CHAPTER-IX

Quit India Movement- 1942

Introduction:

The Quit India Movement was Gandhi’s last all-India Satyagraha on the Indian soil. ‘Quit India’, a simple but authoritative slogan was given during the Second World War. This movement is different from the preceding two movements in the sense that it was offered under unfavorable circumstances, that is, during a war when any government would arm itself with absolute powers. Under such condition the common people of the country demonstrated a unique gallantry and faced the atrocious repression that has ever been used against a national movement.

It is also very important to take an account of the timing of the movement. Though Gandhi had categorically stated that he did not want to turn Britain’s difficulty into India’s opportunity, still the circumstances forced him to call for a Quit India movement. Perhaps the movement can also be called as a by-product of the war situation. The alarming threats from the Eastern regions accelerated the launching of the movement.

The movement was honestly multi-dimensional, all embracing and broad-based; it cut across the blockades of caste, creed, community, religion, and sex, produced mass struggle overwhelming the entire country. The elites,
the intelligentsia, the middle and lower classes, lawyers, women's, students, workers, artisans, craftsmen, and peasants, all participated in the movement.

**Its Genesis and Development:**

The most significant political happening during 1935 was the passing of a new constitution for India by the British Parliament, called the Government of India Act, 1935. It was unanimously rejected by Indian public opinion and in particular by the Congress, because it was a plan not for self-government but for maintaining British rule in the new political conditions through the help of the Indian Princes as well as sectarian, reactionary and pro-British forces.

The provisions of the Act of 1935 consisted of two parts, the Federal and provincial. The proposed "Federation" was a new approach in that it provided for an all-India Central Government uniting both the British India and the Indian States. The Federal Chamber was to consist of two houses, in which the Princes were to nominate two-fifths and one-third of the members respectively. Elaborate weighting governed the choice of the elected members. Seats were allocated to prescribed groups, like Muslims, Sikhs, Scheduled-Castes, Women, Anglo-Indians, Labour etc. In the Upper House, only 75 out of 260 seats and in the Lower House, only 86 out of 375 were open to general election. In the Upper House, the electorate was restricted to about 0.05% of the population of British India; in the Lower, it was about one-ninth. The powers of these legislatures were exceptionally limited. Defence and external
affairs were reserved for the Viceroy; financial policy and control of bureaucracy and police were also excluded from the competence of the Assemblies. No legislation could be passed on certain prescribed topics. The Viceroy had wide unrestricted powers including the right to veto any legislation, dismiss ministers, authenticate bills after their rejection by the legislatures, dissolve the legislatures and even suspend the Constitution.

The provincial part of the Act of 1935, applicable only to the eleven provinces of British India, was somewhat less ruthless. There were no appointees of the Princes. The legislatures were wholly elected, though the franchise for the Upper House was restricted. There were no reserved topics except that the secret Police was under the control of the Governor who also had full emergency powers, if he thought that the harmony of the province was endangered. The provinces thus offered some limited possibilities for popular government.

Elections to the provincial legislature under the Government of India Act of 1935 occupied the attention of all political parties in 1936. An electorate of some 36 million, as compared to an electorate of 7 million in 1920, and representing 30 percent of the adult population, would elect 1,585 representatives to provincial legislatures. The Act of 1935 was the first constitutional measure introduced by the British in India, which envisaged that the parties winning a majority of seats in the legislatures would form ministers, which would function on the basis of joint and collective responsibility.
Both the Congress and the League were discontented with the Act and held that it did not go distant enough to satisfy the political aspirations of Indians. Nehru had described the Act as 'a charter of bondage'. In spite of their opposition to the Act, both Congress and the League decided to contest the provincial elections, if only to make use of the election campaign to spread their respective messages to the electorate.

The election manifestoes of the Congress and the League further reflected the differences in their objectives and ideas. The manifesto of the league was unclearly worded, and was characterized by an absence of commitment on any issue. It made a show of concern for the religious rights of Muslims, which it professed to protect. It asked for the repeal of all repressive laws, reduction in the cost of administration and military expenditure, and called for the social, educational and economic upliftment of the rural population. The Congress manifesto drafted by Nehru, rejected the new constitution 'in its entirety', while the Muslim League manifesto made no mention of it. The manifesto of the League also made no reference to the future political development of India. Independence was not demanded, and, it was clear that the Muslim League did not desire the separation of the British connection. The Congress manifesto reflected the growing mass support for the organization, and stressed the decisive role to be played by the masses in the struggle for freedom.³

As the provincial elections approached, Nehru reiterated in his presidential address to the Faizpur Congress in December 1936 the struggle
against imperialism, the issues of social and economic freedom, the demand for a Constituent Assembly, his hostility to the Indian States system, and the need for greater mass participation in the Congress. The address emphasized his belief that the contest in India was 'between two forces, the Congress as representing the will to freedom of the nation, and the British Government of India and its supporters who oppose this urge and try to suppress it. Jinnah did not agree. There was a third party in India, he sharply informed Nehru, and that was the Muslims' Party, revealing a vital difference in his attitude to political questions from Nehru's. The British had the most curiosity in the electoral fortunes of the Congress, which they regarded as a test of its strength against them. Even as they predicted a Congress victory in most provinces, British officials discussed the possibility of an opposition to it, especially in view of the emphasis on independence and economic reform in its election manifesto.

The elections exposed the strength of the Congress as an all India force. Out of a total of 1,585 seats, of which only 657 were open to general and not sectional competition, the Congress secured 711, a particularly striking success, since it had contested only 1,161 seats. To its regret in later years, it had run candidates in only 58 of the 482 separate Muslim Constituencies. It gained an absolute majority in five provinces - Madras the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa. In Bombay it won nearly half the seats, but with the support of other nationalist groups it was able to constitute a majority. In Assam it emerged as the strongest party, securing 35 seats out of 108, and here again it was in a position, with superfluous support, to form later a coalition
ministry. In the chiefly Muslim North-West Frontier Province the Congress won 19 seats out of 50, of which 15 seats were from Muslim Constituencies, and with the help of some Muslim nationalists it was successful in forming a ministry. Thus, the Congress controlled eight of eleven provinces. By contrast, the Muslim League could secure 4.8 percent of the total Muslim vote. It could not win a sizable number of seats even in the Muslim-Majority provinces. The credit for this is attributed to the election manifesto of the Congress drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru.

The crucial question that confronted the Congress after the elections was whether, or not, it should accept ministerial offices. It was crucial to take a decision because the provincial part of the Act of 1935 was due to go into effect on April 1, 1937. At first the Congress refused to form ministries unless the Government made it clear that there would be no interference by the Governor or the Viceroy in the sphere of provincial autonomy. The majority party having refused office, a deadlock ensured in all the six provinces in which the Congress was in clear majority. Both the Congress Party and the British Government seemed to be worried about the situation. As the controversy proceeded, there was a slight toning down by interpretations of the original demand for assurances on behalf of the Congress. The British Government also changed its ground by slow degrees, and the deadlock was finally removed by a vague assurance given by the Viceroy who issued a statement to the effect that "the essence of provincial autonomy, as envisaged in the new Constitution was the co-operation of the Governor with his
Ministers". Shortly afterwards, the Congress Ministries were formed in six provinces (Bombay, Madras, U.P, Bihar, C.P, and Orissa) and later the Congress rule was extended to Assam and North-West Frontier Province.

Congress now pleaded that it was willing to invite Muslim representatives, including members of the League; to join its provincial ministries provided they became members of the Congress Party. Jinnah smartly interpreted this as an attempt by the "Hindu Congress" to wean Muslims away from their League loyalties with the attraction of office. Further, the League under Jinnah's leadership was more interested in claiming special privileges for the Muslims than in pressing for the country's independence. Jinnah's leadership was more involved in claiming special privileges for the Muslims than in pressing for the country's independence. Jinnah reiterated his "Fourteen Points" (a series of League demands first raised in 1929) along with some recent claims he had put forward in the press.

**Influence of Second World War on Quit India:**

Tired by the inner politics of the Congress and the growing communal spirit in the country, especially the activities of the Muslim League, Jawaharlal Nehru went abroad in April 1938. Expressing his sense of frustration to Gandhi, he said that he had become almost "out of place and misfit". Jawaharlal returned to India in November 1938 two months after the treachery of Czechoslovakia at Munich, being conscious that war was merely a matter of time.
While Jawaharlal was in London in 1938, he met Eden, Lord Halifax, Atlee and some other prominent politicians of all parties. Their attitude chilled him, for they met his anti-fascist and anti-Nazi views with polite avoidance and also with an air of slight depreciation. Jawaharlal realized, that India should now characterize her attitude in the event of a war breaking out between Britain and Germany. He thus set the tone of the thinking of the Congress. In Asia India's sympathies, under his inspiration, were with China in her fight against the brutal attack of Japan. But not all leaders of the Congress were compassionate with China's cause, the most outstanding among these being Subhas Bose who at that time was the President of the Congress. When in 1938, the Congress sent a medical unit consisting of a number of doctors with material and equipment to China, Bose disapproved on ground that India should do nothing to isolate Japan. Jawaharlal thought differently and the Congress followed his lead. India in the spring of 1939 looked anxiously at the world.6

On 3rd September 1939, a new chapter in Indian politics opened. The Viceroy announced India's entry into the war without consulting political parties, legislatures or provincial ministries.7 Linlithgow's overriding objective was to return India into a war base, and to provide men and money; and he regarded the problem of winning the co-operation of Indian parties for the war effort to be one of 'particular urgency. Hence the Viceroy began talks with Indian leaders to probe their terms for supporting the British. Jinnah now placed his cards on the table. 'If ...... Britain wants to prosecute this war
successfully, it must take Muslim India into its confidence through its accredited organization—the All India Muslim League... Muslims want justice and fair play'.

In the Congress Working Committee, Gandhi was alone in suggesting unconditional support for the British on a non-violent basis. The Congress resolved on 14th September 1939, that the issue of war and peace 'must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends'. However, the Viceroy strengthened the position of his government by promulgating the Defence of India Ordinance. This step of the government was met with criticism by the administration of popular ministries operating in eleven provinces of India. At this point of time, the Congress too tried to seek the support of Jinnah, but he refused to come forward in any move sponsored by the leadership of the Congress.

The War-Committee was constituted which consisted of Jawaharlal, Maulana Azad and Vallabhbhai Patel. It was to deal with all the issues arising out of the varying war situation. It only functioned for six months until March 1940, when the Ramgarh Session took place. Its first action was to advise the Provincial Congress Committees not to act or speak hastily, "precipitating a development before its proper time". 

In this situation of growing tension, it became increasingly difficult for the Congress to maintain its eight provincial ministries in province. The Congress ministries resigned before the month of October 1939 was out. And
yet the door to cooperation was kept open. Amidst fruitless negotiations between the Congress and the British authorities, an attempt was also made to cure the break between the Congress and the Muslim League. As so often in the past Jawaharlal was appointed Congress delegate to the renewed talks with Jinnah, which had proved unsuccessful the preceding year. But the talks were never held.

In March 1940 the Congress met at Ramgarh, almost concurrently with the session of the Muslim League at Lahore. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who presided over the session, stressed the need for a firm decision either in favour of cooperation with the war effort or non-cooperation. "As we stand today", said Azad, "We have to decide whether we should march forward in this direction or go backward. When once a step is taken there is no stopping. To cry halt is to go back and we refuse to go back. We can only, therefore, go forward". 11 Undoubtedly, there was a move for a struggle against the British, but no concrete plan was formulated. Civil Disobedience was decided upon at Ramgarh, but the Congress kept the door open abstaining from any positive step to implement it and awaiting a signal from the Government.

Early in July, the Congress Working committee assembled at Delhi and under the sobering influence of the moderate C. Rajagopalachari, toned down its demand. It asked for reorganization of Indian freedom, and as a token of this called upon the British authorities to establish a National Government at the Center. Given this token gesture, the Congress would be willing to cooperate fully in the war effort. The Working Committee made it clear that this would
involve no immediate legislative changes. Later, of course, the required legal changes would have to be made.

The Working Committee's decision was confirmed by the AICC at Poona. It was known as the "Poona Offer". The Leftists attacked it as the "surrender to imperialism", "Rajaji has stabbed us in the back", wrote Jayaprakash Narayan to Jawaharlal on July 20, 1940. Gandhi was also not happy with the Congress decision for other reasons. He had pleaded at the Delhi meeting of the Working Committee that the support of the Congress to the war effort should be strictly non-violent and confined only to "moral help".

Linlithgow explained the British stand on 8th August 1940, which later came to be known as the 'August Offer'. He announced the expansion of the Governor Generals Executive Council to include a certain number of representatives of the political parties. In order to facilitate harmonious co-operation, agreement in the provinces between the major parties was prerequisite to their active collaboration at the center.

The Viceroy also confirmed the establishment of a War advisory council, which would meet at regular intervals and include representatives of the Indian States. He committed the British Government to the revision of the Act of 1935 after the war. In any such revision, however, the views of the minorities would be given due weight.

The constitutional announcement of August 1940 was the first of its kind made on behalf of Churchill's Government. The British Community in India welcomed the announcement. The Viceroy's offer, in any case, did not
find much support in India. Even the Muslim opinion did not give the Viceroy's statement a favourable reception. The August offer dissatisfied the Congress to the core. It felt that the offer was an undeniable expression of Britain's intention to hold India in bondage indefinitely.

With the important parties having rejected the August offer, the Viceroy thought it wise to withdraw it. So, the August declaration served no useful purpose. Jawaharlal ultimately reconciled himself to a struggle, which Gandhi was planning. As in the past, Gandhi first held talks with Lord Linlithgow and these failed, as they were bound to. He embarked upon an individual Civil Disobedience movement in October 1940.

Gandhi now returned to the Congress leadership. A resolution calling for civil disobedience was passed by the AICC in Bombay on September 15, 1940. Gandhi informed the delegates that some form of Civil Disobedience seemed unavoidable, and since the Congress had declared that it was not its intention to embarrass the Government such a demonstration would have to be conducted on an individual, not a mass, basis. This is what Gandhi actually suggested when the Working committee met at Wardha on October 13, 1940.

The first volunteer selected to offer Individual Satyagraha was Vinoba Bhave. Jawaharlal was to follow him. It was arranged that he should offer Individual Satyagraha from November 7 in the district of Allahabad in his home province. But the authorities arrested him on the 31st October at Chheoki railway station, while he was returning from Wardha after visiting Gandhi. He was sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment. On December 4, 1941, the
British Government released all Satyagraha prisoners whose offences were "formal or symbolic in character", including Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad. As the external situation had by now become critical for the British, it was too dangerous and foolish to keep the Indian leaders any longer in jail.

The Bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7\textsuperscript{th} 1941 signalized not only the entry of America and Japan into the War but was shortly to bring hostilities to the frontiers of India. From a distant scene war became a close reality. Although Britain did not seem to retile from her inflexible attitude, Jawaharlal's heart was with the Allies.

With the pendulum shifting rapidly towards active cooperation, Gandhi requested to be relieved of the leadership. This was done on January 16, 1942 when the AICC made another offer of conditional cooperation. For the second time during the war a sharp crack occurred in the Working Committee. But it was only an ideological rift. As regards Jawaharlal, he had differences with him on certain political issues. Gandhi too had full faith in Jawaharlal's leadership; on international issue especially he preferred to rely on Jawaharlal's judgment. He believed that the future rests in his hands.

The war was approaching the gates of India. Singapore had fallen, Rangoon had been evacuated and the Japanese descent on the Far East was swift and quick. Japan's position was becoming alarming if not unbeatable. For Jawaharlal, Japan's "co-prosperity sphere" theory held no attraction. Despite stubbornness of the British, his sympathies were still with the Allies. He therefore, welcomed the visit of Marshall and Madame Chiang Kai-Sheik to
India. They prevailed upon President Roosevelt to use his good offices with Churchill and arrange for an immediate transfer of power to Indian leaders to ensure the successful trial of war. There were uproars and angry protest in the British Parliament against the British policy in India, which now remained the only base for operations against the Eastern Army. The Labour and Liberal statesmen in Britain urged His Majesty's Government to take immediate steps for a re-orientation of their policy and to appease India. Consequently, Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps to Delhi for a political settlement with the Congress and the League.

**Cripps Mission and Its Failure:**

Although Churchill did not favour the idea of raising the issue of India in the Cabinet, the issue, however, could not be burked. In his statement to the House of Commons on 11 March 1942, he declared the object of the mission of Cripps in these words, 'He will strive in their (His Majesty's Government's) name to procure the necessary measure of assent not only from the Hindu majority but also from those great minorities among which the Muslims are the most important.'

Cripps arrived in Delhi on 23 March with a Draft scheme of the government for settling the Indian political problems. It was announced in the preamble that the object of the proposal was 'the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect
of its domestic or external affairs. In fact, fresh elections for all the Provincial Legislatures were to be held, and according to the second step the members of the lower house of the new provincial legislatures together with the representatives of the states were to function as the electoral college whose business was to elect the constitution-making body. It was made clear that the strength of this body would be about one-tenth of the total number of Electoral College, and its members would be elected according to the system of proportional representation. The other step suggested was that the constitution-making body would frame the constitution for the Indian Union. But if at the final stage a province expressed its unwillingness through a vote of its legislature to the Indian Union, it would, in that case, precede to formulate its own constitution, which would have the same status, powers and functions as the Union of India. The scheme was, thus, concerned with the provisional arrangements during the period of the war. In fact, it contemplated no change in the Constitution of 1935.13

Soon after landing in Delhi, Cripps got into touch with the leaders of India. When he met Mahatma Gandhi on 27th March he told him honestly that if his offer was no more than what was contained in the draft declaration then he need not stay in our country, but better take the first plane back to England. Wherever the Muslim League appeared to be satisfied with the British proposals brought by Cripps, Congress found that its oft-repeated demand of Complete Independence had not been conceded either in the immediate present or in the future. Its most serious objections were:
1) To the provision for local option which implied the acceptance of Pakistan, and

2) The selection of state representatives by the rulers. With regard to the second part, question of the status of the Executive Council and especially of its Defence member were subject of discussion.

The Congress working Committee met at Allhabad from 27th April to 1st May 1942. Mahatma Gandhi was not present at this meeting. But he sent from Wardha a draft resolution for the consideration of the Committee. Mirabechn who brought the draft explained to the members how Gandhi's mind was working along the issues raised in the draft. The draft contained the following points:

I. A demand to the British Government to clear out,

II. India is a zone of war as a result of British imperialism,

III. No foreign assistance needed for the freedom of this country,

IV. India has no quarrel with any country,

V. If Japan invaded India it shall meet with non-violent resistance,

VI. Form of non-cooperation laid down,

VII. Foreign soldiers a grave menace to Indian freedom.

The Working Committee passed a resolution and handed it over to Stafford Cripps on 2nd April 1942. It clearly spelt out the reaction of the leadership of the Congress to the proposal made by the British Government.
On 1st July 1942, Gandhi wrote a letter to Roosevelt from Sevagram and acquainted him of the political condition in India. He stated, "......... My personal position is clear. I hate all war... if the Allies think it necessary, they must keep their troops, at their own expense in India, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression and defending China. So far as India is concerned, she must become free even as America and Great Britain are. The Allied troops will remain in India during the war under treaty with the Free India Government that may be formed by the people of India without any outside interference, direct or indirect.... Mr. Louis Fischer is carrying this letter to you...."

The main idea of writing such a letter to the American President was to gain his sympathy for the cause of India's Independence. But as it is clear from his reply to Gandhi, the letter did not make any noteworthy impact on him. Its contents indicate that Roosevelt was quite free from any misty-eyed sentimentalism concerning Gandhi's life and work, and the cause that he symbolized.

With the failure of the Cripps mission, the Congress again turned to Gandhi. In an article written on April 19th 1942, which appeared in Harijan on April 26th, Gandhi first gave public expression to his plan, which was to take shape into "Quit India" Movement. The first sitting of the All-India Congress Committee commenced at 2-45 p.m. on the 7th August 1942 in a spacious and beautifully decorated pandal on the Gowallia Tank Maidan, Bombay. Nearly 250 members of the AICC and 10,000 visitors were present. The proceedings
began with the singing of the Bande Mataram by Desh Sevikas. After the Secretary has read the minutes of the last meeting, The President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad addressed the House. "...This is the crux of our demand and there is no need unnecessarily to cloud the issue by raising fears of anarchy and chaos. If the British Government is earnest about this and true to its professions regarding India's freedom, this can be done immediately. This is what we are asking the United Nations to do and I proclaim from this platform that the newly freed India will wholeheartedly be with the United Nations in the fight against all aggressions...."

After Maulana Azad had spoken, Mahatma Gandhi addressed the session. He said: "Before you discuss the Resolution, let me place before you one or two things. I want you to understand two things very clearly and to consider them from the same point of view from which I am placing them before you. I ask you to consider it from my point of view because, if you approve of it, you will be enjoined to carry out all I say. It will be a great responsibility. There are people who ask me whether I am the same man that I was in 1920 or whether there has been any change in me. You are right in asking that question. I may tell you that I am the same man today that I was in 1920.

The only difference is that I am much stronger in certain things now than what I was in 1920. I may explain it by pointing out that a man goes about heavily clothed in winter. But the same man may be found without much clothing in summer. This outward change does not make any difference in the
man. There are people who may say that I say one thing today and another thing tomorrow. But I must tell you that there is no change in me. I stick to the principle of non-violence as I did before. If you are tired of it then you need not come with me.

It is not necessary or incumbent upon you to pass this Resolution. If you want Swaraj and independence and if you feel that what I place before you is a good thing and right thing, then only accept it. It is only that way you can give complete support. If you do not do that, I am afraid you will have to rule what you do. There is not much harm if a man does a wrong thing and repents, but in the present case you will be putting the country also in danger. If you do not believe fully in what I say, then I will request you not to accept it but to leave it. But if you accept it and do not understand me properly then there is bound to be friction between us, although it may be of a friendly nature.

Another point I want to impress upon you is your great responsibility. Members of the AICC are like members of a parliament. The Congress represents the whole of India. The Congress, from its very inception, has not been of any particular groove or any particular colour or caste or of any particular province. It has claimed, ever since its birth, to represent the whole nation and on your behalf, I have made the claim that you represent not only the registered members of the Congress but the entire nation”.

The only slogan he gave was 'do or die'. He added, "We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our
slavery. He, who loses his life, will gain it; he, who will seek to save, shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or faint hearted". 16

Following Mahatma Gandhi's speech, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who moved the resolution, said that the formation of the resolution was not narrow nationalism but it had international background.... If by demanding freedom we are called blackmailers then surely our understanding of the English language has been wrong. Whatever may happen in Whitehall it is not going to stop us from working for independence. We live for it and will die for it…"

Seconding the resolution, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel pointed out that in the last few days since they passed the resolution in the Working Committee, the outside world had suddenly developed an enormous interest in India. Sardar Patel declared that if America and England were still thinking that they could fight their enemies from India without the cooperation of four hundred millions of people, they were foolish. At the same time Sardar Patel warned his audience against going to the other extreme and putting any faith in the professions of Japan about their good intentions regarding India. From her acts in Manchuria, China and elsewhere was clear that Japan was following the same ambition of empire building as England and even outdoing her in it. India could have no trust in Japanese declarations.

Speaking in English on the Working Committee's resolution, in the AICC Jawaharlal Nehru declared: "This resolution is not a threat. It is an invitation. It is an explanation. It is an offer of co-operation. It is all that. But still behind it, there is a clear indication that certain consequences will follow if
certain events do not happen. It is an offer of co-operation of a free India. On any other terms there will be no co-operation. On any other terms, our resolution promises only conflict and struggle".

**Arrest of Gandhi and Commencement of Quit India Movement:**

Early in the morning at 2 O'clok of 9th August, the Police Commissioner knocked at the gates of the Birla house where Gandhi stayed. The police produced arrest warrant based on Defence of India rules. Gandhi did not disobey it but entered into car waiting outside calmly. G.D.Birla, the noted industrialist, was present and garlanded him. He was taken to Victoria station, Bombay where other leaders Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Asaf Ali, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Dr.Prafulla Ghose, G.B. Pant, Dr. Pattabhi, Syed Mohammad, Kripalani and others had already arrived and kept in the train. All were dropped at Ahmednagar fort except Gandhi and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu who were placed in the Aga Khan's palace at Poona as house arrest. A few days later Kasturbai, Gandhi's wife, too joined him for having addressed a prohibited meeting at Shivaji Park in Bombay.

The arrests of leaders of the Congress was a clear indication for the outbreak of an 'open rebellion' against the British Government almost in every nook and corner of the country. The arrests of their leaders like Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru greatly agitated their minds, and the retaliation in various forms erupted instinctively. As soon as the news reached cities and towns, there were strikes and bandhs, and these strikes varied from place to place. At
prominent commercial towns like Ahmedabad, Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Kanpur and Amritsar, the strikes were observed from one week to two weeks. There was thus an expression of so much excitement and sympathy that it appeared a complete and persistent identification of the common people with the cause Congress had taken up. This kind of identification was to be shown at any kind of sacrifice—both physical and financial suffering.

Another prominent feature of showing resentment, anger and dissatisfaction against the British Government was holding large-scale demonstrations and taking out processions with placards inscribed in patriotic language. The response of the people in terms of their attendance of mass meetings was enormous. People of all professions crowded in thousands to join the mass rallies and meetings. The participation by students in these processions and meetings was a remarkable happening in this regard. Schools and Colleges were closed and students organized mass demonstrations with patriotic zeal. As a result of these activities, numerous students suffered massively in terms of loss in their educational career.

The zeal and enthusiasm shown by the industrial workers was unparallel in the chronicles of our country. They struck work and came out of their mills and factories in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Madras, Delhi, Jamshedpur, Kanpur, Nagpur and other towns. They organized mass meetings, arranged demonstrations and educated their brethren about the fundamentals of independence.
The crowds of people carried national flags and shouted national slogans in cities and towns. Their purpose was to hold these flags at several public places and government buildings. Many of them succeeded in hoisting national flags on the buildings of schools, colleges, municipal boards, district courts and government secretariats. The task indeed was risky, but the challenge the Satyagrahis posed to the British Government was full of complexities, which created difficulties for the police to control and maintain law and order.

The Quit India Movement clearly reflected the frame of mind of the nation and clarified the fact that the awakening amongst them for a common cause i.e., to free India from the bondage of the British Government was a reality and its practicality was to be realized with a deep sense of patriotism tinged with mass action in all the regions of the country.

It indeed was a serious challenge to the British Government, which had deep influence on the functioning of the administration. Although well-formed on the soil of India, it gave it the realization of the fact that it was, at this point of time, was somewhat difficult to ignore a great spontaneous national upsurge which was found to be uncontrolled on account of a huge mass support. This kind of mass support to a common political aim i.e. to attain independence had frightening effect on the day-to-day functioning of the machinery of the government in India and this fact was seriously realized by the Viceroy and the Home Government in England. Under these circumstances, 'The British, Moreover, were moved by the challenge to strengthen their rule, responding
with renewed determination to remove the conditions which made the rising possible. The demands on both sides by the Congress and the British Government were indeed very clear. At this point of time, the leadership of the Congress showed willingness to the cause of the Allies if its demand of India's independence was approved without any kind of pre-condition. On the other hand, the global commitments of the Government had tightened its hands that it simply showed willingness to broaden its area of responsible government in India but any kind of demand for independence was to be taken up after the war was over. These contradictory political gestures did not satisfy the aspirations of the national leaders.

The courting of arrests and acceptance of convictions for a few years were the common trend amongst the Satyagrahis. They bore all kinds of repressions by police with a sense of sacrifice for the country and its people. The economic and physical loses were immense: casualties-fatal and non-fatal, defections from police and other government departments, imposition of collective fines, sufferings caused to women and children and firing from air were the glaring phenomenon during the movement.

The damage to government property was immense. The government buildings, police stations, municipal schools, hospitals and private buildings were severely damaged. The cases of bomb explosions were also evident in various regions. Special courts were set up to deal with criminal cases. The Government records stated that ordinary courts convicted 23,358 persons, 313
by military courts and 41 death sentences were confirmed out of 67 persons who were sentenced to death. 18

The Congress propaganda with the media of cyclostyled literature was a forceful device among the masses of India. These machines operated by small and big shopkeepers proved instrumental in circulating handbills and sheets, which came secretly in hands of numerous Satyagrahis. This kind of style was a glaring phenomenon in cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Lahore, Patna, Allahabad and elsewhere, such persons were actively hunted of houses led to the arrests and convictions of numerous inmates. Thus official efforts were made to stop all possible sources of publicity and propaganda.

The nationalist press was an eyesore for the British Government. It was brought under strict government regulations. The prominent news papers which stopped publications as a result of government's restrictions on them were the Amrita Bazaar Patrika, Hindustan Standard, Hindustan Times, Basumati, Jugantar, Matrubhoomi, Telegraph, Lokamanya, Jagrati, Daily Krishik, Bharat, Andhra Times, Dinamani, Hindustan and others. In all 69 Newspapers closed down. Devadas Gandhi, editor of the Hindustan Times was arrested for breach of the order of the government that not more than three columns be devoted to news about the national movement.

The part played by the Praja Mandal in states like Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Travancore and Udaipur afforded much support to the movement. They informed the rulers to realize the fact that the time was fast changing and they must value the sentiments and political demands of the
people of their states. In some smaller states, people were in total rebellion. In some states, the rulers were reluctant to adopt repressive measures against Satyagrahis but the British residents stationed in their states did not approve of their policy, and they recommended repressive measures against the Satyagrahis. As a result of this policy, there were numerous arrests, convictions, beating, flogging, firing, suspension and dismissals from services. Prominent leaders along with numerous volunteers and Satyagrahis were put behind the bars under inhuman conditions.

This kind of repression, however, did not tire out their zeal and enthusiasm. They moved from village to spread the message of Congress by issuing handbills, posters and news bulletins for wider circulation in towns and villages. This mode of publicity was a counter-move to the censor on news imposed by the order of the government.

The prominent political parties like Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, the Communists and the Akalis and the pressure groups having linkage with princes, depressed classes, Europeans in India, women organizations, the Khakasars and others reacted in accordance with the ideology of their organizations. In this regard, the Muslim League reacted at once and called a meeting of its Working Committee, which had its sessions from 16-20 August 1942. It passed a long resolution condemning the action of the Indian National Congress by launching the Quit India Movement. The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League...deplores...the decision of the AICC to launch "open rebellion" by restoring to a mass Civil Disobedience Movement in
pursuance of their establishing Congress Hindu Domination which has resulted in lawlessness and considerable destruction of life and property...' The Working Committee resolution also made it clear that the League was willing to consider proposals for setting up a provisional government on the basis of equality. It asked the Muslims to keep aloof from the movement and appealed to the British Government to comply with the demand of Pakistan.

The mobs of people showed their resentment by attacking police stations, post offices and all means of communications to disjoint the district authorities and wire-cutting and pulling down polls were the common features of mob ferocity. Thus for three days, the district administrative machinery was completely paralyzed. The wearers of Gandhi caps were hunted out of various places and they fell prey to indiscriminate firing. So for so, the police used excessive powers to arrest anybody found on the roadside, beat him and deprived him of his personal belongings.

In some areas policemen were very much affected by the movement. They refused to open fire on the people. In such cases, British sergeants were commissioned to do the job, but they were too few to suppress the movement, which had engulfed the larger areas. The new recruits failed to cope with the situation, which had taken a serious turn. Their lathi charges, plundering and other kinds of barbarities did not prove effective to curtail the movement from its roots.

The participant of students in the movement was a glaring phenomenon. They came out of their institutions—both schools and colleges in a large number.
The situation became worse when many of them offered themselves for arrest and convictions. The government, however, dealt with them very severely. It sought help of heads of institutions and press in sending them warning of a grave nature. The strikes, however, continued up to 1st September. A few hundreds of them were rusticated and many of them were debarred from appearing for their examination for at least one year. They however, did not lose fervour for the movement, as some of them did not prefer to go back to their institutions. Instead they remained in jails along with other political leaders for a long time. By this kind of political style, the British Government did sense the height of excitement in the hearts of the youths of India inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders.

The calculated plan of the people was to bring about the maximum physical damage to the smooth functioning of the machinery of the government. To achieve this aim, mass sabotage was practiced by their intense marches from one villages to the other, coupled with the anti-British Government propaganda, removal of rails and fish-plates, derailment of goods trains, raids on the police stations, destruction of railway stations, government go downs, post offices, damage to roads, bridges and even aerodromes. They thus resorted to all such activities as were to weaken the position of the government.

The retaliatory action by the police, army and bureaucracy in all the regions of India was well known in content. In the name of the maintenance of law and order, every standard of morality, civility and law was violated. The
dispersal of mobs were at the point of rifle, pistol, and machine-guns. The beating and flogging to political prisoners were combined with all types of insults unheard of. Even women were not spared. 'Women were stripped, assaulted, raped: even children were not spared. In the villages, numerous houses were wrecked to the ground, many actually burnt. People were tied to trees and beaten, sometimes undressed and whipped. Lathis, short staves, fists and even shoes were used...One of the most effective form of retaliatory measures was the imposition of collective fines which were realized with the utmost rigour. The whole object obviously was to terrorize people, teach them a lesson and eradicate from their minds all thoughts of defiance'.

The revolt of 1942 ended in failure in so far as its immediate aim was concerned. This aim was the attainment of independence by forcing withdrawal of British rule, which sought to be achieved in a short period of time by paralyzing the entire machinery of administration and thereafter seizing power. It is evident that the revolt was crushed within three months, and law and order was resorted throughout the country after this short period.

Gandhi had no direct hand in the movement but everything went in his name and for his sake. Excessive frustration, desperation and emotion made them to lose their self-control and the movement rose from ordinary level to emotional and became a spontaneous one and passed the greatest physical challenge to the British Government.

As the Quit India Movement spread all over India more in North than South and resulted in damage of Government's offices and gunfire. When
Gandhi heard of this, he became unhappy both mentally and physically. He could not read newspapers, meet visitors or see his Secretary Mahadev Desai's samadhi in the Aga Khan's palace or celebrate his 74th birthday. Only the jail superintendent was kind enough to present him a garland of 74 one-rupee notes on that day.

As the movement scaled to heights, violence also exceeded. But Gandhi was unhappy because it was differing to his principles of Satyagraha and further those who did the destruction, happened to be his own admirers. He should undertake full moral responsibility for all their misdeeds and purify the land from their sins. In the tradition of ancient rishis he felt that fasting was the only solution. Thus he began it as a kind of spiritual exercise from 10th February 1943 onwards. At the age of 74 he was strongly practicing this risky yoga. But he was confident that there was no danger to his health. It is strange that even during this fast, he read the famous classic Karl Marx's 'Das Capital'. Somehow he was not convinced by the great German scholar's arguments like economic interpretation of history, theory of class war etc.

The Government watched keenly his unpredictable health and wished for sometime that with his death it would be able to get rid of him and remedy the situation. To convince the masses, it issued a pamphlet under the name 'Congress Responsibility for Disturbances 1942-43' on 13th February with a number of quotations from his speeches and writings and thus it tried to prove that it was he who provoked the masses to violence and that it was not responsible if he died. But the wonderful defence argument that it put up
indicates its degree of soothing the public and exonerating itself from the fusillade from all directions. But as fate decided otherwise as per schedule, Gandhi ended his fast on 3rd March 1943.

However, by giving up fast, tension gradually subsided. Both the Government and masses came nearer for reconciliation. The Viceroy found that there was no more threat from Gandhi. It also became certain that the Allies would get victory and it was only a matter of time. Conversely, Gandhi too prepared a reply on 15th June 1942 to the Government's pamphlet and tried to convince that he had no revengeful attitude over it but argued in his usual incredible and logical way.

At the same time he carried some unforgettable memories. His secretary died in that palace a year ago followed by his wife's death with her head on his lap. Both were cremated there. Since then he felt psychologically alone and got once heart attack in March 1944. But by this time a change became evident in Government. A new Viceroy Lord Wavell arrived and replaced Linlithgow and the former unlike his predecessor felt no more danger from the Mahatma. So on 5th March he took a decision without consulting even his Executive Council. released him, who returned from the palace with his wife's and secretary's ashes in separate urns in his hands. The Indian leader found the country quit different. It was no more turbulent. The heated tension that existed at the time also disappeared. The Quit India mass movement became a part of the past. Those who had lost their lives became martyrs; and those who survived became heroes. But he became the hero of heroes or a peerless leader.
Salient Features of Quit India Movement:

An important feature of the 1942 struggle was the "underground movement". The extraordinary network was consolidated in various parts of the country in view of the termination of the mass phase of the struggle due to brutal official repression. Some of the prominent leaders including Achyut Patwardhan, Rammanohar Lohia, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalani, Biju Patnaik, and later Jayaprakash Narayan also joined them after his release from jail. Most of the underground leaders and functionaries of the Congress Office had adopted code names. Sucheta Kripalani was known as Bahanji, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia as doctor, Achyut Patwardhan as Kusum, and Aruna Asaf Ali as Kadam. The leadership thought it necessary to keep the morale of the people high by continuing to provide a line of command and a source of guidance and leadership to activities all over the country. They collected and distributed money and material for underground groups. At the local level, however, the initiative rested with the local people for following the exact pattern of activities. The local underground organizations were active in Bombay, Poona, Baroda, and parts of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi. The main credit for this underground movement goes to Congress socialists, though some ashramait (Gandhi Ashram), revolutionary terrorists, and members of Forward Bloc also participated.

Another significant element of the 1942 struggle was the operation of Congress Radio by a group of young workers in Bombay, including a couple of
students and businessmen. The radio had its own wavelength and call sign. It operated secretly from different locations in Bombay on 42.34 meters and relayed messages from Congress leaders. Every evening people waited impatiently for the Congress news bulletin. The radio broadcast could be heard as far as Madras. It continued till November 1942 when it was discovered and confiscated by the police. Ms. Usha Mehta, an ardent Gandhian, was an important member of the team, which conducted the radio broadcast and actively participated in the Quit India Movement.

Yet another important feature of the 1942 movement was the running of parallel governments at many places for varying periods. The first one was proclaimed in Ballia in Uttar Pradesh in August 1942 but it could not survive for long. The best example of the national parallel governments was that of Jatiya Sarkar in Tamluk subdivision, which continued from December 1942 to September 1944. Its activities included the running of people's courts and constructive work along Gandhian lines. A parallel government existed in Satara in Maharashtra from mid-1943 to late 1945. It was also known as Prati Sarkar under the leadership of Nana Patil. These national governments in a few cases returned the mortgaged land to poor peasants and took effective measures against dacoit. It enforced prohibition and set up people's courts to dispense justice.

A survey of the available literature and government records regarding the impact of the movement on various provinces reveals that Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Bombay (viz, Maharashtra, Karnataka), Bengal (Midnapur) were the
main centers of the movement. It was also intense in parts of Andhra Pradesh and Central Provinces (Ashti and Chimur) and Delhi. In Madras, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Sind the movement was relatively weak.

Women also played a spectacular role in the Quit India Movement. Their participation was no longer confined to picketing and salt manufacturing as was done in the earlier movements launched by Gandhi. This movement involved them in a variety of jobs. They came forward to carry on processions, hoist the national flag, and act as couriers and helpers in underground activities etc. Young girls left schools and colleges to participate in the freedom struggle. These women belonged not only to the upper strata of society or mere wives, daughters, and sisters of Congress leaders as per the earlier practice, but women from the middle class also came out in thousands to contribute their share to the national movement. Aruna Asaf Ali and Sucheta Kripalani were two major women organizers of the underground movement. Usha Mehta was an important member of the small ground that ran the Congress radio. All India Women's Conference in a public statement in August 1942 expressed their concern on the arrest of Gandhi and other Congress leaders and criticized the government for its repressive policies and for rejecting Congress proposals for settlement.

Peasants of all the strata constituted the heart and soul of the movement in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Midnapur (Bengal), Satara (Maharashtra), and some other areas. At some places, Zamindars also participated in the movement.
Freedom loving labourers played a significant role in the struggle. In Ahmedabad and in Gujarat generally not a single spindle clattered for about three months. In Bombay, Sholapur, Tata Nagar and Dalmia Nagar mills remained closed for days together. The strike in Gujarat and at many other places spread like wild fire but it was more or less peaceful.

In February 1943, the government issued a booklet entitled "Congress Responsibility" for the disturbances indicting Gandhi and the Congress. Gandhi, however, held the British government responsible for violence as he considered it to be the result of the untimely arrest of Congress leaders. It is not wrong to say that had Gandhi been free, his influence would have controlled the people from indulging in violence and sabotage.

Moreover, Gandhi argued that it was the government, which forced the people to the point of madness by its repressive policies. People's violence was just a reaction to the much bigger violence of the state, considered as "Leonine violence" by Gandhi. The government, however, did not accept Gandhi's countercharge. To prove his innocence, Gandhi observed a purificatory fast for twenty-one days starting from 9th February 1943.

The government, however, continued issuing statements holding Gandhi and the Congress responsible for violence. In July 1943, Gandhi in a response challenged the government to produce evidence in support of its statements and even asked the latter to place on trial the detainees so that they could disprove the charge and defend themselves.
The movement continued during 1943-44, though by the end of 1942, the British government had come out victorious in their confrontation with Indian nationalism. By the use of overwhelming force, the government was able to put down the struggle but the spirit of freedom could not be suppressed. Though the movement could not achieve independence immediately, it demonstrated India's irrepressible will to be free and people's great capacity for struggle and sacrifice succeeded, in as much as it prepared the ground for independence.

Unfortunately, the movement had an adverse impact, in so far as the vacuum created by the arrest of Congress leaders provided an opportunity to the Muslim League to rally the Muslims under its banner. The non-cooperative attitude of the Congress towards the British in its war efforts prepared the ground for the British to seek Jinnah's help. Finding a favourable response, the Viceroy and the India office wanted to build up Jinnah as their crescent card to neutralize the Congress Challenge. Jinnah, who was already waiting for such an opportunity, utilized the situation to the fullest possible extent and built up the League as a strong party. The League, which fared badly in 1937 even in Muslim majority areas, was able to form ministries in subsequent years in Assam, Bengal, Sind, and North-West Frontier Province, though with the unspoken help of the British.

Under these circumstances, the Muslim League had an open field to consolidate its position among Muslims during 1942-1945 when the Congressmen were in jail. It was able to gain many concessions from the
British and secured vantage point. Being conscious of its newly acquired position, it put forward a strong claim for Pakistan and insisted that, all the political parties must in principle accept the participation of India, whereas prior to this, it had only insisted on its acceptance by the Congress. Thus the political void resulting from the mass arrest of Congress leaders following the Quit India Movement raised the importance of the Muslim League and ultimately paved the way for the creation of Pakistan.\(^{25}\)

The Quit India Movement convinced even Churchill, the conservative prime minister, one of the great opponents of India's independence, that the British could not keep their hold over India for long. He confessed before the king only a few days before the commencement of the movement." The idea of the transfer of power in India has become an admitted inevitability in the minds of British party leaders".

Linlithgow, the Viceroy, admitted that "Quit India Movement was 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".\(^{26}\)

The movement can be termed both as a rebellion and as a revolution. It might have failed as a rebellion but it was successful as a revolution. The impact of the rebellion was also significant, keeping in view Linlithgow's statement cited above.
Conclusion:

The movement was able to draw the attention of world public opinion on the question of Indian freedom. It is correct to say that in the Quit India Movement the Indian revolution reached its culmination. Success of such movements cannot be measured by short-term gains but by its long-term impact, namely in the arousal of the strength of the people and their determination to be free. We can conclude that the movement was a success, in so far as India had already declared herself to be independent and Indian people had demonstrated their will and capacity to be free.

To reconstruct the gains of the movement, it can be said that the movement was able to remove the illusion of the British government that their empire was morally justified, and that the majority of them were loyal subjects of the British. In fact, the most striking aspect of the Quit India Struggle was the wearing away of whatever loyalty the offices of the British government might have had till then. As a matter of fact, jail and other government officials at the lower level had been openly sympathizing with the movement. Moreover, the British in their hearts were unwillingly obliged to admit that Gandhi had succeeded by his nonviolent efforts in making them realize that time had come for them to quit and they were no more welcome in India.

The wide social base of the movement established beyond doubt the fact that the real hero of 1942 was the common mah who came out victorious by his own efforts helped by many other national and international events. The overall impact of the movement was thus very momentous.
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