CHAPTER-9

THE END OF THE ‘QUIT INDIA’ MOVEMENT IN THE

DISTRICT OF NADIA

The ‘Quit India’ movement at the all India level had faced an immature and pitiable end. The imperialist British Government had ultimately subdued and suppressed it with the help of its mightier power and nipped it nearly in the bud. The ‘Quit India’ movement in the district of Nadia had also experienced the same pathetic end. Though the leaders and workers of the district had very courageously and very vivaciously organised the movement throughout the district, still all their efforts—overt and covert—in organising and launching it had very quickly ended in smoke. It is a very pathetic history in the whole affair of the freedom movement in India.

In fact, the ‘Quit India’ movement in India had ultimately been plunged in the womb of utter disappointment and desperation. The main Reson behind this pathetic end of the movement was the lack of proper organisation which was once again caused by the serious absence of the well-organised and continually stable leadership. In fact, as soon as the ‘Quit India’ Resolution had been adopted by the
All India Congress Committee (AICC) at the deep night of the 8th August, 1942, the British police had arrested all the important Congress leaders all over India like Mahatma Gandhiji, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Ballav Bhai Patel and many others before the very dawn of the 9th August. Their immediate arrest had actually created the gross lack of organised and articulated leadership that had resulted in the dispersed organisation and distracted direction of the ‘Quit India’ movement all over the areas of India by the local leaders, workers and supporters of the movement of the concerned areas.

Though the local leaders and workers of the different areas of India had valiantly sought to organise the movement with intense passion for India’s independence, still passion not entangled with reason is sure to go to astray and similar was the fate of the pro-movement passion of the leaders and workers of the movement. The ‘Quit India’ movement in India in 1942 had thus been forced to face really a very deplorable end.

It goes without saying that the ‘Quit India’ movement in the district of Nadia had also experienced the same result as was witnessed in other parts of India. There were a lot of reasons behind the pathetic end of the movement in the district which we can systematically categorise in the following manner.
We have already seen above that the ‘Quit India’ movement could not gather the desired momentum because of the lack of grass-roots organization, continuing leadership and definite programme of action.\textsuperscript{1} In the case of the movement in the district of Nadia, the gradual arrest of almost all the important leaders and workers of the district had directly led to the serious lack of organised and continuing leadership, resulting in the absence of proper organisation that had ultimately culminated in the gross failure of the movement in the district.

Another grave reason for the sad end of the ‘Quit India’ movement in the district of Nadia is the severe repressive policy of the local authority of the British Government in India. The repression of the Britishers was too severe to be withstood by the common people. In fact, the Government had controlled and suppressed the people by the ‘ruthless use of force’.\textsuperscript{2}

In fact, the severe torture of the British police and the merciless repression of the military force had ultimately demoralised the leaders, workers and supporters of the movement in the district of Nadia and had forcefully weaned them from the pro-movement activities and made them mentally impelled to give up all their contacts with the movement that ultimately led to the forced end of the movement in the district.
The serious economic crisis was another factor responsible for the immature end of the movement.³ The great famine of Bengal 1943 had also, instead of rousing the masses into action, demoralized and frustrated the people.⁴ The common people of the district of Nadia, as in the case of the-then undivided Bengal, fell victims to this man-made famine.⁵ The consideration for their bare survival overshadowed other impersonal, national political considerations.⁶ In fact, the immense financial distress and the resulting grave anxiety for mere survival had very unfortunately forced the leaders and workers of Nadia to search for money, i.e., livelihood and thereby impelled them to keep themselves mentally aloof from the movement in the district that had ultimately culminated in the very sad end of the movement.

Another factor for the immature end of the movement in the district of Nadia was that a large number of villagers were offered temporary jobs in connexion with war-time operations of the Government, namely employment in the Gun Factory of Ichhapur, manual-work at the temporary air-base camp at Dhubulia, construction of military camps and refugee camps,i.e., shelter shades in different areas of Nadia district and so on.⁷ Practically speaking, the penniless, helpless, wretched, hungry and highly penurious common people of Nadia having got the
jobs, had become really benifitted and thereby the British Government had become ultimately successful in exorcising the ghost of the movement from the shoulders of the poor common people of Nadia and thus felt actually complacent. This segregation of the common masses of Nadia from the movement by the British authority had ultimately made it (the movement) face a very disappointing end.

We have seen in our discussion on the course of the movement that a large number of processions and meetings were organized and led by the pro-movement workers, but this form of movement could not be sustained for long because of police repression. The students’ strikes, processions and meetings were also suppressed by the police atrocity and harassment. The organizers of the movement in most cases could not remain underground for a long period and could not direct the movement in the way they expected.

Moreover the movement was by and large restricted to middle class students and public. The secret ‘sabotage’ activities, launched especially in the rural areas of the district could make some dent; but since it was a movement restricted to a few select leaders and workers it could not involve the masses in the movement.

This movement had however released the pent-up feelings of deep resentment against the British Raj. But emotion unaccompanied by proper
perspective and strong organization can never be the basis of any successful mass movement. This also happened true in the case of the August movement in the district of Nadia.

Despite all these odds and eccentricities the ‘Quit India’ movement, apparently a failure, certainly did advance the cause of generating anti-imperialist feelings among the masses. True it is as we have already said that organization was not commensurate with the will to do something, yet it must be admitted that it prepared the ground for the mighty upheaval of mass upsurges that shook the foundations of the imperial rule during 1945-46.¹² This general statement is also applicable in the case of Nadia.

NOTES AND REFERENCES


7. ibid.


9. ibid.

10. Interviews with Salil Paul on 06.05.1985.

11. Interviews with Smarajit Bandyopadhyay, Harendra Nath Bose, Salil Paul and Shibaram Gupta on 14.02.1985, 12.05.1985, 06.05.1985, and 27.02.1985 respectively.