The ‘Quit India’ movement of 1942 was the most powerful mass movement in late colonial India. Its importance lay not only in its reflecting the climax of the anti-British struggle but also in its vision for the future. It was characterized by its broad popular participation as well as by certain currents which questioned the internal contradictions within Indian society. The movement commenced with the adoption of a resolution by the All India Congress Committee on 8th August 1942, at the Gowalia Tank Maidan (Bombay), asking the British government to withdraw from India, in order also to ensure the material and cultural development of Indian as a free people, and in order also to ensure their participation in the struggle against fascism.\(^1\) On the refusal of the British authorities to ‘Quit India’, so as to speak, Mahatma Gandhi invited his country men to ‘do or die’ in a bid to liberate themselves from the alien yoke. Gandhi’s speech also contained specific instructions for different sections of the people. What followed the Mahatma’s call for action was a massive uprising, in the course of which British rule collapsed over large parts of the country, especially in the Ganga Valley. National government functioned at Tamluk in Medinapur (Bengal), Satara in Maharashtra, Talchar in Orissa, Ballia in UP etc.\(^2\) In this context the observation of the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow speaks itself the gravity and intensity of the movement:

I am engaged here, wrote the viceroy on 31\(^{st}\) August 1942 to the Prime Minister Winston Churchill, “in meeting by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security.”\(^3\)

For the first six or seven weeks after 9\(^{th}\) August, there was a tremendous mass upsurge all over the country. People devised a variety of ways of expressing their anger on the arrest of national leaders. In some places, huge crowds attacked Police Stations, Post-Offices, Kutcheris (Courts), Railway Stations and other symbols of government authorities. National flags were forcibly hoisted on public buildings in defiance of the

\(^3\) The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr. Churchill (via India office) Telegram, MSS. EUR. 125/158, cited in TOP, op. cit. p. 53.
police. The reaction to the arrests made on 9th August 1942, was most intense in eastern U.P, where peoples movement attained the proportions of a rebellion.  

The great significance of the historic ‘Quit India’ movement was that it placed the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the national movement. Any future negotiation with the British government could only be on the manner of the transfer of power. Independence was no longer a matter of bargain. It warned the British that they were not wanted in India and that “their belief that any section of Indian people-the Muslim, the depressed classes or the states people- favoured continuance of their rule was a delusion.”5 “The events of 1942 had shown”, observes Wheeler, biographer of King George VI, “how easy it was for agitators to influence the mobs and to make orderly governments impossible over large parts of the country.”6 Contrary to his public pronouncements, Churchill, then Prime Minister, gloomily disclosed to the King that “the idea of the transfer of power in India had become an admitted inevitability in the minds of the British Party Leaders”. The King noted in his diary of 28th July 1942:

He (Churchill) amazed me by saying that his colleagues and both or all the three parties in the parliament were quite prepared to give up India to the Indians after the war. He felt they had already been talked into giving up India. Cripps, the Press and the US public opinion have all contributed to make their minds up and that our role in India is wrong and has always been wrong for India.

The mass movement of 1942, the enthusiastic response of the people from one end of the country to the other, many instances of individual and collective heroism and bravery in the face of heavy odds and their untold sufferings and sacrifices hastened the British decision to quit India. People’s resistance in India in general and Eastern UP in particular succeeded in convincing the British that they were not morally justified in keeping India under bondage and that they had to quit.

This work investigates the “masses in Quit India movement in Eastern UP.” Strategically, this was an area of utmost importance to the British as the lines of communication to Bengal and beleaguered Burma front, then reeling under the Japanese onslaught, passed through it.7 Visions of 1857 were easily conjured up in the

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4 Sumit Sarkar, op. cit. p. 392.
6 Ibid.
circumstances of August 1942. Linlithgow jumped at the UP Governor Sir Maurice 
Hallets’ description of the situation as a ‘rebellion’ and thereafter this term was 
regularly employed in official parlance to describe the Quit India movement.

Eastern U.P. seemed to be a good choice also because people of this area are 
extremely proud of their nationalist past. Mangal Pandey, the sepoy who started the 
mutiny, belonged to this area only.8 Babu Kunwar Singh one of the strongest 
adversaries of the British in 1857, although he came from, neighboring Shahabad, 
frequently camped here in the course of his campaigns.9 Eastern U.P. had been a 
major center of political revolt since 1857. Simmering discontent had been kept alive 
by EKA movement and the Kisan Sabha. Owing to the existence of small land 
holdings, a powerful middle peasantry a significant group of professional class fed by 
the B.H.U., supply of labour from this area to industrial areas, Eastern U.P. has been 
in the map of northern India’s political history throughout the twentieth century. 
Because of economic backwardness and administrative apathy, political parties of 
every shade found in the area a fertile region for intensive propaganda. The congress, 
the C.S.P., the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, the Communist etc. were active 
in this area cutting across the class and the caste barriers. The districts of old Banaras 
division and Azamgarh were distinguished in 1942 by the remoteness, economic 
backwardness, density of population and a fairly lively political consciousness. 
Together, they formed the storm – centre of the 1942 agitation in Eastern U.P.10

Not much attention has been given by the scholars to the movement in this area. 
Darbara Singh’s Indian Struggle of 1942 (1942) and Govind Sahay’s 1942 Rebellion 
(1947) are informative but they lacked historian’s critical analysis and are primarily 
based on personal observations. Amba Prasad’s The Indian Revolt of 1942 (1958) is 
his Ph.D. on the topic lacking local specific analysis. Francis Hutchin’s Spontaneous 
Revolution (1971) brought fresh insights in the study of 1942 movement. According 
to Gyanendra Pandey:

9 Bhojpur, Buxar, Kaimur (Bhabhna) and Rohtas districts of Modern day Bihar was called Shahabad in 
those days. The name Shahabad is probably associated with the Emperor Babur who had pitched his 
camp in Agra (Bhojipur) in 1529 A.D, after his victory over the Afghan rulers of the province. (Bihar 
District Gazetteers: Shahabad, (Patna, 1966), p. 1; Francis Buchanan, an account of the District of 
Shahabad in 1818-13, (Patna, 1934), pp. 1-3).
10 Gyanendra Pandey, op. cit.
The whole debate among historians on the Quit India Movement – regarding ‘spontaneity’ vs. ‘organisation’ or the degree of violence during Quit India movement revolves around the question of congress ascendancy or leadership.11 By calling it ‘spontaneous’, Francis Hutchin has just ruled out any political activity or organization in the areas. Professor Mansergh’s Transfer of Power Volumes (1970s) are only historian’s raw material. P.N. Chopra’s Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (1976) presents in print the T. Wickenden’s Report dwelling on the congress responsibilities for the movement. Max Harcourt’s ‘Kisan populism and Revolution in rural India: the 1942 disturbances in Bihar and Eastern United Province’, in D.A. Low (ed) Congress and The Raj (1977) is a stimulating account of the events but it is neither convincing nor is placed in relation to the national, international and local context of U.P. The improvements suggested by Stephen Henningham in his article, ‘Quit India in Bihar and the Eastern United Provinces: The dual revolt’ in Ranajit Guha (ed), Subaltern Studies II (1983), while exposing the limitations of Harcourt takes the readers on a more fanciful realm of the dual nature of revol; the insurgency of high caste rich peasants and small landlord interacting with the ‘subaltern’ rebellion initiated by the poor and low castes. He does not recognize the political significance of ‘subaltern’ in the revolt and over looked the Congress and its call for the 1942 movement. Gyanendra Pandey in his article, ‘The Revolt of August 1942 in Eastern U.P. and Bihar’ in his edited book The Indian Nation in 1942 (1988) has failed to highlight the role of Dalit and women. In the same book, Chandan Mitra has focused on Ballia only. Quit India movement has been rightly placed by Biswamoy Pati in his article, “The Climax of popular protest: The Quit India movement in Orissa.”12 He argues that Quit India movement exhibits the deep inroads made by anti imperialism. It was a reflection of the nature of congress politics and local leadership. Both Gandhi and the congress shaped the popular level while also being shaped by it. But his work pertains to Orissa only. Shri Krishan has seen the movement in the background of ‘crowd vigour and social identity.’13 His work is focused on western India only. Shachi Chakravarty in her work ‘Quit India Movement, A study’, (2002) revealed that in Eastern U.P. during 1942 movement there was a remarkable absence of ‘negative consciousness’ as conceptualized by Ranajit Guha. According to her,

11 Ibid. p. 124.
12 The Indian Economic and Social History Review (henceforth IESHR), Vol. XXIX, No. 1, Jan-March 1992, pp. 1-35.
13 Shri Krishan, “Crowd Vigour and Social Identity: The Quit India movement in Western India,” IESHR, 33, 4, 1996.
there was no extensive popular upsurge from below and the 1942 struggle remained confined to anti-imperialism in Eastern U.P. It is an irony that she has not included Benares in her work. Crispin Bates' 'Quit India and Partition' in Subalterns and Raj: South Asia since 1600 (2007) gave no importance to congress organization and Gandhi while calling Quit India a movement of subaltern classes only.

The mass movement of 1942 occurred more than 60 years ago. So, in the light of current available sources, I have tried to make a fresh assessment of the movement. After the coming of George Lefebvre's book: La Granole Peur de 1789 (1932 French ed.) and later its English translation The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France (1970), and George Rude's work The crowd in the French Revolution (1959), the masses and the mass movement are seen in a new perspective. My work is different because I have tried to answer some of the new questions. Masses from both, the town and the countryside contributed in the movement. But how were the masses composed that paralysed the functioning of the government in Eastern UP? Who led them or influenced them? What were the motives that prompted them? How far their aims were realized? How was the course of the struggle for freedom affected by the people's movement? How the movement was Holistic?

Our concern is not about the spontaneity as done by Francis Hutchin. I am also not concerned about the success and failure of the movement as argued by many scholars. This work emphasized on the history of peoples’ resistance and protest against British imperialism. It tried to highlight the role of Dalit and women. This movement is important because Linlithgow himself felt that it was the greatest mass upsurge since 1857. The mass movement had an adverse impact on the British administration and had aroused fear and anxiety in the minds of British in India. 'Fear bred fear' as said by Lefebvre in context of the French Revolution was characteristically evident in the India of 1942 as well.14 The intensity of mass movement during Quit India was such that the British had to mobilize 8 British Brigades and 57 Indian battalions to restore order.15

Theorizing the Masses

When people cutting across different strata participate in a movement, we call it a mass movement. A movement acquires a mass character only when it expresses the creative genius and energies of the people. According to E.J. Hobsbawm; the History of the common people as a special field of study begins with the history of mass movements in the eighteenth century. He believes that Michelet is the first great practitioner of grassroots history: the great French Revolution is at the core of his writing. And ever since, the history of the French Revolution, especially since Jacobinism was revitalized by socialism and enlightenment by Marxism, has been the proving-ground of this kind of history. If there is a single historian who anticipates most of the themes of contemporary work, it is George Lefebvre, whose Great Fear, translated in English after forty years, is still remarkably up to date. To put it more generally it was the French tradition of historiography as a whole, steeped in the history not of the French ruling class but of the French people, which established most of the themes and even the methods of grassroots history, Marc Bloch as well as Georges Lefebvre. But the field really began to flourish in other countries only after the Second World War. In fact its real advance only began in the middle 1950s, when it became possible for Marxism to make its full contribution to it.  

Perhaps no historical phenomenon has been so thoroughly neglected by historians as the ‘crowd’. Few would deny that the crowd has, in a rich variety of guises, played a significant part in history. Yet it has, over many years, been considered a subject fit to be studied by the psychologist or the sociologist rather than by the historians. Sociologists see crowd as a “face to face” or “direct contact” group and not any type of collective phenomenon, such as a nation, a clan, caste, political party, village community, social class, the general “public” or any other “collectivity too large to aggregate.” Gustave Le-Bon the founding father of modern crowd psychology, being preoccupied with mental states rather than physical phenomena, includes in his crowd not only castes, clans, and classes but electoral “crowds”, criminal juries, and  

18 L.L. Bernard on “crowd” and “mob” in Encyclopedia of Social Sciences in 15 volumes, (IV, 612-13), (X, 552-4), (New York, 1931-5); George Rude, op. cit. p. 3.
parliamentary assemblies. Le-Bon described the crowd as a psychological entity characterized by the presence of a collective mind. Two major attributes of the collective mind are:

i) Disappearance of all individual and particular self consciousness in the members of the group, leading to the emergence of instincts and the commonly shared attributes of the species;

ii) The flow of affective and cognitive elements in the same direction. Moreover, he portrayed the empirical characteristics of crowd behaviour such as heightened emotional sensitivity, impetuosity, capriciousness, increased suggestibility, credulity, personal diinterestedness and exaggerated and one sided opinion.

In discussing the “criminal mentality” during the French Revolution, Le-Bon writes that:

All the civilized societies inevitably drag behind them a residue of degenerates, of the unadapted, of persons affected by various taints. Vagabonds, beggars, fugitives from justice, thieves, assassins, and starving creatures that live from day to day, may constitute the criminal population of the great cities. In ordinary times these waste products of civilization are more or less restrained by the police. During revolution nothing restrains them, and they can easily gratify their instincts to murder and plunder.

Dr. Canetti, discusses “the crowd in history” in terms of the various national symbols that he considers most appropriate to Englishmen, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Jews, and Italians. “For the workers,” writes Barrington Moore, Jr., “The expropriation and rationalization of moral outrage has been a major part of the capitalist experience.” Moore’s own preface warns of the condescension suggested by attribution of “moral outrage” to other people. Yet his searching discussions of working – class experience make a case both for the centrality of a sense of injustice to popular rebellion and for

21 Le Bon, The French Revolution and the Psychology of Revolution. (New York, 1913), p. 99; Gustave Le Bon was one of the earliest writers to discuss the nature of collective behaviour in a systematic way. Le Bon’s treatment of psychological causes is not confined to crowd actions or immediate description of violent episodes in revolution. He draws upon contemporary French clinical psychology to describe the “pathological” characteristics of the revolutionary leadership, and explains many of the events of the period as occurring as a consequence of their influence. He also discuss “mentality” in a general fashion, what we take today to be public opinion. He had a remarkable sense of how it was that rumours and myths became widespread in a largely pre-literate society and he developed a more or less systematic theory for explaining how it is that society in the process of revolution came at times display such a remarkable sense of solidarity. According to him the real message of the French revolution, was not liberty, but equality, and this latter device has become, of necessity, the aim of all modern revolution and revolutionary leadership.
a tendency, within our own era, for large organizations to become the exclusive vehicles for the expression of that sense of injustice. Moore voices gentle, troubled skepticism concerning the extent to which large organizations and mass movements actually quench their members’ thirst for justice.\textsuperscript{24} That is why he worries about the "expropriation and rationalization of moral outrage". Thus, he breaks with two major traditions in the analysis of popular collective action: the one which treats protest, rebellion, and related phenomena as unreasoned responses to stress, and the one which chains together disparate actions as expression of the same, developing social movement. The above two views have dominated western thinking about popular collective action for more than a century. On one side we have a tension–release explanations: Extensive or rapid social change creates uncertainties, anxieties, and stresses which accumulate until people find the opportunities to vent them in violence, protest, and cathartic mass action. Norman Gash writes of Britain after the Napoleonic wars:

\begin{quote}
Riot and disorder were the immemorial reaction of the common people to distress and grievance. The highly localized outbreaks of Luddism, like the rural machine-breaking of 1816, arose from wider, more permanent features of British society: inadequate relief in time of unemployment, bad industrial relations, lack of accepted methods of wage negotiations, vulnerability of employers to forcible action, absence of an effective police, and the general weakness of the forces of law and order. Violence was common because it was an instinctive answer and because there was nothing to stop it in its early stages.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

On the other side we have a social-movement explanation: Haltingly but irreversibly, a set of people with a common problem, grievance, or hope become conscious of their shared fate, build organizations, create social movements for the pursuit of their aims. Thus, labour historians have most often organized their analyses around the development of "The Labour Movement". Cole and Postgate, John Wilkes, Joseph Gusfield, J.T. Ward, Brian Brown and others have also worked in such direction. After World War II, Albert Soboul, E.J. Hobsbawn, George Rude, and other students of the "little people" of rebellion and revolution began struggling to reconstruct the rationales of such apparently impulsive actions as food riots and machine-breaking.\textsuperscript{26}

E.P. Thompson contributed his own distinctive account of the way the English working class created itself through combat with its enemies. Dirk Hoerder has

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Norman Gash, Aristocracy and People: Britain 1815-1865, (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 79-80.
\item Louise A. Tilly, Charles Tilly (ed), op. cit. p. 15.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
reexamined the crowd actions of the American Revolutions for signs of the implicit but coherent doctrine of popular sovereignty they expressed; John Brewer has conducted a parallel investigation of English popular ideology in the late eighteenth century; and Michelle Perrot has lovingly portrayed the complexities of nineteenth-century French strikes. The studies, and others like them, constitute a growing third stream in the analysis of popular collective action: taking the definitions and beliefs of the participants seriously; attempting to connect the action with the interests, grievances, and aspirations of everyday; attaching great importance to the social structures which link the actors to each other, as well as to their rivals, enemies, and exploiters. Within the third stream, Moore's analysis stands out for its stress on justice and—especially—injustice as keys to popular action.27

Writings before George Rude presented such image of the eighteenth century, as if it has never been that of an age of the common man.28 Crucially, Rude recognized that merely because the ‘menu peuple’29 of France and ‘lower orders’ of England were excluded from their respective national political communities, did not mean they were without interests, grievances, ideas and aspiration or the means of expressing them. It became his great historical obsession to redeem the identities of those scorned and denied their historical identities by the powers that be, past and present. Doing so, he challenged the long-standing assumption of writers both right and left.

Rude first had to confront the long-standing conservative view of the French revolutionary crowd. Edmund Burke had characterized the crowd as ‘the swinish multitude’.30 To French Historian Hippolyte Taine, the revolutionaries of 1789 and captors of the Bastille were the lowest social scum: “drags of society,” “bandits”, “savages” and “ragamuffins”; the insurgents of October were “street prowlers”, “thieves”, “beggars”, and “prostitutes”; and those of August 1792, who drove Louis XVI from the Tuileries palace, were bloodthirsty adventures, “foreigners”, “bullies,” and agents of debauchery.”31 Republican historians like Michelet and Aulard, for whom the revolution marked a great regenerative upsurge of the French people; and

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27 Ibid.
29 The term ‘Menu people’ is used for the common people: wage-earners and small property-owners.
again, a Romantic like Carlyle who, while broadly sympathetic to the ‘Nether sansculottic world’, was torn between admiration for its ‘heroism’ and fascinated horror at the ‘World-Bedlam’ or ‘anarchy’ that it appeared to unleash.\textsuperscript{32}

Thus we see that, there are differences in the world between the two approaches – that of Michelet and Aulard, which sees the crowd as “the people”, and that of Burke and Taine, which presents the crowd as “rabble”. Rude has the preference for the first rather than the second, but he finds that both have an important element in common. It is that they both are stereotypes and both present the crowd as a disembodied abstraction and not as an aggregate of men and women of flesh and blood. Thus both reduce the participants in crowds and popular movements to what Carlyle called a “dead logic formula”.\textsuperscript{33} Rude observed that both conservatives and liberals had habitually projected their own political fantasies and/or fears onto the crowd without having asked the basic historical questions. He did not attribute it to scholarly laziness. Rather, he said, rightists and leftists alike had looked at the revolutionary crowd ‘from above – from the elevation of the committee room of the committee of public safety, of the rostrum of the National Assembly or Jacobin Club, or of the columns of the revolutionary press’.\textsuperscript{34}

In the recent years ‘the crowd’ has become a particular field of study for the sociologists. American sociology in particular has done invaluable work on mixed communities, racial minorities, and racial riots. To them the crowd has not been, as it so often has to the historian, a merely generalized abstraction: they have rather tended to break it down and classify it according to its goals, behaviour, or underlying beliefs.\textsuperscript{35}

Le-Bon’s crowds “irrational” behaviour was further developed by Freud and Pareto. Freudian psychoanalysis traced crowd behaviour to the submergence of heterogeneous individual entities into a humongous collectivity due to regression, which produced conditions conducive for the emergence of repressed unconscious instinctual impulses. Freud attributed suggestibility in crowd behavior to a form of

\textsuperscript{34} G. Rude, \textit{The Crowd in the French Revolutions}, op.cit, p. 5.
group hypnosis. Although, he emphasized the spontaneity, the violence and the ferocity of the crowd, he also recognized that under the influence of suggestion, groups were capable of high achievements in the form of abnegation, sacrifice and devotion to an ideal. Psychoanalysis posited a substitution of libidinal cathexes by the affective ties with the other members of the group, the leader and even an abstract idea. The basic weakness of such analysis is that crowd behaviour is seen as an immutable entity. It fails to explain how the crowd develops a common interest in an object or displays similar emotional bias and why the crowd selects particular targets and omits others from attack in the absence of social processes.

The above views were also questioned by Dan Katz who was inclined to identify the crowds according to class and has urged that account be taken of such stubborn historical realities as hardship and persecution in determining the collective actions of feudal serfs and working men. Alexander Mintz has gone so far as to find reason in the actions of “panic” crowds. Psychologist N.J. Smelser has turned his back more firmly on the old shibboleths and urged that the defining characteristics of collective behaviour should be seen as social rather psychological, and he has stressed the importance in such matters of what he terms “generalized beliefs”. Smelser listed six major determinants of crowd behaviour whose interactions determine all forms of collective actions. His social determinants are:

i) Structural conduciveness or the characteristics of the structure;
ii) Structural strain based on the ambiguities, deprivations, conflicts and discrepancies;
iii) Growth and spread of a generalized belief which identifies the source of strain, attributes certain meanings to that source and specifies certain characteristic response appropriate to the strain;
iv) Precipitatory or immediate factors;
v) Mobilization of participants for action;
vi) The operation of social control.

Smelser’s paradigm provides a useful tool for the analysis of crowd behaviour. However, it fails to explain why the same structural determinants produce different reactions and generalized beliefs in different reactions of society. It also fails to explain the dynamic interchangeability among the various social identities.

The social identity theory of John C. Turner resolves the problem of simultaneous operation and activation of various social identities in a particular situation as well as the problem of convergence and interchangeability of social identities at the individual and social levels. The basic assumptions of Turner’s theory are as follows:

- a) The self-concept is a set of cognitive representation of self available to a person.
- b) The self-concept comprises many different components and every individual possesses multiple concept of self.
- c) The functioning of the social self is situation-specific. The particular self-concepts tend to be activated in specific situations producing specific self-images. Any particular self-concepts tend to be salient, activated and cognitively preponderant or operative as a function of the interaction between the characteristics of the perceiver and the situation.41

In Turner’s paradigm, the social self in a sort of continuum covering identities ranging from the personal, family, caste, locality, ethnicity, class and nation to a wider human species identity. In a given situation, there is always functional antagonism between the salience of one level of identity and other levels. The salience of one level leads to the inhibition of other identities. Moreover as these identities are the product of specific circumstances, they are easily interchangeable.42

In spite of all the above improvements, yet one of the old stereotypes still remains: the social psychologist, like the historian, continues to slow reluctance to abandon the old concept of the crowd as “mob” with all its disparaging connotations.43 Rude encountered a distinct but similar set of historical attitudes and notions regarding the crowds of Hanoverian London. For example, Horace Walpole had portrayed the Gordon rioters as ‘chiefly apprentices, convicts, and all kinds of desperadoes’, a judgment Rude found still echoing in historians’ work almost a century and a half later.44

In response to the vague or prejudiced generalizations of his predecessors, Rude pose the questions they had failed to: ‘What? Who? How? and why?’, especially Who? and why?45 Beginning with: what actually happened, both as to the event itself, and as to its origins and its aftermath? That is, we should attempt from the start to place the

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42 Shri Krishan, op. cit., p. 217.
45 Ibid.
event in which the crowd participates in its proper historical context; for without this, how can we hope to get beyond the stereotypes and probe into the crowd outlook, objects, and behaviour? Next: how large was the crowd concerned, how did it act, who (if any) were its promoters, who composed it, and who led it? Such question are important, as they will help us to determine not only the general nature of the crowd and its behaviour but also its components – by picking out what Asa Briggs has called “the faces in the crowd” in terms of the individuals and groups that compose it, their social origins, ages (sometimes), and occupations.\textsuperscript{46} Next: who were the targets or the victims of the crowd’s activities? This is also important, as it may help to throw further light on the event itself and tell us something of the social and political aims of those that took part in it. But, more specifically, we need also to enquire: what were the aims, motives, and ideas underlying these activities? This is where professor Smelser’s “generalized beliefs” come in: without such enquiry we shall have to fall back on the purely “psychological” and “behaviorist” explanations of the crowd.\textsuperscript{47} A further relevant question is: how effective were the forces of repression, or of law and order? It is evident that in strikes, riots, or revolutionary situations the success or failure of the crowd’s activities may largely depend on the resolution or reluctance of magistrates or on the degree of loyalty or disaffection of constables, police, or military. Finally: what were the consequences of the event, and what has been its historical significance?\textsuperscript{48}

It is, of course, one thing to ask the above questions and quite another to find reasonably adequate answers to them. The degree to which our curiosity may be satisfied will depend both on the event itself and on the availability of suitable records: both the traditional sources like ‘memoirs, correspondence, pamphlets, newspapers, parliamentary reports and proceedings and the non-traditional like ‘police, prison, hospital, and judicial records – parish registers of births, death and marriages (in case of French revolution); public assistance records; tables of prices and wages; census-.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{46} George Rude, \textit{The Crowd in History}, op. cit., p. 11.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} George Rude, \textit{Revolutionary Europe 1783-1815}, op. cit., p. xiii.
The necessity of the latter is both pragmatic and political: practical, because the former sources will likely not provide the answers to ‘who’? and ‘why?’ political, because, as the records of the ruling and upper classes (and their functionaries), they will mostly likely provide us with the perspective ‘from above’. The participants in crowd actions ‘rarely leave records of their own in the form of memoirs, pamphlets, or letters’.  

Rude also realized that answering the most fundamental questions would depend on trying to see things critically, from the bottom up, that is, from the vantage of the people in the streets and workshops.

What answers did Rude garner in the archives? In the French case, he found that the revolutionary crowds were drawn in their overwhelming majority from the ‘sans-culottes—from the workshop masters, craftsmen, wage-earners, shopkeepers, and petty traders of the capital’. And in the English case, he found the crowds to have been ‘generally composed of ‘wage-earners’ (‘journeymen’, ‘apprentices’, ‘labourers’, and “servants”), - craftsmen, shopkeepers, and tradesmen’. In other words, both the Parisian and London crowds were composed of working people, not the ‘dregs of society’.

In case of Indian history, the Non-co-operation movement of 1920-22 marked the transformation of Indian nationalism from an elitist into a popular or mass phenomenon. Gandhi’s countrywide campaigns of nationalist protest against the British, in 1919, 1920-22, 1930-34 and 1940-41 made him the undisputed leader of the Indian masses. His technique of non-violent resistance or satyagraha widely adopted after 1920 was the master stroke of his time. Behind Gandhi stood the organizational strength and prestige of the congress. He was the first to underline the fact that the congress, if it was to be a truly national party, must move out into the villages and become the party of the peasantry. Traveling in third class, insisting on

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51 Sans-Culottes: An Omnibus term (literally, those who wear trousers and not knee-breeches) sometimes applied to all the poorer classes of town and countryside; here used in its purely social sense as an omnibus term to include the small property – owners and wage-earners of town and countryside: in its Parisian context, the small shopkeepers, petty traders, craftsmen, journeymen, labourers, vagrants, and city poor. Contemporaries tended to limit its application to the more politically active among these classes or to extend it to the ‘popular’ leaders, from whatever social class they might be drawn. Historians have frequently used the term in this political sense. George Rude, *Revolutionary Europe 1783-1815*, op. cit. p. 265; *The Crowd in the French Revolution*, op.cit., p. 256.
53 Ibid. p. 7.
the sanctity of manual and even menial work, speaking in simple Hindustani, wearing only lion-cloth from 1921 onwards was such a peasant appeal of Gandhi, which made him one of the faces of Indian crowd.54

Shahid Amin has documented the ways in which the villagers of Eastern UP decoded congress and Gandhian messages in their own way, rather than on the model of a simple peasant religiosity responding to the sanctified figure of the Mahatma, as party activists assumed. The way in which the figure and message of the Mahatma, particularly the polysemic word ‘swaraj’, were contextualized within the villagers’ own popular religious culture, helped give birth to a vision of a millennial world which was their own rather than the congress’s, and which was directly political in intent.55 In his examination of Kisan Sabha movement in Awadh over the same period, Gyanendra pandey, reconstructs both the peasants’ appropriation of the image of the Mahatma, and the ways in which they drew upon their own profoundly moral and religious world view in order to voice their protests against the growing impositions of landlords. This culminated in Eka movement of 1921.56

The “subaltern” historiography stresses a kind of unique collective subjectivity of the oppressed and dominated classes. In analyzing the factors that determine the identities that are selected as poles of activation, the “subaltern” school subsumes various identities based on caste, class and gender under the rubric of “subaltern”. It stresses certain unchangeable, rigid and fixed modes of crowd behaviour, which are termed spontaneous, violent and ferocious in pattern; and which (it believes) are periodically activated.57 According to Antonio Gramsci, “pure” spontaneity does not exist in history. It would come to the same thing as “pure” mechanism. In the “most spontaneous” movement it is simply the case that the elements of “conscious leadership” cannot be checked, have left no reliable document.58

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57 Shri Krishan, op. cit. p. 211.
colonial administration to deal with mass uprising in countryside. The colonialist tended to see insurgency as a crime or pathology, seldom regarding it as a struggle for social justice. Ranajit Guha seeks to correct this failure to understand the aims and motives of the insurgent. He adopts the peasants view point and examines ‘the peasant rebels’ awareness of his own world and his will to change it’.\(^59\) Administrative accounts, particularly of protest action – if sufficiently detailed and written soon after the fact by someone relatively familiar with the locale – often prove the most valuable sources.\(^60\) This was not the case here.

By 1940s the social base of the congress widened and it succeeded in mobilizing the youth, the women, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the urban and rural poor, urban and rural artisans and large sections of peasantry and small landlords. Constructive work extending from flood relief to the promotion of spinning and the achutoddhar programme – and the enthusiasm generated by the Non-co-operation, Civil disobedience movements and individual Satyagraha, had given the congress a unique position in the country as well as all over the colonialized world.\(^61\) Mass movement can be different nature. It could be passive resistance against the oppression of states/authority in the form of prayer, petition and protest. It could take militant form when masses attack the sign and symbol of state e.g. Police station, railway station, post office, Kutchery (court) etc. There could be many intermediate forms of protest between complete passivity and open rebellion. The militant mode of protest could turn violent and riotous where masses turn into ‘crowd’ giving rise to collective action of more spontaneous kind with definite objective of redressing a common wrong. All these variables of mass movement were seen in peoples’ resistance in Benares, Ghazipur, Azamgarh and Ballia in Eastern U.P. During 1942 writes Gyanendra

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\(^{59}\) Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (New Delhi, 2009), pp. 1-337.


\(^{61}\) Gyanendra Pandey, op. cit., p. 7; ‘Constructive programme’ was an integral and positive aspect of Gandhi’s post 1920 Satyagraha movements. It was adopted for the achievement of economic self-sufficiency and inculcation of the Swadeshi spirit amongst the masses. However, the constructive programme as a definite method of achieving complete independence found its clear and full exposition only in the post-individual satyagraha period of December 1941. He published a 25-page booklet entitled ‘constructive programme’ in which he had listed the following thirteen items: (i) Communal Unity (ii) Removal of Untouchability (iii) Prohibition (iv) Khadi (v) Other village Industries (vi) Village Sanitation (vii) New or Basic Education (viii) Adult Education (ix) Uplift of Women (x) Education in Health & Hygiene (xi) Provincial Language (xii) Propagation of Rashtra Bhasa and (xiii) Promotion of Economic Equality. Later on many other items were also added into it.
Pandey, the message of destruction coexisted uneasily in many places with Gandhi’s principle of non-violence. The crowd can not be simply treated as a mindless, manipulable, howling rabble or a bundle of unfocussed rage. In Eastern UP, the crowd taking part in people’s resistances during Quit India movement has been termed as professional goondas, rioters, gang, saboteurs, attackers and mob by the colonial officials. I have seen the crowd and its action in background of Rude’s work. I have tried to recognize and categorize the masses in terms of the community, class, caste and gender.

During the Quit India movement, the violence against individual was minimal. Crowd action during the movement can be used to understand the problem of social identity. It will be shown that during Quit India Movement in Eastern UP, various identities were operational along with the possibility of change from one form to another. There is no doubt that the nationalist current became preponderant and was the most significant articulation of mass political activity during the Quit India movements. Crowd behaviour was not purely spontaneous, violent and destructive in nature and we find that crowd actions were constrained by the superimposition of nationalist ideas. The people systematically selected most mass activities in: BHU, Dashasawamedha Ghat, Rajwari, Ibbatpur, Chetganj, Teliaganj, Teliana Crossing, Sonarpura, Harishchandra Ghat, Benares Cant, Keshopur, Dhanapur, Cholapur, Sakaldiha, Babatpur, Khalispur, Saiyid Raja, Mughalsarai, Sevapur, Chandauli Tahsil, Chakia etc. (Benares region); Ghazipur city, Saidpur Tahsil, Nandganj, Jamania, Dildarnagar, Patkania, Sherpur-Mohammadabad areas etc (Ghazipur region); Azamgarh city, Madhuban, Tarwa, Kajha, Mau, Phulpur etc. (Azamgarh region); Ballia city, Bithara Road, Basdih Tahsil, Bairia, Rasra, Shatwar etc. (Ballia region), even in the absence of control by ‘elites’ or the leaders. The political maturity of the crowd behaviour was reflected in the selective attacks on the symbols of colonial state and on people loyal to it. The effectiveness and validity of the nationalist strategy lay in the active participation of the masses in the movement.