

Congress Defeat in Farrukhabad

A Failure of Party Organisation

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The Congress party could still have avoided defeat if the district unit had organised and conducted an efficient campaign. But the campaign suffered from lack of leadership, organisation, workers and materials.

The Congress defeat in Farrukhabad cannot be explained in terms of the voters preference for a radical ideology or a colourful personality. It was a vote of protest against the Congress and the Congress administration.

After independence when the Congress became the ruling party, the government wing of the party became the magnet attracting the ambitions of all Congressmen. This inevitably led to the decline of the organisation to a place of secondary importance.

Further, a section of the active and influential Congressmen in the district left the party on ideological grounds while some of the entrenched social groups with a vested interest in the maintenance of the 'status quo' and the preservation of their own bases of power entered the party. With the entry of these groups the party gained in strength in the rural areas but it also led to an intensification of intra-party conflict.

Finally, the dominant groups in the Farrukhabad Congress have made it difficult for newly emerging groups to enter the organisation, occupy positions of leadership and successfully bid for power. With their political emergence through the Congress thus blocked, caste groups like kachi, kisan, kurmi, ahir and, to some extent, rajput in Farrukhabad have transferred their allegiance to other Parties.

Weakened by these factors, the prospects of the Congress candidate in the bye-election suffered further as a result of the effective exploitation of some immediate causes of discontent among the people by the opposition—e g, collection of forced contributions to the National Defence Fund, imposition of new shop hours, and so on.

THE Congress defeat in Farrukhabad was complete. In a traditionally Congress stronghold, Dr Keskar, an important leader of the party, was defeated by more than 50,000 votes. Such a scale of defeat needs explanation.

Before we consider the election results, it would be useful to have a glance at the political background of this constituency and of the Farrukhabad district. Three groups, the Congress Party, the Muslim League and the Aman Sabha (also known as the Agricultural Party) were politically active in the district before 1947. While the Congress represented the middle classes, the Aman Sabha, formed with the active backing of the then Governor of U P was intended to provide a bulwark against the Congress and, at the same time, to protect the interests of big landholders against the growing leftist tendency in the Congress. The Muslim League, on the other hand, represented a sectarian movement restricted to a religious community, aimed at carving out a separate state for the Muslims. The leadership of the Congress came from outside the district while the Aman Sabha as well as the Muslim League recruited their leaders locally.

The coming of independence ushered in two vital changes. First, socialist members of the Congress left the party in 1948 and, second, both the Aman Sabha and the Muslim League lost their *raison d'etre*. The Congress

Party, in order to compensate the loss it suffered by the eviction of socialist members, readily brought the Aman Sabhaites and the Muslim Leaguers into its fold. The preponderance of the Congress Party in the district is evident if we consider the fact that the Congress won all the Legislative Assembly seats in 1952 including those reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

The Constituency

The Farrukhabad Parliamentary constituency — composed of five Legislative Assembly constituencies — was represented, till 1963, by Mool Chand Dube, a successful Brahmin lawyer popular among all sections of the district. His death early in 1963 caused the bye-election. Four candidates, B V Keskar (Congress), Rammanohar Lohia (Socialist Party), Bharat Singh Raihore (Praja Socialist Party) and Sathi Chhedilal (Republican), filed nominations on April 15, 1963. Out of these only one was a local man (Bharat Singh Rathore). The polling took place on May 18, 1963, and the election was decided in favour of Dr Lohia who defeated his nearest rival, Dr Keskar, by more than 50,000 votes.

The margin between the votes polled by Dr Keskar and the votes polled by Dr Lohia — a margin of 57,588 — is a staggering one. No one, not even the workers of Dr Lohia, had expected this margin to be so large. More

staggering is the fact that Dr Keskar could get more votes than Dr Lohia at only 57 out of 548 polling stations. At one of the polling stations — Kanjhana — Keskar did not set a single vote. Table 1 gives a precise picture of the magnitude of Keskar's defeat.

From the table it is apparent that Dr Keskar got TOO few votes at too many polling stations. His votes ranged between 0 and 150 at 447 polling stations while Dr Lohia's ranged between 100 and 300 at 427 polling stations. With the successive increase in the votes polled, the number of polling stations voting for Keskar decreases while that of Lohia increases.

Table 1: Distribution of Polling Booths According to Total Votes Cast for Dr. Keskar and Dr. Lohia

Votes cast	No of polling booths for Keskar	No of polling booths for Lohia
0 — 49	173	11
50 — 99	165	52
100 — 149	109	108
150 — 199	67	125
200 — 249	18	116
250 — 299	12	78
300 — 349	2	37
350 — 399	—	14
400 — 449	1	5
450 — 499	1	2
Total	548	548

Not only Dr Keskar's defeat was greater in magnitude, it was also extensive; almost all the sections — whether divided on the basis of rural and urban or on caste lines — voted against Dr Keskar. This can be well understood from Table 2.

Table 2 clearly indicates that urban voters in all the towns and townships, except Kannauj, voted against the Congress. The magnitude of the shift away from Congress can not be measured in the absence of comparable data for previous elections, but it can safely be asserted that a shift in voter's preference did occur in favour of Dr Lohia. Even Kannauj, supposed to be a stronghold of the Congress, did not vote heavily for the Congress candidate. Less than 50 voters made a trip on May 19 to the polling booth and 1,085 less voters in comparison to 1962 General Election voted for the Congress, bringing down the margin to a paltry 346 votes between Dr Keskar and Dr Lohia. But his shift in favour of Lohia in the urban areas is not a large one as compared to the shift towards him in rural areas.

Table 3 shows that Keskar lost more heavily in rural than in urban areas. The difference between their votes is 10 per cent in the urban areas but it shoots up to 35 per cent in the rural areas. The obvious conclusion is that the extent of disaffection against the Congress was greater among the voters in rural than in urban areas.

How extensive was this discontentment? Was it limited to certain sections of the society or was it pervasive, affecting all sections? A sampling of the electoral preference of all castes in the district conclusively shows that disaffection against Congress was not restricted to any particular section of

the society; on the contrary, it was widespread affecting all the castes in the district. Table 4 will make this point clear.

The polling stations sampled caste-wise tell the story of how the different castes voted. Lohia got support from all the castes and made heavy inroads in what was once a Congress "sphere of influence". The rural voters preferred Lohia as against Keskar almost 3 to 1. Considering that just a year before the Congress candidate had defeated his nearest rival by about 15,000 votes, what happened in the interim period that caused this Congress debacle at Farrukhabad?

Immediate Causes not Everything

Press reports and newspaper analyses made out that the immediate factors, like collection of National Defence Fund, imposition of emergency surcharge on land revenue, change in shopping hours, gold control order, and scarcity of necessary commodities like sugar, kerosene oil and vegetable oil, were the catalytic agents in changing the attitude of the electorate. This is a very good explanation as far as it goes; but perusal of voting studies make it abundantly clear that the attitude of voters is not mercurial. Affiliations and loyalties do not disintegrate all at once unless it be a crisis time; these are gradually eroded. The process of erosion of party loyalty is spread over many years and is the result of the interaction of many factors. This is not to suggest that the immediate or the short-term factors do not have any influence over the voters' preference. On the contrary, it is suggested here that when a voter's loyalty

to a party begins to weaken, the short-term factors acquire a critical role in completing his alienation. Short-term factors aggravate the feeling of dissatisfaction and make it easy for him to change his party preference.

Although a period of twelve years is insufficient for determining a secular trend in electoral preference, it is significant that during this period the Congress has attracted fewer and fewer votes in the successive elections' In the first General Election in 1952 the Congress candidate for the parliamentary seat got 51 per cent of the valid votes polled. It came down to 38.8 per cent in 1957, 33 per cent in 1962 and 28 per cent in the 1963 bye-election.

Nature of constituencies	Percentage of V V P by			
	Keskar	Lohia	Keskar	Lohia
Urban	13,823	17,420	40.1	50.2
Rural	36,405	90,396	24.5	60.4
Total	50,228	107,816		

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Although this downward trend has been in operation since 1962, one thing that immediately attracts our attention is the fact that there is a sharp decline, like a crash so to say, in the Congress votes between 1962 and 1963. Whereas there was a reduction by 5 per cent in its votes between the general elections of 1957 and 1962, the period between 1962 and 1963 alone accounts for 5 per cent reduction.

This makes it imperative that both the long-term and the short-term, as well as the immediate causes, must be looked into in order to explain this bye-election reverse. The long-term factors include all those factors which have adversely acted upon the Congress organization and have made it weak and ineffective. The short-term factors are those which were in operation immediately before the onset of the election campaign. The immediate factors, on the other hand, relate to the Congress election campaign, its organization and effectiveness.

II

One of the tests of effectiveness of a political party is its ability to adapt to changing situations. With expanding franchise it is but natural that more and more social groups would

Table 2: Urban Votes for the Candidates

Name of urban constituencies	No of polling booths	Votes for				VVP*	TE†
		Keskar	Lohia	B S Rathore	Lal		
Kannauj	15	3,152	2,806	232	89	6,279	13,245
Gursahay Ganj	2	341	589	48	26	1,004	2,147
Talagram	2	282	344	148	19	793	1,647
Kamalganj Town area	3	430	808	51	7	1,296	2,283
Farrukhabad-cum-Fatehgarh	51	8,400	11,159	848	472	20,879	45,447
Chhibramau Town area	9	1,218	1,714	128	125	3,185	5,931
Total	82	13,823	17,420	1,453	738	33,436	70,757

* Valid Votes Polled † Total Electorate

claim right to participation in the political process. If these emerging social groups are accommodated and absorbed, the political party gains new strength; if, however, it fails to do so discontent increases which may ultimately transform itself into protest movements. The social groups whose claims for share in power are ignored or suppressed get alienated from the political party they have supported so far and they either transfer their loyalty to other parties or create one to advance their interests.

Important Groups Alienated

The Congress being a dominant party naturally attracted a variety of social groups to it after independence. One very significant fact about the Congress after independence was that being a ruling party it controlled access to governmental power. The selection of candidates for contesting different kinds of elections therefore assumed great importance inasmuch as each politically conscious social group sought Congress tickets because it considered it vitally important to send some one from its own ranks to decision-making bodies of various descriptions to safeguard and promote its interests. Thus the way Congress tickets were allocated had a very far-reaching effect on their loyalty and support. If a social group was thwarted in its attempts to get tickets for long it tended to withdraw its support from the party and transfer it elsewhere where it was welcome.

This process has been in operation in Farrukhabad since 1932. Tables 6 and 7 give an idea of the extent to which various social groups in Farrukhabad were alienated from the Congress Party. But before that, in order to comprehend better the significance of these Tables, it is essential to know the caste composition in the district. Table 5 gives the estimated caste composition of Farrukhabad,

As Table 6 shows, the Brahmins enjoy a dominant position, while the backward communities and others, in spite of their superior numerical strength, are relegated to the background. This preponderance of a single caste group, that is Brahmins, in the Congress party has vitally affected its fortunes in the district. The party paid dearly for its neglect of other castes, especially the backward communities. Out of five backward communities' applicants for Congress ticket in 1952 only one was given the ticket. And though Congress won all the seven

Legislative Assembly seats, drawing support from all the important castes, in the 1952 General Elections, in the subsequent General Elections in 1957 and 1962 its dominance was seriously challenged by other parties. It lost four seats in 1957 and six seats in 1962.

A perusal of Table 7 reveals that political parties like the PSP and the Jan Sangh have picked up considerable strength in what was once a completely Congress dominated district. More interesting in this connection is the fact that these parties draw their strength from castes such as the Rajputs and more importantly, the backward communities. Two persons belonging to the backward communities were returned on the PSP ticket in 1957 and three in 1962. This indicates that the backward communities have transferred their loyalty to other political parties opposed to the Congress.

The alienation of various social groups, particularly the backward communities, has narrowed considerably the support base of the Congress party in the district and has weakened its position.

Of more importance in this regard is the organizational state of the Congress in the district. The Congress organization in the district is almost non-existent. None of the 57 Mandal Congress Committees (MCC), for example, has either any office or any permanent staff. This means that the very last link of the Congress organization is the weakest.

The District Congress Committee also suffers from serious defects. Most important of all, every visitor to the Congress office asks for the Congress MLA and not for the office-bearers of the Congress party. This indicates that the Congress as an organization does not have much significance in public eye; it is rather the Congress MLA a symbol of the ruling party and a dispenser of petty fa-

yours — who is the focus of mass attraction. This displacement of the Congress party as an organ of public service and mobilization of the masses by the MLA as an instrument of logrolling and granting favours has, over the years, affected the organization on the one hand and its public image on the other.

Attracted to Political Power

The causes of the weakening of the Congress Party in Farrukhabad are not far to seek. When the Congress came into power it resolved not to allow any political group within it and, as a consequence, the Congress Socialist Party left it in 1948.² To compensate the loss the Congress Party opened its door to big landowning classes, from which the British had drawn much of their support in India, and the trader class which had prudentially avoided much contact with the Congress before 1947. Being in possession of the necessary financial resources and social influence, they were naturally not satisfied with joining the Congress as ordinary members but rather sought to dominate it. In contrast to the old type "constructive" workers, the new entrants were pragmatically oriented politicians who sought to serve their own interests through command over instruments of political power.

Tables 8, 9 and 10 show the character of the active Congress members from Farrukhabad town enrolled in the year 1961. Out of 31 active members enrolled, 16 have trading as their occupation. In other words, the traders preponderate over other occupation groups. Another remarkable feature is the fact that 18 out of the total sample belong to the age group 20-40. This means that a majority of active members joined the Congress after 1947 or immediately before it.

More revealing is the fact, that among 16 traders 11 belong to the age group 20-40.

Table 4: Electoral Preferences of Different Castes

Castes	No of polling stations sampled	Total votes	Valid votes polled	Votes for			
				Keskar	Lohia	Rathore	Lal
Brahmins	8	7,553	2,089	395	1,393	262	39
Rajputs	17	14,189	4,306	801	2,867	502	136
Backward Communities	9	6,682	3,091	771	1,795	262	63
Scheduled caste	6	5,337	2,142	517	1,476	111	38
Muslims	8	6,653	1,772	402	1,186	154	30

The emergence in the Congress of a new type of worker, who is very pragmatic and who uses the party as an instrument for promoting his own interest² has made old constructive workers bitter. The old workers sacrificed much but are reaping no benefits; the new workers, on the other hand, have sacrificed nothing but are exploiting their association with the Congress for their own benefit. This shift in leadership has resulted in great tension and struggle for power within the party. Being no match to the superior skill, economic power and political agility of the new entrants, however, the old workers gradually became disinterested in the Congress organization and either left the Congress or became inactive. Others who were anyway incapable of wielding leadership aligned themselves with particular individuals in order to remain in the party.

Growth of Fractional Rivalries

Thus, the difference in outlook, orientation and method of work of the two generations of Congress workers puts a great strain on the Congress organization.⁴ The old workers sold⁴ to the idea of silent service without looking for any reward are seldom elected to party positions because they cannot recruit bogus members;⁵ the new Congressmen do so and consequently occupy key positions in the party hierarchy and in the legislature. Old Congressmen are bitter and skeptical of any improvement in the situation, and a striking feature of the Congress Party's leadership personnel today is their utter lack of loyalty to the party.

To add to the difficulties of Congressmen in general is the fact that every failure of the government — corruption, inefficiency and the like — is attributed by the general public to the Congress as an organization. The Congressmen in this regard face a real

dilemma' They cannot possibly defend those acts of the government which they themselves think to be wrong and yet are unable to criticize them as that would be tantamount to indiscipline and weaken the organization further.' This has adversely affected the morale of the party.

Of even more far-reaching consequences for the Congress Party in the district is the prevalence of factionalism at every level of the party hierarchy.

Factionalism in the Congress Party is not new. Its roots go back, at least in UP, to the Swarajists' days of late twenties. It must, however, be emphasized here that there is a vital difference between the factionalism that obtained before 1947 and the one prevailing now. The pre-1947 factionalism had its genesis, at least in U P, in personal rivalry rationalized in terms of ideological differences and restrained by the objectives of achieving political freedom. The post-independence factionalism revolves round personal rivalry devoid of any ideological content. The force that motivates this kind of factionalism comes from an urge to capture seats of power. And it expresses itself in fierce competition between groups endeavouring to unseat each other from positions of power. Super-arrogation of self-interest above party interest makes factional competition unbridled and unprincipled.

The transformation of factionalism of the first variety into the second in Farrukhabad, as also elsewhere, is largely due to an increase in the importance of the ministerial wing of the party. The control of executive posts at various levels has come to be the mainspring of organizational activities. To control the executive posts it is necessary for the warring factions to get the control of the machinery for selecting candidates: which ultimately means that the whole organization

itself must be controlled. This initiates sharp conflict in organizational elections, selection of candidates, etc. As self-interest is the guiding spirit, of such conflicts they usually degenerate into personal enmity. Resort to unscrupulous means in these conflicts is not infrequent.

Selection of Candidates

One of the main factors of such factional rivalry is the selection of candidates for contesting general elections. Each of the contending groups tries to get its own numbers selected and resorts to every possible method to achieve this purpose. Often this results in a rancorous competition between the applicants for tickets who leave no stone unturned to pull down their competitors. But the ticket, like all scarce commodities, eludes a majority of the applicants. Many of the disappointed 'hopefuls', dissatisfied with the verdict of the selection body, wreak a vengeance upon the selected candidate by working, either openly or secretly, against him with a view to defeating him at the polls.. This attempt, whether successful or not, creates a feeling of hostility among Congressmen and makes it difficult for them to work together. Thus with an atmosphere pervaded by animosity, bitterness and active hostility, the Congress Party faces a general election like a house divided.

The Farrukhabad DCC was relatively free from such factional fights till 1957. Up to that year persons belonging to the Gupta group dominated the DCC. But a change occurred when a person belonging to the Tripathi group was elected to the presidentship of the DCC. He continued till 1960 when he was replaced again by a person belonging to the Gupta group.

In the 1957 General Election, tickets for four out of seven Legislative Assembly constituencies were given to persons belonging to the Tripathi group. Out of these the Congress lost four seats. The main reason for this defeat was attributed to sabotage by Congressmen themselves. The tendency to self-destruction which started in 1957 reached a high point in the 1962 General Election. The war of attrition took a toll of five Congress candidates.

This factional war is not limited to General Elections only; it has now seeped down to other elections as well. Rival groups aspiring to capture executive posts in the district forge alliances with opposition parties.⁷ Cutting across party lines they try to gain controlling positions which they can use for distri-

Table 5: Caste Composition at Farrukhabad

	Castes	Percentage of the total population	
High Castes	Brahmans	16.0	} 27.1
	Thakur	11.1	
Backward Communities	Kurmi	11.1	} 39.9
	Kacchi & Kisan	22.2	
	Ahir	6.6	
Harijans		22.2	22.2
Muslims		10.8	10.8

buting spoils and offering patronage to followers with the aim of creating, maintaining and expanding their bases of power. As ideologies and principles do not count for much in this kind of politics, groups form, break and reform only to be broken again with every change in the situation.

Factionalism has also introduced its own contradictions. At one level it opposes rival political parties; at other it makes alliances with them. We have already seen that at the first level the Congress has gradually lost ground to its rival. At the other level too intra-party conflicts are proving beneficial to other political parties in the district.

Yet another effect of factionalism is that Congressmen in the district, belonging to rival groups, are not in a position to work together for a common cause. They openly indulge in denouncing each other.⁸ Thus just prior to the 1963 bye-election, faction;-Hsm had so degenerated the Congress in the district that Congressmen were freely indulging in mutual acrimony, contentious debates, hurling charges and counter-charges at each other and damaging each other in the public eye. The District Congress organisation was in a state of utter confusion; it had lost its vitality at all levels.

III

In addition to the somnolent existence of the Congress in the district, there were other factors that influenced the attitude of the voter towards the Congress candidate in the bye-election. The long-term factors operating in the district in general and in the Congress

Party in particular, discredited the party in the public eye. When some Short-range factors joined the long-range ones, the Congress prestige reached its lowest point. These short-range factors include the manner of collection of the National Defence Fund, emergency surcharge on land revenue, the gold control order, the change in shopping hours and the scarcity of some necessary commodities like sugar, kerosene oil and vegetable oil at a time when they were most needed.

Contribution to National Defence Fund would not have been a factor in swaying the voters' preference if they were entirely voluntary. An element of coercion, however, was introduced in it which not only meant economic hardship for the people but also an affront to human dignity." Not only the collection at many places amounted to extortion, it was also discriminatory. Rich and influential people, used their influence and were left scotch free; the poor and the unprotected had no access to such mitigating influence and had therefore to suffer most. Their supplications and protests had no effect on the district bureaucracy which used coercion freely. This added fuel to the fire of people's discontent.

In addition certain other policies such as emergency surcharge on land revenue and gold control order were brought into operation which meant further inconvenience to the people. A surcharge to the extent of one-fourth of the land revenue was an extra burden on the peasantry. The gold control order, though affecting only a microscopic section of the populace, was annoying because it meant that people with mar-

riage on their hands would not be able to buy ornaments. As the marriage season was on, the gold control order and the scarcity of necessary commodities such as sugar, kerosene oil and vegetable oil added to people's difficulties. One additional sore point was the enforcement of new shopping hours which meant less of shopping time at a time when selling was very brisk.

These immediate factors, though not in themselves decisive added to the discontent that had been accumulating over the years. Even much before the election the public had been dissatisfied with the administration. Corruption, specially in Chakbandi (consolidation of land holdings), red-tapism and improper behaviour of the district officials towards the public, were rampant. As early as 1959, one of the members of the DCC was complaining that in the areas across the Ganges and elsewhere peasants were given *taccavi* loans, but the amount, in lieu of being given back to the peasants, was being deposited in small-scale saving scheme against their will.

IV

When the Farrukhabad parliamentary seat fell vacant, no Congressman in the district was eager to fight the election. Everybody apprehended that Congress will lose. This apprehension of defeat affected different Congressmen differently. One section of Congressmen wanted some prominent Congress leader from outside the district to contest the election hoping that he would be able to bring together the different warring factions. As one Congressman wrote:

Table 6: Caste and Representation in Different Bodies

Castes	DCC Executive Committee 1961	Applicants for Congress [@] tickets in general election in			Total	District Board 1963	Regional Presidents of Marketing Co-op Societies
		1952	1957	1962			
Brahmins	13	16	20	11	47	12	4
Rajput	1	2	5	6	13	7	1
Bania		4*	2*	1	7	3*	
Backward Communities	3	5	1†	2	8	7	
Scheduled Castes		3			3	1	
Muslims		1	2		3	2	
Others	2	2	5	1	8	1	1
Total	19	33	35	21	89	33	6

[@] Data for only 4 Legislative Assembly constituencies are available. Reserved constituencies have been ignored for the purpose of this analysis.

* Includes Khatries. † Defeated and joined P S P.

"In the last general election some of the Congressmen openly opposed the party candidates, some became indifferent and did not work and some pretended to work. As a result, the Congress lost 5 out of 7 Legislative Assembly seats. There is no change noticeable in their attitude. So it would amount to losing the seat if a local man were selected to contest this election. I therefore request that a person of high calibre should be selected to fight the election."¹¹

Another section of Congressmen thought differently. It was of the opinion that some local man should be chosen to contest the election inasmuch as the defeat of a big leader would be harmful to, Congress prestige.

AICC Wanted Keskar

Meanwhile, Mohan Lal Gautam, an anti-C B Gupta man, visited Farrukhabad early in March to explore the chances of his own success in The bye-election. This alerted the Gupta group in the district which at once became active in working against Gautam. On March 8, 1963, Chaturbhuj Sharma was sent by the UPCC to Farrukhabad to consult the local leaders about the possible choice. Opinions were divided; some suggested that an outside leader should be selected while others insisted on some local man. All the local leaders, whose names were proposed, declined to fight the election. The DCC President, whose name figured in all the proposals, expressed the fear that local Congressmen would work against him in the election campaign.¹²

When C B Gupta visited Farrukhabad on March 16, 1963, the question was again taken up but no Congressman came forward to carry the Congress banner in the electoral fight. At last the name of S N Dixit was proposed and everybody agreed to it.¹² The DCC recommended his name to the Pradesh Election Committee.

Immediately afterwards two or three members of the Gupta group in the district began writing to the AICC against Dixit's candidature. They were interested in Dr Keskar being selected as the Congress candidate. The Congress High Command was itself interested in Keskar and he was therefore finally selected. Keskar filed his nomination papers on April 15, 1963.

In order to set up an election campaign organization a workers' meeting was called on April 14, 1963, but it broke up in confusion when Congressmen came to the point of exchanging

blows after hurling accusations at each other. Similar had been the fate of the workers' meeting held on March 16 which was addressed by C B Gupta himself. When it was realized that it was wellnigh impossible to work out a plan in a workers' meeting, an organizational set-up was informally drawn by three or four prominent local leaders.

An Election Board of 21 persons was constituted which was responsible for making plans and taking policy decisions and was, moreover, entrusted with overall supervision and control. Another body consisting of the Congress candidates who had contested the 1962 general elections in the district was set up. Each candidate was given the charge of one Legislative Assembly constituency.¹¹ Yet another body of 11 persons was constituted to look after the community blocks. Care was taken to give the charge of the block to *Block Pramukhs* if they happened to be Congressmen. In case no such Block Pramukh was available, the charge was given either to the MCC President or the Secretary. The DCC President took the overall charge of the whole parliamentary constituency.

Thus there was a three-tier arrangement for directing and conducting the election campaign. Three central offices along with nine regional offices were set up to direct, supervise and supply materials to campaign workers.¹⁵

The campaign was officially started on April 22. From the very beginning it had to face an uphill task. The moment the names of the persons in-charge were made known Congressmen antagonistic to them began a clamour. Another factor that hampered an effective campaign was the bringing together of two or more Congressmen — who had cause to be hostile to each other — for conducting the campaign. Coupled with this was the fear that credit for a successful campaign would

go to their rivals.

Yet another factor that made any united effort, particularly in Fairukhabad and Kannauj, very difficult was municipal politics in these towns. The municipal politics had already divided these two towns into several factions each of which attempted to exploit the campaign for its own political ends, keeping all the time in view the next municipal election.

Congress Campaign Weak

In addition to all these, most Congressmen were not inclined to work seriously for the campaign. They were more interested in establishing contact with Dr Keskar, presumably in their own interest in case Keskar won the election and was taken in the cabinet. They would deprecate the work of others only to emphasize their own or their friends' importance for the campaign work. They seldom went out to canvass votes; but whenever they showed a willingness to do so, they wanted jeeps to be provided to them. Even when jeeps were provided, they would not take the trouble of going on to kutchra roads.

Considering the state of the Congress organization and the widespread dissatisfaction among the Congressmen themselves, it is not surprising that the Congress campaign was ineffective and lifeless. About five to six hundred workers — both from within and without the district — were engaged in campaigning, a large number of them working in their own home villages or villages nearby. They would devote only a small part of their time to the campaign. Their effectiveness was, however, circumscribed by the prevailing village feuds. In the first place, such feuds narrowed their contacts. In the second place, they were neither intellectually equipped nor politically train-

Table 7: Caste and Political Affiliation of the Legislators in Farrukhabad 1952-1962.

Caste	1952			1962			1957		
	Cong	PSP	JS	Cong	PSP	JS	Cong	PSP	JS
Brahmins	2			1					
Rajput	1			1	1		1	1	
Khatri	1								
Backward Communities	1				2			3	1
Scheduled Castes	1				1		1		
Muslim	1			1					
Total	7			3	4		2	4	1

ed to reply to ever-rising wave of criticism,

The higher echelon district Congress workers would not move without jeeps. Whenever they did they measured only the metalled roads and went into roadside villages or those just a little way down the road. They contacted only the village *Pramukhs*, the implicit assumption being that the village *Pramukh* or a prominent man of the village was a person who controlled votes in the village and, further, that he was willing to get these votes for the Congress. Neither of these assumptions worked in practice for two reasons: first, it is a rare village that elects a village *Pramukh* without a contest and therefore if a village *Pramukh* decided to work for the Congress, the groups opposed to the *Pramukh* supported the opposition; second, most of the village *Pramukhs*, it was reported, were bought off. As such, Congressmen could make no effective contact with voters in the villages they visited, and they visited only a small number of villages; very few villages were visited twice and a large number of villages were completely left out.

Thus, voters in the rural areas could not be approached. Those who could be approached were approached only towards the end of the campaign. By that time most of them had already committed themselves to vote for Lohia.

Perhaps no political party had ever calculated to win an election by using least amount of campaign materials as did the Congress in this bye-election. In the initial days of the campaign no need for campaign materials was felt as it was supposed that the visits of big leaders would be publicity enough. It was only during the last days of the campaign that three notices were printed and distributed. No press release was ever issued. Flags and posters were always in short supply. In the absence of effective communication between the headquarters and the held offices, supplies of these things were irregular. Moreover, at many places these things were never utilised.

Conveyances form a very important part of any election campaign inasmuch as they make it easy to cover vast distances in a short time facilitating contact with voters on a mass scale. But it is strange that the Congress election campaign was carried on with very few conveyances. Even those conveyances which were available were misutilized and some of them were kept idle.

Public meetings, street corner meetings and small informal group meetings are the necessary instrumentalities through which to strengthen bonds of partnership in the minds of militants, ordinary members and sympathizers of a political party. Beside renewing the contact of leaders with the masses, meetings create a fellow-feeling in the partisans and help recruit new adherents. But, strange as it may seem, meetings were not given an important place in the scheme of Congress election campaign. Moreover, the meetings that were held were ill organised and ill-timed. As a result of this they were ill-attended. And all the meetings addressed by national leaders were scheduled to be held towards the fag end of the campaign.

Leaders' Visits Ineffective

In view of the fact that workers of Dr Lohia were active in the field from the very beginning and had created an atmosphere not very favourable to the Congress, visits of Congress leaders towards the end of the campaign could not be very effective. The programmes of these leaders were also so crowded that they could not give more than 30 to 45 minutes—more often 15 minutes—to a meeting. Furthermore, the timings of the meetings—specially at Kannauj—were such that people could not be expected to attend them in large numbers. Lastly, all these meetings were held either in urban centres or at places lying on or near the metalled roads. As a result, a greater part of the rural areas was not covered by them.

One of the dysfunctional effects of the meetings lay in the fact that it took three days to organize them. This meant that for the entire period that, the workers were engaged in making preparations for the meetings campaign work ceased. Moreover, on the meeting day itself all the workers stationed in the villages would leave their posts to attend the meetings, which meant further curtailment of election work.

From the above accounts it becomes very clear that the Congress campaign was not seriously undertaken, neither was it zealously carried on. If the campaign materials were in short supply, this could have been compensated by a band of trained, well-trying, sincere and enthusiastic workers giving of their most dedicated and concerted effort. But this too was evidently lacking. A disorganized, undisciplined and ill-directed army of workers cannot be expected to win battles.

Some of these deficiencies could have been remedied by a well-knit organiza-

tion. Had there been a clear demarcation, a mechanism of co-ordination. Periodical check-up and supervision of the functioning organs, a willingness to critically analyze the performance of different parts of the election machinery and, above all, a readiness to adjust to changing situations, the Congress could have fared well. But this did not happen. The central election office presented a chaotic look, and the regional offices, a deserted look. Requisitions from field offices would go unattended for two or three days at a stretch. This lack of communication created a sense of frustration among the workers. There was lack of co-ordination as well. Each Congress worker did what he could. He did not receive continuous guidance from above nor his efforts and skills were utilized where they could have been most effective. Most important of all, no one individual seemed to be in command of things in general.

Most of these defects can be traced back to the defects of leadership. The leadership at the district level was badly divided and therefore not in a position to command allegiance from all sections of the district Congress.

Table 8: Occupational Distribution of Active Members in Farrukhabad Town, 1961

Occupation	No in each category
Agriculture	6
Trade	16
Handicrafts	5
Service	2
Law	1
Medicine	1
Total	31

Table 9: Age Distribution of Active Members in Farrukhabad Town 1961 (N = 31)

Age groups	No
Less than 20	1
20—29	9
30—39	8
40—49	6
50—59	7
Total	31

Table 10: Age Distribution of Active Members in Trade (N = 16)

Age group	No
20—29	5
30—39	6
40—49	2
50—59	3
Total	16

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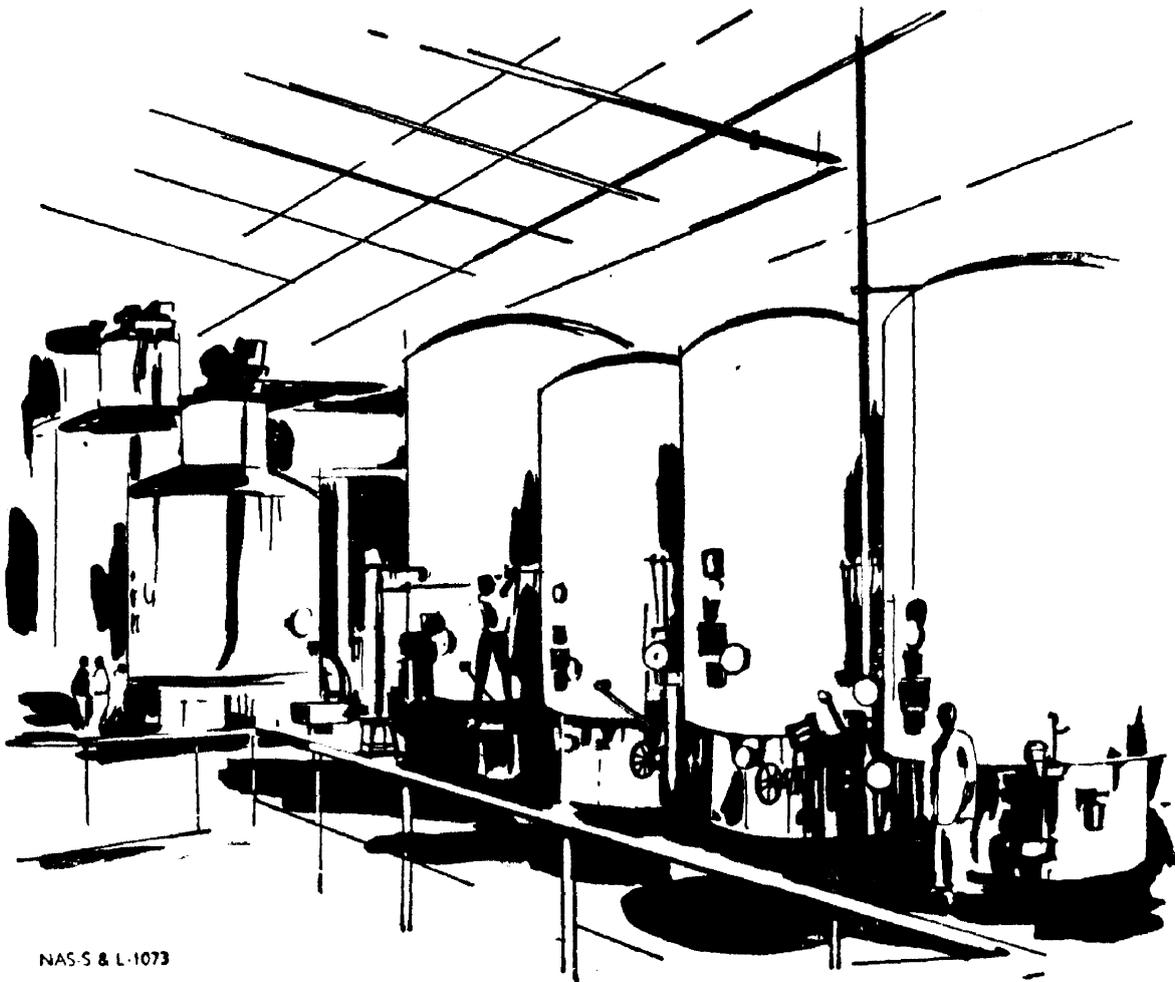


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The PCC had deputed Banarasi Das with the responsibility of an overall charge of the election campaign. He came to stay in the constituency only on May 5.17 By then the rot had already set in and he was not in a position to make radical changes in the election machinery- Again, Banarasi Das divided his time between Futehgarh and Kannauj and functioned more as a troubleshooter than an effective commander.

The two- persons deputed by the AICC could have been expected to take things into their own hands when they saw things going wrong. But they too were incapacitated by certain limitations. For one thing, they were not acquainted with the local situation and had to depend for advice and co-operation on local leaders. For another, they were reported to have involved themselves in Farrukhabad town politics and each of them backed two different factions in the town with the result that tension between these two factions increased and election work suffered.

Keskar No Match for Lohia

The one person, who had personal stakes in the election outcome and was expected to take up the direction of the whole business,—the candidate himself—suffered from certain limitations. The fact that Dr Keskar was not aligned with any group in the district and there was no personal animosity against him was favourable for the campaign. Another favourable factor was the stature of Dr Keskar. He could have, if he so wanted, exerted a wholesome influence over the tottering election machinery. He did not do so because he was not physically fit to face the rigours of vigorous campaigning. Dr Lohia's candidature entailed a rough and tumble campaign for which Dr Keskar was not suited, either physically or temperamentally.

In contrast to the Congress efforts, Lohia's campaign presented an altogether different picture. It started at least 15 days earlier than that of the Congress. In the very beginning Lohia sent about 500 workers in the villages. Most of these workers belonged to the Jan Sangh which was actively supporting Dr Lohia. These workers had explicit orders not to leave their posts till the election was over. Fresh batches of workers were added and sent to the villages till their number, in the last week of the campaign, reached 3000. Two workers were assigned to one polling-booth and at every twenty booths

there was a supervisor who would regularly make rounds of the polling booths under his charge, collect reports, know the requirements of the workers and pass on the reports to the Election Office. Thus there was a very effective communication between the workers in the field and the election offices which promoted a good co-ordination of the campaign work.

In addition to creating an organization which worked in a disciplined and concerted way and obtained support of zealous workers, Lohia skilfully exploited the many acts of omissions and commissions of the Congress government both at the Centre and in the State as well as in the district. He made out to the voters that the powers that be were all corrupt, degraded and oppressive; the salvation of the voters lay in kicking out the 'rascals'. The first step towards achieving this lay, of course, in electing Lohia. To the voters who had recently tasted the bitter fruits of administrative highhandedness. Lohia presented himself as a Saviour who, though persecuted, persisted in his efforts to bring solace to the suffering masses. He skilfully exploited his arrest in 1954 in connection with canal rate agitation and made it a symbol of his crucifixion for the people of Farrukhabad.

Gandhi's "Two Sons"

Dr Lohia spoke of the two sons of Gandhi—one Nehru, and the other Lohia himself—who had dedicated their lives to the service of the country. But while one (Nehru) had taken to a life of pomp and luxury, power and prestige, forsaken the Gandhian tradition and was now driving the country to the precipice of disaster the other (Lohia) was living a life of penury and want, misery and suffering, keeping aloft the Gandhian ideals of selfless service to the nation. Here was a man who not Nehru—was the true servant of the people. To the voters of Farrukhabad Lohia appeared to be a messiah who would not hesitate to castigate even the indomitable Nehru. For them he symbolized a relentless, outspoken critic of governmental authority who could belittle the idols of national adulation with impunity. The voters of Farrukhabad who had recently been the subject of administrative excesses found in Lohia a personification of their own outraged feelings and took him to their hearts.

Lohia did not stop at promising the pie in the sky and talking of high principles. While he spoke of 'higher things' his workers were busy promis-

ing to the voters the reward of things mundane. To the housewives they promised smokeless ovens and un-stinking latrines; to the farmers, a rent-free holding of six acres; to the consumers, cheap articles of daily consumption; and to the Muslims, recognition of Urdu as a state language. Everything was promised to everybody. If persuasion failed, pressure was brought to bear on the recalcitrant voters.

Conclusions

On the basis of what has been discussed above it can be safely concluded that one of the major reasons for Congress defeat in Farrukhabad lies in the fact that the Congress in this district is a non-functioning organization. Several factors are responsible for this. First, with the attainment of independence there came a change in the orientation of Congressmen; various organs of governmental power became the main attraction for a Congressman's ambition because through them public good could now be realized. This inevitably meant the receding of the organization to a place of secondary importance. Organization was important only to the extent it helped capture the seats of governmental power.

Second, after the independence, a section of active and influential district Congressmen left the party on ideological grounds while some of the entrenched social groups with a vested interest in the maintenance of *status quo* and the preservation of their own bases of power entered the party. With the entry of these groups in the Congress, the party gained strength in rural areas but it also meant an intensification of intra-party conflict, now made more violent as the restraints that operated before 1947 were removed or slackened. It also meant a worsening of inter-personal relations in the Congress so much so that Congressmen would not hesitate to work against each other in general elections. Struggle for power has pervaded their personal lives to such an extent that co-operation between two opposed groups or individuals has become difficult to achieve.

Third, dominant groups in the Farrukhabad Congress have made it difficult for new emerging groups to enter into the organisation, occupy leadership positions and successfully compete for power. With their political emergence through the Congress blocked, caste groups like Kaebi, Kisan, Kurmi, Ahir and, to some extent, Rajputs in Farrukhabad have transferred their allegiance to other political parties.

All these factors have made the Congress in Farrukhabad weak; internal bickering, hostility and fratricidal fights have left it paralysed. When some immediate causes like forced collection of National Defence Fund and impositions of new shopping hours joined with the long-range factors, the stage was set for Congress defeat. Defeat could have possibly been averted had the district Congress organized and conducted an efficient campaign. But the campaign itself suffered from lack of leadership, organization, well-trained and honest workers, campaign materials and canvassing. The Congress debacle at Farrukhabad cannot be explained in terms of the voters' reference for a radical ideology or a colourful personality. It was a protest vote against the Congress and the Congress administration.

Notes

The Executive Committee of the DCC has not held any meeting since October 1962. One post of Vice President and two posts of general secretaries were lying vacant. The DCC President holds also the post of the Chairman of the District Board and devotes much of his time to District Board affairs. The post of General Secretary is held by the Congress MLA of the district and is thus not in a position to give much of his time to organizational work.

² Mention in this connection may be made of Horilal Yada", Chairman and President of the District Board and the DCC for many years and now a PSP MLA, who left the Congress with the result that the Congress lost much of its influence among the Ahirs and the Rajputs.

³ A typical example of this is the president of the Farrukhabad Town Congress Committee. He is a young-man of 33 years, belongs to the Bania caste and is a wholesale denier in cloth and a licence holder of a cement depot. He also openly avows that he is in the Congress because it helps his business. Such examples can be multiplied.

⁴ This is evident from the following discussion in the DCC 'general body meeting held on May 17, 1961 for making preparations for the third general elections:

DCC President—"Our new friends should show respect to our old

friends. And old friends should think themselves as foundation-stone of the organization and go on watering the plant they have so far nurtured with their blood with firmness casting off of their indifference."

To this an old Congressman replied —'To talk of making sacrifice would not take us any far because opportunists take advantage of the Congress and do not hesitate to hurt it if their self-interest is involved.'" Proceedings of the DCC, May 7, 1961 (original in Hindi).

It is ironical that the same Congressman himself opposed the Congress candidate in the 1962 General Elections on Jan Sangh ticket because he was not given Congress ticket.

⁵ The phenomenon of bogus membership is widespread. As one Congressman of the district indicated, even persons belonging to Jan Sangh or already dead are, sometimes, enrolled as Congress members.

⁶ Interview with the Congress MLA and General Secretary of the DCC.

⁷ In the recent District Board elections, for instance, two groups in the District Board Congress Party were vying for the seat of the chairmanship. Both of these groups approached the P S P for support but it was the dominant group which succeeded in getting it and the leader of this group was elected chairman.

⁸ This is very nicely illustrated by a series of articles published just before the bye-election, in 'Sajag' and 'Chattan', two Hindi weeklies supported by two rival Congress groups in Farrukhabad. These articles were out-spoken in their criticism of the vices of the prominent leaders of each of the groups. Congressmen were broadly categorized into two models — 1920 model and 1948 model — and lurid accounts of how these leaders exploited their association with the Congress Party in grabbing permits and licences were given. See the files of 'Sajag' and 'Chattan', March 1962.

Some of the local Congressmen were pressing the Chief Minister to pay a visit to Farrukhabad. He is reported to have agreed on the condition that he should be given a purse of Rs 150,000 for the National Defence Fund. Accordingly, the District Magistrate was informed. But he had to collect the fund in a very short time.

Persuasion being not very effective the district administration resorted to

coercive measures. These measures sometimes amounted to physical violence and prosecuting unwilling persons under the Sharda Act or Section 34 (Cr P C).

The intensity of these measures, however, varied from place to place. In Kannauj, for instance, Congressmen themselves volunteered to collect funds and so it escaped such measures. But in Farrukhabad and the rural areas administrative "atrocities" came into full force and some Congressmen collaborated with district officials in their adoption of harsh measures.

¹⁰ Proceedings of the DCC, Farrukhabad, March 29, 1959.

¹¹ Communication from Lajjaram Dube, President, Prempur MCC to the AICC, February 28, 1963.

¹² Interview with Kali Chanan Tandon.

¹³ S N Dixit had contested the 1952 general election on KMPP ticket against the Congress and was not even a primary member of the Congress since then. His selection as a Congress candidate shows that the Congress Party in Farrukhabad was prepared neither psychologically nor organizationally to fight the election.

¹⁴ In one case the defeated candidate from Chhibramau constituency excused himself and the Congress MLA from this constituency till 1957 was made incharge in this area. In the case of Farrukhabad, the defeated Congress candidate was deliberately bypassed because he was too old to work.

¹⁵ It is worth nothing that two of the central offices were set up at a distance of three miles only. The central office at Fatehgarh was set up because Fatehgarh, being the district administrative headquarters, was supposed to facilitate contact with the in-coming rural voters to the town. Farrukhabad, on the other hand, was chosen in order to appease the trading class there,

¹⁶ Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed visited the constituency on May 8, Jagjiwan Ram on May 11, and Mrs Indira Gandhi on May 17. One exception was C B Gupta who visited on April 23 and 24,

¹⁷ Banarasi Das had visited the constituency twice before he finally came to stay there. It was because of marriages in his family, he pointed out, that he could not devote more time to the campaign-