The year 1942 constitutes a very significant landmark in the history of modern India. In this year the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi started the last movement for India's freedom struggle which is popularly known as Quit India Movement. Though the Congress had launched several other movements prior to it yet this movement was quite different in its nature and character. A large passage from the period of Non-co-operation to the Quit India Movement, the people of India became politically much conscious and aware of their national independence. This period can be counted as a training period for the Congress workers. They became ready in 1942 to fight against the exploitative and ruthless nature of the British rule in India. Now the Indian leaders under the umbrella of Congress demanded that the British must leave India because they were wanted no more now in the country. This movement was of a very different nature as it cut across the regional barriers. Practically the whole of India was affected by this movement. The masses of India were very eager and ready to sacrifice everything for the liberation of the country. During this year a complete breakdown of law and order in certain parts of the country could be seen.

Several works have come out now on the Quit India Movement such as those of Amba Prasad, The Indian Revolt of 1942 (Delhi, 1950), Francis G. Hutchins, Spontaneous Revolution (Delhi, 1971), A.C. Bhawan.
The quit India Movement, (Delhi, 1975), Venkataramani and Srivastva, Quit India, (Delhi, 1979), P.N. Chopra, Quit India Movement (Delhi, 1976), Y.B. Mathur, Quit India Movement (Delhi, 1979), S.R. Bakshi, Quit India Movement and Congress (Delhi, 1985) etc. These works focuss attention on the national politics. There is very little in regard to the movement in Provinces. These works do not throw much and significant light on the participation of Punjab province in Quit India Movement. The authors of these works in fact cannot give provincial role in these monographs. Several writers and historians at regional level are busy in writing about the provincial participation in this movement. I have also made an humble effort to discuss the role of Punjab province in this great movement. Till now no such effort has been made by any historian in this regard. Punjab offers an interesting case study. The Indian National Congress from its very inception was rather weak in the province; it had not succeeded in mobilising a large section of the population. We also witness the rise of separatist tendencies among the Muslims and to some extent among the Sikhs as well. Then we see the emergence of agriculturist class as a force to reckon with. In 1942 the Unionist party was in power. The aim of the present work is to analyse the response of the Punjab to the Quit India Movement. How do we explain Punjab's feeble response? What was the Unionist Government's role in the suppression of the "open relation"? What was British policy towards Punjab during these crucial years? Why the Congress remained a rather weak and disunited organisation in this province? There and some other allied questions are to be examined in the coming pages.
In the first chapter, *Punjab on the Eve of Quit India Movement*, an attempt has been made to discuss in detail, the administrative changes which took place after the annexation in 1849 the importance of Punjab specially in the recruitment, the condition of Punjab peasantry, growth of means of communication and transportation, British policy towards Muslims, impact of British rule on Punjab society, development of education system, social and religious life of the province, emergence of new classes, Punjab Land Alienation Act and its result of Punjab society. The period from 1849-1941 marked a significant change in the attitude of Punjab peasantry which played a very significant role in the rise and growth of new party popularly known as the Unionist Party. Many influential Punjabi Muslims through platform and press kept on isolating them from the Congress which was the towering national organisation. Besides, the Muslim League formed as a counterpoise organisation which regarded it as a Hindu organisation. This period also gave birth to several Sikh organisations which were primarily active in getting concessions for the Sikh Community. Sikh Community through British bureaucracy tried to keep its identity separately from section of the society. In this period several revolutionary organisation were also formed like Bharat Mata Society, Ghadar Party, Naujawan Sabha, Hindustan Republic Association etc. which spearheaded freedom struggle on different lines. Though the leader of these organisation were ideologically different from the Congress yet the Punjab youths indirectly kept on supporting the Punjabi top ranking leader. It is evident how they avenged the
death of Lala Lajpat Rai who was badly beaten by the police when he was leading a demonstration against Simon Commission.

The most significant work done by the British administrators in Punjab was to create and consolidate the Muslim landlords, agriculturist Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and feudal lords. These forces turned the whole situation in the province in favour of the Government. Several forces and mutiny in particular are such examples which testified the above evidence. These forces tried to weaken the nationalist forces in the provinces. Though this was a difficult task yet the pro-British sentiment through the Government succeeded in dominating the Punjab politics. The Unionist Party passed several agrarian legislation in order to satisfy the wishes of Punjab peasantry which was the bullwark of their support. This party dominated the Punjab politics from 1923 to 1945. This was the reason that the Muslim League could not muster support of the Punjabi Muslims. The British Government's main object in supporting the Unionist Party was to make Punjab a recruiting centre and food supply centre. Having this object in mind, the British bureaucracy became successful in its politics.

In the second chapter, *Quit India Movement: Events and Participants*, I have tried to explain the starting of Quit India Movement by the Indian National Congress. This was more significant movement than the earlier movements because in it
there was a call of India's independence. There was no other option before the Congress accept to make India an independent country. All the movements launched by the Congress were non-violent in character. This was the last great mass movement for the national emancipation started by the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Congress leadership had clearly stated that the exploitation of country's resources would not be tolerated and no self respecting freedom loving people could accept or tolerate it. Congress in its annual session of 1940 made it clear that imperialism should not only be condemned but also be removed wherever it existed. In such situation the Government announced a declaration which is popularly known as August Offer. The basic contention of the Government as declared by Viceroy was that they could not contemplate transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose power was directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. The Congress deemed the August offer as unsatisfactory because there was no mention of grant of dominion status to India. This offer was also rejected by the Muslim League.

When the individual Satyagraha was launched, several Congress leaders were arrested in Bihar, Assam and U.P. Around
25,000 Congressmen were arrested throughout the country. British Government wanted that her power both in India and Europe should be strengthened in order to control the situation. On the other hand, the Second World War was taking a serious turn following Germany's attack on the quick advance into Soviet Union in the mid-1942. Hence Japan was also consolidating its position in Far East. It was becoming quite imminent that the war would reach at the doors of India. Various tendencies which were developing in Germany (Nazism), Italy and Japan (Fascism) were seen as more worse than the British imperialism. To avoid the critical situation in India, Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India to make it clear the steps which the British Government wanted to propose for the earliest possible realization of self-government by the creation of Indian Union which was to be constituted a dominion. It was made option for the British dominion whether she might join the British Commonwealth or not. This process was to be followed by setting up a constitution making body whose members would be from the provincial legislatures and princely states in order to frame a new constitution. The province had the right to remain out of the Indian Union. The attitude of the Congress was not favourable to the proposals made by Cripps. The Congress recognised the self-government for India in principle but the faulty provisions were not acceptable.
After launching the Quit India Movement, Congress leaders were arrested. The Congress workers who were bearing anger in their minds began to display violence and sabotage means of communication and transportation. Besides, several looting incidents took place in Bombay, C.P., Madras, Bengal, Assam, U.P., and Bihar. There was a large scale looting of railway property and goods in transit in coaches. Indian Railways was the most severe victim of destruction. Post and telegraph communications were the second which became the object of mass attack. The normal life of the people was greatly disturbed by this mass movement.

The third chapter, Quit India Movement in the Punjab deals with the how and why the prominent leaders and workers of the Congress were arrested under the Defence of India Rules. In response to the arrest the people of Punjab demonstrated against the arrest of their popular leaders. When the government came to know the attitude of the leaders who led, the Provincial-Government declared the Congress as an illegal organisation. Not only this but all the Congress Committees whether at provincial level or district level or tehsil level were declared unlawful. This led to the arrest and humiliation of the local leaders who led in demonstration, protest and procession. All these repressive measures were taken in order to demoralise the people. The second attack of the authorities was on mass media like the press. The Provincial authorities ordered that no printing of newspapers and
journals could be printed or published without the permission of the Government. Moreover, all the printers, publishers and editors were prohibited to print or publish any records on the disturbances and demonstrations occurring in various parts of India. All the Congress offices were raided and sealed. Lahore, the capital of the province, was the most affected district, as compared to other districts. A modest attempt has also been made to highlight the role of women of Punjab who came forward unhesitatingly at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Several women leaders were arrested under the Defence of India Rules. The women of Punjab not only led several processions in the province but also outside the Punjab.

The students of the Punjab also tried to participate in the movement whole-heartedly but the Government's repressive policy restricted the students from their participation in the movement. To abstain students from participating in the movement the Punjab Education Code was amended in order to restrict the students. In this way the Government issued an order discouraging the students in taking part in the movement.

The participation of the Punjab in this movement was not so strong as compared to other provinces like Bombay, Bihar, C.P., U.P. and Bengal etc. The weak participation of the Punjab was largely due to the Unionist Party which was in power and was supporting the cause of the British Government. The Unionist party propagated that the Congress party was the party of money-lenders and businessmen of the urban areas. In such situation
Unionist party got hold over the peasantry by passing certain acts (Debtors Protection Act (1936), Punjab Restoration of Mortgaged Land Act (1938), Agricultural produce Marketing Bill (1938) which are popularly known as the golden acts. These acts gave the peasantry a belief in the slogans of the Unionist party. Therefore, it is evident that the urban outlook of the Congress kept away the poor masses from the Congress movement. Anyhow, other factors responsible for weakening the Congress movement have also been discussed in this chapter.

In the fourth chapter, British Policy, an humble attempt has been made in regard to the British attitude towards this popular movement and the policies adopted by the Government. How this movement became powerful and widespread? How this movement created nationalistic awakening and anti-British sentiments among other regions and the people of the country? It was in fact the most serious challenge ever faced by the British to their rule since the mutiny of 1857. The Government did not hesitate in making use of any strategy which could crush the movement. The British Government affirmed that if the existing laws were insufficient then new one could be put into operation. This was the reason how the Government adopted a multi-pronged policy.

Appropriate way before the Government was to moblise public opinion and individuals who disagreed with the Congress policy, programme and the resolution. The public opinion not only of the country but also of the Western countries including America.
were also to be prepared well in advance for any strong action which might deem necessary. The Central Government asked the provincial authorities to assess their arrangements for dealing with a mass movement in order to clamp the Emergency Power Ordinance which was already there. Besides, several Congress leaders and liberals viewed Gandhi’s programmes with serious misgivings. Some non-Congress leaders also declared the Quit India Movement as a treachery to India and urged the masses to resist with all power and resources at their command the Congress.

The British public opinion denounced the movement as a scarcely veiled threat of a sell-out to Japan. The British Labour Party which was supporting the Congress decried the Congress call as a proof of political irresponsibility. It was also deemed that the Congress wanted the British to leave India without any constitution or any Government. Press was the most important propaganda media through which the British Government tried to communicate its views through pro-government newspapers and journals. Pro-government journalism played a very significant role in denouncing the movement without Hindu-Muslim agreement. The Government tried to prohibit the entry of teachers and students in the movement. The Government knew that if the mass of teachers and students joined the movement then it would be difficult to control them. Therefore, it was thought essential that the control over the schools and colleges was necessary.

The Punjab Government effectively dealt with the processions and hartals rigourously under the new rule 81-D of Defence.
of India Rules which permitted the District Magistrates to break and open the shops of traders who closed them due to hartals. All the business and trading communities were asked to maintain the essential supply and not to charge more than the price fixed in the schedule.

The attitude of the Punjab Government towards the political prisoners was full of callousness. All the political prisoners lost their weight and succumbed to many diseases. The Jail authorities attitude towards them was harsh and inhuman. They were treated as dangerous criminals. It is also clear from this chapter that Government tried to punish those people who were anti-government and pro-Congress and also rewarded those who criticised the Congress movement.

In the fifth chapter, Non-Congress Parties And The Quit India Movement, an attempt has been made to study the attitude of the non-Gongress political parties like Hindu Mahasabha, Muslim League, Communist Party of India and Akali Dal towards Quit India Movement. It has been shown how all these political parties greatly differed basically in their ideologies, programmes and policies. Except Communist Party of India all these political parties laid great stress on sectional and communal politics. These three political parties wanted to mix religion with politics. Several questions have been raised in this chapter about the role of these political parties in this movement and how these political parties created gulf among various sections of the society. It has
been made clear in this chapter why the prominent figures of the province chose to work on communal lines? Why these political parties worked against the Quit India Movement initiated by the Congress?

In the conclusion the main findings of the thesis have been summed up.

This work is mainly based on governmental records, private papers of several individuals and organisations, published reports and documents, newspapers, journals and periodicals etc. collected from National Archives of India, Delhi, Punjab & Haryana States' Archives, Chandigarh, Nehru Memorial and Museum Library, Central Secretariat Library, Sapru House Library and Indian Council of Historical Research Libraries, Delhi.

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