

An examination on the Quit India Movement and its role in Global History



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Abstract

The Indian National Congress led the largest mass movement in history, the Quit India Movement of 1942, which was marked by intermittent and unplanned uprisings. In numerous cities around the nation, it became violent. It was intense in Kolkata and several western areas of Bengal, but generally mild in the eastern regions. However, there is readily available, very concrete proof of popular mobilization into this movement in several eastern areas. However, public historical materials on the Quit India movement in Eastern Bengal are hard to get by now after a lengthy period of time. Reports from newspapers are similarly scarce. Only a few police records on public agitations vs police operations are found in the archived papers. The history of the Quit India Movement, however, has so far avoided discussing what transpired in the eastern regions of Bengal. This research seeks to clarify the media rhetoric and widespread mobilization of the Quit India Movement in Eastern Bengal against this background.

Keywords: Quit India Movement, Indian National Congress, Dalits, Eastern Bengal.

Introduction

The Quit India campaign had been a significant turning point in India's fight against British colonialism. The 1930s and 1940s saw a shift in both political movements and protest tactics. India was making progress in her battle with the colonialists to regain her sovereignty. Women and men have been the cadre in this movement.

It will be fascinating to learn more about the movement as a whole and how it was feasible to get enormous numbers of people together in an appropriate setting for a single goal. The study that follows provides information about the well-known August-Kranthi movement, also known as the Quit India movement. This study's methodology combined intricate interpretation with critical analysis.

Background of Quit India Movement

Under Gandhi's direction, the Quit India campaign was the most revolutionary anti-colonial movement. I'm going to start by examining the history of the Indian National Movement before moving on to the Quit India Movement, which gained widespread support from a variety of social groups.

- The Civil Disobedience Movement's decline about 1934 had caused significant dissent in Congress.
- New political tendencies were being created by the formation of many peasant groups, such as the All India Kisan Sabha and the Congress Socialist Party.
- Communist Party and All India Forward Block also attracted a sizable number of members with a strong revolutionary orientation.
- Viceroy Linlithgow's decision to declare India a combatant in the Second World War without consulting the Indian people led to the resignation of Congress Ministries in 1939. As was previously indicated, the Second World War was about to start in the world of international politics. Due to the sharp decline in membership—which went from 4.5 million in 1938–1939 to 1.4 million in 1940–41—Congress popularity also decreased. In light of the overall situation, Congress needed a large-scale uprising—like the Quit India Movement—to reaffirm its legitimacy among the party's disaffected supporters.
- The Quit India movement was sparked by a number of circumstances,

Opposition

It should come as no surprise that Gandhi's "Quit India Campaign" was opposed by certain Indians, who choose not to support the movement for a variety of reasons. The well-known figure and Gandhi supporter Chakravarti Rajgopalachari criticized the Congress draught that called for widespread civil disobedience if the nation didn't get independence right once and instead opted to leave the party. Despite their reservations over the appeal, leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad decided to stick behind Gandhi and trusted the Mahatma's judgement. Allama Mashriqi and other officials, however, criticized the Congress Working Committee's resolution, calling the initiative "pre-mature." He said that before putting out a demand to

liberate India, the Congress must first debate the establishment of Pakistan with the "Muslim League" and take into account all other factions. The campaign was opposed by a number of political organisations, including the "Muslim League," "Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh," "Hindu Mahasabha," and the "Communist Party of India." The "All-India Muslim League" worried that if the British left India without establishing a separate state for the Muslims, the Hindus would persecute the Muslims. As a result, it dissented from the movement, which benefited the British. The silence of the "Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh" was another factor that favoured the British (RSS). The RSS, headed by M.S. Golwalkar, was unable to join the movement because it did not want to challenge the current administration. Both the general public and several influential RSS members criticised this choice made by the organisation. However, the group persisted in opposing the "Quit India Movement," which delighted the British government. The movement was not supported by other significant political groups like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Communist Party of India. The Communist Party of India backed the British throughout the war because it wished to aid the Soviet Union in its conflicts with Hitler's Nazi Germany, despite the "Hindu Mahasabha claims" that the movement would cause domestic unrest. The fact that many Indian businesspeople and students also opposed the campaign served to undermine it even more. While many students just disregarded the campaign because they were focused on Subhas Chandra Bose's advancement in his quest to liberate India, businesspeople backed the war since they were reaping enormous profits from significant military expenditure.

Violence

According to renowned British novelist John F. Riddick, 155 government structures, including 70 police stations, were destroyed as a result of the "Quit India Movement." Additionally, he said that at least 250 train stations and 550 post offices were attacked as a result of the campaign. There were 2,500 cases of telegraph wire sabotage by the demonstrators across India. To regain control over the area, 57 battalions of British soldiers had to be sent to Bihar alone. People began bursting into prisons in Uttar Pradesh, liberating several Congress leaders. Even some of the local authorities declared their own rule. Because the British administration had increased taxes and even compelled the peasants in West Bengal to export rice, the peasants there participated in violent behaviour.

Suppression of the Movement

Nearly all of the movement's protests had been put down by 1944. Gandhi and the rest of the "Congress Working Committee" members were all in jail thanks to the British. In actuality, several well-known Congress leaders were cut off from the outside world for almost three years. Gandhi's health was rapidly

failing as his personal secretary, Mahadev Desai, and his wife, Kasturbai, passed away while they were imprisoned. Due to the fact that many protests were violent in character, the British government reacted by mass arresting more than 100,000 individuals, which ultimately resulted in the movement's repression. It was widely believed that the "Quit India Movement" had failed terribly as a result of the police shooting several citizens and demonstrators, which devastated many nationalists.

Effect of the Quit India Movement

Gandhi's campaign had a significant influence in the years leading up to India's ultimate independence, even if it had little effect on achieving immediate freedom. First and foremost, the movement held the Congress Party together through thick and thin and made it clear to the British that the Indians were prepared to go farther than they had anticipated in order to achieve full independence. As then-American President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressed the British government to take into account at least some of the requests made by the Indian leaders, the campaign also demonstrated to the British that India had the backing of world leaders. The devastation that the movement generated via numerous rallies and violent acts had a significant influence on independence as well. The movement caused numerous buildings and infrastructure to be destroyed, thus the British had to rebuild many of them if they were to control India for a longer time. However, the 'Second World War' caused such damage and financial loss for Britain that the British government was not left with enough money to reconstruct India. As a result, the British realised it would be almost difficult for them to rule India in the long term. The only issue that remained in many British minds when the war ended in 1945 was how to leave India in a dignified and peaceful manner.

Significance

Even though the government claimed that independence could only be granted after the end of the war, the movement emphasized that India could not be governed without the support of the Indians. It also put the demand for complete independence at the top of the freedom movement's agenda, which increased public morale and anti-British sentiment..

Conclusion

After the Great Rebellion of 1857, the Quit India Movement was the most revolutionary attempt at independence in India. However, for a variety of reasons, Eastern Bengal saw only a modest level of popular mobilisation for this campaign. However, individuals from many metropolitan areas in Eastern Bengal, particularly students, were inspired to join this movement, accepted all the cruel repressions, and gave their

lives to ensure India's freedom. This campaign didn't succeed immediately because of the government's repression, poor coordination, and lack of a clear plan of action. However, the martyrs of this campaign who received a great deal of support from the general public led the British Raj in India to revert to its oppressive underpinnings. 120 Therefore, the Quit India Movement's eventual contribution to India's liberation was crucial. The most intriguing aspect of this movement, however, was how peasants, rickshaw drivers, ekka drivers, and "illiterate" villages took over as the leaders. According to Bandyopadhyay, the dalit peasants and other members of the lower classes had different motivations for joining the Quit India Movement than the educated young and middleclass peasants did. They weren't even organised by the Communist Party or the Congress. The anti-imperialist sentiment that unified them, however, even overwhelmed the pre-existing anti-feudal impulses in the countryside. 121 The entire public, in Aruna Asaf Ali's opinion, had led the way in the Quit India Movement.

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