

- The second objective of the nationalist strategy was to erode the hegemony or ideological influence of the colonial rulers inch by inch and in every area of life. Since the British did not rule primarily by force but by a carefully organized belief system or ideology, it was necessary to undermine and overthrow this belief system. The battle then had to be one of ideas. The objective was to have more and more people adopt nationalist ideas and ideology.
- A major objective of the hegemonic colonial ideology was to hide the face of the real enemy — colonialism — that is, to hide the primary contradiction between the interests of the Indian people and colonialism. The basic task of the counter hegemonic nationalist movement was to expose the face of the colonial enemy and the primary contradiction to the light of day. Hence the most important element of nationalist strategy was its ideological-political work.
- A third objective of the Congress strategy was to undermine the hold of the colonial state on the members of its own state apparatuses — members of the civil services, the police and the armed forces — and to win them over to the nationalist cause or at least to weaken their loyalty and obedience to the colonial regime. The nationalist movement was, in fact, quite successful in this task. Gradually, the behaviour of the police and jail officials underwent a qualitative change. A large number of officials of all types actively helped the 1942 movement at great personal risk.

This as well as efforts to win the support of non-Congress leaders and public opinion within India also aided the achievement of a fourth objective of the nationalist strategy: to constantly expand the semi-democratic political space, and to prevent the colonial authorities from limiting the existing space, within which legal activities and peaceful mass struggles could be organized.

- The second major aspect of nationalist strategy was the long-drawn out character of the hegemonic struggle. Under this strategy, which may be described as Struggle-Truce-Struggle or S-T-S', a phase of vigorous extra-legal mass movement and open confrontation with colonial authority was followed by a phase during which direct confrontation was withdrawn, and political concessions, if any, wrested from the colonial regime were worked and shown to be inadequate. During this latter, more 'passive,' phase, intense political and ideological work was carried on among the masses within the existing legal and constitutional framework, and forces were gathered for another mass movement at a higher level. The culmination of this strategy of S-T-S' came with a call for 'Quit India' and the achievement of independence. Both phases of the movement were utilized, each in its own way, to undermine colonial hegemony, to recruit and train nationalist workers and to build up the people's capacity to struggle.
- The entire political process of S-T-S' was an upward spiralling one. This strategy also assumed advance through stages. Each stage represented an advance over the previous one. At the same time, it was realized that the task of national liberation was incomplete till state power was transferred. Even an advanced stage of constitutional reforms did not mean that freedom had been partially transferred. Freedom was a whole; till it was fully won, it was not won at all. Any other view would tend to make Indians 'partners' of colonialism during the 'reform' phases of the movement, and the national movement would tend to be co-opted by the colonial state. The Indian nationalists avoided this trap by treating the non-mass movement phases also as phases of political, anti-colonial struggle. The working of the reforms was not equated with the working of the colonial system.
- A basic feature of the nationalist strategy was to move from stage to stage without getting co-opted by the colonial regime which was opposed and struggled against at each stage. Only the form of struggle changed. In the extra-legal mass movement phases, laws were broken and civil disobedience was practised; in the non-mass movement or 'passive' phases, there was mass agitation, intense ideological work, including extensive tours by leaders, organization of public meetings on an extensive scale, and the organization of workers, peasants and students and youth and their struggles, mostly by the left-wing, during the late 1920s and the 1930s. Thus, both types of phases were seen as political phases of the anti-imperialist struggle,