

16.12 New York Times Reports on the Salt March in India (1930)

Question: In your opinion, why did a symbolic act such as the Salt March have such a major impact?

Arrest of Gandhi is Held Imminent

London, March 15, 1930. *The Sunday Times* says that well-informed quarters in London regard the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi as “imminent.” “The action of the headmen,” says *The Sunday Times*, “is in direct response to Mr. Gandhi’s appeal and is regarded as a defiance of law which not even the greatest sense of official tolerance can countenance.”

Bombay Takes Action

New Delhi, India, March 15, 1930. With a view to counteracting the Gandhi movement against the salt tax, . . . the Central Board of Revenue plans to invest every police officer above the rank of constable in the presidency of Bombay . . . with all the powers of a salt revenue officer. That would enable him to order confiscation of salt made otherwise than under the government monopoly, or to take any other necessary action.

Government to Check Illegal Salt Making

Ahmadabad, India, March 15, 1930. Mahatma Gandhi, beginning the fourth day of the march to Jalalapur . . . where his party plans to manufacture salt in violation of the British monopoly. . . . There are still sixteen days before the pilgrims reach the coast and begin in real earnest the civil disobedience campaign by which they hope to gain independence for India.

Gandhi Urges India to Extend Boycott

Kareli, India, March 20, 1930. Mahatma Gandhi arriving here with his volunteer marchers in the civil disobedience campaign, today gave further instructions for carrying out his policy of non-violent resistance to the Indian Government.

Gandhi Commences Last Lap of March

Surat, India, April 2. Mahatma Gandhi today strated on what is virtually the last lap on his long march to the sea when he walked under the Navsari Gate in the city wall bound for the village of Dinloi. Gandhi was greeted by the most enthusiastic welcome since he left his seminary in Ahmedabad, April 12. A huge crowd gathered last night on the bank of the River Tapy outside the city to hear Gandhi, who in the flickering light of kerosene lamps, jibed at the government for “being ashamed to arrest me.”

Signal for Mass Action

Jalalpur, India, April 5, 1930. Mahatma Gandhi today ended his 200-mile march from Ahmedabad at this desolate village on the shores of the Arabian Sea, and tomorrow morning he will wade into the water to begin the forbidden manufacture of salt. His action will be a signal for a campaign of mass civil disobedience in other parts of India, which Mr. Gandhi believes will start a revolt against British rule.

Gandhi Makes Salt, Defying India’s Law

Jalalpur, India, April 6, 1930. Mahatma Gandhi manufactured salt from sea water at Dandi this morning, thereby breaking the British law establishing a monopoly on salt manufacture.

Viceroy and Gandhi Agree on Truce in India

New Delhi, India, March 4, 1931 - The Congress party’s campaign of civil disobedience, which included defiance of the salt laws, non-payment of taxes, holding of illegal assemblies and mass picketing of factories and shops selling British goods, will forthwith be called off. It is understood that the India [British] Government made concessions regarding the salt laws and that henceforth the natives will be permitted to manufacture salt by the process of evaporation on the seacoasts, the government monopoly, however, maintaining control of its manufacture and distribution in inland areas. As a result of the compromise, many political prisoners are expected to be released and . . . property confiscation from Congress members found guilty of law-breaking will be restored with their release from jail.

Hopes Truce Will Lead to Independence for India

New Delhi, India, March 5, 1931. Mahatma Gandhi . . . served notice anew on British that complete independence is the goal of India. “That is the birthright of India as it is of every nation worthy of the name,” he said. “England’s statesmen will have to be willing to let India wander away into the woods through errors. Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err and even to sin.” “I venture to suggest that if India reached her goal of liberty through truth and non-violence she will have made no small contribution to the world of peace for which all the nations are thirsting.”