

GANDHI-IRWIN PACT (5 MARCH 1931)

After the conclusion of the First Round Table Conference, the British government realised that the cooperation of the Indian National Congress was necessary to make progress in framing the Indian constitution. Early in 1931, two demand for freedom. The communal question dominated moderate statesmen. Sapru and Jayakar, initiated efforts to conference and Gandhi had to return empty-handed bring about a rapprochement between Gandhi and the government. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, extended an invitation to Gandhi for talks. Gandhi agreed to end the Civil Disobedience Movement without setting any preconditions. Six meetings with Lord Irwin finally led to the signing of a pact between the two on 5 March 1931. whereby the Congress called off the movement and agreed to join the Second Round Table Conference. The terms of the agreement included the immediate release of all political prisoners not convicted for violence, the remission of all fines not yet collected, the return of confiscated land not yet sold to third parties and lenient treatment of all the government officials who had resigned. Gandhi and other leaders were released from jail as Irwin agreed to release most political prisoners and to return the properties that had been seized by the government. The government also conceded the right to make salt for consumption in villages along the coast and also the right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing. The salient points of the agreement were as follows:

1. The Congress was supposed to discontinue the Civil Disobedience movement.

2. The Congress was supposed to participate in the Round Table Conference.
3. The government was supposed to withdraw all ordinances issued to curb the Congress.
4. The government was supposed to withdraw all prosecutions relating to offenses not involving violence.
5. The government was supposed to release all persons undergoing sentences of imprisonment for their activities in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The pact indicated British government was anxious to bring the Congress to the conference table.

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