

## Quit India Movement, Demand for Pakistan, and the INA

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### Quit India Movement

After Cripps' departure, Gandhi framed a resolution calling for British withdrawal and a non-violent non-cooperation movement against any Japanese invasion. The CWC meeting at Wardha (July 14, 1942) accepted the idea of a struggle.

#### ■ Why Start a Struggle Now

The reasons were several—

1. The failure of the Cripps Mission to solve the constitutional deadlock exposed Britain's unchanged attitude on constitutional advance and made it clear that any more silence would be tantamount to accepting the British right to decide the fate of Indians without consulting them.
2. There was popular discontent because of rising prices and shortage of rice, salt, etc., and because of factors such as commandeering of boats in Bengal and Orissa. There were fears of Britain following a scorched earth policy in Assam, Bengal and Orissa against possible Japanese advance.
3. News of reverses suffered by the British in South-East Asia and an imminent British collapse enhanced popular willingness to give expression to discontent. The Japanese troops were approaching the borders of India. Popular faith in the stability of British rule was so low that people were withdrawing deposits from banks and post offices.

4. The manner in which the British evacuated from South-East Asia leaving the subjects to their fate (two roads were provided—Black Road for Indian refugees and White Road exclusively for European refugees), and the rout of a European power by an Asian power shattered white prestige and the British behaviour towards the Indian subjects in South-East Asia exposed the racist attitude of the rulers.

5. The leadership wanted to condition the masses for a possible Japanese invasion.

### ■ The 'Quit India' Resolution

In July 1942, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and resolved that it would authorise Gandhi to take charge of the non-violent mass movement. The resolution generally referred to as the 'Quit India' resolution. Proposed by Jawaharlal Nehru and seconded by Sardar Patel, it was to be approved by the All India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay in August.

The Quit India Resolution was ratified at the Congress meeting at Gowalia Tank, Bombay, on August 8, 1942. The meeting also resolved to

- demand an immediate end to British rule in India.
- declare commitment of free India to defend itself against all types of Fascism and imperialism.
- form a provisional Government of India after British withdrawal.
- sanction a civil disobedience movement against British rule.

Gandhi was named the leader of the struggle.

### ■ Gandhi's General Instructions to Different Sections

Gandhi's special instructions were spelt out at the Gowalia Tank meeting but not actually issued. They were directed at various sections of society.

- **Government servants:** Do not resign but declare your allegiance to the Congress.
- **Soldiers:** Do not leave the Army but do not fire on compatriots.
- **Students:** If confident, leave studies.
- **Peasants:** If zamindars are anti-government, pay mutually agreed rent, and if zamindars are pro-government, do not pay rent.
- **Princes:** Support the masses and accept sovereignty of your people.
- **Princely states' people:** Support the ruler only if he is anti-government and declare yourselves to be a part of the Indian nation.

Gandhi followed up with the now-famous exhortation: "Here is a *mantra*, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is: '**Do or Die**'. We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery."

### ■ Spread of the Movement

Gandhi had carefully built the tempo through individual civil disobedience movements or satyagraha, organisational revamping and a consistent propaganda campaign. The government, however, was in no mood to either negotiate with the Congress or wait for the movement to be formally launched.

In the early hours of August 9, 1942, in a single sweep, all the top leaders of the Congress were arrested and taken to unknown destinations. The Congress Working Committee, the All India Congress Committee and the Provincial Congress Committees were declared unlawful associations under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908. The assembly of public meetings was prohibited under rule 56 of the Defence of India Rules. The removal of established leaders left the younger and militant elements to their own initiative. With the major leaders out of the picture, young Aruna Asaf Ali,

till then relatively unknown, presided over the Congress committee session on August 9, and hoisted the flag.

### **Public on Rampage**

The general public attacked symbols of authority, and hoisted national flags forcibly on public buildings. Satyagrahis offered themselves up to arrest, bridges were blown up, railway tracks were removed and telegraph lines were cut. This kind of activity was most intense in eastern United Provinces and Bihar. Students responded by going on strike in schools and colleges, participating in processions, writing and distributing illegal news sheets (*patrikas*) and acting as couriers for underground networks. Workers went on strike in Ahmedabad, Bombay, Jamshedpur, Ahmednagar and Poona.

### **Underground Activity**

Many nationalists went underground and took to subversive activities. The participants in these activities were the Socialists, Forward Bloc members, Gandhi ashramites, revolutionary nationalists and local organisations in Bombay, Poona, Satara, Baroda and other parts of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra, United Provinces, Bihar and Delhi. The main personalities taking up underground activity were Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta, Biju Patnaik, Chhotubhai Puranik, Achyut Patwardhan, Sucheta Kripalani and R.P. Goenka. Usha Mehta started an underground radio in Bombay. This phase of underground activity was meant to keep up popular morale by continuing to provide a line of command and guidance to distribute arms and ammunition.

### **View**

... though the need for non-violence was always reiterated, Gandhi's mantra of Do or Die represents the militant mood of Gandhi.

—Sumit Sarkar

### **Parallel Governments**

Parallel governments were established at many places:

- Ballia (in August 1942 for a week)—under Chittu Pandey. He got many Congress leaders released.
- Tamluk (Midnapore, from December 1942 to September 1944)—*Jatiya Sarkar* undertook cyclone relief work, sanctioned grants to schools, supplied paddy from the rich to the poor, organised *Vidyut Vahinis*, etc.
- Satara (mid-1943 to 1945)—named “Prati Sarkar”, was organised under leaders like Y.B. Chavan, Nana Patil, etc. Village libraries and Nyayadan Mandals were organised, prohibition campaigns were carried on and ‘Gandhi marriages’ were organised.

Active help was provided by businessmen (through donations, shelter and material help), students (acting as couriers), simple villagers (by refusing information to authority), pilots and train drivers (by delivering bombs and other material) and government officials including police (who passed on secret information to the activists).

### **■ Extent of Mass Participation**

The participation was on many levels.

**Youth**, especially the students of schools and colleges, remained in the forefront.

**Women**, especially school and college girls, actively participated, and included Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalani and Usha Mehta.

**Workers** went on strikes and faced repression.

**Peasants** of all strata were at the heart of the movement. Even some zamindars participated. These peasants concentrated their offensive on symbols of authority and there was complete absence of anti-zamindar violence.

**Government officials**, especially those belonging to lower levels in police and administration, participated resulting in erosion of government loyalty.

**Muslims** helped by giving shelter to underground

activists. There were no communal clashes during the movement.

The **Communists** did not join the movement; in the wake of Russia (where the communists were in power) being attacked by Nazi Germany, the communists began to support the British war against Germany and the 'Imperialist War' became the 'People's War'.

The **Muslim League** opposed the movement, fearing that if the British left India at that time, the minorities would be oppressed by the Hindus.

The **Hindu Mahasabha** boycotted the movement.

The **Princely states** showed a low-key response.

### ■ Government Repression

Although martial law was not applied, the repression was severe. Agitating crowds were lathi-charged, tear-gassed and fired upon. The number of those killed is estimated at 10,000. The press was muzzled. The military took over many cities; police and secret service reigned supreme. Rebellious villages were fined heavily and in many villages, mass flogging was done.

### ■ Estimate

- Left without leaders, there was no restraint and violence became common.

- Main storm centres of the movement were in eastern United Provinces, Bihar, Midnapore, Maharashtra, Karnataka.

- Students, workers and peasants were the backbone of the movement while the upper classes and the bureaucracy remained largely loyal.

- Loyalty to government suffered considerable erosion. This also showed how deep nationalism had reached.

- The movement established the truth that it was no longer possible to rule India without the wishes of Indians.

- The element of spontaneity was higher than before, although a certain degree of popular initiative had been sanctioned by the leadership itself, subject to limitations of the instructions. Also, the Congress had been ideologically,

politically and organisationally preparing for the struggle for a long time.

- The great significance was that the movement placed the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the national movement. After Quit India, there could be no retreat.

- In this struggle, the common people displayed unparalleled heroism and militancy. The repression they faced was the most brutal, and the circumstances under which resistance was offered were most adverse.

### ■ **Gandhi Fasts**

In February 1943, Gandhi started a fast as an answer to an exhortation by the government to condemn violence; the fast was directed against the violence of the State. The popular response to the news of the fast was immediate and overwhelming. Protests were organised at home and abroad through hartals, demonstrations and strikes. Three members of the viceroy's executive council resigned. The fast achieved the following—

- public morale was raised.
- anti-British feeling was heightened.
- an opportunity was provided for political activity.
- Government's high-handedness was exposed.

Gandhi got the better of his opponents and refused to oblige by dying.

On **March 23, 1943** Pakistan Day was observed.

### **Famine of 1943**

The horror and inconveniences of war were increased by the famine of 1943. The worst-affected areas were south-west Bengal comprising the Tamluk-Contai-Diamond Harbour region, Dacca, Faridpur, Tippera and Noakhali. Around 1.5 to 3 million people perished in this basically man-made famine, the epidemics (malaria, cholera, small pox), malnutrition and starvation. The fundamental causes of the famine were as follows.

1. The need to feed a vast Army diverted foodstuffs.
2. Rice imports from Burma and South-East Asia had been stopped.
3. The famine got aggravated by gross mismanagement and deliberate profiteering; rationing methods were belated and were confined to big cities.

### **Rajagopalachari Formula**

Meanwhile, efforts were on to solve the ongoing constitutional crisis, and some individuals also tried to come up with constitutional proposals.

#### ■ **The Formula**

C. Rajagopalachari (CR), the veteran Congress leader, prepared a formula for Congress-League cooperation in 1944. It was a tacit acceptance of the League's demand for Pakistan. Gandhi supported the formula. The main points in the CR Plan were:

- Muslim League to endorse Congress demand for independence.
- League to cooperate with Congress in forming a provisional government at centre.
- After the end of the war, the entire population of Muslim majority areas in the North-West and North-East India to decide by a plebiscite, whether or not to form a separate sovereign state.
- In case of acceptance of partition, agreement to be made jointly for safeguarding defence, commerce, communications, etc.
- The above terms to be operative only if England transferred full powers to India.

#### ■ **Objections**

Jinnah wanted the Congress to accept the two-nation theory. He wanted only the Muslims of North-West and North-East to vote in the plebiscite and not the entire population. He also opposed the idea of a common centre.



While the Congress was ready to cooperate with the League for the independence of the Indian Union, the League did not care for independence of the Union. It was only interested in a separate nation.

Hindu leaders led by Vir Savarkar condemned the CR Plan.

### **Desai-Liaquat Pact**

Efforts continued to end the deadlock. Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the Congress Party in the Central Legislative Assembly, met Liaquat Ali Khan, deputy leader of the Muslim League in that Assembly, and both of them came up with the draft proposal for the formation of an interim government at the centre, consisting of—

- an equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the central legislature.
- 20% reserved seats for minorities.

No settlement could be reached between the Congress and the League on these lines, but the fact that a sort of parity between the Congress and the League was decided upon had far-reaching consequences.

### **Wavell Plan**

Although the war in Europe came to an end in May 1945, the Japanese threat still remained. The Conservative government in Britain led by Churchill was keen to reach a solution on the constitutional question in India. The viceroy, Lord Wavell was permitted to start negotiations with Indian leaders. Congress leaders were released from jails in June 1945.

### **■ Why the Government was Keen on a Solution Now**

1. The general election in England was scheduled for mid-1945. The Conservatives wanted to be seen as sincere on reaching a solution.

2. There was pressure from the Allies to seek further Indian cooperation in the war.

3. The government wanted to divert Indian energies into channels more profitable for the British.

### ■ The Plan

The idea was to reconstruct the governor-general's executive council pending the preparation of a new constitution. For this purpose, a conference was convened by the viceroy, Lord Wavell, at Shimla in June 1945. The main proposals of the Wavell Plan were as follows.

- With the exception of the governor-general and the commander-in-chief, all members of the executive council were to be Indians.
- Caste Hindus and Muslims were to have equal representation.
- The reconstructed council was to function as an interim government within the framework of the 1935 Act (i.e. not responsible to the Central Assembly).
- The governor-general was to exercise his veto on the advice of ministers.
- Representatives of different parties were to submit a joint list to the viceroy for nominations to the executive council. If a joint list was not possible, then separate lists were to be submitted.
- Possibilities were to be kept open for negotiations on a new constitution once the war was finally won.

### ■ Muslim League's Stand

The League wanted all Muslim members to be League nominees, because it feared that since the aims of other minorities—depressed classes, Sikhs, Christians, etc.—were the same as those of the Congress, this arrangement would reduce the League to a one-third minority. (Wavell wanted Khizr Hyat Khan as the Muslim representative from Western Punjab.) The League claimed some kind of veto in the council with decisions opposed to Muslims needing a two-thirds majority for approval.

### ■ Congress Stand

The Congress objected to the plan as “an attempt to reduce the Congress to the status of a purely caste Hindu party and insisted on its right to include members of all communities among its nominees”.

### ■ Wavell's Mistake

Wavell announced a breakdown of talks thus giving the League a virtual veto. This strengthened the League's position, as was evident from the elections in 1945-46, and boosted Jinnah's position; and exposed the real character of the Conservative government of Churchill.

## The Indian National Army and Subhash Bose

Subhash Chandra Bose was an intrepid man. He had always shown a militant streak and reacted violently to any insult of Indians by the Europeans. He passed the Indian Civil Services examination securing fourth position but resigned from the service in 1921 to join the struggle for freedom by becoming a member of the Congress. His political guru was Chittaranjan Das. He became mayor of Calcutta in 1923. He was jailed many times by the British. Once it became clear to Subhash Chandra Bose that he could not follow Gandhi's way but that the Congress was determined to follow Gandhi, Bose decided to go his own way to fight for independence.

In March 1940, Bose convened an Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh; it was a joint effort of the Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha. It was resolved at the conference that a world-wide struggle should be launched on April 6, the first day of the National Week, with a call to the people not to help the Imperialist War with any resource—men, money or materials. He called for resistance to be offered to all forms of exploitation of Indian resources for the

imperial cause. There was enthusiastic participation by the people in the struggle launched on April 6.

Bose was arrested in July when he protested and tried to launch a satyagraha against a proposed monument for Holwell in Calcutta. He was released from prison and placed under house arrest in December 1940 after a hunger strike. In January 1941, it was reported that Bose had escaped. On January 26, 1941, he reached Peshawar under the pseudo-name Ziauddin, helped by Bhagat Ram.

Later it was heard that he had left India “to supplement from outside the struggle going on at home”. He was reported to have approached Russia for help in the Indian struggle for freedom from Britain. But, in June 1941, Russia joined the Allies in the war, which disappointed Bose. He then went to Germany.

Bose met Hitler under the pseudo name, Orlando Mazzotta. With the help of Hitler, the ‘Freedom Army’ (Mukti Sena) was formed which consisted of all the prisoners of war of Indian origin captured by Germany and Italy. Dresden, Germany was made the office of the Freedom Army. Bose came to be called ‘Netaji’ by the people of Germany. He gave the famous slogan, ‘Jai Hind’ from the Free India Centre, Germany.

He began regular broadcasts from Berlin radio in January 1942, which enthused Indians. In early 1943, he left Germany and travelled by German and later by Japanese submarines to reach Japan and then Singapore in July of the same year. He was to take over command of the Indian independence movement from Rashbehari Bose, but that was the second phase of the Indian National Army.

### ■ **Origin and First Phase of the Indian National Army**

The idea of creating an army out of the Indian prisoners of war (POWs) was originally that of Mohan Singh, an Indian army officer who had decided not to join the retreating

British army in Malaya. He decided to turn to the Japanese for help. The Japanese had till then encouraged Indian civilians to form anti-British organisations. Mohan Singh asked for Indian prisoners of war.

The Japanese handed over the Indian prisoners of war to Mohan Singh who tried to recruit them into an Indian National Army. After the fall of Singapore, several POWs were ready to join Mohan Singh. By the end of 1942, 40,000 men were ready to join the INA. It was intended that the INA would go into action only on the invitation of the Indian National Congress and the people of India. The move to form this army has been seen by many as a check against the misconduct of the Japanese against Indians in South-East Asia and as a bulwark against a possible future Japanese occupation of India.

The INA got a boost with the outbreak of the Quit India Movement in India. In September 1942, the first division of the INA was formed with 16,300 men. With the Japanese contemplating an Indian invasion, the idea of an armed wing of INA seemed more relevant to them. But soon, serious differences emerged between the Indian Army officers led by Mohan Singh and the Japanese over the role to be played by the INA. Actually, the Japanese wanted a token force of 2,000 only while Mohan Singh wanted to raise a much larger army. Mohan Singh was taken into custody by the Japanese.

The second phase began with the arrival of Subhash Bose in Singapore. But before that in June 1943, Subhash Chandra Bose (under pseudo name Abid Hussain) reached Tokyo; met the Japanese prime minister, Tojo.

The role of Rasbehari Bose, another great freedom fighter, should also be acknowledged here. He had fled to Japan in 1915 following the failed revolutionary activities. In Japan, Rashbehari Bose eventually became a naturalised citizen. He made a lot of effort in getting the Japanese interested in the Indian independence movement. He became

active in Pan-Asian circles, founded the Indian Club of Tokyo, and gave lectures on the evils of Western imperialism.

Very early itself he was impressed by Subhash Chandra Bose. When the Indian National Army was formed by Mohan Singh in Singapore, Rashbehari Bose was greatly excited and left Tokyo for Southeast Asia. It was at a conference in Bangkok (also under Japanese occupation at the time) that it was decided to place the INA under an Indian Independence League whose chairman would be Rashbehari Bose himself. He had created the League in 1942 in Tokyo.

When Subhash Bose was sought by the Japanese to lead the INA, he was ready for it. He went to Singapore and met Rashbehari Bose, and the latter happily transferred the control and leadership of the Indian Independence League and the INA to Subhash in July 1943. It must be noted that it was on the organisational spadework done by Rashbehari Bose that Subhas Bose could build up the Indian National Army. Subhash Bose became Supreme Commander of the INA on August 25. (In February 1944, after a collapse of the lungs, Rashbehari's health steadily deteriorated, and he died on January 21, 1945, aged 58.)

On October 21, 1943, Subhash Bose formed the Provisional Government for Free India at Singapore with H.C. Chatterjee (Finance portfolio), M.A. Aiyar (Broadcasting), Lakshmi Swaminathan (Women Department), etc. The famous slogan—"Give me blood, I will give you freedom" was given in Malaya.

This provisional government declared war on Britain and the United States, and was recognised by the Axis powers. Recruits were trained and funds collected for the INA. A women's regiment called the Rani Jhansi Regiment was also formed.

The INA headquarters was shifted to Rangoon (in Burma) in January 1944, and the army recruits were to march from there with the war cry "Chalo Delhi!" on their lips.

On November 6, 1943, Andaman and Nicobar islands

was given by the Japanese army to the INA; the islands were renamed as Shahid Dweep and Swaraj Dweep respectively.

On July 6, 1944, Subhas Bose addressed Mahatma Gandhi as 'Father of Nation'—from the Azad Hind Radio (the first person to call Gandhi, 'Father of Nation'). He asked for Gandhi's blessings for "India's last war of independence".

One INA battalion commanded by Shah Nawaz was allowed to accompany the Japanese Army to the Indo-Burma front and participate in the Imphal campaign. However, the Indians received discriminatory treatment from the Japanese, which included being denied rations and arms and being made to do menial work for the Japanese units, and this disgusted and demoralised the INA units.

The Azad Hind Fauz crossed the Burma border, and stood on Indian soil on March 18, 1944. The INA units subsequently advanced up to Kohima and Imphal. On April 14, Colonel Malik of the Bahadur Group hoisted the INA flag for the first time on the Indian mainland at Moirang, in Manipur (where the INA Memorial Complex stands today) to enthusiastic cries of "Jai Hind" and "Netaji Zindabad". For three months the INA carried out military administration duties at Moirang but then the Allied forces reclaimed the territory. The INA met the same fate as the Japanese, and all brigades began their withdrawal on July 18, 1944.

The steady Japanese retreat thereafter quashed any hopes of the INA liberating the nation. The retreat continued till mid-1945.

On August 15, 1945 the surrender of Japan in the Second World War took place and with this the INA also surrendered.

On August 18, 1945, reportedly, Subhash Bose died mysteriously in an air-crash at Taipei (Taiwan).

But when the INA POWs were brought back to India after the war to be court-martialled, a powerful movement emerged in their defence.

### Summary

- **Quit India Movement**

- \* **Why launch a movement now?**

- Failure of Cripps Offer an evidence of British lack of will to concede Indian demands
  - Public discontent against wartime hardships
  - A feeling of imminent British collapse
  - Indian leadership's desire to prepare masses for possible Japanese invasion

- \* **AICC Meeting (Bombay—August 8, 1942)**

- The meeting ratifies Quit India Resolution

- \* **August 9, 1942** All prominent leaders arrested

- \* **Major Activity**

- Public on rampage—especially Eastern UP, Bihar, Bengal—attacking symbols of authority

- Underground activity to provide a line of command

- Parallel governments in Ballia (UP), Tamluk (Bengal) and Satara (Maharashtra)

- Sections participating included youth, women, workers, peasants, government officials, some communists

**February 1943** Gandhi started a fast

**March 23, 1943** Pakistan Day observed

- **C. Rajagopalachari Formula (March 1944)**

- League should immediately support independence for India and cooperate in Interim Government

- After War, Muslim majority areas to exercise right to self-determination

- In case of partition, common centre for defence, commerce, communications, etc

- Jinnah rejected the offer as he wanted Congress to accept the two-nation theory

- **Desai-Liaquat Pact**

- Congress and League nominees to have equal representation in Central Executive

- 20% of seats reserved for minorities

- **Wavell Plan (Shimla Conference—June 1945)**

- An all-Indian executive council except the governor-general and commander-in-chief



Equal representation for caste Hindus and Muslims  
Muslim League wanted all Muslims to be its nominees and  
claimed a communal veto in the executive council  
Congress objected to it being painted purely as a caste Hindu  
party

● **Subhash Bose and the INA**

Origin of INA—Mohan Singh's role.

First Phase of INA.

Second Phase of INA.

Subhash Bose takes over from Rashbehari Bose.

INA achievements—flag hoisted on Indian Soil.

Retreat of INA with the Japanese with the end of Second World  
War.