

## **I: CIVIL DISOBEIDENCE MOVEMENT**

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The observance of the Independence Day in 1930 was followed by the launching of the Civil Disobedience Movement under the leadership of Gandhi. It began with the famous Dandi March of Gandhi. On 12 March 1930, Gandhi left the Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmadabad on foot with 78 other members of the Ashram for Dandi, a village on the western sea-coast of India, at a distance of about 385 km from Ahmadabad. They reached Dandi on 6 April 1930. There, Gandhi broke the salt law. It was illegal for anyone to make salt as it was a government monopoly. Gandhi defied the government by picking up a handful of salt which had been formed by the evaporation of sea. The defiance of the salt law was followed by the spread of Civil Disobedience Movement all over the country. Making of salt spread throughout the country in the first phase of the civil disobedience movement, it became a symbol of the people's defiance of the government.

In Tamil Nadu, C. Rajgopalchari led a march-similar to the Dandi march-from Trichinopoly to Vedaranyam. In Dharsana, in Gujarat, Sarojini Naidu, the famous poetess who was a prominent leader of the congress and had been president of the congress, led non-violent satyagrahis in a march to the salt depots owned by the government. Over 300 satyagrahis were severely injured and two killed in the brutal lathi charge by the police. There were demonstrations, hartals, boycott of foreign goods, and later refusal to pay taxes. Lakhs of people participated in the movement, including a large number of women.

In November 1930, the British government convened the first round table conference in London to consider the reforms proposed by the Simon commission. The congress, which was fighting for the independence of the country, boycotted it. But it was attended by the representatives of Indian princes, Muslim league, Hindu Mahasabha and some others. But nothing came out of it. The British government knew that without the participation of the congress, no decision on constitutional changes in India would be acceptable to the Indian people.

Early in 1931, efforts were made by Viceroy Irwin to persuade the congress to join the second round table conference. An agreement was reached between Gandhi and Irwin, according to which the government agreed to release all political prisoners against whom there were no charges of violence. The congress was to suspend the civil disobedience movement. Many nationalist leaders were unhappy with this agreement. However, at its Karachi session which was held in March 1931 and was presided over by Vallabhbhai Patel, the congress decided to approve the agreement and participate in the second round table conference. Gandhi was chosen to represent the congress at the conference which met in September 1931.

At the Karachi session, of the congress, an important resolution of fundamental rights and economic policy was passed. It laid down the policy of the nationalist movement on social and economic problems facing the country. It mentioned the fundamental rights which would be guaranteed to the people irrespective of caste and religion, and it favoured nationalisation of certain industries, promotion of Indian industries, and schemes for the welfare of workers and peasants. This resolution showed the growing influence of the ideals of socialism on the nationalist movement. Besides Gandhi, who was the sole representative of the congress, there were other Indians who participated in this conference. They included Indian princes, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communal leaders. These leaders played into the hands of the British. The princes were mainly interested in preserving their position as rulers. The communal leaders

had been selected by the British government to attend the conference. They claimed to be the representatives of their respective communities and not the country, though their influences within their communities were also limited. Gandhi alone as the representative of the congress represented the whole country.

Neither the princes nor the communal leaders were interested in India's independence. Therefore, no agreement could be reached and the second round table conference ended in a failure. Gandhi returned to India and the Civil Disobedience Movement was revived. The government repression had been continuing even while the conference was going on and now it was intensified. Gandhi and other leaders were arrested. The government's efforts to suppress the movement may be seen from the fact that in about a year 120000 persons were sent to jail. The movement was withdrawn in 1934. The congress passed an important resolution in 1934. It demanded that a constituent assembly, elected by the people on the basis of adult franchise, be convened. It declared that only such an assembly could frame a constitution for India. It thus asserted that only the people had the right to decide the form of government under which they would live. Though the congress had failed to achieve its objective, it had succeeded in mobilizing vast sections of the people in the second great mass struggle in the country. It had also adopted radical objectives for the transformation of Indian society.

- It shattered people's faith in the British Government and laid the social root for the freedom struggle, and popularised the new method of propaganda like the prabhat pheris, pamphlets etc.
- It ended the exploitative salt policy of British which was followed by the defiance of forest law in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Central province and the refusal to pay the rural 'Chaukidari tax' in Eastern India.

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## UNIT-II: QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

- Also known as the India August Movement or August Kranti.
- It was officially launched by the Indian National Congress (INC) led by Mahatma Gandhi on 9 August 1942.
- The movement gave the slogans 'Quit India' or 'Bharat Chodo'. Gandhi gave the slogan to the people – 'Do or die'.
- In line with the Congress ideology, it was supposed to be a peaceful non-violent movement aimed at urging the British to grant India independence.
- The Quit India Resolution was passed by the Congress Working Committee on 8 August 1942 in Bombay. Gandhi was named the movement's leader.
- The resolution stated the provisions of the movement as:
  1. An immediate end to British rule over India.
  2. Declaration of the commitment of free India to defend itself against all kinds of imperialism and fascism.
  3. Formation of a provisional government of India after British withdrawal.
  4. Sanctioning a civil disobedience movement against British rule.
- Gandhi's instructions to various sections of the public:
  1. **Government servants:** do not resign your job but proclaim loyalty to the INC.
  2. **Soldiers:** be with the army but refrain from firing on compatriots.
  3. **Peasants:** pay the agreed-upon rent if the landlords/Zamindars are anti-government; if they are pro-government, do not pay the rent.
  4. **Students:** can leave studies if they are confident enough.
  5. **Princes:** support the people and accept the sovereignty of them.

6. **People of the princely states:** support the ruler only if he is anti-government; declare themselves as part of the Indian nation.

Causes of Quit India Movement – Why was it launched?

- The Second World War had started in 1939 and Japan, which was part of the Axis Powers that were opposed to the British in the war were gaining onto the north-eastern frontiers of India.
- The British had abandoned their territories in South-East Asia and had left their population in the lurch. This act did not garner much faith among the Indian population who had doubts about the British ability to defend India against Axis aggression.
- Gandhi also believed that if the British left India, Japan would not have enough reason to invade India.
- Apart from hearing news about British setbacks in the war, the war-time difficulties such as high prices of essential commodities fostered resentment against the British government.
- The failure of the Cripps Mission to guarantee any kind of a constitutional remedy to India's problems also led to the INC calling for a mass civil disobedience movement.

### **Response to Quit India Movement**

- The British government responded to the call of Gandhi by arresting all major Congress leaders the very next day. Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, etc. were all arrested. This left the movement in the hands of the younger leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia. New leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali emerged out of the vacuum of leadership.
- Over 100000 people were arrested in connection with this movement. The government resorted to violence in order to quell the agitation. They were mass floggings and lathi charges. Even women and children were not spared. About 10000 people died in police firing in total.
- There was no communal violence.
- The INC was banned. Its leaders were jailed for almost the whole of the war. Gandhi was released on health grounds in 1944.
- The people responded to Gandhi's call in a major way. However, in the absence of leadership, there were stray incidences of violence and damage to government property. Many buildings were set on fire, electricity lines were cut and communication and transport lines were broken.
- Some parties did not support the movement. There was opposition from the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India (the government revoked the ban on the party then) and the Hindu Mahasabha.
- The League was not in favour of the British leaving India without partitioning the country first. In fact, Jinnah asked more Muslims to enlist in the army to fight the war.
- The Communist party supported the war waged by the British since they were allied with the Soviet Union.
- Subhas Chandra Bose, was by this time, organizing the Indian National Army and the Azad Hind government from outside the country.
- C Rajagopalachari, resigned from the INC since he was not in favour of complete independence.
- In general, the Indian bureaucracy did not support the Quit India Movement.
- There were strikes and demonstrations all over the country. Despite the communist group's lack of support to the movement, workers provided support by not working in the factories.
- In some places, parallel governments were also set up. Example: Ballia, Tamluk, Satara.

- The chief areas of the movement were UP Bihar, Maharashtra, Midnapore, and Karnataka. The movement lasted till 1944.

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### III: PARTITION OF INDIA

#### Background of the Partition

It can be said that the seeds of the Partition of India were sowed in the Partition of Bengal when the province was divided on a religious basis. Popular outrage and protests against this move forced the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, to reverse the decision.

The 1916 Lucknow session of the Congress was a scene of unprecedented mutual cooperation between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. It was spurred on by the doubts of the Muslim League that the “religious neutrality” of the British was a farce. This was because of the fact that Britain was at war with Turkey. The Sultan of Turkey was regarded as the *Khalifa* or spiritual head of Islam as he was the custodian of the holy sites of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. This only increased the suspicion of the British intention towards the Muslims of the subcontinent.

The Muslim League joined the Congress towards the goal of greater self-government; in return, the Congress accepted separate electorates for Muslims both in the provincial legislatures and the Imperial Legislative Council. This came to be known as the Lucknow Pact. In the ensuing years, the full implications of the pact unfolded. The pact was seen as being more beneficial to a minority of Muslim élites from the provinces of UP and Bihar rather than the Muslim majorities of Punjab and Bengal. Despite this glaring fact, the pact was regarded as a major milestone of the Indian Independence Movement as it saw two of the biggest political parties of the subcontinent set aside their differences and work towards a common goal.

#### The Legacy of the Partition of India

The Partition was and continues to remain a highly controversial arrangement along with being a cause of much tension in the Indian subcontinent today. It is widely believed that Lord Mountbatten rushed the partition process along with having influenced the Radcliff Line to favour India. The two countries were granted independence long before the boundary commission decided on the final borders between India and Pakistan.

Historians argue that it was British haste for a less violent exit that led to the atrocities during the Partition. Because independence was granted much earlier by the partition, it fell upon the shoulders of India and Pakistan to maintain law and order. No large population movements were contemplated despite plans to protect minorities on both sides of the border. It was a task at which both states failed. There was a complete breakdown of law and order; many died in riots, massacre, or just from the hardships of their flight to safety. What ensued was one of the largest population movements in recorded history.

Law and order had broken down many times before Partition, with much bloodshed on both sides. A massive civil war was looming by the time Mountbatten became Viceroy. After the Second World War, Britain had limited resources, perhaps insufficient to the task of keeping order. Another viewpoint is that while Mountbatten may have been too hasty, he had no real options left and achieved the best he could under difficult circumstances.

Conservative elements in England consider the Partition of India to be the moment that the British Empire ceased to be a world power, following Curzon’s dictum: “the loss of India would mean that Britain drops straight away to a third rate power”.

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#### **IV: INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT, 1947**

- British India was planned to be partitioned into two dominions that is India and Pakistan.
  - It was decided that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly would not be applicable to the Muslim-majority areas (as these would become Pakistan).
  - As per the plan, the legislative assemblies of Bengal and Punjab met and cast their vote for the partition. As per the plan, it was decided to partition these two provinces along religious aspects.
  - The legislative assembly of Sind had the capacity to decide whether to join the Indian constituent assembly or not. Finally, it decided to go with Pakistan.
  - A referendum was scheduled and was held on NWFP (North-Western Frontier Province) to decide which dominion to join. Later on NWFP decided to join Pakistan while Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan boycotted and rejected the referendum.
  - The date for the transfer of power was decided to be August 15, 1947.
  - To corner the international boundaries between the two countries, the Boundary Commission was established by Sir Cyril Radcliffe who was the chairperson of the committee. The commission was to divide Bengal and Punjab into the two new countries.
  - Until the time the new constitutions came into power, the Governor-General would assent any law passed by the constituent assemblies of the dominions in His Majesty's name. The Governor-General was considered as the constitutional head.
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