

Civil Disobedience

Boycott of Prince of Wales' Royal Visit [1921-22]

On July 10th, Gandhi had suggested that while he would "extend the heartiest welcome to His Royal Highness if he came without official patronage", a boycott directed at "the insolent bureaucracy and dishonest ministers of His Majesty" was in order.

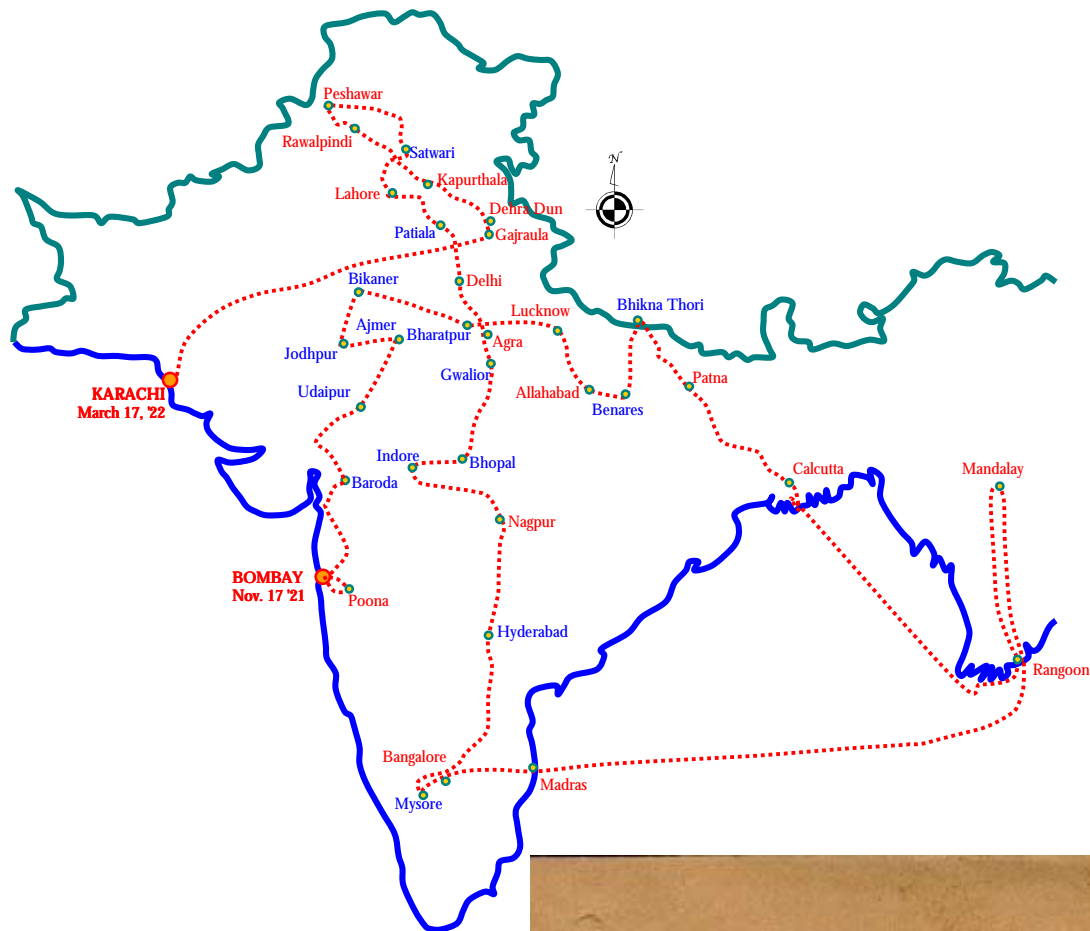
The Prince of Wales visited the Indian subcontinent from November 1921 to March 1922. The special cancellation with the Royal Insignia of the Prince of Wales was used for mail sent by the Royal entourage.



Royal Visit Special Cancellation

The last day of the official visit was March 17th, 1922 in Karachi. Shown above is the cancellation on the entire set of British India stamps in circulation at that time- up to a value of 1 Rupee. The paper used to mount the stamps bears Royal Insignia as a watermark.

The Popular Discontent. Still reeling under the pain of the General Dyer's army massacre in Punjab and the indignation of European feeding frenzy over remnants of the Ottoman Empire, the Indian nationalist movement was in no mood to accord a cordial reception to the heir apparent.



Prince of Wales Camp P. O.

Places where the Royal Party stayed overnight are shown in the map. Anticipating mass protests in the British Presidencies, most public events and celebrations were restricted to Indian Princely States loyal to the British Crown [SHOWN IN BLUE IN THE MAP].

Gwalior was one of the princely states where the Royal party spent 4 days [8-11 February].

Late use of three 1899 British India Officials used for the 9 paise postage rate from Gwalior to Bombay.



Gandhi in *Young India* of December 1st 1920

"His Royal Highness will soon be in our midst. It is a matter of great sorrow to me that I should advise a complete boycott of all public functions held in his honour. He is personally an amiable English gentleman. But, in my humble opinion, public interest demands that this official visit should be strictly ignored. His Royal Highness comes to sustain a corrupt system of government, he comes to whitewash an irresponsible bureaucracy, he comes to make us forget the unforgettable....."

A YEAR LATER.....

ALLAHABAD, 12 DECEMBER 1921.

The boycott organized by the Indian National Congress was most effective in the United Provinces and Bengal. Mass arrests began early in December.

Jawaharlal Nehru and his father were arrested in Allahabad a few days before the Prince arrived. This was memorable- Nehru's first of many imprisonments by the British government.



CALCUTTA, 24-30 DECEMBER 1921.

Congress volunteers in Bengal and the United Provinces were declared illegal just before the Prince arrived in India in November.

Christmas day in Calcutta, busy Capital of British India, was eerie and silent- with all businesses essentially closed.

During December '21 and January '22, about 30,000 persons were sentenced in connection with the boycott across India.

Unusual late usages of blocks of 1898 (QV) and 1905 (KEVII) ¼ anna surcharges.

Gandhi's Letter Published in *Young India* on November 17th 1921

"As a non-cooperator, I neither own nor disown George as my King. I have dissociated myself from the system administered under the King's name. I keep myself free to give my allegiance to him, if I can attain my full growth in his Kingdom and can secure full redress of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs."

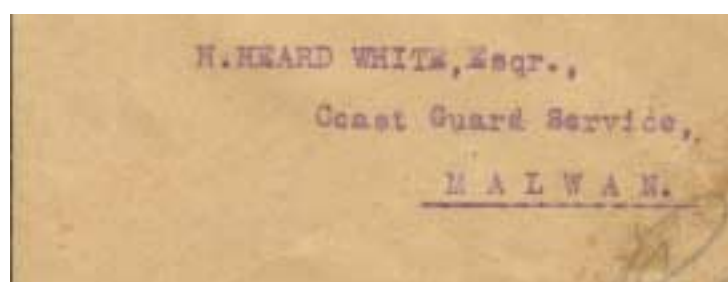
THREE MONTHS LATER....

DELHI, 14-18 FEBRUARY 1922.

The Royal Visit to Delhi coincided with Gandhi abruptly calling off the civil disobedience movement.

This was the result of a riot in a small town (*Chauri Chaura*) that led to policemen being killed by an angry mob.

The cover shown was mailed to the southern coastal town of *Malwan* (near the Portuguese enclave of *Goa*) and redirected to *Ratnagiri* (delivery backstamps on back).



PATIALA, 22-24 FEBRUARY 1922.

With Gandhi fasting for calm, the nationwide movement came to a grinding halt, despite strong objections from several prominent Congress Leaders.

Reinforcing the potent adjective- "civil", Gandhi's simple answer was: "If we obtain our freedom by murder and bloodshed, I want no part of it".

Unusual late usage of the 1899 3 pies (0V) stamp for the postcard rate. Note delivery markings on the same side- preserves picture on the other side.

Gandhi's articles in Young India 24 November 1921.

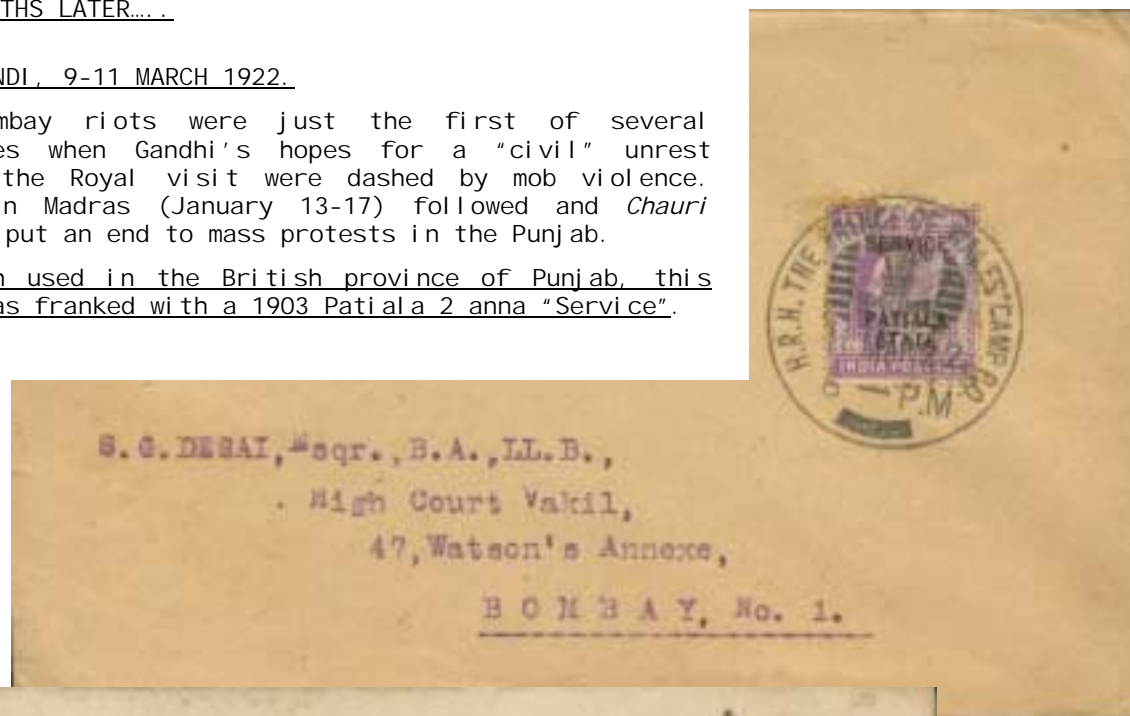
In Bombay, the sympathizers of non-cooperation lost the moral balance... Parsis and Christians took part in the welcome to the Prince... they were as much entitled to take part in the welcome as we were to refrain. Nor can I shrink my own personal responsibility. I am more responsible than any other in bringing into being the spirit of revolt. I find myself not fully capable of controlling and disciplining that spirit.. Swaraj does not lie that way, India does not want Bolshevism...

FOUR MONTHS LATER....

RAWALPINDI, 9-11 MARCH 1922.

The Bombay riots were just the first of several instances when Gandhi's hopes for a "civil" unrest during the Royal visit were dashed by mob violence. Riots in Madras (January 13-17) followed and *Chauri Chauria* put an end to mass protests in the Punjab.

Although used in the British province of Punjab, this cover was franked with a 1903 Patiala 2 anna "Service".



KARACHI, 17-18 MARCH 1922.

The Royal visit ended in Karachi, with the Prince leaving on the evening of the 17th.

This cover is unusual on two counts:

- the date (March 18) was the day AFTER the end of the Royal Visit.
- Unlike all other PoW Camp PO cancels, this has a different design at the bottom of the CDS (diamond dots- not solid bar).

Dandi March : Against the Salt Tax



2 Oct 1969

March 12, 1930. Sixty-one year old Gandhi, along with 78 other residents of the *Sabarmati* Ashram, started the historic march to the sea to make salt, in defiance of the existing Salt Laws of the British Government. The destination was a seaside fishing village *Dandi* and the event turned out to be one of the most significant in the annals of the Indian Nationalist Movement.

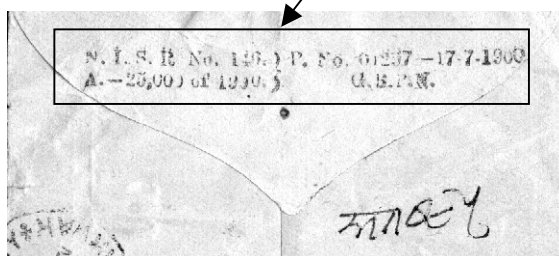


24 Dec 1998

Salt Tax in British India. Enacted following the Salt Commission of 1836, salt tax had grown to represent over 95 percent of the price of salt by 1930! Salt and land taxes [imposing disproportionate burden on the poor peasants] added up to over a fifth of the overall Indian tax burden. In 1905, people in India were taxed twice as heavily as those in England and three times as those in Scotland.



Salt Tax Demand Notice. Mailed in 1902 to a salt trader in the desert region in NW India. Unusual in that these were often mailed "unpaid" with 1 anna postage due to secure delivery [not ½ anna On HMS, as shown here]. Note the printing on the flap shown below- 25,000 such notices printed in 1900 just by the NISR region!



Government Salt Monopolies. It was Gandhi's genius that he made enormous political capital out of an issue that was not very uncommon in history. Ancient Romans used salt from Palestine as soldiers' compensation [hence the word "salary"]. Successive Chinese dynasties controlled vast regions with imperial salt taxes and inequities in salt tax [Gabelle] played a critical role in the French Revolution.

Route Cancellations

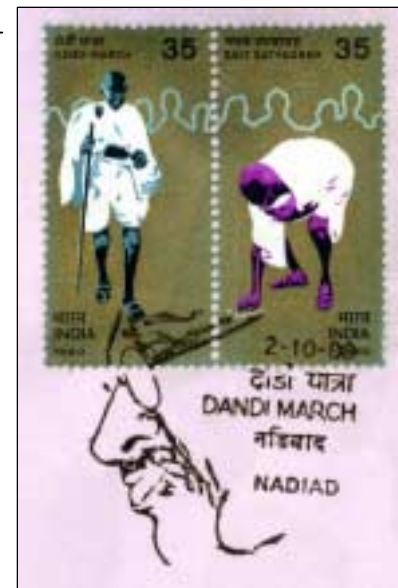
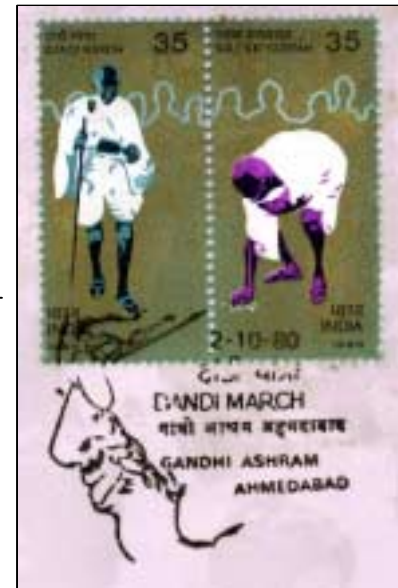
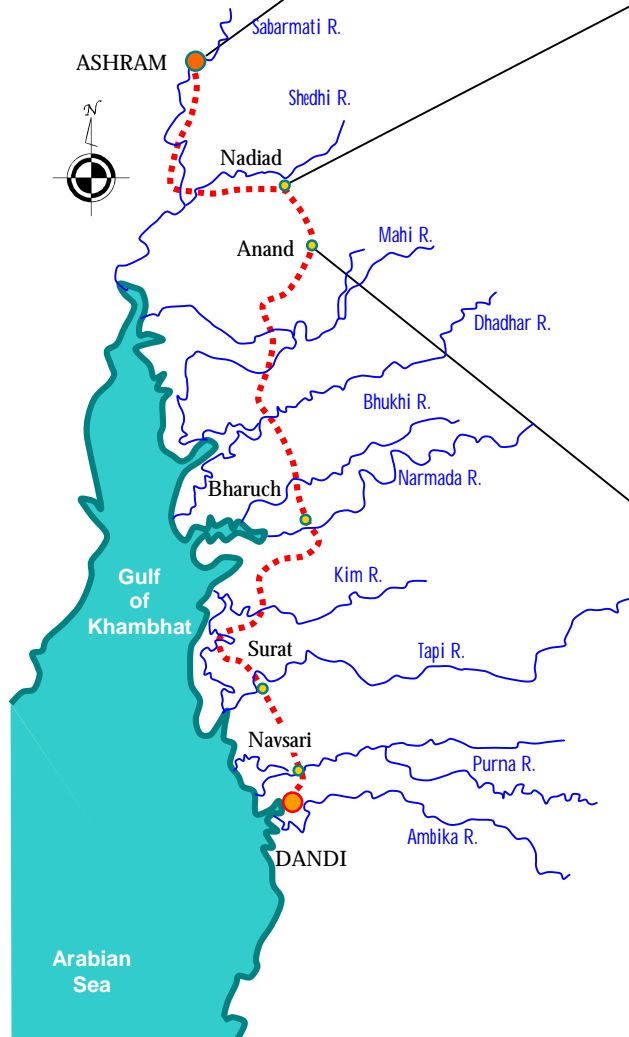
The 241 mile long trek from *Ahmedabad* to *Dandi* took 25 days. Gandhi's main purpose of the effort was to rally ordinary Indians against unjust laws and taxes imposed by the British government. To this end, he addressed huge crowds in every town, which limited the marchers to less than 10 miles a day.

Shown here are first day cancellations from the seven major towns along the route. The set-tenant issue commemorated the 50th anniversary of the historic civil disobedience event.

March 12th 1930, Ahmedabad. Marchers depart *Sabarmati Ashram* at 6:30 AM.

March 15th, Nadiad. Gandhi addresses *Satyagrahis* [civil disobedience volunteers] on moral strategy.

March 17th, Anand. Gandhi appealed to the public for non-violence if arrested.



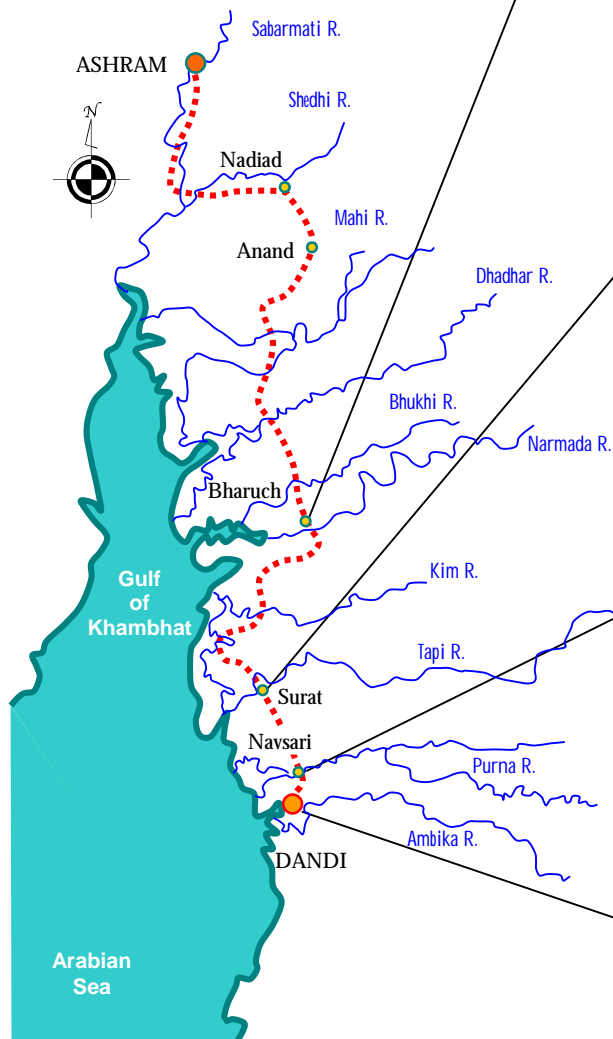
Route Cancell s

March 26th 1930, Bharuch.
Gandhi addressed public on Hindu Muslim Unity.

April 1st, Surat. Gandhi spoke to volunteers and public.

April 3rd, Navsari. Gandhi emphasized the need for greater self-purification among volunteers and pilgrims of the March.

April 5th, Dandi. After reaching the sea shore, Gandhi issued a statement to the Associated Press, sent a Message to America and advised the public not to eat salt supplied by the government.

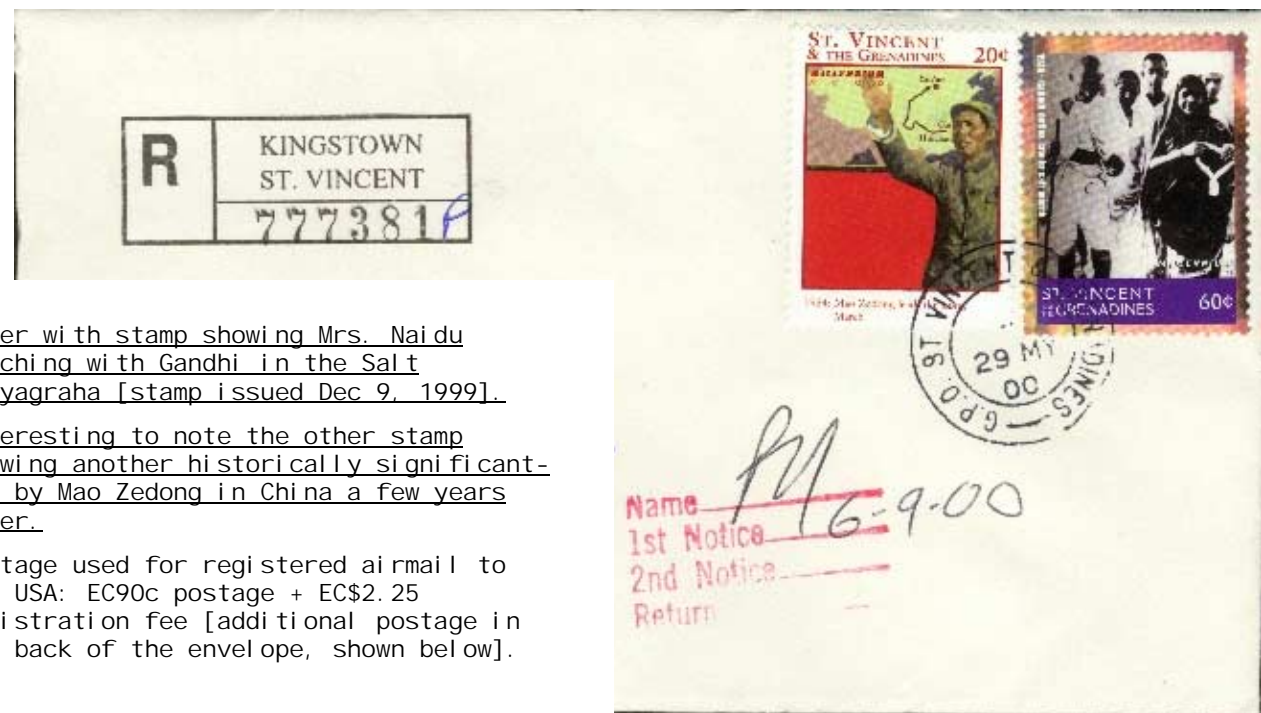


Shown here on the salt march with Gandhi is Mrs. Naidu, then the most prominent woman in the Indian Nationalist Movement.



29 Oct 1998

Subsequently, she led a march on the *Dharsana Salt Works* [south of Dandi], where marchers were brutally attacked by police.



Cover with stamp showing Mrs. Naidu marching with Gandhi in the Salt Satyagraha [stamp issued Dec 9, 1999].

Interesting to note the other stamp showing another historically significant led by Mao Zedong in China a few years later.

Postage used for registered airmail to the USA: EC90c postage + EC\$2.25 registration fee [additional postage in the back of the envelope, shown below].

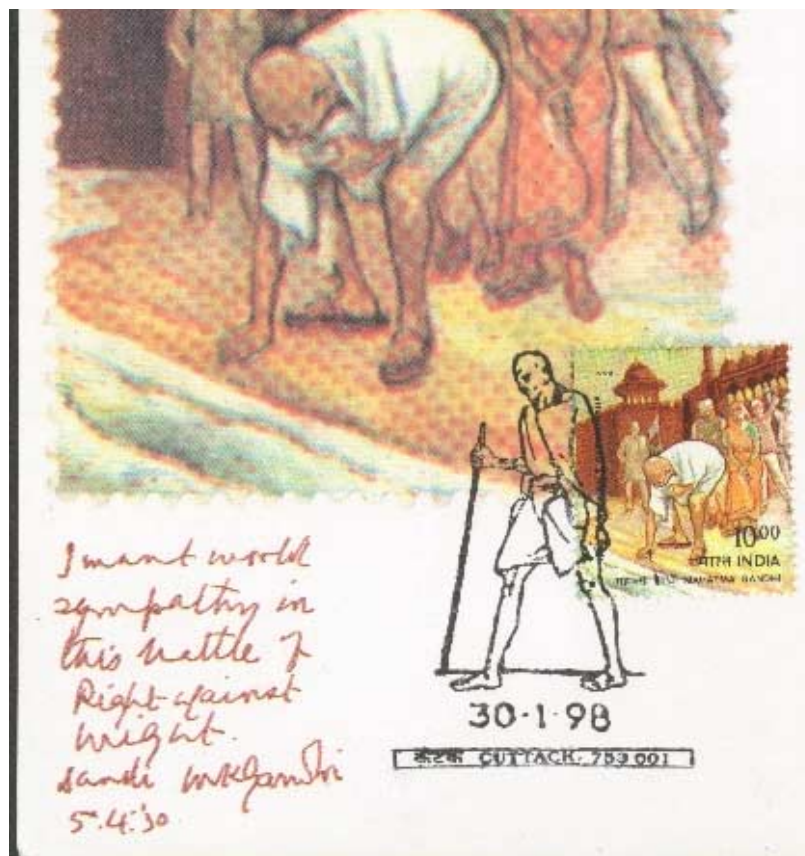
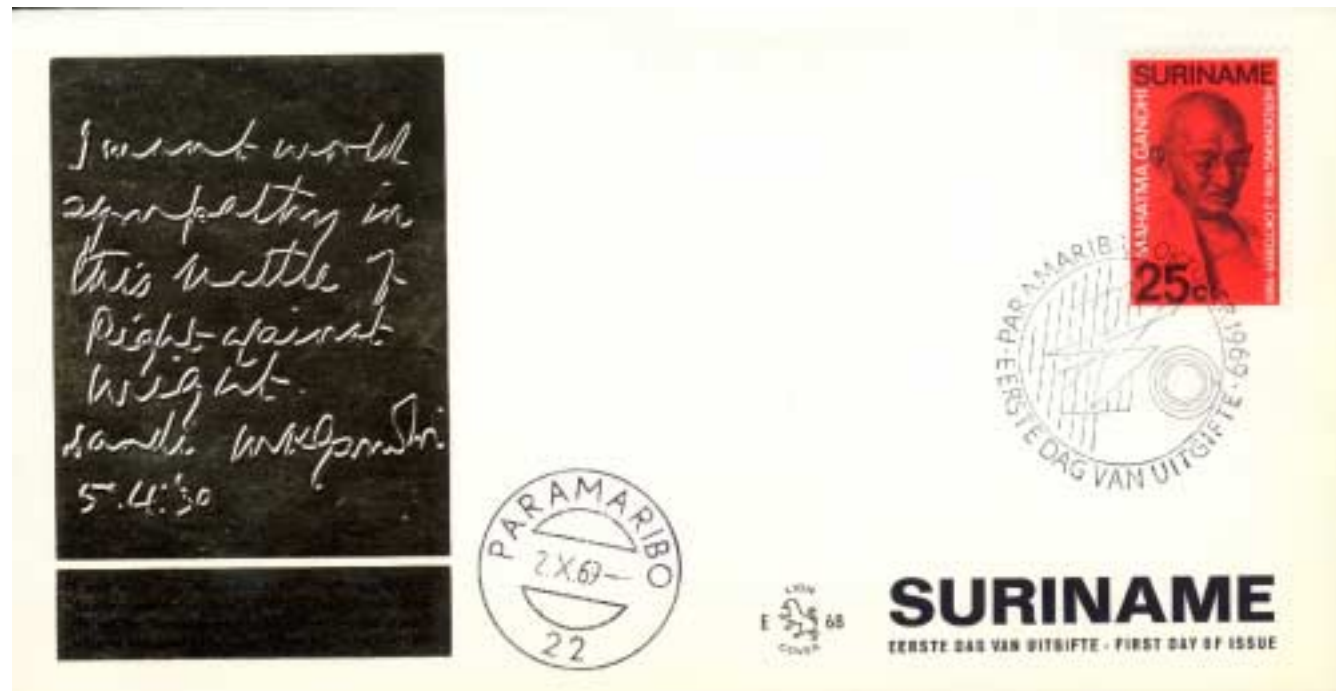


Sarojini Naidu. Succeeding Gandhi as President of the Indian National Congress, she set the stage for acceptability of women in Indian Politics.

Following the Dandi march, she later accompanied Gandhi to England to the Second Round Table Conference,

Press Release and Address to America

Facsimile of Gandhi's press release from Dandi - shown on an official FDC Cachet from the 1969 Surinam issue.



Press Release, 5 April 1930.
The text of the statement made by Gandhi to the Associate Press, while short, was directed at Western Public Opinion.

Artful user of mass media that he was, Gandhi did get world sympathy for the Indian cause almost immediately.

Often depicted as concurrent with the symbolic "picking of a handful of salt", it was not until the next day that Gandhi actually did that.

Maxim card from India, showing text of the press release.



April 6, 1930. The day began with early morning prayers and a ritual bath in the sea by Gandhi and his followers [shown in the bottom of the margin illustrations in the 1991 souvenir sheet from Comoros].

This was followed by Gandhi picking a lump of salt from a prepared bed by the sea.



18 Nov 1991

This image of Gandhi, captured in many of the stamps shown here, is as symbolic as the tossing of tea overboard in the Boston Tea Party.



24 Dec 1998

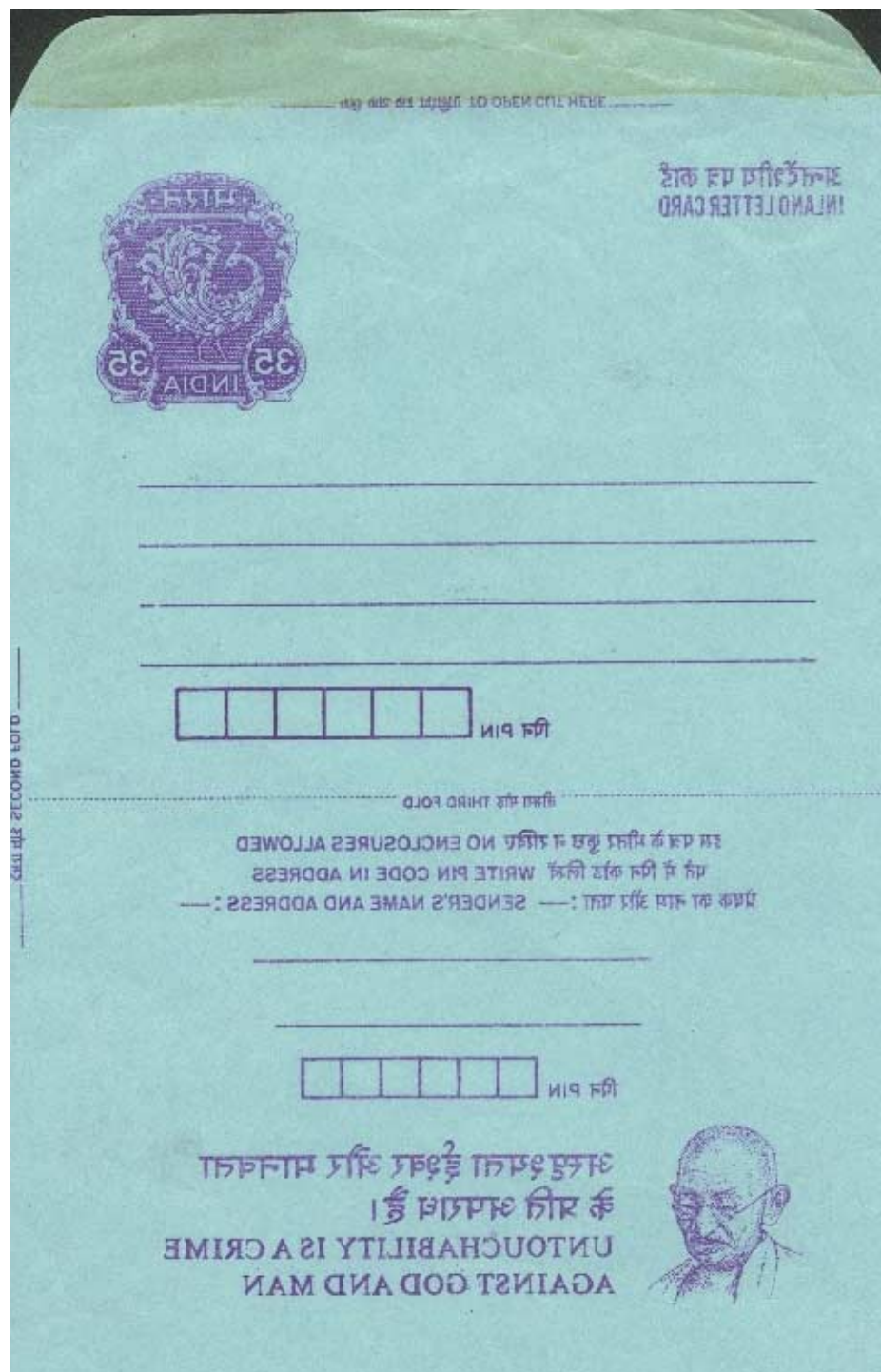
Many conservatives continued to stress that "it would take more than a grain of salt to bring down the British Empire".



2 Oct 1994

The "salt Satyagrah", as it was called, captured the imagination of millions of poor Indians and galvanized sympathizers around the world!

Separate Electorates and Provinces



In 1932, the British Government proposed a system by which separate electorates would be established for general populations in British India, lower caste or "untouchables" and each of the princely states.

This proposal was soundly rejected by Gandhi and all of Congress.

Also proposed was a system of separating some of the outlying provinces that had very little in common with India.

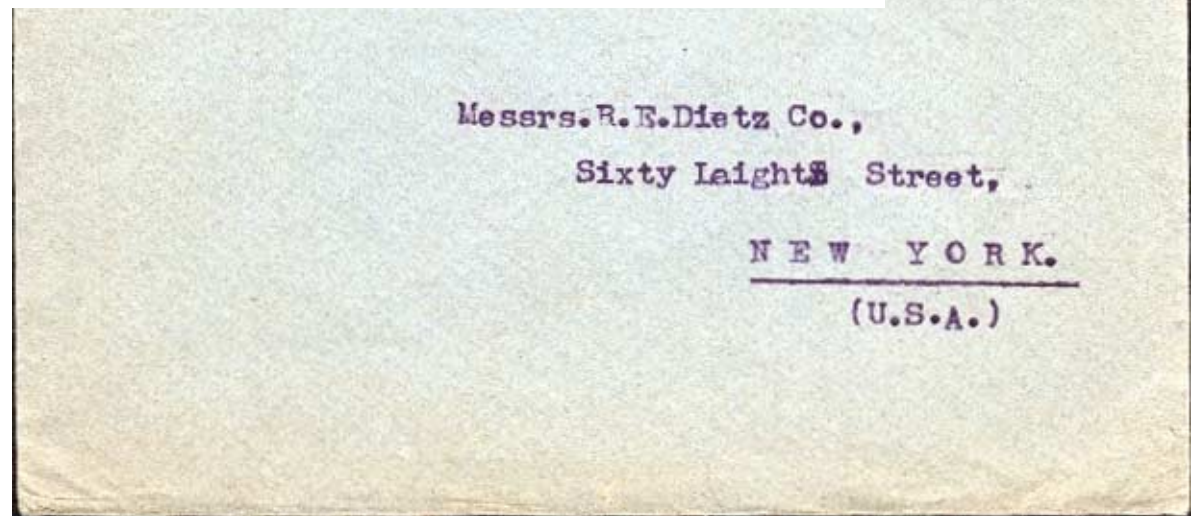
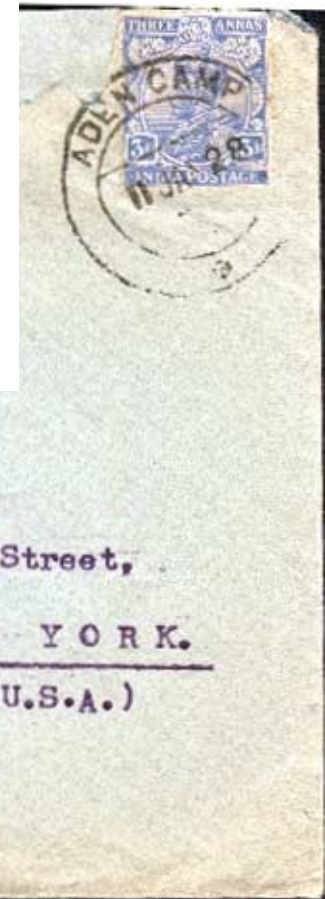
This measure was not opposed vigorously by Gandhi or the Indian National Congress.

Gandhi always opposed the idea of "separate but equal", a system that he never believed would work anywhere, leave also a country as diverse as India. His opposing a separate electorate for untouchables is still a bitter memory in India's underclass, who felt that this would have empowered them.

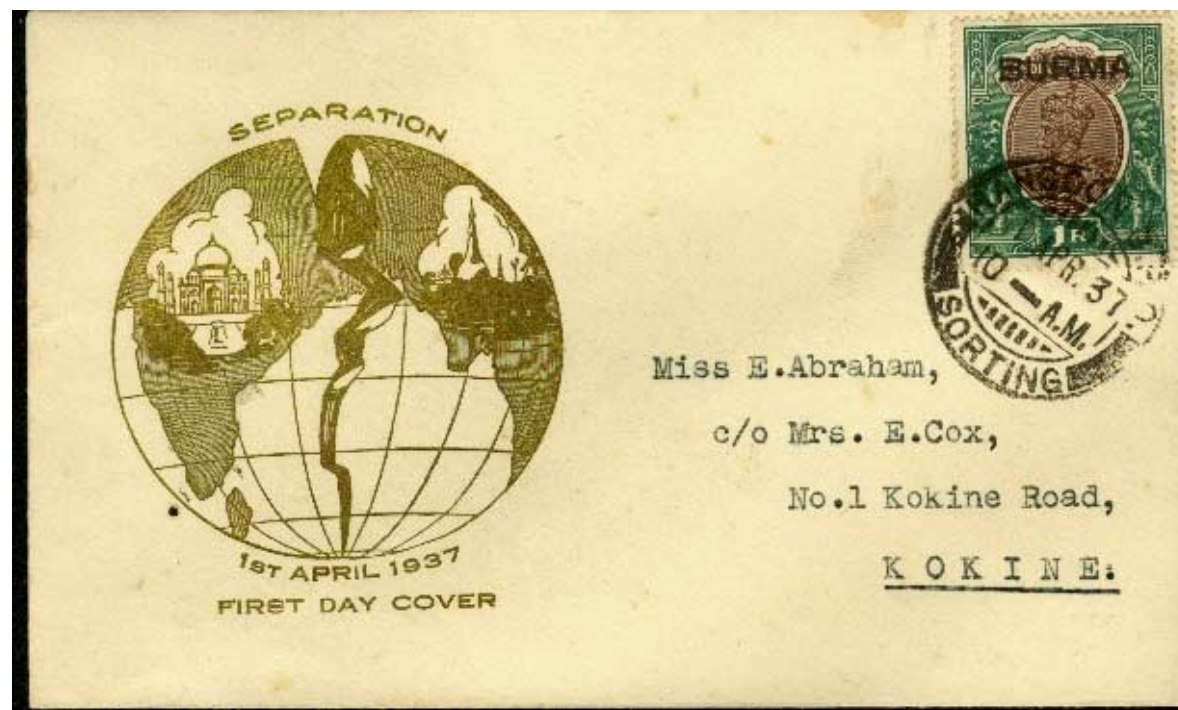
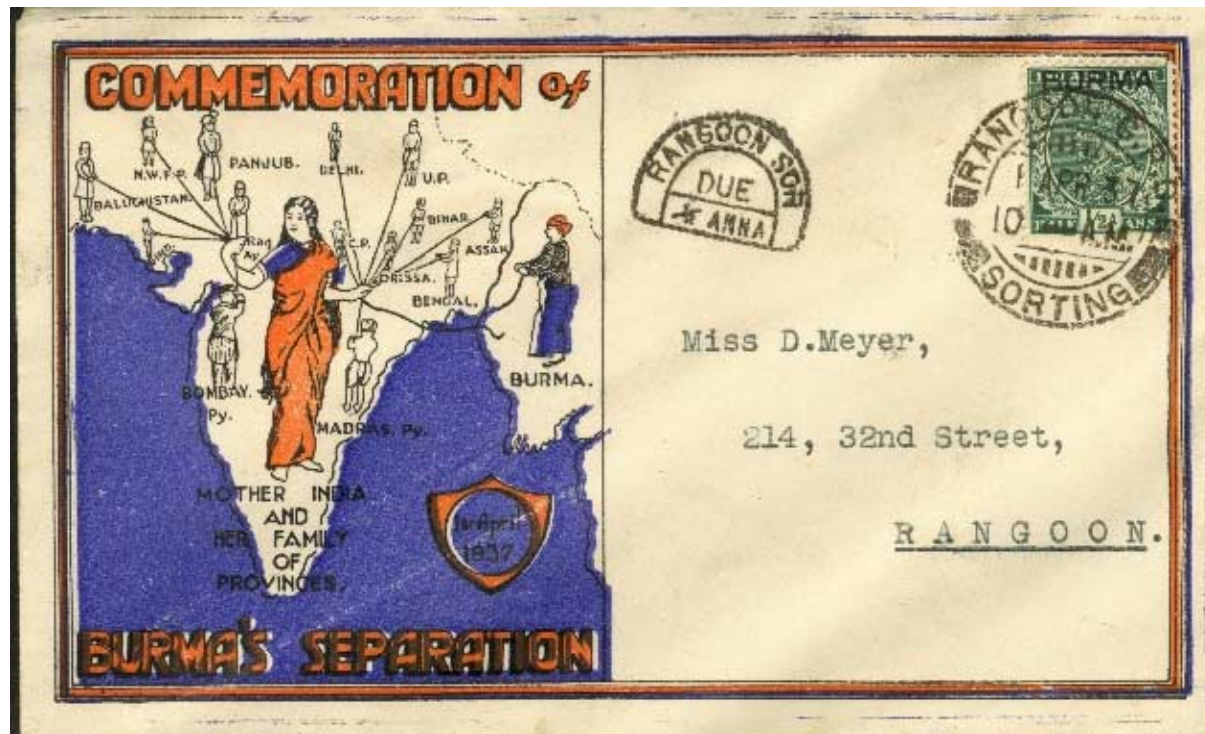
Same slogan as shown before, printed on gum side in reverse.

Aden and Burma were part of the Indian administration for several decades. This included the civil services and the post office, which used Indian stamps without any overprints.

Cover mailed from Rangoon, Burma to a city in southern Madras Presidency in southern India, franked with an Indian stamp. Most of such mail, from Tamil money lenders in Burma [Chettiyars] was addressed in Tamil!
Note Rangoon CDS.



Cover mailed from Aden to the USA, franked with Indian stamp.
Note Aden Camp CDS.



Burma and Aden were officially separated from Indian administration on April 1st, 1937.

Commemorative FDCs of the new "BURMA" stamps with interesting cachets representing the separation with dramatic artistic license!

Quit India Movement

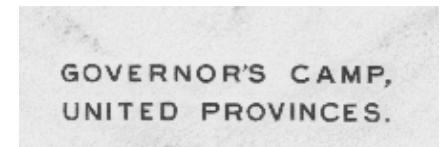


Gandhi negotiated on details of British plans with several leaders in Delhi and the provinces.

With no relief in sight on legislation regarding home rule, Congress embarked on the "Quit India Movement" in 1942.

Simply put, the nationalists did not want any compromise- they simply wanted the British to pack their bags and leave India to Indians.

One of the leaders Gandhi negotiated with in 1937 was Sir William Malcolm Hailey, Governor of the United Provinces. Gandhi met with him in Nainital, location of the Governor's camp in the Himalayan foothills.



The cancellation is unusual - an error led to brief usage of "U.P. Govt. Camp", instead of "U.P. Governor's Camp". Cover mailed to London and franked with airmail rate.



1 Apr 1979

One individual who made a last ditch effort to negotiate away a major boycott by Congress was Sir Stafford Cripps. As a member of Churchill's war cabinet, he visited India to make Congress an offer that was summarily rejected.

Cripps went on to become Chancellor of the Exchequer later in a Labor Government. He did not have any room to negotiate and was said to have his "arms and legs tied" by Prime Minister Churchill, who did not want full independence for India in any form.

This Scottish "local" is the only stamp to show Gandhi and Cripps, although there is no annotation to that effect.



FDC commemorating the silver jubilee of the Quit India movement.

The statue shows in as famous in India as the one depicting the erection of the American flag at Iwo Jima is in the US.



Stamps depicting Gandhi's writing during the quit India movement, which roughly translates: "we will achieve it or die in the process of trying".

It was simplified to "Do or Die"!

9 Aug 1992

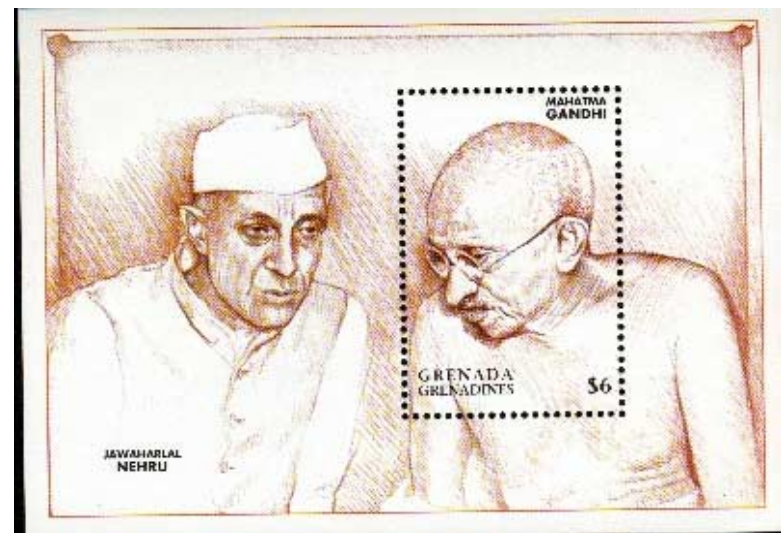


9 Aug 1983

Gandhi and Nehru shown in the meeting where the resolution was declared.

The "Quit India resolution" was passed by the All India Congress Committee in August 1942.

A full draft titled "My Appeal to the British", written by Gandhi, was forwarded in advance by Nehru for publication in America and dissemination to the West.



15 Sep 1998