* wrote: "The Premier of Punjab once boasted that his province being pioneer in the field of constructive endeavour or not may be debatable, but in the severity and harshness of punishment awarded to some of *Satyagrahis*, the Premier's boast has without doubt been justified."⁶⁹

First Phase (up to 15 January, 1941) of the agitation was to be followed by the second Phase from January 27, 1941. Punjab Provincial Congress Committee sent a list of 702 volunteers to Gandhi for his approval. About 100 *Satyagrahis* belonged to the districts of Haryana. In January, 1941, only two *Satyagrahi* one from Hissar and other from Ambala intimated the PPCC to offer *Satyagraha* and both were convicted for the same. During February, 1941 the number of *Satyagrahis* began to increase. The total number of persons prosecuted for political and anti-war activities under ordinary law and Defence of India Rules in Haryana had reached up to 42 (Rohtak 12, Hissar 8, Gurgaon 6, Karnal 9, and Ambala 7) in February 1941 but the number declined in March⁷⁰ The prominent among these *Satyagrahis* were Anand Swarup, Haji Khair Muhammad Khan and Badlu Ram from Rohtak, Muhammad Hassan from Karnal, Girdhari Lal 'Shauq',

Pohlu Bhagat and Muhammad Yasin from Ambala. The total number of convicted persons in the whole of Haryana was 22 (Rohtak 9, Karnal 8 and Ambala 5). The number of persons prosecuted for political or anti-war activities under the ordinary law and Defence of India Rules were 72.⁷¹

Prosecutions during II Phase of Individual Sayagraha

District	January (Second-Half)	February (First-Half)	March	Total
Hissar	2	8	9	19
Karnal	2	9	3	14
Rohtak	1	12	18	18
Ambala	1	7	2	13
Gurgaon	—	6	2	8
	6	42	34	72

The above table shows that Rohtak and Hissar districts provided a large number of *Satyagrahis* during the Second Phase of the movement. The participation of Gurgaon district remained low. The volunteers sent intimation to offer *Satyagraha* shouting anti-war slogans and delivering speeches against the war. The prominent *Satyagrahis* during the phase were Balwrat Rai Tayal, Murli Manohar, Murli Dhar, Kasturi Bai, Mool Chand Jain, Banarsi Dass Gupta, Abul Hamid and Jagdish Prasad. In February and March, 1941, the number began to swell and total number of prosecutions reached to 72. It was, indeed, a remarkable increase as the above table indicates. The total number of persons convicted from January to March, 1941 was 64, which is evident from the table given below⁷²:

Convictions during II Phase of Individual Satyagraha

District	Jan.	Feb.	Mar. (First-Half)	Total
Hissar	1	—	11	12
Karnal	—	8	2	10
Rohtak	—	9	9	18
Ambala	1	5	9	15
Gurgaon	—	—	9	9
Total	2	22	40	64

The above table shows that Rohtak district provided the largest number of *Satyagrahis* followed closely by Ambala, Hissar and Karnal. The activities in Gurgaon district, however, remained quite weak. Success of the operation depended solely upon the quality of leadership provided by various districts. There were some prominent leaders in Hissar and Rohtak districts such as Neki Ram Sharma, Shri Ram Sharma, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Lala Sham Lal *Satyagrahi* and Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava who activated the movement in their respective districts. Lala Duni Chand and his wife, Abul Ghaffar Khan, Bhagat Ram Shukla and Jagdish Prasad were prominent leaders in Ambala and Karnal districts. The leaders like Khushi Ram, Chandar Bhan and Abul Hamid were active in Gurgaon district but their leadership not as dynamic as the one witnessed in Hissar, Ambala and Rohtak districts.⁷³ As the figures above indicate, all the districts except Gurgaon did well in Haryana region.

The first phase of the movement failed to inspire much confidence in Haryana region, reason being the internal factionalism within and absence of full faith in

the cult of non-violence. The provincial press continued to observe that Individual *Satyagraha* lacked proper direction and suggested to seek the required cooperation with British imperialism in the given situation. The attitude of the provincial government was harsh and vindictive. The *Satyagrahis* were awarded rigorous punishment ranging six months to 2 years' imprisonment. In several cases, fines were also imposed. The treatment meted out to *Satyagrahis* was unjustified and unfortunate. Coercion was invariably used for collection of funds as following lines sufficiently corroborate: "A number of complaints lodged by villages show that coercion is used by *patwaris* and *lambardars* upon the public and they are threatened to face consequences of arrest in case they failed to subscribe towards the war fund."⁷⁴

The attitude of the government was liberal towards peasantry which was showing interest in raising war funds. Secondly, the Unionist leadership had enough influence on peasantry in Haryana while Congress could not improve its position in rural areas. In order to raise war fund, the Governor visited Rohtak in the beginning of February 1941, when he was presented a purse of Rs.1 lakh collected from the district for provincial War Fund. He also paid a visit to Hissar where he received a cheque of Rs. 70,000 for the purchase of fighter plane to be used in the war.⁷⁵

Of the two newspapers published from Rohtak, the *Haryana Tilak* and *Jat Gazettee*, the former supported Congress policies, programmes and strategies of its leadership i.e. Gandhi and the latter opposed the Congress and Congressism and supported the strategy and ideology of its leader, Sir Chhotu Ram and the government. The *Haryana Tilak* had intensified the anti-British struggle and reposed faith in Congress leaders in their demand for

granting freedom to India at the earliest. The prestige of this paper grew and its membership continued to rise briskly. The change wrought by this paper among the masses of Haryana was acknowledged even by officials of the Intelligence Department in their reports.⁷⁶

The tempo of the movement vigorously picked up in the third phase which started in second-half of March to April 10, 1941. The Provincial Congress Committee instructed Congressmen to go for courting arrest positively by April 5, 1941. From Rohtak, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Chaudhry Charan Singh elder brother of Chaudhry Lehri Singh, Pt. Bhagwan Das, Pt. Surat Singh, Chaudhry Rati Ram were arrested in first week of April, 1941. On 5 April, they were shifted to Lahore and Ferozpur jails keeping their class in view.⁷⁷ The court gave one year rigorous imprisonment to Chaudhry Ranbir Singh on 5 April, 1941 during the movement. In Ferozpur jail, he came into contact with Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava who was a true Gandhian. Chaudhry Sahib inclined towards Dr. Bhargava and the former also became true Gandhian and close associate of the latter. The other reason was that Dr. Bhargava also belonged to Haryana region.⁷⁸

The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee issued instructions to Congressmen who happened to be members of District Boards, Municipal Committees and other local bodies to resign positively by April 10, 1941. Besides, office bearers of all the provincial, districts, tehsil Congress Committees were asked to sign *Satyagraha* pledge and court arrest as per schedule of the programme. The members who did not follow instructions were cautioned that disciplinary action would be taken against them.⁷⁹

During the third phase of *Satyagraha*, drive for recruitment of volunteers was the major issue. How many

names were recommended by Gandhiji is not exactly known but Rohtak district became a nerve centre of political activities during this phase. Large number of persons were prosecuted for delivering anti-war speeches or intimating to offer *Satyagraha*. During March, the total number of *Satyagrahis* was 54 out of whom 35 belonged to Rohtak district.⁸⁰ The other districts could not do fairly well in the month of March, 1941, as evidenced in the table given below:

Prosecutions during III Phase of Individual *Satyagraha*

District	March (first-half)	April (second-half)	April	Total
Hissar	8	16	17	41
Rohtak	35	38	53	126
Gurgaon	5	4	5	14
Karnal	5	3	7	15
Ambala	1	20	183	9
Total	54	81	100	235 ⁸¹

The table shows that during first-half of April, 1941, Rohtak district remained ahead of other districts of Haryana and Punjab where 38 *Satyagrahis* courted arrest. Hissar and Ambala followed Rohtak with 16 and 20 arrests respectively. The above table shows that the total *Satyagrahis* from the whole of Punjab was 247 while regions of Haryana provided 135 up to March and first-half of April, 1941. This shows that around sixty per cent *Satyagrahis* were from Haryana. Gandhi was unhappy with the performance of Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. The Congressmen of Punjab did not show any interest in spinning and *Khadi* while both these were given

top priorities in the Constructive Programme.⁸² The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee dampened the spirit of Congress High Command during the *Satyagraha* movement with its less than encouraging response.

The treatment meted out to *Satyagrahis* in jails and the internal contradictions in Punjab Congress were responsible for this discouraging participation as the following official report reveals it: "The hesitant *Satyagrahi* points out that Gandhi wants quality and not quantity and that the quality represented by members of the Legislature, District Boards and Municipal Committees, advocates and doctors have not yet come forward. They explain too that ordinary *Satyagrahis* are placed in a higher class and their families are looked after well. Disparity in treatment by Congress itself as revealed in the petitions by the High Court Bar Association as *amicus curiae* in some cases has created great resentment among the rank and file of Congressmen."⁸³

During the first and second-half of April, 1941, no major change is seen in the trend of *Satyagrahis* as compared to the happenings of March. Rohtak district contributed maximum number of prosecutions i.e. 81 in the month of April while Hissar and Ambala districts improved their position as their numbers grew to 41 and 39 respectively. Rohtak district topped all the districts of Punjab so far as the number of arrests was concerned. Haryana presented the most impressive figure of 235 while Punjab could not contribute fairly well during the month of April, 1941.⁸⁴

The number of convictions made during the third phase of Individual *Satyagraha* movement from March (second-half) to April, 1941 was 212. There were only 47 arrests in the month of March, 1941 in which maximum

number was from Rohtak district⁸⁵ as the following table shows:

Convictions during III Phase of Individual Satyagraha

District	March (first-half)	April (second-half)	April	Total
Hissar	7	17	19	43
Rohtak	30	40	44	114
Gurgaon	5	3	2	10
Karnal	5	5	3	13
Ambala	-	16	16	32
Total	47	81	84	212 ⁸⁶

The above table shows that number of prosecutions made during the month of March was 47 from all districts of Haryana. Rohtak district provided 30 while other districts could not touch the two digits. In first and second half of April, the numbers remained almost identical while Hissar and Ambala districts improved their position in both the fortnightly periods. In totality, the participation of Rohtak, Hissar and Ambala districts was remarkable as compared to the other districts of Punjab. Karnal and Gurgaon districts though always lagged behind the other three districts of Haryana region.

Bhim Sen Sachar challenged his arrest in the Punjab High Court under the Provisions of Defence of India Rules. He was arrested before giving any call for participating in the movement. Two judges bench headed by Bhide and Skemp heard the case and ultimately found that the action of the local authorities was unjust and illegal as is clear

from the judgment given by Bhide in the case: "The giving of notice to District Magistrate of intention to take part in civil disobedience did not constitute an act preparatory to a contravention of Provisions of the Defence of India Rules and was therefore not punishable under rule 121."⁸⁷ The court instructed the district authorities not to take recourse to the use of rule 121 in this regard. Skemp, another English Judge, gave identical decision in this case. The detenu was acquitted. The Provincial Government was perturbed over such a decision of the High Court. All the detenues convicted were released and the district authorities had to accept the verdict of the court. The judgment given by the Judges was seen as 'unfortunate' in a situation when pace of the movement was steadily decelerating.⁸⁸

The official reports show that many *Satyagrahis* applied for release on parole on health ground or death of their relatives. Though the government did not show any interest in releasing them yet the verdict of Punjab High Court compelled the government to release them. Many *Satyagrahis* also applied for their release. There were some Congressmen who took part and courted arrest again for fulfilling their pledges as Congress leadership wanted this. But many Congressmen especially in Punjabi-speaking regions did not apply again for becoming *Satyagrahis*.⁸⁹

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Shri Ram Sharma, Mool Chand Jain, Neki Ram Sharma, Sham Lal and other Congressmen were released by the end of May, 1941. All the released *Satyagrahis* were asked to make tours of their respective regions for creating communal harmony and opposing the recruitment drive more effectively. The Congress leadership further instructed party-workers not

to deliver speeches at the meetings but only to raise anti-war slogans. Gandhi directed the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee that all members of local bodies elected on Congress tickets should resign from local bodies with immediate effect. This was another strategy of congress leadership to keep the movement alive during war.⁹⁰

During the month of May, there was great enthusiasm among the Congressmen who surrendered themselves for arrest in large numbers. Rohtak as in earlier months remained quite active politically when 45 Congressmen came forward to court arrests during the month of May, 1941 as the table given below indicates:

**Prosecutions during IV Phase of Individual
*Satyagraha***

District	May	June	July	Total
Hissar	19	5	3	27
Rohtak	45	1	-	46
Gurgaon	1	-	1	2
Karnal	3	2	-	5
Ambala	16	1	4	21
Total	84	9	8	104⁹¹

The table shows that there was significant fall in the months of June and July 1941. Rohtak district which remained ahead of other districts of Punjab provided only one *Satyagrahi* in June. The position of Hissar and Ambala was no better as compared to the statistics of earlier months were concerned. The convictions remained almost identical as the table given below indicates:

**Convictions during Fourth Phase of Individual
Satyagraha**

District	May	June	July	Total
Hissar	4	3	2	9
Rohtak	52	2	—	54
Gurgaon	14	—	—	14
Karnal	6	1	1	8
Ambala	18	1	9	28
Total	94	7	12	113⁹²

If the numbers of persons prosecuted and convicted are compared, Rohtak district continued to retain its first position even during the month of May. The districts of Karnal and Hissar remained at low ebb during the periods of three months i.e. May to July. All the *Satyagrahis* were convicted under Rule 38/121, Rule 38 and Rule 39 of the Defence of India Rules. But in totality during these months, Rohtak and Ambala districts remained at the top though during the June-July months, the numbers began to decline. The situation emerged because of the Punjab Agricultural Produce Markets Act and the Punjab General Sales Tax Act passed by Punjab Government which greatly impacted the movement. Most of the participants like petty-shopkeepers and small businessmen who were the real bulwark of the movement now diverted their energies towards opposing these acts. This unfortunate situation created some acute problems for conducting the *Satyagraha* movement smoothly in the province. The Unionists started questioning the Congressmen about their social bases while the latter had been claiming for protecting the larger interests of the province. Many prominent Congressmen such as Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Ram Singh Jakhar, Shri

Ram Sharma, Hari Ram Arya etc. admitted that the base of the Congress remained weak in the rural areas.⁹³

The group rivalry within the Congress fold was another factor that demands some elaboration. Mian Iftikhar-Ud-din, President of Punjab Provincial Congress Committee after release from jail, came back to Congress politics and became a centre of criticism. During his absence, Duni Chand (Ambala) was appointed the President of Punjab Provincial Congress Committee but Iftikhar again took over the Presidentship, which caused great offence to Duni Chand.⁹⁴ Besides, the Congressmen in Punjab were dissatisfied with Mian Iftikhar Ud-din's functioning as Congress President. Many Congressmen did not want him to be President any more and complained to the Congress High Command for his request of a radio-set and special food during the tenure of jail. Besides, his opposition to non-violent method, his failure to adhere to the task of spinning and his neglect of other *Satyagrahis* in jail became matters of severe criticism. A powerful group led by Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava did not leave this opportunity in discrediting Iftikhar in the eyes of Gandhi.⁹⁵ All these factors created critics against him in Congress circles of Punjab.

The British in the given situation failed to consider the demands of Congress and it created a sense of antagonism and left itself with incurable barrenness. The statement of Amrey, Secretary of State for India, in the House of Commons created resentment among Congressmen and the press that Punjab had been governed according to the norms of self-government introduced by them. *The Tribune* in its editorial entitled: 'Punjab has Self-Government' severely criticized his statement for misleading the house by giving false information to the parliamentarians: "The Punjab has self-

government. This is what the Secretary of State for India told the members of the House of Commons. Questioned as to whether the remarkable willingness of the population of Punjab to come forward to serve the throne "was not" a good reason to give the people self government. But Mr. Amery must have been laughing in his sleeves when he made that statement, for no one knows better than he does that the statement is wholly incorrect."⁹⁶

The fourth and final phase of the movement was to start from August and would continue up to December 1941. The Congressmen were willing to play the game safely under the rule but did not gather courage to disobey the national Congress leadership. The situation began to improve in August⁹⁷ as is evident from the table given below:

Prosecutions during IVPhase, August-December, 1941

District	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Hissar	--	1	--	2	--	3
Karnal	--	--	--	1	2	3
Rohtak	52	4	3	--	--	59
Ambala	18	2	2	--	--	22
Gurgaon	1	--	2	--	--	3
Total	71	7	7	3	2	90⁹⁸

The table shows that the situation improved only in Rohtak and Ambala districts. The others did not do any better. The months of September, October, November and December did not witness any Congress activity. In June and July, the movement remained weak due to passing of the two Acts as mentioned before. The abhorrently oppressive treatment meted out to *Satyagrahis* in jails, their

illness and death of their relatives, dissensions among the Punjab Congress Committee's members etc. created lull in the movement. Only in the month of August, Rohtak and Ambala districts maintained to some extent the same momentum. The district of Hissar, Karnal and Gurgaon failed to contribute much due to communal riots.⁹⁹

It shows that the local Congressmen in their meetings failed to arouse anti-British feelings resulting in precipitous fall in the number of arrests by December 1941. The district wise figures explicitly indicate that the struggle was almost totally dysfunctional now. The Congress had no sufficient funds to further the cause of movement. Besides, the Congressmen were reluctant to go to jail until and unless their leaders did likewise. The leaders like Dr. Satya Pal had started decrying Congress leadership on the ground that it had no policy or any concrete programme. In such a situation, the Congress should either start a mass struggle against the government or it cooperates with it till the war lasts.¹⁰⁰ The leadership in Haryana region was under the influence of Dr. Satya Pal. It could, therefore, contribute little to *Satyagraha* movement in the fourth and final phase.

Congress High Command asked Congressmen to court arrests in large numbers during the fourth and final phase of *Satyagraha*. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Pt. Surat Singh, Chaudhry Charan Singh, Chaudhry Rati Ram, Pt. Bhagwan, Harphool Singh, Phula Ram (Rohat), Pt. Ranjit Singh (Salimsar Majra), Chaudhry Risal Singh (Jatola), Amar Singh (Dipalpur), Jug Lal (Kasni), Palu Ram (Purkhas), Lala Ram Chander Singhal (Sonepat) were arrested from Rohtak district during the month of August 1941. All these freedom fighters were shifted to Borstal jail, Lahore and Lyallpur jail. Chaudhry Ranbir was

awarded one year rigorous imprisonment along with a fine of Rs. 100/- while others were not fined.¹⁰¹

The official secret reports indicate that the Individual *Satyagraha* was concentrated in eastern parts of Punjab i.e. the Districts of Rohtak and Ambala where local leadership was far superior to that of other districts. The number of convictions made during the fourth phase clearly testifies the statement as is evident from the following table:¹⁰²

Convictions during IV Phase August-December 1941

District	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Hissar	--	3	3	2	2	10
Karnal	--	--	--	--	2	2
Rohtak	52	1	3	--	--	56
Ambala	21	2	2	--	--	25
Gurgaon	2	--	1	1	1	5
Total	75	6	9	3	5	98

It shows that Rohtak district provided 52 *Satyagrahis* in August followed by Ambala with 21. The situation in other districts was extremely poor. After August, the turnout of Congressmen remained abysmally low. The Congress remained in wilderness contributing almost nothing to the movement. In November and December, only 8 *Satyagrahis* were convicted for political and anti-war offences under Rule 38 of the Defence of India Rules.¹⁰³ The total number of persons convicted in the last months of the fourth phase was 98 whose average comes to 19. These numbers show that the situation did not improve much. Gandhiji was in favour of prolonging the movement but for Haryana, it was as good as dead as figures indicate. However, a temporary enthusiasm can be seen only during

the month of August as is shown in the tables given above but after that it continued to plummet briskly.¹⁰⁴

Narrating his experiences of Lahore Borstal Jail, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh said that, though he was, given 'B' class jail yet he decided to shift to 'C' class in order to interact freely with the other Congress leaders. Raghubir Singh 'Panchhazari', Prem Singh 'Prem', Jathedar Chanan Singh, Ch. Rattan Singh, Ch. Lehri Singh, Ch Charan Singh, Gopal Singh 'Qaumi' etc. were with him in Lahore Borstal jail.¹⁰⁵

Though, internal factionalism was consistently responsible for the lukewarm response to the movement in Punjab Province while other Provinces did sufficiently well. There were many more other factors too responsible for this i.e. social heterogeneity, timidity, dissension and lack of faith in *Gandhian* strategy. The less number of convictions among Congressmen, who were reluctant to go to jail for the just cause and shortage of funds weakened the Individual *Satyagraha* movement. The dissensions among party men and division over the issue of classification of *Satyagrahis* were such issues which continued to weaken the movement.¹⁰⁶ The political prisoners continued to blame the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee for their neglect. The *Satyagrahis* designated by the District Congress Committees were not willing to go to jail. A deputation of Congress MLAs tried to persuade Gandhi to reconsider his decision for the boycott of legislature but they were rebuffed. Congress leaders talked much but did little. The new development in communal disharmony was also responsible for increasing communal outlook of the Muslim League.¹⁰⁷

The petty traders, shopkeepers and conservative Hindus wanted to extend support to the Congress against the Unionist Party but their faith in *Satyagraha* faded way.

The Congress party could return to the Legislative Assembly as a majority party only by breaking pro-agriculture and pro-Muslim politics of the Unionist party.¹⁰⁸

The nationalist papers such as the *Tribune*, *Milap*, *Paisa Akhbar*, etc. raised doubts about the feasibility of the movement towards contributing tangibly to the freedom of India. The government did not try to resolve the political crisis during *Satyagraha* movement.¹⁰⁹ The prominent Congressmen of Haryana took keen interest in courting arrest during the first three phase of the movement. The Congress, however, remained very active in anti-British campaign but in the fourth phase, the situation began to change. It is noteworthy that Rohtak and Hissar were the leading districts where participation was massive.¹¹⁰ The leaders were successful in arousing deep emotions and explicitly presented the nature of war and its impact on India appropriately. In the fourth and final phase of the movement there was more bickering among Congressmen against each other rather than waging a relentless struggle. Only the first week of August was encouraging but other months led to drastic fall in political activity during the movement. The anti-imperialist struggle of Congress could not remain stable due to the complex and contradictory situations in Punjab Congress.¹¹¹

The *Satyagraha* movement, however, started with a bang but ended with a whimper. The *Satyagraha* should have been stopped by August 1941 in Haryana and Punjab if conditions were not rife in the province. The anti-imperialist struggle weakened due to ideological deformations and opportunism. The unwanted activities of some leaders continued to create dissension among the Congressmen. Crisis loomed large even in the beginning

when leaders showed little faith in Gandhian strategy and non-violence. Besides, the Congress had to fight on two fronts-against the anti-imperial forces and its political wayfarer i.e. the Unionist leadership.¹¹² The Unionist party diverted the attention of the people from Congress movement and told them that their interest would be served only if they lent support to the government.¹¹³

It is true that the Unionist leadership had a hold on small peasantry of Haryana. When Sir Chhotu Ram visited rural areas, people assembled in thousands to listen to him about his agrarian legislations in Punjab. Prem Chowdhry, a critical biographer of Chaudhry Chhotu Ram, comments: "Hailed as the champion of the downtrodden and the have-nots", he was duly acknowledged even by some of the Congressmen to be "genuine" in protecting the cause of small peasantry. Many legislations passed by the Unionist Government made him popular in Punjab and as such he emerged as the representative of wider interests."¹¹⁴ Despite such odds, the districts of Rohtak and Hissar extended tremendous support to *Satyagraha* movement which was a matter of great satisfaction for Congress leadership in Haryana region.¹¹⁵

It is consistently alleged that after the elections of 1937, Sir Chhotu Ram dominated politics with the sole support of *Jat* peasantry of Punjab. But the massive support to the Congress *Satyagraha* movement was also given by this community in district of Rohtak. According to official estimates of Punjab Government reports that 1372 *Satyagrahis* were convicted in Punjab while 627 were from the regions of Haryana i.e. Ambala Division. Rohtak district provided the maximum number of *Satyagrahis* i.e. 264 in this movement perhaps highest as far as the other districts of the Punjab were concerned.¹¹⁶

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and other Congressmen were released from jails by the end of December, 1941. The prominent leaders of Rohtak District Congress Committee were Ranbir Singh, Shri Ram Sharma, Rao Mangli Ram, Bharat Singh, Badlu Ram, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, Ram Singh Jakhar, Com. Lachhman Dass, Smt. Kasturi Bai, Smt. Munni Devi, Sultan Singh Gupta, Ram Chandra Singhal, Mehar Singh Dangi, Preet Singh, Hari Ram, Rao Sohan Lal, Badri Prasad Kala, Kanhya Singh, Swami Basant Nath (*Mathi*, Asthal Bohar) who actively participated in Individual *Satyagraha* under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. These leaders were successful to some extent in bringing a part of the peasantry into the fold of freedom struggle.¹¹⁷

The interviews with many freedom fighters of Haryana have brought out the fact that a large number of Congressmen did belong to the villages of Haryana. Among the urban classes, only the petty shop-keepers, doctors, businessmen, journalists and teachers played an important role in the struggle. The majority of the Congressmen, belonging to the peasant communities did not enjoy a sound economic position like their urban counterparts but they did not lag behind their urban counterparts.¹¹⁸

If a communal graph of *Satyagrahis* is taken into account, it can fairly be argued that majority of Congressmen belonged to the Hindu community. The participation of Muslims and Sikhs was very thin. The anti-imperialist struggle was dominated by the middle and lower middle classes of Haryana in the earlier phase¹¹⁹ but in the later phase, the situation began to change when artisans, service classes, students came into the fray of the movement.¹²⁰ This movement could not become a mass

movement like Quit India movement because its national leadership had no such inclination. It was almost a full dress rehearsal for preparing the masses for a bigger struggle. Despite this, Gandhi was successful in creating anti-imperial consciousness among the people on broader level benefit was to be taken in the near future.¹²¹

Many Congressmen especially in the Punjabi-speaking regions did not apply again for courting arrest.¹²² But Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and other Congress leaders of Haryana region continued to court arrest frequently without any fear or hesitation. Besides, he continued to make tours of Haryana region for communal harmony and opposing the recruitment drive. The Congress leadership further instructed the party workers to raise only anti-war slogans. The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee was directed by Gandhi to strength the party and participate in the movement.¹²³ Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was jailed three times during the Individual *Satyagraha* movement. He not only opposed the war issues but denounced the anti-people policy of the colonial masters. His crusading zeal, self sacrifice and his endeavour in creating mass awakening left a profound influence on the rural folk of Haryana.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh's political understanding was so deep that his individual self had merged with the greater cause of India's independence. He was a kind-hearted, helpful and selfless freedom fighter. He always believed in Gandhian approach and strategy not only in struggle but also in his personal life throughout. He never cared for his personal comforts and braved all difficulties to secure freedom so that subjugation and exploitation could be ended throughout.

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66. *The Tribune*, 26 November, 1940.
67. *Ibid.*

68. *The Tribune*, in an editorial entitled 'Sir Chhotu Ram as the Protector of the Poor' and 'Sir Chhotu Ram as the Representative of his Caste and Peasant-Proprietors' highlighted his attitude towards the Congress, his efforts for the enlistment of youth in military and protector of the interests of the peasantry. *The Tribune*, 20, 21 November, 1940.
69. *Ibid.*, 7 January, 1941.
70. *Home (Dep'tt.) Political*, 18/3/1941 first-half of March, 1941, Punjab.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. *The Tribune*, 22 January, 1941.
75. *Home (Dep'tt.) Political*, 18/2/1941, second-half of February, 1941, Punjab.
76. *Home (Dep'tt.) Political*, 18/3/1941 first-half of March, 1941, Punjab.
77. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 73-74.
78. *Ibid.*
79. File No. 33, 1940-41; AICC Papers.
80. *Home (Dep'tt.) Political*, F.No. 18/3/1941 first-half and second-half of March and April, 1941, Punjab.
81. *Ibid.*
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid.*, F.No. 18/4/1941, first-half and second-half of April, 1941, Punjab.
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Home (Dep'tt.) Political* 18/5/1941; first-half of May 1941, Punjab.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*, 18/5/1941 second-half of May, 1941, Punjab.
90. *Ibid.*, 18/4/1941 second-half of April, 1941, Punjab.
91. *Ibid.*, 18/5/1941; 18/6/1941; 18/7/1941; first and second-half of May, June and July, 1941, Punjab.
92. *Ibid.*

93. Shri Ram Sharma, Ram Singh Jakhar, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh provided this information to the writer during their interviews conducted on 12 July, 30 September, 1985, 13 July 1985, 20 October, 1985; 2 February, 2003.
94. *Ibid.*, 18/4/1941, first-half of April 1941, Punjab.
95. *Ibid.*
96. *The Tribune* in its editorial, 'Punjab has Self-Government refuted the claim of Amrey, Secretary of State for India, made in the House of Commons. The government dealing with the *Satyagrahis* was totally opposite. In its editorial, the paper tried to prove that there was no self-government but autocratic government reigning the Punjab, *The Tribune*, 22 February, 1941.
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Home (Deptt.) Political*, 18/8/1941 to 18/12/1941; first and second-half of August to December, 1941.
99. *Ibid.*
100. *Ibid.*
101. *Desh Bhagat (Delhi)* 3,10 September, 1941.
102. *Home (Deptt.) Political*, 18/8/1941 to 18/12/1941; first and second-half of August to December, 1941.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Ibid.*
105. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Home (Deptt.) Political*, 18/6/41, second-half of June 1941; 18/8/41 second-half of August, 1941, Punjab.
108. *Ibid.*
109. *The Tribune*, 13 July, 1941.
110. After reading all the confidential reports of the provincial government and tables given in the chapter, one can arrive at this conclusions that both these districts were ahead in many ways be it a matter of leadership, funds or coordination. The editorials of the press do verify this argument.
111. Interview with Chaudhry Ranbir Singh on 2 February, 2003.
112. *The Tribune* in some of its editorials such as 'Sir Chhotu Ram as Protector of the Poor' 'Sir Chhotu Ram and his Friends' throw

- ample light on his attitude towards the tilling-toiling masses of the province; *The Tribune*, 21 November, 1940.
113. *Ibid.*
114. Chowdhry, Prem, *Punjab Politics: The Role of Sir Chhotu Ram* (Delhi, 1984) P. 284.
115. Shri Ram Sharma, Chaudhry Ram Singh Jakhar, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh told the author that they were fully satisfied with their participation in both the movements' i.e. Individual *Satyagraha* and Quit India movements.
116. *Home (Deptt.) Political*, 18/12/1941; first and second-half of December, 1941, Punjab.
117. *Ibid.*, 18/1/1942, first and second-half of January, 1942, Punjab.
118. Shri Ram Sharma, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Ram Singh Jakhar, Hari Ram Arya, Ram Saran Chand Mittal and Ram Kishan Gupta fully agreed with the statement that their economic condition was not good but their participation was massive in several movements.
119. Shukla, S.P., 'The Emergence of Middle class in Haryana in 20th Century', *Proceedings of Punjab History Conference, Fifteenth Session, Patiala*, March, 13-15, 1981, pp. 384-94.
120. *Ibid.*
121. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh in an interview with the author told that it was basically a trial whose prime aims were to create immense political consciousness, self-confidence, patience, perseverance etc.
122. *Home (Deptt.) Political*, 18/01/1942; first and second-half of January, 1942, Punjab.
123. Gandhiji was greatly aggrieved to see the less participation of Punjab while the other provinces had been contributing immensely. He tried to revitalize the provincial leadership by sending Nehru and Maulana Azad to Punjab but in vain; *Home (Deptt.) Political*, 18/3/1941; first-half of March, 1941, Punjab.

CHAPTER-V

ROLE IN QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

When Nazi-Germany occupied Poland, Belgium, Holland Norway, France along with most of the eastern parts of Europe, these changes worried the Allies. Soviet Russia was also attacked on 22 June, 1941 on one side by the Nazis and American fleet by Japan at Pearl Harbour on 7 December, 1941 on the other. Philippines, Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Burma were occupied by the military forces of Axis powers and reached nearer India.¹ The Japanese helped the Indian nationalist, Subhash Bose, to launch an offensive against Allied Forces. Such a situation alarmed many leaders. American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Chinese President Chiang Kai-Shek and the British Labour Party leadership pressurised British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill to seek active cooperation of India in the war.² It is imperative to analyse the whole global scenario obtaining during the Second World War relating to the Allies politics and Indian political milieu.

A group of British parliamentarians opposed the 'purely negative policy' of British Cabinet which suggested in October 1941 to send a parliamentary delegation to India for the solution of constitutional crisis. A high-level delegation headed by a Cabinet Minister visited India to seek support of Indians during the war. Cripps "as a self-

appointed ambassador to treat with the Congress" had already brought a draft for "the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India".³ There were three main Indian sides with whom the Mission had to deliberate upon. These were Congress, Muslim League and the Princely States.

In order to win over Congress leadership, the government released most of prisoners imprisoned during the Individual *Satyagraha* movement. But there was no change in the attitude of Congress which reiterated its previous stand of non-cooperation with the *Raj* until the grant of independence to India. In February 1942, Chiang Kai-Shek visited India and urged the "British government to concede real political power" to the Indian people.⁴ But the British Government and Viceroy did not agree with his proposal. As an emissary of War Cabinet, Cripps was confident of an agreement with Indians in such a critical situation. Cripps Mission⁵ arrived in Delhi on 22 March, 1942 and declared that the British Government would set-up an Indian Union⁶ based on 'Dominion Status' soon after the war. The provincial legislatures along with the rulers of the Princely States would duly prepare a constitution. The demand of Pakistan was conceded in principle and provinces were at liberty to opt out of Indian Union after the draft of the constitution. It was also conceded that until a new constitution was framed, the British Government would continue to control over the defence of the country.⁷

The Congress opposed the Draft Declaration of Cripps which did not concede the transfer of power nor the concept of Indian independent state. Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee rejected it as 'the post-dated cheque'.⁸ The Draft proposals were negative in nature. Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, clarified

that the Congress solely stood for transfer of sovereign power. Azad while recording the same aspect in his autobiography frankly admitted: "The offer of Cripps really gave us nothing. If we accepted his offer, we might have to rue in the future. War had given India opportunity for achieving her freedom. We must not lose it by depending upon a mere promise."⁹ The Congress strongly felt that all subjects including defence of the country should be transferred to 'National Government'. The approach of Cripps Mission was not to resolve the crisis but 'take it or leave it' attitude. Owing to its stiff approach, negotiations were bound to fail.

The situation arising during the war in India and in the war theatres worried American, President Roosevelt. He urged Churchill to resolve the deadlock which "has been caused by the unwillingness of the British Government to concede to Indians the right of self-government."¹⁰ But the British Prime Minister did not trust the Congress leadership. Jawaharlal Nehru firmly believed that the whole affair was only a propaganda stunt while the real question was the transfer of power to the 'National Government'. He further wrote: "It was an old issue of Indian nationalism verses British imperialism...The British governing class in England and in India was determined to hold on to what it had. Behind it, stood the imposing figure of Mr. Winston Churchill."¹¹ The British Government refused to accept the demand of transfer of power immediately to India. Stafford Cripps returned to England without any concrete solution and created tension and frustration among the Indians.

After the failure of Cripps Mission, Gandhiji wrote a series of articles in the *Harijan* where he made it clear: "If I continue to wait, I might have to wait till doom's day, personally I am so sick of slavery that I am even prepared

to take the risk of anarchy."¹² Rising prices, war-time shortages of articles, high-handed government actions and other allied issues made the struggle inevitable. He again referred to his demand of complete withdrawal from India. He further wrote, "We were fixed in determination that British rule in any shape or form must end....leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy."¹³ The Congress Working Committee at Wardha on 14 July, 1942, reiterated that the British rule in India must end immediately as freedom was necessary not only to India but to the whole global peace and security also. Gandhi made it clear that he would not hesitate to go to any extreme as far as the interest of India was concerned.¹⁴

Gandhi sent Miss Slad, known as Mira Ben, to apprise the Governor-General of the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee. But the Governor-General, Lord Linlithgo, refused to meet her and clarified that the government would not tolerate any such rebellious attitude during the war whether violent or non-violent. All the Congress leaders authorised Gandhi to take a firm stand whatever he deemed fit. Before launching any movement, he decided to meet the Governor-General for accepting the demand of the Congress.¹⁵

Gandhi knew that such a process might take two or three weeks. He decided immediately to launch Quit India movement on 8 August, 1942. In the session of All India Congress Committee at Bombay, 'Quit India Resolution' was passed. He further made it clear: "Nothing less than freedom..... Here is a *mantra*, a short one that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *Mantra* is: 'Do or Die'. We shall either be free or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery."¹⁶

Now question arises, why it became necessary for the Congress leadership to launch a movement in such a critical situation. Firstly, the Cripps Mission which negotiated with different Indian political parties failed to accept the demand for transfer of power to the Indians. Gandhi had also realized that a struggle for immediate withdrawal of the British was necessary.¹⁷ The Individual *Satyagraha* movement had already prepared and trained the people for a massive struggle in the near future.

Secondly, the war period shortage of food-products and rising prices of necessary commodities created popular discontent and Indian Government failed to control the situation.¹⁸ Thirdly, government in handling *Satyagraha* movement and arming herself with the special powers (different provisions of Defence of India Rules) had irked the sentiments of the people. Fourthly, the position of the Allied powers in II World War encouraged the growing feelings among Indians that Allied collapse was inevitable and the advantage of international situation even to the extent of taking help of anti-British powers for national cause should be taken. Fifthly, there was a general feeling among people that the end of British rule was inevitable. They started withdrawing their amounts from post-offices and banks and began investing in gold, silver and coins in East Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madras provinces.¹⁹

Gandhiji's historic speech at Congress session contained the instructions for all sections of the people. Addressing the government servants, he asked them not to resign but openly declare their allegiance to Congress in order to weaken the functioning of the administration. He urged Indian soldiers not to resign from their posts but should refuse to fire on their brethren. It was a strategy to shift the allegiance of soldiers. The Princely Chieftains

were asked to accept the sovereignty of their own people instead of loyalty to the colonial masters.²⁰ They were also asked to assert that they were not separate from Indian people who would accept their leadership, "if the latter cast their lot with the people but not otherwise." Gandhi asked students to give-up their studies and join the movement. Addressing peasants, he told them not to pay land-revenue to the collecting authorities. He emphasised that Congress "holds the belief that the land belongs to those who work on it and to no one else, where the *zamindari* system prevails ...portion of the revenue, which may be settled by mutual agreement, should be given to him. But if a *zamindar* wants to side with the government, no tax should be paid to him."²¹ These instructions came from the core of his heart and accepted by everyone.

Mahatma Gandhi made it clear that the outcome of the fight against imperialism depended solely on mass participation in "an open rebellion" with determination to "free India or die in the attempt."²² When All-India Congress Committee or the leaders could not be contacted in the event of contingency, the people were authorised "to function for themselves and strive to be their own guides along the high road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India."²³ The people were full of zeal for revolution and expected victory within a record period. The Congress leadership instructed provincial committees to organise campaign with a solitary aim of expelling British imperialism from India. He made it clear that "by embarking on mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India."²⁴ It shows that his intentions were clear as far as the future course of action was concerned.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and other Congress leaders were not happy with the arrests of national leaders in the morning of 9 August. The provincial governments also started arresting provincial and local leaders in order to avert the rising tide. The Government wanted to identify and arrest especially those Congressmen who had attended the Bombay session. Many Congressmen were nabbed at Bombay itself on 9-10 August and others left Bombay immediately to avoid their arrests.²⁵ The Punjab and Haryana Congress leaders responded to the same political wave-length effectively. The intensity of the 'August Revolution' began to increase more particularly in districts of Rohtak, Ambala and Hissar. The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee was instructed by the Congress High Command that it should lay particular emphasis on mass contacts, village food crops and the Constructive Programmes. The unrest and discontent was reflected in a protracted *hartal* of Beopar Mandal, Rohtak against increased sales tax implemented on January 9, 1942.²⁶

Like Rohtak district, a significant development also witnessed in Hissar where Balwant Rai Tayal, Secretary, Hissar District Congress Committee, was arrested on 5 June, 1942 on the charge of possessing a copy of the resolution passed by All India Congress Committee at Allahabad in April, 1942. He was kept in the city police station for three days as it wanted to collect more information from him about its publication etc.²⁷ This was the only example of its kind in the whole of India when a Congressmen was detained in police station. His arrest became a matter of hot discussion everywhere even in British Parliament where Secretary of State for India admitted that carrying away the copy of banned resolution of Allahabad Congress was a mere routine operation but not necessary justifying the prosecution. *The Tribune*

observed that the Congress High Command was apprised of the matter by refuting the argument of the Secretary of State for India when he said that no prosecution had taken place.²⁸

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and others were happy with the decision of Congress leadership and its call for 'August Revolution'. The government, however, disliked the launching of such a movement during the war-be it violent or non-violent. In order to control the situation, Gandhi, Nehru, Maulana Azad were arrested. The news of their arrests spread like a fire and lakhs of people gathered at Gowalia Tank, Bombay, where many clashes with police took place. The Congressmen were in doldrum 'what to do and where do they go?' If remained at Bombay, they could be arrested at any time. Most of the delegates from other provinces decided immediately to leave Bombay.²⁹ Many cities like Ahmedabad, Poona, Delhi, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varansi. Patna witnessed public demonstrations and *hartals* by breaking the laws. All the Congress delegates from Haryana returned to their homes by evading the arrests. Some leaders went under-ground during the movement.³⁰

Neki Ram Sharma and Shri Ram Sharma who were delegates from Hissar and Rohtak District Congress Committees and members of AICC were arrested under the Defence of India Rules. Neki Ram Sharma was among the first-forty four Congress leaders arrested throughout Punjab province on 14 August, 1942. Now the provincial authorities ordered districts authorities to arrest all prominent Congressmen at the earliest.³¹

The reverberations of Quit India movement started echoing in Haryana region also. And Chaudhry Ranbir Singh stole the limelight observing that the several Congressmen were dissatisfied with the functioning of Mian

Iftikar-ud-din, President of Punjab Provincial Congress Committee for mishandling the situation during the *Satyagraha* movement. Dr. Satya Pal owing to dissatisfaction with Mian Iftikar formed his own party known as Punjab Congress Workers' Party. In order to resolve the organisational crisis, Shri Ram Sharma, President, Rohtak District Congress Committee, wrote a letter to the Congress High Command in July, 1942 seeking some clarifications on certain vital issues.³² Duni Chand also wrote an identical letter highlighting the Congressmen's hobnobbing with the Unionists and Akalis during the *Satyagraha* movement.³³ He further clarified: "They have invariably pursued the policy of hobnobbing and cultivation friendly relations with the Unionist party government for paltry advantages and selfish gains. They mishandled the *Satyagraha* movement in various ways, which can easily be proved. They have condoned actions and mis-doings of prominent Congressmen" and that the same had brought Congress into mire. They have allowed the Akalis to carry on an anti-Congress campaign and no action was taken against them. He further wrote: "The continued process of demoralisation, as stated above, has resulted into the above mentioned pact which is, in my opinion, the severest blow to Congress cause in the province. An immediate inquiry is urgently called for".³⁴

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh told the author that the Quit India movement began in Haryana soon after passing the 'Quit India Resolution' at Bombay session. The period of this movement has been divided into three phases. The first phase can be termed as the phase of mass mobilisation for upsurge. It started from 10 August, 1942 and continued up to 31 August, 1942. The second phase began on 1 September, 1942 and continued till February, 1943. This phase featured an approach of expulsion of British power

from India. The third and the last phase, however, began on 10 February, 1943 but came to an end on May 6, 1944 when the movement was finally withdrawn. During this period, the concerted attempts were made to arrive at the final settlement with the British imperialism.

This period often marked comprehensive application of Gandhian Constructive Programme more on broader level. Consequently, the repressive character of the government became visible when it began to severely attack the nationalist forces in Haryana.³⁵ All members of All-India Congress Committee from Haryana who had gone to attend the historic Bombay session were arrested promptly. During the month of August 1942, 337 persons were detained without trial or dealt with under the provisions of 26 and 129 of Defence of India Rules in Punjab. 279 persons were detained under the provisions of 26, 57 and 127 and only one provision 26 was restricted. The police made large scale arrests which created resentment among the people who protested against the provincial authorities.³⁶

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and other Congressmen of District Congress Committee attended the meeting of its workers at Rohtak on 12-13 August, 1942. All the Congressmen resolved to follow the instructions given by the Congress leadership at Bombay session. They decided to bring people of all classes to participate in the movement. The Congress workers were greatly enthused with the slogan of 'Do or die' (*Karenge ya marenge*).³⁷ There was a tremendous mass upsurge in almost all regions of the country. The Congress workers followed different ways of expressing their resentment against the *Raj*. Huge crowds attacked government buildings, post offices, police stations, courts, railway stations and lines at some places. The government tried to suppress these violent activities

wherever occurred. India did indeed witness the 'most serious rebellion since the first Revolt of 1857 as admitted by Lord Linlithgo, Nehru and others.³⁸

The *Congressmen* of Rohtak District Congress Committee convened a meeting secretly at the house of Ch. Net Ram at village Bhaproda, on 22 September, 1942. The prominent organisers of the meeting were Shri Krishan Nayyar (Delhi), Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Chaudhry Badlu Ram (Sanghi), Master Nanhu Ram (Jasrana), Pt. Sheo Karan (Mokhra) Mange Ram Vatsa (Mandauthi) etc. Besides, it was attended by two dozens of Congress workers who were keenly interested in spreading the movement to the villages. Before the meeting could start, police came from Sampla and encircled the meeting place. Ch. Badlu Ram along with some other workers escaped avoiding their arrests.³⁹

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Master Nanhu Ram, Pt. Sheokaran and other dozen of Congress workers were arrested and locked up at Bahadurgarh police station. They were shifted to Rohtak district jail next day i.e. 24 September, 1942. Ranbir Singh, Mange Ram Vats etc. were shifted to Multan Jail on 25 September, 1942. When the Jail authorities tried to snatch Vatsa's Gandhi cap, he warned that he would prefer to sacrifice his life but would not let the cap down at any cost. He was sent to Rawalpindi Jail as he was considered a very dangerous prisoner.⁴⁰

Despite arrests of Congress leaders, demonstrations continued in several towns of Haryana. The shopkeepers closed their shops at Rohtak and Jhajjar on 12, and 13 August 1942. In Hissar, Neki Ram Sharma along with a dozen of Congressmen were arrested and sent to Shahpur Jail. It was reported in *The Tribune* that several Congressmen were handcuffed and carried in a separate compartment.⁴¹

In Ambala, Lala Duni Chand, M.L.A., was arrested on 16 August, 1942 under Rule 129 of Defence of India Rule.⁴² The local police raided the office of District Congress Committee, Ambala, and seized its records. The people broke the telephone wires and letter-boxes in the city. 15 persons were also arrested in the Cantonment area in connection with the attempts of sabotage. Prominent among them were Maharshi Munshi Ram Arya, the Secretary of the Cantonment Congress Committee, Lala Jyoti Prasad, Lala Basheshwar Nath, Lala Mangat Ram, a member of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, etc. The later was immediately arrested when he returned from the Bombay session of the Congress.⁴³ More than a dozen persons were also arrested while going in *tongas* raising anti-war slogans in Ambala City. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, President of District Congress Committee, Ambala, was to be arrested soon as he had also attended the Bombay session but since then there was no news of his arrival nor was he seen anywhere in Ambala. Police wanted to arrest him immediately.⁴⁴

Lala Hari Chand, Manager of the *Khadi Bhandar*, Ambala, and Lala Nand Lal, Inspector of All-India Spinners' Association, were arrested under the Defence of India Rules on 25 August, 1942. The police not only raided the premises and office of the *Khadi Bhandar* but also the residence of Manager and seized the objectionable literature.⁴⁵ The office of District Congress Committee, Ambala, was also searched on August 22, 1942, where an 'objectionable material' was found. Lala Duni Chand who was earlier arrested under rule 129 of Defence of India Rules was released on account of his old age on 27 August, 1942. Orders were also issued to him that he would restrict to his residence only. His old age and the untimely and tragic death of his son perhaps forced the government to

take the earlier orders back in his case. He was instructed not to take part in any meeting, procession and in any identical political activities.⁴⁶

New villages also came into the fray. Shahpur, a nearby village of Ambala Cantt., witnessed five arrests under the Defence of India Rules. Another Congress worker was arrested at Kurali village while distributing 'objectionable' leaflets. Now the Congress workers in Kharar tehsil of Ambala district started asking the shopkeepers to close down their shops as a mark of protest. All the workers were arrested and situation in Haryana was going beyond the control of government. The government resorted to violent methods in order to suppress the violent activities. The Punjab government issued a notification on 10 August, 1942, declaring Punjab Provincial Congress Committee and all the District Congress Committees illegal.⁴⁷

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the Premier of Punjab, denounced the Congress movement and further stated that it was an opportune time for all patriotic Indians and *Punjabis* in particular that their brothers who were fighting battles against "a most formidable and unscrupulous enemy are not betrayed."⁴⁸ The statement of Hyat Khan had an emotional appeal but was against national interest as the whole of India was entangled in the last fight with British imperialism. In support of his statement, he further argued: "As far as Punjab is concerned, we have a special reason to resent the movement which the Congress leaders threatened to launch. Hundreds of thousands of gallant sons of this province are fighting the enemy on various points of the battlefield and the province as a whole is wedded to a policy of giving all possible help to win the war."⁴⁹

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh observed that it was an emotional blackmailing policy of the government and seeking support and sympathy of the local populace whose sons were serving in Indian army. A press-note was issued on 17 August, 1942, in which some concessions were announced for relatives of those soldiers who were killed before and during the war. Their relatives were exempted from stamp duties relating to acquisition of a right to inheritance in property of the deceased. The district authorities started showing socio-religious interests to find ways and means to win over the people. The provincial authorities notified the Penalties (Enhancement) Ordinance No. J.H. of 1942, in order to create terror. The ordinance was for the enhancement of penalties i.e. whipping and extending up to the extreme penalty of death for certain types of offences such as looting, arson, voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons and sabotage.⁵⁰ Besides, the Divisional Commissioner of Ambala directed the members of District War Board to be vigilant and render all sorts of assistance to maintain peace and tranquillity throughout the district.⁵¹

All Congress leaders like Chaudhry Ranbir Singh showed anguish towards nationalist press which became neutral, conciliatory and mediatory in many cases during the war. It criticised the Congress leaders for saying that "the struggle would be short and swift". Similarly, many editorials published in *The Tribune* blaming the government "in the policy of procrastination and for relying on measures of repression for prolonging their tenure of irresponsible power in India."⁵² This paper, however, expressed nationalist sentiments and defended the Congress and Gandhi who were not solely responsible for such a mass violence prevailing in the province. Punjab Government and Unionist ministry were held responsible

for 'not making sound judgment and responsible statements.' However, mass upsurge did not turn into hooliganism as government believed but demanded the formation of a 'National Government' in such a situation. The leaders such as Rajagopalachari and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru were appreciated by *The Tribune* for their stand that independence for India should come "through British goodwill and not through success of any such mass struggle as the Congress proposed to start in the event of its demand not being conceded voluntarily." Both these leaders opposed the mass-violence which caused damage to public properties all over India.⁵³

The significance of movement lies in that it assumed the form of a mass movement in which people of all communities and shades became volunteers of the Congress. The villages of Rohtak, Hissar and Ambala districts showed extreme courage during different phases of the movement. Many freedom fighters refuted that the movement in urban centres was not impressive and only hardcore Congressmen participated. The students studying in educational institutions of Ambala and Rohtak districts were also active, especially in damaging post offices and tampering with telephone wires. Congressmen published and distributed anti-government literature briskly.⁵⁴

The first phase which began from 10 August and continued up to the end of August 1942 explicitly shows that the ordinance for collective fines was announced time and again but never applied in Haryana region. The confidential reports of government show that all District Congress Committees held numerous meetings in order to advise participants in the last struggle of Gandhi's life. All regions witnessed a new wave of enthusiasm.⁵⁵

During the second phase of the movement (September, 1942 and February 10, 1943), Haryana

countered the British offensive policy during this phase. The struggle continued despite terror and persecution. One section of Congress was opposing the violence but the demand of independence was common for all Congressmen. Their task was to find common language with underground supporters of the Quit India movement. All of them wanted to unite the vast unorganized mass of people for the common cause against destruction of imperialism by exploiting every possible means and opportunity. The government however, alleged that the Congress which was leading the movement represented only one "percent of India's population and there are many pro-Japanese elements in the Congress" and that despite the Congress movement, war efforts in Punjab were not affected where recruitment had gone up.⁵⁶

District authorities on their part started nabbing those persons who were suspected of sabotage. Onkar Nath Sehgal, a clerk in the office of Controller of Accounts, Air Force, Ambala Cantt., was arrested for suspected sabotage. Among others were Nathi Ram (Jagadhari), Lala Amar Nath (Shahzadpur), Shabbir Aslam (Jagadhari), Khairati Ram (Multanpur), Garibdas and Nanta Ram (Tiwari) belonging to the same district were sentenced under the Defence of India Rules. 19 persons were convicted in October, 1942 and 5 persons were charged with economic offences in the district. The cases of damaging the letter-boxes and tampering with telephone wires were also detected. In some cases, field cables of military were cut and removed. The matter of distribution of anti-government literature was also reported by the Home Department in districts of Ambala, Hissar, Gurgaon and Rohtak. A confidential report confirms that an unsuccessful attempt was made to set fire the Library of Govt. College, Rohtak, on 31 October, 1942.⁵⁷

Exact number of persons prosecuted and convicted during different phases of Quit India movement in Haryana is difficult to gather. However, it is apparent from government's confidential reports that in comparison to Individual *Satyagraha*, this movement had wider impact on the districts of Haryana region. The number of persons accused of economic offences was also quite significant. The number of the persons prosecuted under provisions of 81 and 90 of Defence of India Rules arose to 259 in Haryana as the table given below indicates:

**Persons Prosecuted during Quit India Movement,
October 1942-Feb. 1943**

Districts	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Total
Rohtak	15	3	26	23	66	133
Hissar	6	1	---	6	7	20
Gurgaon	---	2	20	20	33	75
Karnal	3	4	8	16	---	31
Ambala	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total	24	10	54	65	106	259⁹⁸

Table shows that Rohtak district suffered the maximum number of prosecutions under the D.I.Rules. Gurgaon district stood second followed by Karnal and Hissar districts. Ambala district lagged behind as far as the number of prosecutions was concerned. Gurgaon district's participation was quite significant as compared to Individual *Satyagraha*. Due to proximity with Delhi and political awakening, the number of participants increased enormously in this struggle. The total number of persons convicted remained low as compared to the number of prosecutions as following table indicates :

**Persons Convicted during Quit India Movement
Oct. 1942- Feb. 1943**

Districts	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Total
Rohtak	-	4	28	10	6	48
Hissar	13	4	1	-	1	19
Gurgaon	9	4	1	2	7	23
Karnal	2	2	6	10	-	20
Ambala	5	-	8	3	3	19
Total	29	14	44	25	17	129⁹⁸

As far as the number of convictions was concerned, Rohtak district remained ahead with other districts. Gurgaon district was the next followed marginally by Karnal, Hissar and Ambala districts. The difference between both tables appears mainly in February 1943 when Gandhiji started fast on 10 February. In economic offences, Rohtak and Gurgaon districts witnessed the arrests of 66 and 33 respectively. But why did the people not join in large numbers? Two reasons may possibly be responsible for this. Firstly, some *Congress* leaders followed by the communists disagreed with methods and ways of the movement as it had become violent from the very beginning.⁶⁰ Secondly, oppressive treatment of the Punjab Government meted out to many participants compelled them to restrain from the movement due to hand-cuffed and shabby behaviour of jail authorities. Some persons also became prey of several diseases and even died in jails.

It would now be appropriate to show the attitude of provincial government which adopted atrocious and unlawful attitude as echoed in Punjab Legislative Assembly. Sardar Santokh Singh, Bhagat Ram Sharma,

Teja Singh, Sohan Singh Josh had decried the highhandedness of policemen who continued to arrest people "on the sweet will of police officers". They criticised that the imperialistic unscrupulousness and Unionists alignment were chiefly responsible for perpetrating tyranny in the province. The Jail Minister, Sir Manohar Lal, became direct target of their criticism as he had no control over Jails where Congress detainees were treated mercilessly. Sir Sikander Hyat Khan was blamed to act as Jail Minister and also for his 'lack of judgment and irresponsible statements'.⁶¹ Premier defended the Punjab police and Criminal Intelligence Department and even went on to say that "to arrest and detain men on mere suspicion is better than to have them shot on mere suspicion."⁶² This statement provoked not only legislators but the press also.

Another vehicle of public opinion like legislature was the press which took-up matter at length and commented on current issues. *The Tribune* in its editorial entitled, 'Police Demand' wrote that the established principles of administration of justice were not taken into account as law did as it "is as grave a matter as it is to deprive him of his life." This paper not only targeted police authorities but did decry the Unionists hobnobbing as well. The situation was becoming critical for British Government which was participating in war and handling the movement. Both the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Secretary of State for India, Amrey, made Gandhi solely responsible for such a situation and compared Gandhi with Hitler. Both of them made it clear that India should not expect anything from British Government "as long as Mr. Churchill remains the Prime Minister."⁶³

In Punjab Legislative Assembly, leaders of opposition parties continued to raise the issues of atrocious treatment meted out to Congress prisoners, the unlawful activities and the manner in which situation was handled by the police etc. Sardar Santosh Singh, the leader of opposition, supported the cut motion placed by Bhagat Ram Sharma in the Assembly where they accused the government for treating Congressmen differently while they deserved 'highest respect' and lamented that "most of them were handcuffed like criminals". He urged the Unionist Premier not to be vindictive and advised him to give proper treatment to Congress detainees so that they "would not be starved physically and intellectually".⁶⁴

The hold of police on state machinery continued to increase not in 'eradicating crimes in the province' but in 'pulling into Jails and causing wrong to greatest patriots of the province'.⁶⁵ The police kept on arresting people through the blank printed warrants under whom arrested any person they liked after filling up the warrants.⁶⁶ The police made indiscriminate arrests without even consulting district judicial authorities. The government tried to appease the press by cancelling the order of September 1942, restraining all printers, publishers and editors of newspapers and periodicals from submission of their publications to the special press adviser to Punjab Government.⁶⁷

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh became severe critic of the government which did not show any sympathy with political prisoners and the Congress was declared as an illegal organisation in Punjab.⁶⁸ *The Tribune* in its issue of 29 Sept., 1942, commenting on the notification issued by Punjab Government wrote: "whereas in the opinion of the

Governor of Punjab, associations known as City, Town, Tehsil and Village Congress Committees throughout the Punjab interfere with maintenance of law and order and constitute a danger to the public peace... Now, therefore, in exercise of powers conferred by section 16 of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, the Governor of Punjab is pleased to declare the said associations to be unlawful."⁶⁹

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan supporting the police and C.I.D. in the Assembly lamented that Congress was fully responsible for unrest and chaotic situation prevailing in the province. The questions raised by the opposition legislators were related to the health of Congress prisoners. The government continued to heap insults on Jailed Congressmen citing an instance of Rattan Lal of Rohtak who was transferred from Lahore Jail to Multan Jail,⁷⁰ handcuffed like a criminal of high order. Keeping such atrocities and highhandedness of police in view, Duni Chand, M.L.A. met William Phillips, President Roosevelt's Personal Envoy who came to India to see the political situation in India and particularly in Punjab.⁷¹ Due to alignment of political forces, their nature and aims, nationalist forces could not make any sizable gain.

The British Government did not realize the intensity of situation becoming worse day by day. The cases of mass destruction of public property occurred at many parts of Haryana like railway lines, damaging buildings, telegraph and telephone lines, and pilferage of letter-boxes etc. The people were determined to attack at all symbols of imperialism throughout India. Taking it the last battle with colonial regime, they became violent and started targeting government properties as the following table shows:

Non-violent Activities during Quit India Movement in Haryana.

Particulars	Number of Destructive activities
The Telephone wires cut (at different places)	45
The Post Offices attacked	11
The Govt. Building attacked	8
The Railway lines and fish-plates damaged	6
The Police stations attacked	4
Total	74⁷²

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh firmly believed that the government might not have imagined to what extent the people could go, during the movement. The government, undoubtedly, took a serious view about violent activities and adopted repressive measures to deal with Congress workers. Many cases of lathi charge, firings and bursting teargases were witnessed in order to suppress the rising tide of the movement. The large-scale arrests of the participants were made also throughout Haryana.⁷³

A new phase of 'Quit India' movement started when Mahatma Gandhi observed fast on 10 February, 1943. He was released on 6 May, 1944. His basic contention through the fast was to unite people of all shades on non-violent basis against the Raj. The situation had become complex particularly in Punjab due to the social base of Congress, which was largely depending on the trading and professional classes. The Congressmen who were activating the movement underground resorted to violence specially on 9 August Day and Gandhiji's birthday as both the dates had assumed special significance. One section staged

passive protest on these dates. The released *Congressmen* were active again and made attempts to revive anti-imperialist feelings in the region.⁷⁴

The nationalist papers in Punjab demanded immediate dialogue between the government and *Congress* but the Conservative Secretary of State for India, Amery, refused the immediate prospect of negotiation. Such attitude could not lead to any solution of the constitutional problem. The District Magistrates were instructed to keep vigilant eye on the objectionable material in the papers. A new turn came in Punjab politics when Muslim League and Akalis aligned together for Pakistan and *Azad Punjab* scheme. The Akalis asserted that Sikhs had as much right as Hindus to negotiate with the Muslim League.⁷⁵

The next significant aspect was the economic condition which created great resentment among the people due to shortage of sugar, kerosene oil, cloth, coins and grains in the regions of Haryana. The press published many reports about the wheat policy of provincial government which was held responsible for worsening food problems and rising prices. *The Tribune* in its editorial frankly admitted that the people should not expect anything from the bureaucratic government' which, however, expected cooperation of people in the recruitment on one hand but failed to provide basic needs of daily use on the other.⁷⁶ It was expected that only a popular national government would solve problems in the given situation. Unequal distribution of sugar, kerosene oil, cloth, grains etc. and delay in receipt of quotas of caused much distress to the people. The paper asserted that the major cause of 'present inflation' was the diversion of rupee by the Government of India to Allied powers which purchased warfare materials in return for payment of sterling in London. It demanded that it should

immediately be stopped as it was improper and injurious to India's interests.⁷⁷

A debate on the food question echoed in Central Legislative Council where Food Minister, Government of India, failed to make the position clear. The nationalist press denounced the incompetence of Central Government and obstruction offered by the provincial government. The confidential reports of the period indicate that the government was unhappy with publication of such matters in the nationalist press which held the government responsible for not taking any action against hoarders and profiteers instead of shooting down hundreds of nationalists as 'rebels'.⁷⁸ The confidential reports lamented that the nationalist press continued to pay scant attention towards such incident, "speech or shortcomings, however, trivial, likely to support the *Congress* cause or to bring the administration into contempt of disfavour."⁷⁹

The nationalist press continuously appealed to government to release all political prisoners as early as possible. The non-political leaders also appealed to release them. The issue of freedom of the press was also raised which was equally significant for the growth of democratic institutions. The government should have used the Defence of India Rules only to prevent confidential military information rather than to suppress legitimate and healthy discussion of internal politics.⁸⁰ The press made it clear that rebellion was not possible in the given situation but would only accentuate bitterness, if the government did not immediately release all leaders from jails as Sir Oswald Mosley, a British fascist leader, was also released. However, Indian leaders never professed fascist tendencies but treatment of the government towards them was such as had been meted out in the case of Sir Oswald Mosley.⁸¹

The *Tribune* asked for release of all prisoners keeping the humanity and justice in mind. The Punjab Government decided that Congress legislators after their release would not be allowed to attend session of the Assembly. This issue received a wider publicity and nationalist press criticised it as an undemocratic decision against Congress legislators. When Gandhi was released on May 6, 1944, it was perceived as a possible political settlement and welcomed on personal, humanitarian and on political grounds also. The Congress leaders and nationalist press continued to show anguish over recruitment policy of the government. In the first quarter of 1943, recruitment figures began to increase but in the II, III and IV quarters, the situation did not favour the government as the table given below shows :⁸²

Recruitment figures, 1943-44

Period	Year(1943)	Year (1944)
I Quarter	27, 304	20, 016
II Quarter	18, 774	17, 369
III quarter	17, 298	_____
IV quarter	11, 146	_____

The figures during II and III quarters also remained unsatisfactory. In the last month of December, 1943, i.e. last quarter shows a general decline as compared to the months of October and November, 1943. Between, January and March 1944, recruitment graph continued to increase but after that there was a steep decline even for Emergency Commission in the military as candidates did not turn up due to the opposition of Congress.⁸³

The British officials dully acknowledged the services of Sir Chhotu Ram in the recruitment of youth and his advocacy for a large section of peasantry in Haryana

region. Glancy, Lt. Governor of Punjab, wrote a letter to Linlithgow, Viceroy, in January 1942, saying that "Sir Chhotu Ram is made of sterner stuff than his leader" (i.e. Sir Sikander Hyat Khan). He was tremendously praised for being "an effective and hard-working Minister of marked capacity whose instinct is to ride straight at his fences, whatever their dimensions" might be.⁸⁴ Both the Viceroy and Lt. Governor of Punjab agreed to appoint him a member of Viceroy's Executive Council. His successor, Lord Wavell, had also a lot of praise for his qualities of head and heart but failed to recognise his services as he was not nominated to the central legislative Council.⁸⁵

The Congressmen in Punjab had to face so many enemies such as bureaucracy, Unionists, Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and other pro-government elements which restricted their functioning and their plans could not be materialised. The Punjab Government failed to face action of the people of Rohtak and Gurgaon on the anniversary of Gandhiji's arrest on 9 August 1943. People staged protests and *hartals* in these districts.⁸⁶ The traders, teachers and students cooperated with the Congressmen for organising such demonstrations as following lines indicate : "One case of incendiaries in a letter-box was reported from Rohtak; and a small amount of Congress literature urging the holding of demonstrations and the closing of shops on the 9th August was recovered. It was also found necessary to ban meetings in a few localities and to make a small number of preventive arrests including the arrest in Rohtak of twelve Congressmen who were suspected to be planning to proceed to Poona." Besides, such incidents took place also at Rewari, a tehsil of Gurgaon district at that time when the Congressmen were "arrested for shouting anti-government slogans"⁸⁷

The Congressmen who were activating the movement underground celebrated Gandhi's birthday and anniversary of the movement in every district. The *Khadi*

Bhandars, which were opened in many towns of Haryana, celebrated the occasion by increasing sale of *Khadi*. The exhibitions of *Swadashi* articles and spinning competitions were also organised to mark the occasion in towns of Haryana. In Rohtak town, such a meeting was organised in which flag hoisting ceremony was also held.⁸⁸

Though a large majority of prisoners had already been released yet restrictions were put on them not to leave their towns and villages without permission of local authorities. Many of them did not make any such attempt. Rohtak district was the only exception where some released prisoners like Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and others remained quite active as government report say: "For the most part, *Congressmen* who have recently been released from detention show no signs of attempting to revive agitation, though a few released detainees of Rohtak are reported to be touring the district and conducting *Congress* propaganda under the cover of appeals for relief to Bengal."⁸⁹

The political arrests made in Haryana were quite less than U.P, Bihar and Bengal provinces. If Haryana region is compared with Punjab, the activities of the former were far better than their counterparts of Punjab in a more organized manner. The *Congress* in Punjab region failed to consolidate its position even after the suspension of Individual *Satyagrah* movement. Even to enrol more primary members was a very difficult task. Gandhi was also dissatisfied with the working of *Congress* in Punjab and instructed the prominent *Congress* leaders there to re-organise it in order to make its base stronger by mass mobilisation. Internal dissensions amongst *Congressmen* was one of the major factors for its weakness.⁹⁰ In the last phase of movement, political activities came at a low ebb due to lack of enthusiasm and false trappings by the police.⁹¹

When Jawaharlal Nehru visited Punjab in the last week of August 1945, *The Tribune* frankly observed that he found 'perfect tranquillity' in Punjab in the last phase of the movement. Punjab Government's attitude was "most reprehensive and disgraceful". The business class of Punjab which was the bulwark of the movement was held responsible for loosing its militancy shown earlier. However, attitude of the general masses towards *Congressmen* was sympathetic but it failed to denounce the treatment meted out to political prisoners by the provincial government.⁹² *The Tribune* in its editorial entitled, 'Detenus in Punjab', urged: "It is the duty of the Premier (of Punjab) to see that these men, who include many of his colleagues in the legislative assembly, are treated with utmost consideration. The present state of affairs is deplorable, it does more harm than good. The premier should put an end to it."⁹³ The public opinion put ample pressure on the government which had to release all *Congressmen* such as Shri Ram Sharma, K.N. Sehgal, Partap Singh, Gopal Singh Qaumi, Mange Ram Vats, Kali Charan, Syed Mutalbi, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh. The latter was considered dangerous detainee as he was released quite late i.e. on 18 December, 1945.⁹⁴

The print media of Punjab advocated their cases at all fronts but vehemently opposed the 'mob violence' steered by *Congress*. It, however, firmly believed in non-violence. The paper, therefore, held *Congress* responsible for not realising the importance of rural India in order to consolidate its base therein. The other regions of India remained active due to devising new ways and means and strategies during the movement. Besides, the suppressive and false trapping incidents by the government greatly angered the general masses in Haryana also. Gandhi continued to state that *Congress* was not responsible for

'mob violence' but it was government which "goaded the people to the point of madness."⁹⁵

Gandhi was seen as 'a traitor' by the British officials for launching his movement at such a time when democratic forces were entangled in their fight against the fascist forces. In order to seek support of Congress, Field Marshall Smuts appreciated Gandhi not only as a great man of India but 'the great man of the world'. His unshaken belief in 'non-violence in the midst of mob-violence' raised him to the height of glory among the millions of Indian people.⁹⁶ However, the movement lunched by him could not succeed but the depth of national will had convinced the British that their empire would not go long as admitted by Winston Churchill, himself. He disclosed all facts before the King in plain term that all the parties and parliamentarians were quite prepared to leave India soon after the World War II.⁹⁷

The Quit India movement was the only movement which had reached its climax. This was admitted by Nehru also in 1956 that the then situation drove them "in a peculiar direction. If we have been passive then....we would have lost all our strength". Most significant feature of this movement was that many leaders continued their underground movement till 1944 when it finally came to an end.⁹⁸ Almost all sections of the society participated in it and thousands of them courted arrest.

After the suspension of Quit India movement in May 1944, the Congress leaders of Punjab Province paid their attention toward strengthening the Congress base in rural areas where it was quite weak. The Congressmen demanded that all political prisoners should be released immediately and all bans be lifted immediately in Punjab⁹⁹ so that the constructive work and enrolment of new members could be started.¹⁰⁰ The most important matter before the Punjab

Congress M.L.As was whether to participate in the assembly or not. The Congressmen, after the removal of restrictions in July 1945, started paying scant attention towards these significant issues.¹⁰¹ It is important to note that during the year 1945, 1,75,000 new members were enrolled while 11,000 were enrolled throughout Punjab in 1941.¹⁰²

The Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, declared that the Congress workers would commemorate the sacrifices made during the Quit India movement as 'The Liberty Day' from 9 August to 16 August, 1945.¹⁰³ In order to strengthen the base of Congress organisation in Punjab, many national leaders such as Nehru, Azad, Aruna Asaf Ali along with others visited to several parts of Punjab. In her speech delivered at Chheharta village near Amritsar on 23 March, 1946, Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali stated that the Congress has played a pivotal role in Quit India movement in which nearly 50,000 people had to suffer for the sake of national cause.¹⁰⁴ In a message to Congressmen, Azad made it clear that fitting tribute should be paid to those Indians who laid their lives for India's freedom. Whatever weaknesses had been in organisational and discipline matters, all feasible efforts would be made further to strengthen the organisation and overcome the weaknesses witnessed during the movement. The Constructive Programmes were deemed quite useful in welding Congress workers into "disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom". All the District Congress Committees in its meetings paid homage even to unknown soldiers and wounded fighters and expected that the coming generations would also remember the sacrifices made by them in India's liberation movement.¹⁰⁵

The most significant impact of the movement was that the people came to know the sacrifices made by

Congressmen and bore the brutal repression of the government. Besides, meetings were held during 'The Liberty Week' at different places created great enthusiasm among Congressmen who pledged to sink their differences and work for Constructive Programme. Duni Chand Ambalvi assured Congress President that the Congressmen in Ambala division would work 'unitedly and above partisan spirit'. In between Ch. Chhotu Ram died in January 1945. It was a great blow to the Unionist politics in the Punjab.¹⁰⁶

Now, the Punjab government lifted the ban on Punjab Provincial Congress Committee and its local Committees. Almost all political prisoners were released. In order to revitalize political activities in the province, Jawaharlal Nehru¹⁰⁷ and Azad¹⁰⁸ toured Punjab in July, August and October, 1945. Both the leaders were unhappy with the factional-ridden Congress organisation and poor participation in Quit India movement by Punjab.¹⁰⁹

In order to dispel lullness among Congressmen, Nehru exhorted that Punjabis had more latent energy and enthusiasm and are superior in many respects to several other provinces but its energy was wasted by party bickering and personal squabbles at the cost of larger interests of the country. He asked the people to rise above partisan spirit and strengthen the Congress.¹¹⁰ The party workers were advised to work together at this critical juncture in the interests of the country which was 'faced with reactionary forces.' It was the 'foremost' duty of all Congressmen "to forget their differences, present a united front and speak with one voice".¹¹¹

Reporting about the tour of Nehru in August, 1945, *The Tribune*, in its editorial 'Pandit Nehru's Tour' (of the Punjab) observed: "Scenes reminiscent of the baloney days of the Non-Cooperation movement were witnessed in

Punjab during the brief but hurricane tour of some towns in the province by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Unprecedented crowds greeted him wherever he went."¹¹² When he was addressing a gathering at Lahore, he remarked that it was "the biggest gathering of his life". The same paper further wrote: "No doubt the personality of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who is the idol of the people, was an important factor in attracting huge crowds at functions arranged in his honour. But the crowds would not have been actuated by a keen desire to support the Congress in its great fight for the freedom of India."¹¹³

The next significant development during the World War II was the formation of Indian National Army or Azad Hind Fauj by its officers and Rash Behari Bose. Subhash Bose had already appealed Gandhiji in 1938 to take concrete steps keeping the war situation in view. But Gandhiji did not agree with him and the former left the Congress and founded the Forward Bloc. After the fall of Rangoon, Singapore and Andaman, Japanese had captured many Indian soldiers and officers.¹¹⁴ When Subhash Bose reached South-East Asian regions, he reorganised the Indian National Army consisting of soldiers and officers captured by the Japanese. He roused great enthusiasm while addressing them: "Give me blood, I will give you freedom" for the fulfilment of their cherished dreams. He gave a war cry 'Delhi Chalo' as the last and final call for struggle with British imperialism.¹¹⁵ Haryana made tremendous contributions to the struggle initiated by the Indian National Army of Subhas Bose and joined him in the struggle.

The total number of army personnel from Haryana region alone in INA movement was 2715, including 2317 soldiers and 398 officers as the following table shows:

The Total Number of INA personnel from Haryana

District	Officers	Soldiers	Total
Rohtak	149	724	873
Gurgaon	106	580	686
Hissar	61	478	539
Jind	53	296	349
Karnal	14	105	119
Mahendergarh	14	104	118
Ambala	1	30	31
Total	398	2317	2715¹¹⁶

The table shows that the participation of Ambala district remained quite low while the contribution of the districts of Rohtak and Gurgaon was the highest as compared to others in the region of Haryana.

The INA personnel fought bravely under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose (popularly known as *Netaji*) in the eastern sector of India. They did not care for their lives and future. The following table shows the sacrifice:

Number of Martyrs from Haryana

District	Officers	Soldiers	Total
Rohtak	12	126	138
Gurgaon	5	72	77
Jind	2	53	55
Hissar	2	51	53
Mohindergarh	1	17	18
Karnal	—	5	5
Ambala	—	—	—
Total	22	324	346¹¹⁷

The table shows that maximum number of officers and soldiers killed in INA movement was from Rohtak district followed by Gurgaon. The districts of Karnal and Ambala paid less as compared to other districts. Now the people were stirred and prepared to go to any extent by seeing the valour of INA personnel. Their fight created deadly fear among British officers when the Royal Indian Navy also revolted against them. Such movements i.e. Quit India, INA brought the hope of freedom quite nearer.¹¹⁸

The prominent INA officers from Haryana were Col. Ram Sarup Yadav (Kosli) Col. Dilsukhman (Mundsa), Ran Singh Ahlawat (Dubaldhan), Capt. Preet Singh (Rewara), Capt. Kanwal Singh (Dhakla), Capt. Kanwal Singh (Mandothi), Capt. Risal Singh (Dhandhlan), Capt. Dalip Singh (Mitathal), Capt. Bharat Singh (Jharsa, Gurgaon), Major Balwant Singh (Chhara), Capt. Deep Chand (Kasandi), Capt. Banwari Lal (Bhaini Chandrapal), Capt. Chiranji Lal (Sikohpur, Gurgaon) Capt. Nanak Singh (Saha, Ambala), Capt. Bharat Singh (Mandothi), Capt. Daryao Singh (Karontha), Capt. Surjan Singh (Kheri-Khumar, Jhajjar), Capt. Rai Singh (Kosli), Capt. Ram Chandra (Ballabgarh) and many others who brought laurels to India's dignity by participating in anti-imperialist struggle.

Mehar Singh (Sisana) had served as driver of Netaji Subhash Bose's car in Japan, Malaya and Burma etc. Another Mehar Singh was a *bhujani* who continued to create nationalistic fervour among INA personnel singing patriotic *ragnies* on the war fronts.¹¹⁹ 324 soldiers and 22 officers from Haryana sacrificed their lives for India's freedom struggle. About 17000 personnel were made prisoners of war and tried in Red Fort, Delhi. All of them were treated as 'traitors' by the British Government for waging war against the British Emperor.

When the news of their torture and execution reached the Congress leaders, they appointed a Defence Committee comprising Bholabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Jawaharlal Nehru for their release.¹²⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru was on a tour to Kashmir Valley in August 1945, he then cautioned the government that it would be a supreme tragedy if the Indian National Army personnel were punished by the authorities. It would "lead to an additional festering sore in India's mind and heart".¹²¹ The press also became active and took up their cause in order to create a strong public opinion in their favour.¹²²

At the time of trial proceedings against these personnel started, anti-government processions and meetings started taking place throughout India. A unanimous voice of amnesty for these prisoners arose from all the corners of country. When Jawaharlal Nehru visited Haryana in 1946, he urged the people to liberally contribute to the Relief Fund for supporting their dependents who were not only in depression but also needed financial assistance for their subsistence.¹²³

Though, the efforts of the Indian National Army were not successful at the front but it left a profound impact on Indians. The INA provided a new spirit to the liberation movement and also set an example of communal harmony and comradeship. It was, indeed, a warning to the British imperialism that their reliance on loyalty of the Indian mercenary troops could not continue any longer. The example set by the Indian National Army fully confirmed that the Indian army personnel were not mercenary in the traditional terms but more patriotic in their actions.¹²⁴

After the end of World War II, elections were held both for Central and Provincial Legislatures in 1946. All

the political parties were in the fray. Their leaders visited all the constituencies addressing election meetings in support of their respective party's candidates. Only three main political parties i.e. Congress, Unionist and Muslim League were the strong contestants.

The position of the Unionist party was not so strong at this time due to death of its stalwarts -Sikandar Hyat Khan and Chhotu Ram.¹²⁵ Now the only leader was Khizar Hyat Khan who had neither that charisma nor impressive policies and programmes but only catchy slogans of his predecessors. The outdated slogans like "Prosperous Punjab for Punjabis" were with him which carried no weight in the provincial politics.¹²⁶ Congress through Constructive Programme and mass mobilisation had strengthened its position among the people living in the rural areas.¹²⁷

The military personnel who had been ardent supporters of the Unionists earlier now shifted their allegiance to Congress, which had been raising their issues for several decades such as discrimination in pays, pensions, racial discrimination, slow-rate of Indianisation of higher services in military, economic grievances and some facilities available only to the white soldiers created great resentment among the Indian soldiers. But the most significant cause perhaps was the trials of *Azad Hind Fauj* that roused patriotic sentiments among them.¹²⁸ The Congress garnered their support by defending the cases at Red Fort trials in Delhi. When these soldiers and officials returned to their homes, they changed the entire electoral scenerio in favour of Congress¹²⁹ which won 51 seats in 1946 than 18 in 1937 with a dramatic shift in the political atmosphere and the beneficiary was the Congress.

The following table at the facing page shows party-wise position in these elections:

The Election Results in Punjab

Party	Seats Won	Percentage
Muslim League	75	42.857
Congress	51	29.142
Akali	22	12.571
Unionist	20	11.428
Independent	7	4.002
Total	175	100.000¹³⁰

The above table shows that the Muslim League which did not do fair in the last elections but now achieved great success getting around 42% seats in the elections. The Unionists propagated that the Congress was a party of *Brahmins* and *Banias* and anti-Jat. It was their contention that the Jats would not be allowed to come forward if the Congress came to power. It proved otherwise.¹³¹

Muslim League emerged as the largest party in the provincial legislature and staked its claim to form the government but failed to muster the support from the other political parties. The Congress, Unionists and the Akalis formed a coalition government in the Punjab. The prominent winners from Haryana were Shri Ram Sharma, Ch. Lehri Singh, Prof. Sher Singh, Smt. Shanno Devi, Ch. Badlu Ram, Capt. Ranjit Singh, Jagdish Chandra, Jiwan Lal, Samar Singh etc.¹³²

The coalition government led by Khizar Hyat Khan failed to control the communal riots to such an extent that he had no other option except to resign in March 1946. A series of communal riots became a matter of grave concern at Rohtak, Gurgaon, Ambala, Hissar and in some parts of United Provinces. In such a situation all the power was assumed by the Lt. Governor of Punjab under section 93

of the Government of India Act, 1935. This arrangement continued up to the division of India in August 1947.¹³³

A bill was passed by the House of Commons on 4 July, 1947, known as Indian Independence Act, 1947. India was granted independence on 15, August 1947 but the country was divided into two parts i.e. India and Pakistan. The communal disturbances were witnessed when Muslims started going to Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs coming to India. There was lot of bloodshed at both sides of the divide in which hundreds of people lost their lives. The situation in Rohtak, Hissar, Panipat and Gurgaon districts could hardly be brought under control.¹³⁴ Besides, many villages were looted, burnt, houses were plundered, men, women and even children were butchered and property was looted at a number of places in Haryana region too.¹³⁵

The Muslim areas of Kharkhauda were encircled by the Hindus in order to butcher them but when this news reached to Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and Shri Ram Sharma, they immediately rushed to the spot. All the Muslims were rescued and sent to Rohtak in bullock-carts.

Seeing the pathetic situation, both these leaders decided to meet Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi but in between Gandhiji immediately rushed to Rohtak. where the Muslims shouted anti-Patel slogans. Dewan Chaman Lal who was accompanying Gandhi directed the driver to return back the car immediately for reaching to the last corner of *Quila Mohalla*. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh who was beside Gandhiji was also surrounded by the Muslim mob which started manhandling him.¹³⁶ Giving account of that horrible moment, he wrote in his *Memoirs* that some miscreants started pressing towards Gandhiji and his life was in danger at *Quila Mohalla* area. Any how, he escaped and got a lift in a police vehicle and reached the last corner

of Quila-Mohalla where Muslims were showing their anguish and shouting anti-Nehru-Patel slogans. The situation was quite precarious despite the presence of Pakistani military personnel who did not pay any attention to save Gandhi. Dewan Chaman Lal shouted and threatened them that if anything happened to Gandhiji, "they won't go to Pakistan alive".¹³⁷ Sensing that the situation was going out of hand Chaudhry Ranbir Singh came forward and told the impatient Muslims that he is from Sanghi and a son of Chaudhry Matu Ram. It immediately had an effect. Elders among them at once declared him as one of their own since his father was their benefactor and whom Muslims respected much. All slogan mongering was stopped and the situation was brought to normal. The soldiers then took the leaders to a safe place who urged the people of all communities to be patient and help each other at such a critical moment.¹³⁸

The situation in Gurgaon district too went beyond control. Looting, arson and burning incidents were rampant at many villages. Mohammed Yasin Khan, ex. M.L.A., wanted Meos not go to Pakistan and stay on to live in their own place of birth. When Chaudhry Ranbir Singh came to know the situation, he immediately reached Gurgaon and the Indian Government declared him as its representative for maintaining peace and tranquillity in the villages in the region. Many Muslim families of Jaurasi village were leaving for Pakistan but he requested them not to do so.¹³⁹ Yashin Khan also met Gandhiji in Delhi and requested him to help in stopping the migration of the Meos. A public meeting was held at Ghasera village where Gandhiji, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Yasin Khan, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Premier of Punjab addressed the people of all the communities to maintain communal

harmony and stop the migration. A number of villages were burnt, houses were plundered, people were slaughtered and property was looted by the anti-social elements.¹⁴⁰ A large number of army troops was called to control the situation. But due to efforts of these leaders, peace and tranquillity was restored. Consequently, a large number of Muslims of Mewat decided not to leave the country of their birth.¹⁴¹

The dawn of freedom was, however, taken as a joyous moment by every Indian, though large scale communal riots, looting, plundering, slaughtering soured this moment of rejoice. The districts of Gurgaon and Panipat were declared highly disturbed areas where government promulgated Section 3 of the Punjab Disturbed Areas Act, 1947 which provided extra-ordinary powers to civil and military authorities to control the situation.¹⁴² The stern measures of the Punjab Government and intervention of Congress leaders helped to control the situation.

Unfortunately, the country was divided on communal lines and India and Pakistan were declared two separate independent nations on 15 August, 1947.¹⁴³ A Boundary Commission was constituted to demarcate boundaries of newly created countries. The migration and rehabilitation were, however, two serious issues to be solved but the latter one was very serious for the government. The Congress leaders like Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Neki Ram Sharma, Shri Ram Sharma rose equal to the occasion and rendered all feasible assistance to solve the problems of resettlement of the displaced persons who came from erstwhile West Punjab (now called Pakistan).¹⁴⁴ The displaced persons became a significant factor in the future political consideration of the state and contributed a lot to the socio-economic development of the state.¹⁴⁵

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45. *Ibid.*, 27 August, 1942.
46. *The Tribune* in its editorial: 'The Arrest and After' analysed the political scenario of the province where the government did not leave any stone unturned in crushing the movement and applied all tactics to meet out the situation. *The Tribune*, 29, 30 August, 1942.
47. *Ibid.*, 11 August, 1942.
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49. *Ibid.*, 5, 12, September, 1942.
50. *Ibid.*, 26 August, 1942.
51. *Ibid.*, 21 August, 1942.

52. *Ibid.*, 14 August, 1942.
53. *The Tribune* fully supported the statements of Chari and Sapru in the given situation. The government and Congress leadership had their own views and continued to blame each other for creating such a critical situation in the province. *Ibid.*, 27 August, 1942.
54. The intelligence reports of the Political Department, Punjab, provide ample informations about all sections of the society which were participating in the movement. Besides, the papers of the Punjab did not lag behind in providing all sorts of news but kept on encouraging the masses to actively participate and win the struggle non-violently.
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79. *Ibid.*, 18/1/1944; second-half of January 1943, Punjab.
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83. Ambala Divisional Commissioner's report indicated that stoutly built youths were not available but only 'a low standard' youth eight in numbers came forward for military recruitment from the whole of district. *Ibid.*, 18/8/1943; first-half of August 1943, Punjab.
84. Prem Chowdhry, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
85. It is still a mystery for almost all the researchers who have worked on the Punjab and Haryana or are still pursuing research on this important aspect of Punjab history. He, however, did maximum what a politician could do but, despite that, he could not get his due for which he was entitled.
86. *The Tribune*, 10 August, 1943; *Home (Deptt.) Political*, 18/8/1943; first-half of August 1943, Punjab.
87. *Ibid.*
88. *Ibid.*, 18/10/1943; first-half of October, 1943, Punjab.
89. *Ibid.*, 18/8/1943; first-half of August, 1943, Punjab.
90. S.L. Malhotra, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-53.
91. *Ibid.*
92. *Ibid.*
93. *The Tribune*, 10 March, 1943.
94. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
95. *The Tribune*, 14 March, 1943.
96. S.N. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 302-03.
99. *The Tribune*, 12 September, 1945.
100. *Ibid.*, 25 July, 1945.

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102. *The Tribune*, 10 February, 1946.
103. *Ibid.*, 25 July, 1945.
104. *Ibid.*, 24 March, 1946.
105. *Ibid.*, 25 July, 1945.
106. When the session of Punjab Legislative Assembly was held in the beginning of 1946, 'there was a changed atmosphere. Neither Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan nor Sir Chhotu Ram were in this world. Sir Khizr Hyat became Premier of Punjab and Chaudhry Tika Ram replaced his father as a minister in Punjab ministry' Pt. Shri Ram Sharma, *Meri Apni Ram Kahani*, p. 91.
107. *The Tribune*, 24 August, 1945.
108. *Ibid.*, 3 October, 1945.
109. *Ibid.*
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111. *Ibid.*, 30 August, 1945.
112. *Ibid.*
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114. Yadav, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 192
115. In an interview, many INA officers such as Col. Ran Singh Ahlawat (Dhandlan), Capt Kanwal Singh (Bahadurgarh), Capt. Risal Singh (Dhandhan) Chaudhry Lalti Ram (Dubaldhan) told the writer that Subhash Chandra Bose was a very attractive, dynamic and intelligent personality who created a great enthusiasm among them.
116. Yadav, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
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118. Many Congressmen and INA personnel told the author that both these movements broke the backbone of Britain and this fact was admitted by Winston Churchill, Prime Minister, when he met the Emperor.
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123. S. Gopal, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 308.
124. Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 423.
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126. *Home (Dep'tt.) Political*, File No. 110, 1946.
127. *Ibid.*
128. In interview with Col. Ran Singh Ahlawat, Capt. Rishal Singh (Dhandhan), Capt. Kanwal Singh, Sh. Lalti Ram, the author came to know that all the INA personnel vehemently supported the Congress in the elections held in 1946 and it emerged a victorious party which formed the government with the support of the other political parties in Punjab.
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CONCLUSION

In India the process of elite formation began gradually under the over-all impact of western education, press, growth of literature, administrative and economic changes, socio-cultural movements such as the Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharam Sabha etc. With this growth, the nationalist sentiment started taking roots against the foreign rule and a strong urge for freedom found a fertile ground. The serious attempt to smash the British stranglehold over the country in 1857 though failed to achieve the object immediately but provided a rich crop of experience to proceed further towards the goal.

At the very outset of the 20th century, two streams in Indian politics became active. One stream was shaped by the Indian National Congress which believed in the peaceful and constitutional agitation. Coming out of the womb of terrorist phase of late eighteenth century, the other stream was one dominated by the revolutionaries working in India and abroad as well. Both these streams launched anti-imperialist struggle against the oppressive and exploitative nature of the *Raj*. They differed in ways and approaches, but the aim of achieving freedom was one.

The Congress stream spearheaded the freedom struggle for a long period under the leadership of

Mahatma Gandhi (1920-47). In Haryana region Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Lala Murlidhar, Shri Ram Sharma, Neki Ram Sharma, Duni Chand, Sham Lal, Daulat Ram Gupta and other Congressmen worked under his guidance with zeal and contributed a lot to India's freedom struggle.

The second stream was weak and had stray elements in the area. It was, however, overwhelmed in course of time, while the terrorist elements had no presence here. The reasons for failure of this stream to take roots may be many and that may need a separate treatise to work upon.

Among the peers, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was a freedom fighter of firm belief, superb dedication, diligence who had a clear vision of the object and steeped in values/mores of an agricultural family with deep sense of social obligation. His grit and optimism of a peasant with the missionary zeal of a reformer were legendary. He kept high the flag of freedom from the ailing hands of his father at a time when peasant community was being nursed to stand by right side of the *Raj*. He worked slowly but steadily to bring back courage among the subdued people.

It was necessary to fight for justice and freedom. The people had faced barbaric brutality for their heroic role in the 'First War of Independence' in 1857 and were wary of participating in agitations against the *Raj* at the first instance. This pioneering task Ranbir Singh fulfilled with devotion like a nurse to bring back the patient to health. He did it creditably. The increasing participation of ordinary rural-folk in various political activities and programmes of Indian National Congress must be satisfying to him for the untiring labour he put along with others in the movement. He was fortunate to have a untiring father who had prepared the ground for him to work upon. Haryana region was awakened to a new phase of pulsating dynamism.

After a long gap of inactivity following the events of 1857-58, the first stirrings were felt in peasant struggles during 1905-07 in Punjab, led by S. Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai that had its reverberations in Haryana also. Later, Chaudhry Matu Ram along with his other colleagues led Arya Samaj movement to break the barren ground. When Chaudhry Ranbir Singh joined the ranks later, he found the task daunting to work-up the peasantry for fighting evil of slavery and injustice. But he did the job admirably.

Born and brought up in a progressive peasant family of Sanghi village, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh had drawn great inspiration from his father, Chaudhry Matu Ram, duly tempered by socio-cultural mode of rural India. Chaudhry Matu Ram himself was a freedom fighter of repute, a social worker and a crusader for education par excellence. Ranbir Singh's participation in freedom struggle brought him into contact with the prominent nationalist leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, Mohammed Ali, Shaukat Ali, C. Rajagopalachari, Sarojini Naidu and others. He readily developed a cordial working relationship with regional/provincial leadership of his times.

Due to unflinching dedication and strong bonds, he came out with flying colours as a prominent freedom fighter. When age came down heavily on his father rendering him politically incapacitated, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh took the reins himself and led the movement further to new height. He extensively toured various parts of the State and attended Sessions of the Indian National Congress held at various places in India.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh like his father contributed much to the growth of education for eradicating the social evils and thus generating political consciousness. He

assisted the Arya Samaj and other voluntary organisations for establishing educational institutions to eradicate ignorance and illiteracy which were the root-cause of backwardness. Chaudhry Matu Ram was pioneer in founding the Jat Anglo-Sanskrit High School at Rohtak, whereas Chaudhry Ranbir Singh equally evinced keen interest in launching High School at Kharkhauda and Primary Schools at Basantpur, Bahu Jamalpur and Gaurad. The government's attitude was not encouraging due to their imperial interests. It is apparent that the efforts made by Chaudhry Matu Ram, Master Baldev Singh and Chaudhry Chhotu Ram ultimately fructified with crowning success. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh thereafter played an equally important role in spreading mass-education in Rohtak district. The foundation of the same adage laid by these stalwarts absolutely led to the mammoth growth of Jat Anglo-Sanskrit High School which blossomed into a magnificent edifice today.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh started his political career when Gandhi launched the Individual *Satyagraha* movement in 1941. He wanted to court arrest at the beginning of the movement but could not get a chance early for want of permission from the Congress leadership. During the First World War, the situation took a dramatic shift and Congressmen took up cudgels against the colonial *Raj*. An agitation against Rowlatt Bills followed by *Khilafat* and Non-Cooperation movements took shape.

In retaliation, the government took to coercive measures such as prosecution of the press, arrest of prominent leaders, banning public meetings in order to suppress the movement. The government did everything it could to create dissensions among different communities to fulfil their imperial ends. Sycophantic elements were also created to thwart the rising tide of the nationalist

movement. After Muslim separatism, peasants were also alienated from the main stream by the party in power in the province. In such an odd situation, it was the Congress that continued to work actively. Here the role of Chaudhry Matu Ram and later on his son, Ranbir Singh, proved path-breaking to win over distraught peasantry to the fold of freedom movement and awakened reforms in the social sector, freeing it of the deep moss around.

Chaudhry Matu Ram who had been illustrious all through played an important role in the Non-Cooperation movement. Coming clean of his *Zaildari* in 1907, he jumped into the movement at the clarion call given by Mahatma Gandhi. Numerous conferences and meetings were held in which national and provincial leaders participated and led a number of anti-government agitations in Rohtak district. Efforts were also made to include all-rural and urban, artisans and peasants, men and women, old and young-into the national fold for the struggle. This movement left indelible imprints on the growth of freedom movement. The period during 1920-22 proved the worst moment for colonial rulers in India in an era between the Mutiny and Quit India movement of 1942. The movement stirred the alien rulers to the core. For the first time, the Congress branches were established both at the district and tehsil levels in Haryana region.

As the Non-Cooperation movement grew in intensity, *Khilafat* as a protest movement of Indian Muslims against the hostile attitude of the Allies took roots in Haryana region too. The British Government started looking down on the *Sultan* of Turkey whom they considered an inimical to their imperial interests. The Muslims meanwhile presumed that the Sultan would be completely divested of all the authority after the World War I. The prominent Muslim leaders such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr.

M.A. Ansari, Dr. Kitchlew, Maulvi Abdul Bari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Shaikat Ali, Mohammad Ali, Dr. Syed Mahmud and others started the *Khilafat* movement for the retention of Sultan's integrity. The Congress leaders of Haryana like Chaudhry Matu Ram, Neki Ram Sharma, Shri Ram Sharma, Daulat Ram Gupta, Duni Chand, Sham Lal, K.A. Desai and quite a few others supported the movement and helped in the formation of *Khilafat* Committees throughout the districts and tehsils of Haryana.

Certain regions of Haryana which had so far remained cut off from the experiment of mass mobilisation and participation in political agitation were brought into the mainstream. Bhiwani and Rohtak towns now saw hectic activities and direct contact with the national leaders like Gandhi brought more town-folk into the Congress movement. *Swadeshi* and boycott movements became an important feature of the Non-Cooperation movement. The educated sections united together and opposed government policies and programmes. The government believed that the Non-Cooperation was a visionary scheme 'devoid of any constructive genius'. But it proved to be wrong. Many new regions embraced the movement with warmth and enthusiasm resulting into the political awakening. The people came to know through meetings and press about the corrupt and exploitative nature of British rule.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, in an interview by one of the authors, narrated that the Lahore session of Indian National Congress held in 1929 was remarkable from many angles. First of all, '*Pooran Swaraj*' (complete independence) was declared for the first time as an ultimate goal and the British Government's offer of Dominion Status was out-rightly rejected as inadequate.

Secondly, the delegates present at the session pledged to celebrate 26 January, 1930 as the 'Independence Day' throughout India. All the Congressmen resigned their seats in the Central and Provincial Legislatures and took a solemn vow not to contest elections in future without the prior approval of Congress High Command. It was also decided not to participate in the proceedings of Round Table Conference in London. The civil rights, rights of Princely States, apathetic attitude towards Indians in African continents, communal aspects etc were other matters hotly discussed in the session. It is, undoubtedly, true that this session energised the freedom struggle and the youth leadership in Congress emerged which worked for the national cause.

In October 1940 when Individual *Satyagraha* movement was started by Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave was the first *Satyagrahi* offering arrest. All the Provincial Congress Committees selected *Satyagrahis* from among members of the Working Committee of All India Congress Committee, Central and Provincial Legislatures and prominent Congressmen as a chain to keep the movement going. The Congressmen courted arrest by shouting anti-government slogans such as: 'Help to the *Satanic* Government in the War is a Sin'; 'Don't get your Sons Butchered for a few paise for this Dishonest Government'; Better die for the Independence of the Motherland than to die for *Satanic* Government'; 'Long live the Revolution'. These slogans had immediate impact and response. The provincial government arrested those leaders who opposed military recruitment and financial assistance to the government.

The Individual *Satyagraha* picked-up momentum during the third phase of the movement which started in second-half of March and continued up to 10 April, 1941. On instructions from the Punjab Provincial Congress

Committee, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Charan Singh, elder brother of Chaudhry Lehri Singh, Pt. Bhagwan Das, Rati Ram, Pt. Surat Singh and others were arrested and kept in Rohtak jail but owing to certain other factors, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and others were shifted to Borstal Jail, Lahore. Keeping in view the legal preparative of the educational qualifications he was in 'B class' whereas others remained in 'C class'. He however, opted for 'C class' with others. He rightly refused to enjoy 'B class' comforts while his companions suffered miseries in the ordinary class. The Congressmen as instructed by Congress High Command resigned from Central and Provincial Legislative Councils.

During this phase of Individual *Satyagrah* movement, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was sentenced rigorous imprisonment along with other leaders. In Borstal Jail, Lahore, he came into contact with Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, Duni Chand, Neki Ram Sharma, Partap Singh Kairon, Prof. Nigam (Delhi) and others. He became familiar with both the groups - Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Dr. Satya Pal but he was greatly attracted towards the former as he was a true Gandhian while the latter did not like Gandhian approach and tactics in the freedom struggle. In between, Bhim Sen Sachar filed a writ petition in Punjab High Court challenging his arrest under Defence of India Rules alleging that he was arrested wrongly when he did not recite any slogan against the government. The Punjab High Court ordered his release immediately. Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Punjab Premier, decided to release all such political prisoners who were in jails. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and other *Satyagrahis* were also released. In between, communal riots broke out in many parts of Haryana and Punjab. All the Congressmen

worked towards restoring peace and communal harmony in their respective regions.

Gandhiji directed the Congressmen to continue courting arrest for keeping the momentum intact during the movement. Keeping the instructions of national leadership in view, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh courted arrest again in 1941. He was kept in Rohtak jail but shifted to Borstal Jail, Lahore, afterwards.

During his imprisonment, Ranbir Singh got an opportunity to meet the leaders of different political parties such as Akalis, Socialists, Communists and Congress. The Communists and Socialists, however, differed ideologically with the Congress. They very often discussed various questions like capitalism, imperialism, trade union movements and allied matters in their 'Study Circles' in the jail. The Congressmen disagreed with their ideological formulations. The most significant feature of the movement in 1941 was that the regions of Haryana showed greater enthusiasm than any other parts of the province. Lahore and Amritsar used to be hubs of political activities earlier but now small towns in Haryana region like Rohtak, Hissar and Ambala came into prominence.

When the ferment raised by Individual *Satyagraha* movement settled in December 1941, the failure of Cripps Mission in April 1942 gave a fresh lease of life to restart the struggle. The Congress Working Committee drafted the 'Quit India Resolution' at Wardha on 14 July, 1942 which was, however, passed at the Bombay session of Congress on 8 August, 1942. In fact it was the commencement of a mass struggle against the colonial regime on non-violent basis. All the relevant instructions were issued to Congressmen, which the masses too were expected to follow. Gandhi, in his historic speech, exhorted all the sections of Indian society to consider themselves as

'free men and decide accordingly'. It released mass energy. Almost the whole gamut of society took part in the movement as it was deemed the last struggle. Despite arrests of all the national leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Patel etc., the movement by the people continued with greater vigour and vehemence.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was arrested again at Bahadurgarh on 24 September, 1942 and sent to Rohtak district jail. Because of the sensitivity involved and the non-availability of proper accommodation, he was shifted to Multan Jail where Manage Ram Vats from Mandoth, Dewan Chaman Lal, Maulana Daud Ghaznavi and others had already been lodged earlier. The environment of Multan Jail did not suit Chaudhry Sahib as he developed some eye trouble there. He was shifted to Lahore Jail where he was treated satisfactorily. Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Kulbir Singh, Kultar Singh (brothers of Sardar Bhagat Singh), Niranjan Singh Talib, Sardar Gulab Singh, Pt. Rup Chand, Malik Kundan Lal were also with him in Lahore jail.

Chaudhry Ranbir was again shifted to Multan Jail where he came across with some new political prisoners such as Bhagwan Das (Rewari), Yogender Pal (Palwal), Lurinda Ram, Comrade Ram Kishan, Rajendra Nath, Yashji, Brish Bhan, Kedar Nath Sehgal, Master Nand Lal, Sardar Bhupinder Singh Man, Darbara Singh, Devi Lal and many others. Their arrests generated unrest among the masses which became violent. The chief targets of their attacks were means of communication, post and telegraph offices, telegraph wires, railways, offices, government buildings, police stations etc. The government took a serious view of the whole situation and tried to crush violent activities with an iron-hand. Now all the Congress

offices were raided and the organisation was declared illegal.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh in his pre-independence speeches made it amply clear that the Indian masses were in no mood to tolerate any malpractices rampant in the administrative machinery. Thus through practicality and practice, he axiomatically proved that he too was the staunchest well-wisher of the peasantry. He succeeded in dispelling the misconception from the minds of a certain section of society that the Congress largely represented by the urban-elite alone. He also spoke for poor economic conditions of the people due to official apathy and natural calamities resulted in burdening the people with extra taxes. Whenever he visited villages, he would raise his voice for the multitude dumb peasantry and every time gave suggestions for ameliorating their bleeding lots. His speeches delivered in the Constituent Assembly are a glowing example in lending his support to their cause. His economic philosophy covered subjects like governance and agricultural. Subjects like irrigational, industrial pursuits and social welfare were directly linked with his belief in generating awakening among the exploited peasantry and ameliorating their immediate problems too.

The colonial regime was forced to release Chaudhry Ranbir Singh also on 24 July, 1944. Gandhiji, as usual, appealed to all the Congressmen to be non-violent. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was again arrested for unfurling Congress flag at Rohtak for which he was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment and sent to Ambala district jail. His release was unduly delayed whereas all other co-political prisoners had already been released much earlier. During freedom struggle, he was imprisoned several times and remained in almost all the prominent jails of Punjab province like Rohtak, Ambala, Borstal and

Central Jail, Lahore, Multan, Ferozpur, Rawalpindi etc. It may be mentioned here that about 50,000 Congressmen courted arrest and were kept in jail for long durations during the Quit India movement.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was a leader of impeccable secular credentials. He escorted the Muslims of Kharkhauda safe to Rohtak as many heinous incidents of barbarity were afoot against the minority community then. The courage he showed by visiting the communal violence-ridden areas ravaged by arson, murders, looting and burning proved that he was made of sterner mettle. When Gandhiji along with Dewan Chaman Lal visited Rohtak, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and Shri Ram Sharma also accompanied them to such places where communal riots had hit the social fabric in the severest manner. Chaudhry Ranbir Singh along with others appealed to the people of all communities to maintain communal harmony. He also went to Mewat as the Indian Government's representative to preach the message of peace among them in Gurgaon district. Gandhiji, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, Premier of Punjab, Yasin Khan, an ex-M.L.A. addressed a public meeting at Ghasera Village where their appeals had a deep impact on the Meos and they decided not to leave the country. This ghastly scenario shows that Ranbir Singh believed in the secular character of Indian society.

The efforts made by Chaudhry Ranbir Singh and the like ultimately bore fruit. The government unleashed a reign of terror on numerous occasions during the struggle. However, Chaudhry Sahib kept his cool and did not lose his balance and equilibrium. The British felt heavily bogged down all around and thus were left with no option but to quit India. Keeping the utmost zeal and zest of the Indians inside and outside, the British had ultimately

decided to leave India. The long-awaited journey of independence ultimately dawned on the nation at mid night hour of 14-15 August, 1947 when the whole world was asleep but India fulfilled her promise of 'tryst with destiny'.

It is worthy to mention that Chaudhry Ranbir Singh was a great admirer of Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi who not only contributed a lot to the freedom struggle but took some such steps which were highly applauded by the Indians and foreigners in the national reconstruction. In post independent India.

The concepts of modernisation, secularism, socialism, planning, industrialisation, parliamentary democracy, Non-alignment, *Punch Sheel* were given due consideration to make India a modern state. Both the Government and the private sectors were assigned an essential role in the development of national economy. Great stress was laid on the orderly development of science of technology for the modern industrial development. Keeping all these developments in view, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh has rightly called Nehruji as 'the architect of modern India'. Later, as minister in Punjab and Haryana he did his level best to translate these principles in matters of governance and development of the backward areas in the region.

The role played by Chaudhry Ranbir Singh is thus, undoubtedly, a saga of heroism and sacrifices. He played a conspicuous role by shaping the formative independence and political consciousness among the people. During this span other ones were busy cultivating rural-folks and Unionist politics. All the sections of society which had joined and worked vigorously for freedom struggle ultimately attained after 62 years (since the formation of Congress in 1885). He later confided that he kept working

and participating in freedom struggle silently with no desire of any reward or recognition.

The oldest political party of the country is celebrating its 125th birth anniversary during the current year. The most befitting tribute to this illustrious son of the soil, Chaudhry Ranbir Singh, would be just to follow in the footsteps by acting upon the Gandhian ideals which he propounded, propagated, and immaculately cherished all through his life. Chaudhry Sahib's simplicity and practicability would keep serving as the beacon light of inspiration and genuine healthy enthusiasm to the new young generation to come.

Chaudhry Ranbir Singh even today wields a lot of relevance in the context of world-wide violent-drifts, ravaging and devastating flames of pernicious modern trends. The humanity as a whole is facing grave threat of its self-extermination and annihilation owing to mutual distrust, mistrust and prejudicial hatred between man and man. And here we can draw succor and support from the blemishless track-record of an extra ordinary personality who rose from a peasant family to the national level politics.

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Chaudhry Ranbir Singh

CHRONOLOGY

1914

26 November : Born, at village Sanghi, distt. Rohtak.(Mother Smt. Mama Kaur, Father Chaudhry Matu Ram. Brothers .
: Dr. Balbir Singh, Fateh Singh.)

1920

April : Joined Government Primary School, Sanghi.

1921

16 April : Mahatma Gandhi visited Rohtak. Chaudhry Matu Ram presided over a meeting of 25,000 people there which Gandhiji addressed.

1924

: Passed Primary School Examination.

July

: Joined Gurukula, Bhainswal, distt. Rohtak for further studies.

1928

: Left Gurukula, Bhainswal for health reasons.

1929

- : Joined Vaish High School, Rohtak.
- December : Went to Lahore with his elder brother to witness the historic Lahore session of the Congress.

1933

- : Passed Matriculation Examination.
- : Joined Government College, Rohtak for higher studies.

1935

- : Passed F.Sc. Examination.
- : Joined Ramjas College, Delhi for further studies.

1937

- : Passed BA Examination.

- November : Marriage with Smt. Hardei, d/o Chaudhry Hardwari Singh of village Dumarkha, Jind

1941

- March : Joined Congress Party.
- 5 April : Offered *Satyagraha* during the Individual *Satyagraha* Movement; awarded one year's rigorous imprisonment (hereafter r.i.)

- 25 May : Released from jail at the behest of the Punjab High Court, Lahore, along with other prisoners.

- June : Again offered *Satyagraha*; awarded 4 months r.i.

- 24 September : Released from jail.

1942

- 14 July : Father died.
- : Arrested during the wake of the Quit India Movement; tried in the local court; and jailed for 3 years.

1944

- 24 July : Released from jail; put under 'house arrest'.

- September : Again arrested in an old case and sent to jail.

1945

- 14 February : Released from jail, but put under 'house arrest'.

- : Arrested for disobedience of the 'detention' order.

- December : Elections to the Punjab Legislative Assembly announced.

- 12 December : Nominations for the coming elections to the Punjab Legislative Assembly filed (Chaudhary Saheb being still in jail did not contest the election)

- 18 December : Released from jail

1946

- : Elected to the Constituent Assembly of India by the Punjab Legislative Assembly.

1947

- 14 July : Presented Credentials and signed the Register as a member of the Constituent Assembly.

- 15 August : India became free.
- : Worked hard to douse communal fire in his own district and Mewat (Gurgaon).
- : Accompanied Gandhiji during his Mewat peace tour.
- 14 November 1948 : Maiden Speech in the Constituent Assembly
- 1948
- 30 January : Gandhiji shot; went to Delhi to have last *darshan* of the great man.
- 1949
- 26 March : Elected to Standing Committee for Ministry of Agriculture.
- : Elected to Standing Committee for meeting of relief of rehabilitees.
- 1952
- : Elected to 1st Lok Sabha from Rohtak constituency.
- 1957
- : Again elected to the 2nd Lok Sabha (Rohtak).
- 1963
- : Elected to Vidhan Sabha from Kalanaur constituency (Rohtak)
- : Joined Kairon Ministry as Irrigation and Power Minister.
- : The Bhakra Dam Project completed.
- 22 October, 1963 : The Bhakra Dam dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.

- 1965-66 : Worked for formation of Haryana.
- 1966
- 1 November : Haryana State came into being.
- : Shifted to Haryana Legislative Assembly, and joined as P.W.D. Minister in Haryana Council of Ministers.
- 1967
- : Contested election for Haryan Legislative Assembly from Kalanaur Constituency but lost.
- 1968
- : President's Rule in Haryana imposed.
- : Elected to Haryana Vidhan Sabha from Kalanaur.
- 1972
- 4 April : Elected to the Rajya Sabha from Haryana.
- : Elected Deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the House (Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Leader).
- : Formed Freedom Fighter's Association and Freedom Fighters Successor's Association along with his friends, Shri Sheelbhadra Yaji and N.G. Ranga; Mrs. Indira Gandhi agreed to give pensions

to freedom fighters on their pleadings.

1977

: Appointed as President, Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee for about two years.

1978

: Renounced active politics after the expiry of the Rajya Sabha term; took to social work; worked as President, Harijan Sevak Sangh and became active in Backward Classes Federation, Bharat Krishak Samaj, etc.

2009

1 February : Passed away; Nation and the State mourn.

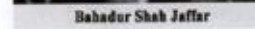
2 February : Creation at *Sanwidhan Sthal*, Rohtak.

4 February : Ashes immersed in the Gobind Sagar, Bhakra and the Hathni Kund Barrage, Yamunanagar.

11 February : *Shraddhanjali Sabha* held at the Jat College grounds, Rohtak.

Photo Gallery

(Fists war of Independence-1857
and Freedom Movement)





बहादुरशाह जफर की गिरफ्तारी



Chandani Chowk, Delhi where Raja Nahar Singh and Nawab Abdul Rahman Khan, Bhajjar were hanged.



क्रांतिकारियों को फांसी देते हुए ब्रिटिश सरकार



A scene of mass hanging



A scene of mass hanging on the tree.



A scene of shooting the Indian Revolutionaries by the Cannons.



Swami Vivekananda



Mahatma Gandhi



पं. जवाहरलाल नेहरू



Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru



Sardar Ajit Singh



Maulana Abul Kalam Azad



Sardar Bhagat Singh



चन्द्र शेखर आज़ाद



Lala Lajpat Rai



Lala Murliidhar (Ambala)



डॉ. रामजी साहि



Chaudhry Mata Rams father of Ch. Ranbir Singh



Ch. Chhotu Ram



Lala Sham Lal



Bhagat Phool Singh



Lala Desh Bandhu Gupta



Neki Ram Sharma



Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargya



Duni Chand Ambalvi



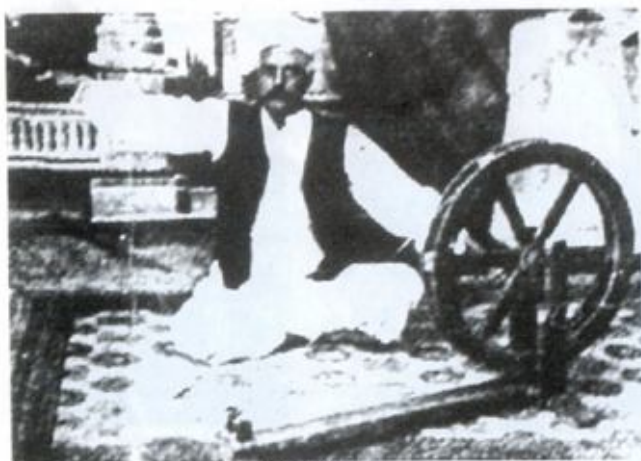
Dada Gaurahi Lal



Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan (Akhbar)



Sardar Kishan Singh



Swaran Lal spinning yarn



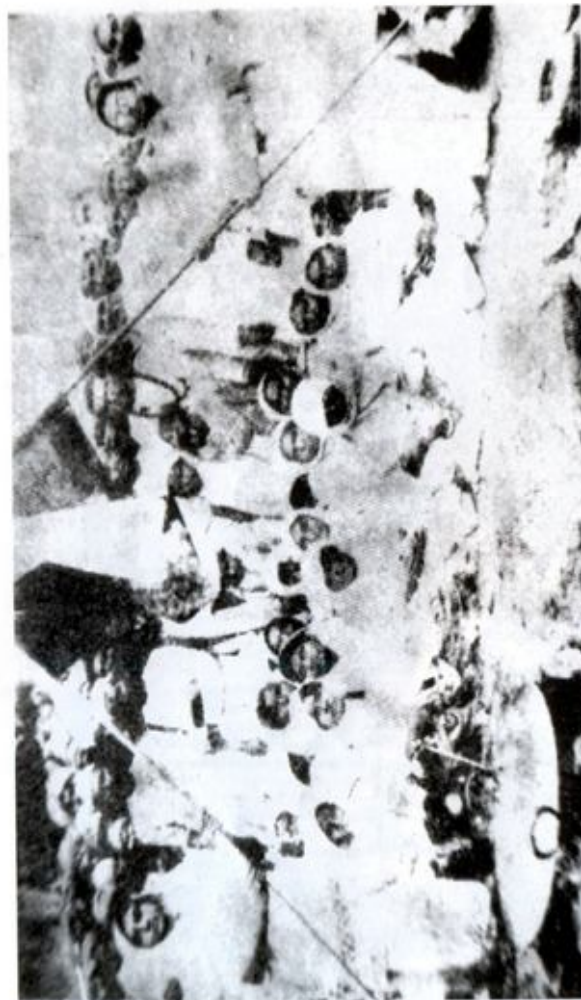
Gandhiji breaking Salt Laws at Dandi



A group of women at the spinning wheel at village Dhana (Hisar)



Congress workers of Hissar breaking the salt law (1930)



Women volunteers manufacturing salt at Ambala (1930)

The Tribune.

Saturday, February 19, 1921.

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MAHATMA GANDHI'S TOUR. MEETINGS AT KALANAU AND ROHTAK.

LALA BHAN LAL RESPONDS
PRACTICE

*write from the Secretary, Rohtak
(Chowdhry Chaudhary)*

Rohtak, Feb. 17.

Mahatma Gandhi and party left Shimla yesterday morning by motor and on their way stopped at Rohtak for an hour to address a meeting at Kalanau. The audience was more than five thousand. Mahatma Abul Kalam explained the Kallanau question.

Mahatma pointed out that he wanted three things from the people. If they wanted *Swaraj* before the next September—Non-violent non-co-operation with the Government, co-operation with our own people, and Jai to carry on the work. He told the people to take to the spinning wheel and boycott foreign goods.

Lala Lajpat Rai then requested the people to give up smoking and opposed to the Jai and Mahatma and to some instruments in carrying other nations.

AT ROHTAK.

The party arrived at Rohtak at about 12 noon. The first function was to visit the Jai School, which had been lately nationalized. A vast multitude had assembled there. Short speeches were delivered and the foundation stone of the Vaidya High School was laid and a meeting was held. Then Mahatma went to the ladies meeting and addressed them.

The party then went to the Conference. The same resolutions which were passed at Shimla were passed unanimously; and the meeting was addressed by all the leaders. More than 25 thousand people attended. Chowdhry Matu Ram presided. The whole audience received with applause the announcement of L. Bhan Lal, the leading local Vaid, that he suspended his practice for one year from the 1st March. The Headmaster, Quora High School declared that he had resolved to give up his present post and to become engaged himself in any Government or social work that endorses national development. The day (and the Harpur Road Conference, which began the meeting at Shimla, was brought to a close at Rohtak. Amidst shouts of *Swaraj* and *Jai*, Mahatma, Jai, Lajpat and Mahatma left for Lahore in the evening.

Chowdhry Matu Ram presided the
conference addressed by Mahatma
Gandhi at Rohtak.

More than 25 thousands people
attended