

Handout 35: Second Phase of Revolutionary Movement (1920s and 1930s)

Nikhil Sheth

"The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of tyrants. It is its natural manure."

Thomas Jefferson

Ab na agle valvale hai, aur na armanonki bheed
Sirf mit jaane ki ek harsat dil-e-bismil me hai

Ramprasad Bismil

Once again pushed the youth to the course of revolutionary nationalism. Revolutionary activities began in Punjab, United Province and Bengal.

Causes for its upsurge:

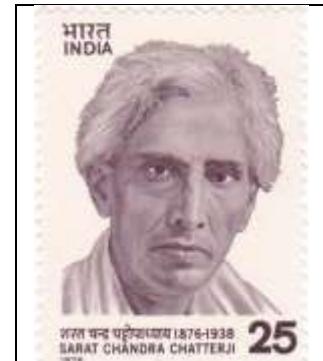
- Discontentment among Indian youths due to the sudden withdrawal of Non-Cooperation Movement.
- Many youth leaders were not satisfied with Gandhian techniques. They were under the influence of Russian Revolution (1917) and the success of the young Soviet state in consolidating itself.
- Journals publishing memoirs and articles extolling the self-sacrifice of revolutionaries, such as Atmasakti, Sarathi and Bijoli.

Two different currents of Revolutionary Nationalism:

During this period revolutionaries came under the influence of new ideological forces such as socialism & communism.

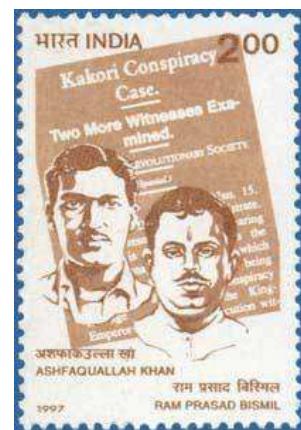
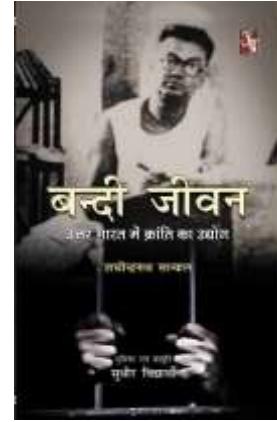
1. United Province and Punjab:

- In 1920s, two old revolutionaries such as **Sachin Sanyal & Yogesh Chandra Chatterjee** started to organize youths in UP and at their initiative **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)** formed in 1924. Its objective was to organize an armed revolution. Later, this party was reorganized by **Chandra Shekhar Azad**.



Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya (1876-1938) was a Bengali novelist who wrote books like Parinita, Devdas. His novel Pather Dabi (1926) inspired the Bengali youth for sacrifice and it was banned by the British government for the revolutionary theme.

- Sachin Sanyal propagated militant ideology through his biography '**Bandi Jiwan**'. In 1925 he published a pamphlet in which he stated that stars are born in anarchy.
- Just after one year, **Kakori train Dacoity** happened in 1925. The Government took serious note of this development and decided to strike at it by putting a large number of revolutionaries under trial. So, the government cracked down and in this case, Ram Prasad Bismil, Roshan Singh, Asfaqullah Khan and Rajendra Lahiri got death sentence.
- Bhagat Singh help establish **Punjab Naujawan Sabha (1926)** as an open wing of revolutionaries to carry out political work among youth, peasants and workers. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev organized **Lahore Students' Union** for open legal work among students. He soon joined HRA.
- Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru killed a British police officer **JJ Saunders** (Dec 1927), who was responsible for the lathi-charge on a demonstration headed by Lala Lajpat Rai, who was seriously wounded in the incident.
- In 1928, the members of HRA convened a meeting at Ferozeshah Kotla in Delhi under the chairmanship of Bhagat Singh, and H.R.A was renamed as **H.S.R.A (Hindustan Socialist Republican Army)** *on the advice of Chandrashekhar Azad*. HSRA had three-fold objective.
 - To rouse the consciousness of people of India to the futility of the Gandhian methods of non-violence;
 - To demonstrate the need and desirability of Direct Action and Revolution to achieve complete independence.
 - To substitute British imperialism in India by a federated republic of the United States of India ideologically inspired by the Russian Revolution and the Socialist thought.



Debate with Gandhiji

Bhagwati Charan Vohra attacked Viceroy Lord Irwin by planting a bomb on a railway line in Delhi in 1929. Gandhiji criticized this act in his article titled **The Cult of Bomb** wherein he referred to HRSA's actions as cowardly. In response, **Philosophy of the Bomb** was written by Vohra. In it, HSRA defended their violent methods by terming them as important as Gandhiji's non-violent methods. It also urged the youth to join them in their journey to achieve freedom for India.

The concluding paragraph of the article reads:

There is no crime that Britain has not committed in India. Deliberate misrule has reduced us to paupers, has 'bled us white'. As a race and a people, we stand dishonoured and outraged. Do people still expect us to forget and to forgive? We shall have our revenge – a people's

righteous revenge on the tyrant. Let cowards fall back and cringe for compromise and peace. We ask not for mercy and we give no quarter. Ours is a war to the end – to Victory or Death.

Gandhi differed with Bhagat Singh only on the merit of their path. He called militant revolutionaries as ‘misguided youth.’ He often said that militant nationalism was injurious to India’s struggle for freedom.

Vohra died in Lahore in 1930 while testing a bomb on the banks of the Ravi.

- On April 8, 1929, when **Trade Dispute Bill** and **Public Safety Bill**, which aimed at curbing civil liberties, were being passed in the central council, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw a **bomb and pamphlet in the Central Legislative Assembly Hall**. Their aim was to propagate their ideology. They were arrested.
 - The pamphlet had slogans like Inquilab Zindabad.
 - *“It takes a loud noise to make the deaf hear.”*
- They also **used the spotlight to propagate their ideas** and inspire the country to action.
- The case is famous because of the draconian provisions incorporated by the British in this context in the otherwise reasonable laws of criminal procedure.
 - Those detained under the case resorted to hunger strikes and boycotts in jails. In December 1929, **Jatin Das** started hunger strike. He demanded that he should not be tried like any ordinary criminal but should be tried as a political prisoner involved in the freedom struggle. He died while he was on hunger strike and being force-fed.
 - Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev were awarded capital punishment and executed in Lahore jail on the 23rd March, 1931. Batukeshwar Dutt was sent to Kalapani for 14 years (life transportation) in assembly bomb case.
- In 1931 **Chandra Sekhar Azad** was killed in a police encounter. With this, the government was finally successful in crushing HSRA.
 - Alfred Park, Allahabad



2. Bengal:

- After 1922, Revolutionary Nationalism became active in Bengal too. They started revolutionary propaganda and underground activities through the press at a large scale.

- **Surya Sen** (masterda) who was a teacher in a national school in Chittagong formed 'Indian Republican Army'. In this group, apart from Surya Sen the other members were Anant Singh, Ganesh Ghosh, Amrita Chakrvarti and Loknath Pal/Baul.
 - When the civil disobedience movement was at its climax, **captured the Chittagong armoury** on 18 April, 1930.
 - This was followed by a series of attacks on other European establishments in Chittagong by the same group. Soon after, a temporary independent government of India was formed, whose president was Surya Sen himself. (*Provisional Revolutionary Government*)
 - In this revolutionary organization, women decided to start a Guerrilla war through staying at nearby villages. The **women associated** with this group were **Bina Das, Kalpana Datta** and **Pritilata Ohdedar**.
 - Despite severe police pressure, the revolutionaries received **protection from the villagers (mostly Muslims)** for nearly 3 years.
 - But Surya Sen was eventually caught and hanged in 1934.



- In Dec.1931, in another revolutionary incident we found that two Santhal girls, **Comilla Shanti Ghosh** and **Suniti Chaudari** assassinated Mr. Steven (judge).
- Likewise, in 1932, a revolutionary **Beena Das** tried to assassinate Lt. Governor of Bengal by firing at him point blank while receiving degree during convocation.



Government Reaction:

There was a panic at first in the government but finally they came down heavily on the revolutionaries. Armed with 20 repressive acts, Government let loose the police after the revolutionaries. Hundreds of revolutionaries were sentenced to long term imprisonment or transportation. In 1933, even Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested for sedition and given two years of imprisonment because he condemned imperialism and praised the heroism of revolutionaries.

The extreme government repression, violating all norms of civilised behaviour, ultimately led to the decline of the revolutionary movement of this phase. The martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, followed by the martyrdom of Surya Sen, was the high watermark of the revolutionary movement of that period. The other revolutionaries were awarded life imprisonment and sent to the Andamans and those who were left behind were put behind bars.

Differences in revolutionary nationalism during 1920s and 1930s from earlier time

- Essentially a continuation of the revolutionary activities of the earlier period, though there is some ideological change. The importance of the second phase of the revolutionary movement was in its ideological content.
 - Influence of **socialism** and communism.
 - Earlier revolutionaries were organized based on religious symbols, but now based on **secularism**.
- Tendency towards a more concrete programme of action.
 - Secret organization of a violent armed uprising to drive the British out of India and collecting money and arms were collected in large quantities continued as before.
 - But, now, the revolutionary leaders of this period were fully aware of the role of the masses. They sought to arouse the masses through propaganda and agitation.
 - Yet, they were in practice compelled to keep 'terroristic activities' in the forefront of their movement. Eg target assassinations.
- One Pan-Indian movement
 - Although there were several revolutionary organisations operating during this time, in a broad sense, India only had one revolutionary movement working to advance the same goal of the nation's freedom and employing the same strategy. The various revolutionary organization interacted with one another and occasionally also engaged in talks for coordinated operations.

Contribution of revolutionary nationalism

The reactionary attitude of the government evoked popular anger and protest. The deep sense of patriotism, courage and determination displayed by the revolutionaries helped to disseminate a growing sense of nationalism and socialism all over the land.

- Every time the morale of the people became low and national movement was on wane, these young revolutionaries **enthused their countrymen** with their unprecedented acts of sacrifice and sufferings.
- They made a tremendous impact on the minds and hearts of the youth, enthusing them to fight relentlessly for the freedom of the country. Their martyrdom become a living **source of inspiration for the youth of the country**.
- The lasting contribution of these revolutionaries was to demand and **popularise the idea of Purna Swaraj**. They were the first to raise and popularise it by making supreme sacrifices.
- They underlined the essential unity of our people and thus blazed a new trail on the front of **secularism**. Their contribution to promoting the secular fabric of India appears more

spectacular as it was during that period when various communal groups had started eating into the vitals of India.

- They also made some contributions towards linking the fight of independence with the **fight for socialism** and tried to put the sufferings of the poor and the downtrodden on the national agenda. Influence of Bhagat Singh's views on the socialist proposals of the **Karachi Session** of Congress in 1931.

Limitation:

- The critics point out their lack of organisation, and their failure to mobilise and carry the masses along with them. As they worked as a secret organization, these revolutionaries could not go to the masses to lead them. Therefore, their socialist programme remained simply on paper.
- With the acts of open defiance and bravery, these young people made it easier for the government to lay their hands on them.
- They may add that some of these young revolutionaries even appeared to be in a hurry to seek martyrdom.

All these observations might contain some grains of truth. But there is no doubt that these limitations do not diminish their seminal contributions to the cause of Indian freedom.

Bhagat Singh (1907-31)

- He wasn't simply a revolutionary, but he was a great ideologue as well.
- He was a well-read man and he widely read the text on socialism, communism, and anarchism. He presented an alternative method for nation-building based on socialism & secularism.
- **Redefining Revolution:**
 - Revolution was **not about violent movement against imperial rule**, but for national liberation including end to the exploitation by landlords. Similarly, although an admirer of Gandhi because he managed to mobilise the masses, he did not believe that Gandhian philosophy and programme would lead to a fundamental transformation of society. Gandhian politics, he observed, would only result in the replacement of one set of exploiters by another. It would enable the exploitation of Man by another Man.
 - Bhagat Singh understood that **revolution means mass movement** of the suppressed and exploited sections by the revolutionary intelligentsia. Bhagat Singh used to say "...real revolutionary armies are in villages and in factories."



His main objective was not to create headlines by using pistols and revolvers but to create awareness among the masses.

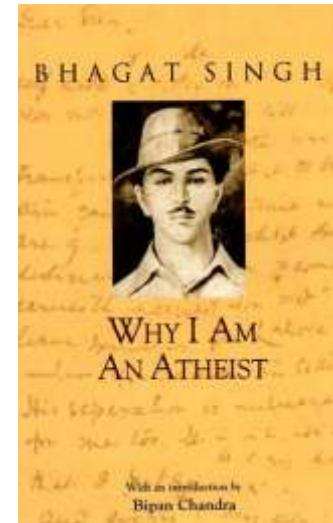
What distinguished him from the earlier revolutionaries was this **ideological factor**.

- **Socialism:**

- The alternative was found in socialism, which he incorporated in the ideology and programme of the movements with which he was associated.
- Bhagat Singh conceived of socialism as the abolition of capitalism and class domination. It is unfortunate that his book entitled **The Ideal of Socialism**, which was smuggled out of the jail along with three other manuscripts, has not survived, as it would have given a much fuller account of his ideas on socialism.
- HSRA clarified its position '*We don't believe in the cult of bomb & pistol, rather my objective is to destroy such a system in which the exploitation of man by another man would become possible*'. According to him, violence is permissible only for a transitional phase for socialist transformation. Once this Objective would be achieved then, the method of violence would automatically be discarded. Then, through education & persuasion, the socialist programmes would be carried out.
- He also published a series of articles on **anarchism** in *Kirti*. On anarchism he said, "*The ultimate goal of Anarchism is complete independence, according to which no one will be obsessed with God or religion, nor will anybody be crazy for money or other worldly desires. There will be no chains on the body or control by the state. This means that they want to eliminate: the Church, God and Religion; the state; Private property.*"

- **Secularism:** In his pamphlet, '**Why I am an atheist**' he clarifies his vision of secularism.

- He believed that God was brought into imaginary existence to encourage man to face boldly all the trying circumstances. **The idea of God is helpful to man in distress.** He thus recognised the role of religion in the life of the masses. At the same time, **he rejected the existence of a benevolent God**, as otherwise there would not have been any injustice in the world.
- According to him, **normally religion is misused by the dominant class to exploit the people.** Thus, secularism means the denial of that kind of exploitation. Emancipation from the bondage of religion and superstition was, in his reckoning, crucial for revolutionary practice and, therefore, **he tried to instill rational thinking** in the minds of all his comrades. "to be a revolutionary, one



requires immense moral strength, but one also requires criticism and independent thinking."

- Bhagat Singh **opposed to communal politics** from which he tried to distance the organisations he was associated with. The Naujawan Bharat Sabha, for instance, did not entertain those belonging to religious-communal organisations as its members.

Armed revolutionaries' role in freedom struggle not given due recognition: Shah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

SAYING THAT the freedom struggle led by the Congress succeeded only because of the "fire of patriotism" ignited by armed revolutionaries, Home Minister Amit Shah said on Wednesday that the latter, unfortunately, did not get due recognition in India's written history.

Shah was speaking at the launch of the book, *Revolutionaries: The Other Story of How India Won Its Freedom*, written by Sanjeev Sanyal, a member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council.

Shah said only one story about the freedom struggle has been "repeatedly narrated". "Only one point of view has been thrust upon people through education and history books. I don't say that the non-violent movement had no contribution in the freedom struggle, or that it is not part of history... But this narrative that no one else had any contribution is not right," he said.

"Many people like me believe that the Congress's movement was successful because of the fire



Home Minister Amit Shah with Sanjeev Sanyal at the launch of the latter's book in New Delhi, Wednesday. Prem Nath Pandey

of patriotism ignited by the armed revolution. I believe it, and I can prove it also. If the armed struggle had not continued parallelly, it would have probably taken many more decades to get independence," he said.

"The history of India should be written not on the basis of victory or defeat, but by judging the struggle and efforts of all. That is how history is complete," Shah said. "To rid the country of colonial mindset, the biggest work, I feel, needs to be done in the field

of written history, to free India's written history of the colonial mindset," he said.

He said many historians did not mention the contributions of armed revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and Aurobindo Ghose. Shah said their efforts have been portrayed as sporadic acts of individual bravery, whereas the truth was that they were a well-thought-out, collective effort driven by a common ideology. "We have to understand it, accept it, and propagate it as well," he said.

"Some people have suppressed this narrative but I want to say to those people that history is very cruel... no one can distort history... it comes out eventually," he said.

"They don't know that when Bhagat Singh was hanged, no fire was lit in the kitchens from Lahore to Kanyakumari. Now, if you write history saying the country was not free when Bhagat Singh was martyred, that is not the right judgement," he said.

Shah said Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and the INA also did not get the respect and place they should have got in the history of the country.

Saying that the armed revolutionaries were not violent by nature but viewed violence as a means to achieve freedom, Shah said: "We have to bring our history out of the binary of extremist versus moderates".

He said it is time to remove "distortions" from the history of India's freedom movement. "Many people blame the Communists or the British mindset while talking about how history was distorted. Sometimes, even the Congress is

blamed. But I ask, who is stopping us now," he said.

He asked students and scholars of history to take up the responsibility, adding that it cannot be the government's responsibility alone.

Shah said Veer Savarkar was the first to challenge the established narrative of India's freedom struggle. "The entire world used to view the 1857 revolution as a mutiny. He was the first to call it the country's first freedom struggle. That was the start of altering the narrative," he said.

Sanyal's book, he said, would start a new narrative on India's freedom struggle.

Shah said literary personalities like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, farmers and tribals were equally responsible for India's independence. "But those who were responsible for telling the story of freedom struggle from our point of view after independence, I think, were somehow at fault," he said.

"The British had left, but history was written with the British-ness that they had left behind, and because of that, there is this confusion even today," he said.

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Handout 36: Rise of Left

Nikhil Sheth

'I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have a greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy.'

- Pandit Nehru

During the later phase of 1920s and during 1930s, a powerful Left-wing movement arose in India and within Congress. Socialist ideas took root in Indian soil.

The early nationalists were aware of socialism, but their outlook was not consistent with socialist thoughts. The moderates believed in efficacy of concessions and reform while socialism was too radical to them. They deliberately avoided class issues. The extremists believed that swaraj would be the panacea to all the sufferings. Gandhiji believed in the idea of class-collaboration and trusteeship. He was convinced that exploitators would realize their mistakes sooner or later and the sufferings of working class would disappear. He was not in favour of complete departure from tradition and radical restricting India socio-economic life.

Causes for the rise of leftist ideas in National Movement

The emergence of socialism was response and reaction to socio-economic and political environment prevailing in India. The contemporary international developments were also responsible for emergence of socialism.

- **Emerging class and class consciousness**

- Increasing industrialisation leading to the creation of workers' class.
 - By the opening decades of 20th century, a number of modern Industries had emerged in India but the condition of working class in these factories was far from being satisfactory. The suffering of working class pushed them towards socialism.
- Growth of awakening among peasants was also responsible for emergence of socialism.
 - There was an emergence of Kisan Sabha movement against exactions by Zamindars. (e.g. UP Kisan Sabha, Awadh Kisan Sabha). This growth of awakening carried Indian peasantry and their leadership towards socialism.
- Successful Russian revolution of 1917 and formation of USSR popularized socialist ideas of Marx.

- **Economic dislocations**

- Post-WW 1 consequences: Price rise etc.
- Effect of the Great Depression of 1929-30 and unemployment

- During this period, when capitalist world was suffering immensely, the Russian socialist economy was growing with leap and bound. This convinced Pandit J.L Nehru and S.C Bose that socialism was best ideology for India as well.
- **Political condition**
 - The beginning of the phase of mass politics brought 'people' in the national movement. But there was a section of youth which was dissatisfied with Gandhian techniques.
 - Sudden withdrawal of NCM/CDM convinced many peasants and working class leaders as well as youth that Gandhian method of struggle was too weak to be effective and they developed faith in socialism.
 - Rise of new youth icons who developed leftist visions like S.C. Bose, J.L. Nehru, Bhagat Singh. Other leaders were Acharya Narendra Dev, J.P Narayan and Achyuta Patwardhan, Indulal Yajnik etc.
 - Rise of leftist organisations, newspapers, journals etc.
- **Role of foreigners**
 - H.L. Hutchinson, B.F. Bradley, P Spratt in Meerut Conspiracy Case

There was emergence of three major streams of Left ideology in India:

- Communist Party of India (1925)
- Congress Socialist Party (1934)
- Other party organisations: HSRA, Royists, Forward Bloc etc.

All this led to radicalization of the Congress. The objective of national movement was also redefined. The goal of political independence acquired a clearer and sharper social and economic content. Thus, there was a coming together of political and socio-economic stream.

Communist Party of India

The Communist Party was originally formed at **Tashkent** in 1920 at the initiative of **M.N. Roy**. Roy founded military and political schools in Tashkent with the help of Lenin to prepare revolutionaries. In 1920, as he formed the Communist Party of India, he contacted his revolutionary colleagues in India.

However, the government had banned all communist activity, which made the task of building a party in India very difficult.

Peshawar Conspiracy Case	1922-27	Russian-trained muhajir communists were put on trial.
Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case	1924-25	Communists were seeking "to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty of British India, by complete separation of India from Britain by a violent revolution."

The All-India Conference of Communist Party took place at **Kanpur**. Its founders included MN Roy, his wife Evelyn Trent, Abani Mukherjee, and MPT Acharya. SV Ghate was the first secretary, and the president was M. Singaravelu in 1925. This is the official beginning of the communist movement.

Communists formed the **Workers' and Peasants' Party** within Congress (1925-30) as a front organization. It made alliances with other left elements inside the Congress, including Jawaharlal Nehru. However, it was wound up by 1929-30.

Meerat Conspiracy Case	1929-33	Arrests of WPP, CPI and other labour leaders
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Contribution:

- Working as a pressure group under the Congress.
- To make Indian nationalism more inclusive through organizing farmers and workers.
- To establish mass support in Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

Limitations:

- The communist party couldn't transform itself according to the Indian condition. Unlike the communist party of China, it didn't chalk-out its programs according to the Indian condition.
- Factors like economic division, social division, gender division and caste exploitation were clearly visible in India, but the communist party failed to take advantage of them.
- The model of the violent revolution was suitable for an autocratic government of Soviet Russia but not for India. Here the model of democratic socialism could have proved more suitable than the Communist model.

Role of Jawahar Lal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose

The youth leaders, like J.L Nehru and S.C Bose, were widely influenced by socialist ideas. Both of them imparted a socialist vision to the national movement and emerged as symbol of socialism in India after 1929.

Pandit Nehru:

- 1920-21: Developed an interest in economic questions, came in touch with the peasant movement in eastern UP
- 1927: Attended the international Congress against Colonial Oppression and imperialism, held at Brussels
- 1927: Visited the Soviet Union and was deeply impressed by the new socialist society. He remained in touch with communists and anti-colonial fighters from all over the world.
- 1928: Independence for India League (with Bose) to fight for complete independence and 'a socialist revision of the economic structure of society.'
- 1929: J.L. Nehru presided over the Lahore session of Congress. There, he declared himself to be a socialist and a democrat.
- 1936: He presided over the Lucknow session of Congress. There, he encouraged socialist consciousness among the youths. While addressing the session he declared that I think there is only solution to the problem of India and the world was socialism.
- 1937: He presided over the Faizpur session of Congress and introduced progressive programs for the peasants.



Subhas Chandra Bose:

- The Haripura session of Congress was presided over by S.C. Bose in 1938. A 'National Planning Committee' was set up during this session.



Congress Socialist Party

Some youth leaders in **Nasik jail** planned to form the Congress Socialist Party in 1933 (finally formed in 1934.) Prominent leaders were Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, Ashok Mehta, Sampurnanand Singh, Meenu Masani etc.

This party decided to work within the Congress and to channelise the Congress policy and programme towards socialism. Thus, the socialist phase was concurrent to the Gandhian phase. Socialist represented Leftist within Congress. Throughout the course of National struggle, the socialist were under the leadership of Gandhiji but their ideas of National struggle were significantly different.

Contributions:

The emergence of socialism greatly radicalized anti British struggle, Congress adopted new aims as well as new methods.

- **It radicalized the objective of national movement** (from political freedom to economic and social freedom).
 - The socialists stood for Purna swaraj. It was under the pressure of socialist leaders, Congress adopted Purna swaraj resolution in 1929 at Lahore.
 - Socialist idea of Purna swaraj was not just political but social and economic as well they believed that political freedom would be meaning less in the absence of social and economic freedom.
 - The Congress linked itself to the programs of workers and peasants.
 - The socialists were in favour of extension of freedom movement into native states. The leaders like Pandit Nehru believed that native states cannot remain aloof to the development going on British India. They wanted national struggle would assume **true pan India character**.
 - The Congress adopted socialist programs during its Karachi session (socio-economic freedom) (1931), Lucknow session (1936), Faizpur session (Agrarian program) (1937) and Haripura session (National Planning Committee) (1938) etc.
 - In 1936 at its Faizpur session, Congress adopted an agrarian program which emphasized:
 - Land revenue should be reduced.
 - Feudal privileges should be abolished.
 - Tenant-cultivators should get guarantees of safety of their tenure.
 - Forced labour should be abolished.
 - In 1945, congress adopted a resolution in which it demanded abolition of zamindari system.
- **Social base**
 - The social base of National movement was greatly widened by emergence of socialism. The peasants and workers started participating in nationalist activities

in large no because the policies and programs of socialist were in consonance with their needs and aspirations.

- **Impact on Gandhi**

- **Difference with Gandhian method**

- The socialists were not happy with Gandhian philosophy of STS and wanted continuous mass struggle till time independence. Thus, socialists were in favour of sustained struggle.
 - Socialists were non-violent in nature, but their idea of non-violence was pragmatic. They did not want nonviolence to be a weakness of nationalist struggle. They believed that stray violent acts should not punish the entire movement.
 - **The radical outlook of socialist leaders influenced Gandhiji as well. He also became more and more radical with the passage of time.**
 - In the summer of 1942, Gandhiji was far more radical than the socialist leaders including Pandit J.L Nehru because at this time even Pandit Nehru was not in favour of landing a mass movement. It was Gandhian pressure that forced Congress to start the movement.
 - The emergence of socialism transformed anti British struggle into all-out war. QIM was never suspended or called off.

Limitations:

- Socialist and Communist parties couldn't establish their hegemony in the Indian national movement.
- The Congress Socialist Party remained vague in its objectives. Its primary goal was Indian independence whereas a socialist transformation remained to be a secondary one.
- It couldn't form a united front with CPI even during the time of crisis.

GS Foundation 2024: Modern India
Handout 37: Civil Disobedience Movement

Nikhil Sheth

"Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience."

Howard Zinn

"The call of 1920 was a call for preparation. The call in 1930 is for engaging in the final conflict."

Mahatma Gandhi

"The Civil Disobedience Movement was a watershed moment in the Indian freedom struggle. It helped to unify the Indian people and to show the world that India was ready for independence."

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Background: The political environment in the country was getting over-heated. By 1928-29 the country was slowly but surely, moving towards a new mass movement.

- The Swaraj Party
- Simon Commission and Nehru Report
- A new upsurge was visible among the youth: Leftist leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru were spreading the idea of Purna Swaraj through the Indian Independence League.
- Return of Gandhi
- Ultimatum given by Calcutta Congress (1928): British to accept the Nehru report or be ready for another round of mass movement with the goal of Purna Swaraj.
- Lahore Conspiracy Case and death of Jatin Das
- Meerat Conspiracy Case
- Failure of Irwin Offer (Oct 2919)
- Impact of world economic depression on almost all sections of Indian society.
- Lahore Session of Congress (1929-30)

Thus, the stage was set for a new confrontation with the Government. Gandhi wrote a letter to Viceroy Irwin on 31st January 1930 presenting his **eleven demands**. He first wanted to negotiate with Viceroy before launching the movement.

1. 50% cuts in army expenses and civil service salaries
2. Total prohibition
3. Release of political prisoners
4. Reform in the C.I.D. It should stop spying on political leaders.
5. Change in the Arms Act allowing popular control of issue of fire-arm licenses.
6. Lowering of the rupee-sterling exchange ratio to 1:41
7. Textile protection
8. Reservation of coastal shipping for Indians
9. 5% Reduction in land revenue
10. Abolition of the Salt Tax and end of Government salt monopoly
11. Acceptance of Postal Reservation Bill

Many Congress leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, did not appreciate Gandhiji's proposal. The government also took a negative attitude to his proposal. After a lot of heart-searching, Gandhiji decided to launch the Salt Satyagraha.

In his letter to the Viceroy dated 2 March 1930, Gandhiji conveyed his decision and reiterated some of his earlier demands. And he made it clear that if no positive response came by 11 March 1930, he would proceed along with his Ashram co-workers to break the provisions of the salt laws.

Gandhi's letter to Viceroy on 2nd March 1930

*And why do I regard the British rule as a curse? It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation, and by a ruinously **expensive** military and civil administration which the country can never afford. It has reduced us **politically** to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our **culture**. And, by the policy of cruel disarmament, it has degraded us **spiritually**.*

Beginning of the movement: Dandi March

On 12th March 1930, Gandhi, in association with 78 volunteers, started a 24 days march of 386 km from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi coast. Based on Gandhi's principle of non-violence or Satyagraha, the march marked the inauguration of the civil disobedience movement.



"Gandhi wanted this to be a long march, or pilgrimage perhaps, where his leisurely progress would enthuse people along the way and attract wider publicity too." Ramchandra Guha

Thus, it wasn't simply a physical march; it was an attempt to establish an extensive communication with the people. It was a technique of mass mobilisation.

His Ashram inmates who accompanied him were drawn from different region and religions. In a word, it was a mini-India marching under the leadership of the 20th c. apostle of truth and non-violence. *"There were thirty-one marchers from Gujarat, thirteen from Maharashtra, lesser numbers from the United Provinces, Kerala, Punjab, and Sindh, with Tamilnad, Andhra, Karnataka, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa sending one man apiece. The diversity was social as well as geographical, for among the chosen marchers were many students and khadi workers, several 'untouchables', a few Muslims and one Christian"* (Ramchandra Guha). Even though women too wanted to be part of the march, Gandhi preferred to keep it restricted to men alone.

Newspapers of the day reported on how at every stop Gandhi was greeted by enthusiastic followers.

Gandhi reached Dandi on April 5. The following day (6th April), early morning he proceeded along with the other marchers to the sea, where he picked up lumps of natural salt lying in a small pit. The act was symbolic, but was hugely covered by the press, and was the beginning of several other acts of civil disobedience in other parts of India.

"With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire...Now that the technical or ceremonial breach of the Salt Law has been committed it is open to anyone who would take the risk of prosecution under the Salt Law to manufacture salt wherever he wishes and wherever it is convenient. My advice is that the workers should everywhere manufacture salt to make use of it and to instruct the villagers to do so"

Gandhi said.



Now the movement spread to different parts of India. The people joined the battle instantaneously, thousands defied the lawless law all over the country. On 5th May, Gandhi was arrested and taken to the Yerawada Central Jail. (He remained in the Central Jail without trial and was released unconditionally on 26 January 1931.)

Why did Gandhi choose salt as the main issue?

The **Salt Act, 1882** gave the British a monopoly in the manufacture and sale of salt. Even though salt was freely available on the coasts of India, Indians were forced to buy it from the colonisers. Gandhi decided that if there was any one product through which civil disobedience could be inaugurated, then it was salt.

The issue of salt suited to the Gandhian method of mass mobilisation. It proved to be a unifying factor between the rural poor and the urban intellectuals. For millions of rural poor, it was an economic issue. It was inhuman and unnecessary burden on them. On the other hand, it was an emotional issue for Indian intellectuals. So, by choosing salt as the major issue of the non-cooperation movement, Gandhi tried to bridge the gap between the two classes and created a united front against the British.

Programs:

Gandhi had formulated a well-planned programme for this movement such as the boycott of British clothes and educational institutions, violation of salt laws in different parts of the country, protests outside liquor shops and at the shops selling other intoxicants (women took part in large numbers in such protests), no-tax campaign in Ryotwari areas and no-chowkidari tax campaign in Zamindari regions etc.

Spread of the movement:

The popularity gained by the march shook up the British government. It responded by arresting more than 95,000 people by March 31.

Gandhi had chosen **Dharasana** (May 1930, Gujarat) as the next site for salt satyagraha. However, before it could be executed, many Congress leaders, including Nehru, Patel as well as Kasturba were arrested. Gandhi had chosen **Abbas Tyabji** to lead but he too was arrested. Finally, it was **Sarojini Naidu, Maulana Azad, Pyarelal and Manilal** who led the brave and peaceful satyagraha at Dharasana.

American journalist **Webb Miller** was an eyewitness to the beating of satyagrahis with steel tipped lathis. He wrote that in his 18 years carrier as an international journalist he never saw such a determined non-violent agitation, where agitators were beaten mercilessly but they didn't lose courage. *"the satyagrahis faced blows with steel shod lathis on their bare heads and not one of them even raised his hands to protect his head. Each one of the satyagrahis went ahead till he was beaten unconscious and then another batch came facing the same fiery ordeal."* His report attracted international attention. As Louis Fischer later on commented: *"The British beat the Indians with batons and rifle butts. The Indians neither cringed nor retreated. That made England powerless and India invincible".*

The Salt Satyagraha inspired many such satyagrahas in different parts of India.

1. Salt Marches

- a. In Bengal, volunteers led by **Satish Chandra Dasgupta** walked from Sodepur Ashram to the village of Mahisbathan to make salt.
- b. **K.F Nariman** in Bombay led another group of marchers to Haji Ali Point where they prepared salt at a nearby park.
- c. **Chakravarti Rajagopalachari** broke the salt law at Tanjore coast in Tamil Nadu. He led a march from Tiruchirapalli to Vedaranyam, on Tanjore coast. (Vedaranyam Salt March)
- d. **K. Kelappan** (the hero of Vaikom) led a march from Calicut/Kozhikode to Payyannur.

- e. In the **far North-East**, salt satyagrahis marched all the way from Sylhet in Assam to Noakhali on the Bengal coast for making salt.
- f. In **Andhra**, Satyagrahis marched from village to village, spreading the message of Swaraj to reach the coastal area for making salt.
- g. In Bihpur, Bhagalpur, a large crowd of satyagrahis were lathi charged, in which **Dr Rajendra Prasad** was seriously hurt.

2. Satyagraha at Salt-work

- a. A crowd of 15,000 carried away all the salt from **Wadala salt work** in a suburb of Bombay, despite deployment of heavily armed mounted police.
- b. In Karnataka, a crowd of 10,000 satyagrahis invaded **Sanikatta salt-work** and faced lathi blows and police firings.

Altogether, more than one hundred people lost their lives and more than a thousand were wounded. However, the movement was not confined only to breaking of the salt laws alone. People also joined, rather enthusiastically, the **other programmes of the movement**. The illegal manufacture and sale of salt was accompanied by the **boycott of foreign cloth and liquor**. What started as salt satyagraha soon grew into mass satyagraha.

1. In response to the call of the Congress by February 1930, 172 **members of legislatures had resigned their memberships**, including 21 from Central Assembly and the rest from the provinces like Bengal (34), Bihar and Orissa (31) CP (20), Madras (20), UP (60) Assam (12) Bombay (6) and Punjab (2) and Burma (1).
2. In **Gujarat** a number of **village Patwaris** relinquished their posts and joined the movement.
3. Farber in **Calcutta**, **JM Sen Gupta**, the Mayor of Calcutta, publicly read out from seditious literature in **defiance of the law of sedition** and invited imprisonment.
4. **No revenue campaign** was organized in those areas where peasants were paying land revenue directly to government. **No rent campaign** was organized in Zamindari area.
5. **Forest laws** were flouted in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and the Central Provinces. The provisions of Indian forest Act, 1927 had imposed a number of restrictions on the activities of forest dwellers. They could no longer use forest produce freely.
6. Peasants in Bengal refused to pay **land and chowkidari taxes**. Anti-Chowkidari tax movement was particularly strong in East India.
7. **No rent and no municipal board tax campaign** was also organized.



In Allahabad, Motilal Nehru gave away his palatial house, Anand Bhawan, which was renamed Swaraj Bhavan, to the country. He even tried to make salt in the streets of Allahabad.

Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested on 14 April and gave his clarion call to the people: "Who lives if India dies and who dies if India lives.

8. **Traders and businessmen** also participated by boycotting foreign clothes, evidenced by the fall in the imports of British clothes from 26 million yards in 1929 to 13.7 million in 1930, Revenue on liquor excise also went down in a significant measure.
9. One of the marked features of the movement was the **large-scale participation of women**. They particularly took the lead in **picketing liquor shops**. They launched their own '**Purda Hatao' Movement** in which the women, drawn from all sections of society, participated.
10. **Assam:** Agitations were organized against **Cunningham Circular**.
11. **Nagaland:** Nationalist agitations were headed by **Rani Gaidinliu**. She was a young tribal girl of about 15 years of age. She led the agitation from the front. She was arrested during CDM and was released only after independence. The title of Rani was given to her by Pandit Nehru.



Flag Satyagraha: Flag agitations were organized by Indian Nationalist throughout India.

1. At **Machlipatnam**, the flag agitations were led by **Thota Narasayya Naidu**.
2. At **Calicut** the flag agitations were led by **P. Krishna Pillai**.
3. At **Surat**, kids organized **flag agitations** in their unique manner.

Quite surprisingly, there were **three violent incidents** during this movement-

3. Revolutionary activist, **Surya Sen**, along with his 5 associates, captured the **Chittagong** armoury on 18th April 1930.
4. On 23rd Oct 1930, when **Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan** was arrested at Peshawar, the volunteers of massively successful **Khudai Khidmatgar**, called **Red Shirts**, turned violent against the police.
5. On 7th May, the **mill workers of Solapur** went on strike on a violent note. Labours paralyzed the entire admin. They ran parallel government in city from May 7 to 16.

Acts of violence broke out in Calcutta, Karachi, and Gujarat as well, but unlike what happened during the non-cooperation movement, Gandhi refused to suspend the civil disobedience movement this time. It means that he realised by this time that a mass movement cannot be completely non-violent.

Participation in the movement:

- Larger participation of farmers, women, and capitalist class in comparison to Non-cooperation Movement.
- Unlike Non-cooperation Movement this movement did not enjoy the support of Hindu-Muslims amity. Declining participation of intellectuals, students, and workers in comparison to Non-cooperation Movement.

Political Attitudes

- The **socialists** supported the movement wholeheartedly. The **communists** also supported the Congress as at this time, they were working from within the Congress and trying to tilt its policies.
- Some congress leaders known as **New Swarajists** refused to resign from the Legislative Council. NC Kelkar, Satyamurti and M.A Ansari were prominent among them.
- The Nationalist **section was Muslim League** supported CDM, but rest of the didn't participate.

Interlude: Stalemate from both the sides

The movement affected India's soul despite the government's repressive actions, and it sent a clear message to the authorities that the Indian people were no longer prepared to live as slaves. The administration was also alarmed since it had not anticipated such broad public backing, despite its outwardly aggressive postures and oppressive methods.

Lord Irwin started to talk in terms of holding the RTC by the end of 1930. The services of liberal leaders like **Tej Bahadur Sapru** and **M R Jayakar** were enlisted to work out a compromise formula, leading to a truce. But nothing came out of their efforts as both sides stuck to their guns. Hence the struggle continued.

The **First Round Table Conference** was held in Nov 1930 – Jan 1931, in London, which was boycotted by the Congress. As the Movement was losing its momentum towards the end of 1930, some rethinking was also probably being done by the Congress leadership. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Shrinivas Shastri played behind-the-scenes roles to work out a new rapprochement between the Congress and the Government.

In January 1931, Gandhi was released unconditionally from the Jail.

Major provisions of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (March 5, 1931):

After protracted negotiations between Gandhiji and the Viceroy, an agreement was reached between the two on 5 March 1931. Gandhiji agreed to discontinue the civil disobedience movement and participate in the Round Table Conferences, on Irwin's acceptance to withdraw the Salt tax and ordinances and cases against the Congress and other nationalists.

- Major Provisions:
 - All declarations regarding all associations, including the Indian National Congress, making them **unlawful** during the movement were to be taken back.
 - Release of **prisoners** of CDM who had not participated in violent acts.
 - All **fines** not yet realised were to be remitted. All **moveable property** seized during the movement would be returned. To return the seized **immovable property** if that property had not been sold to a third party.

- Withdrawal of draconian **ordinances**.
- All **proceedings** moved by the Government against all legal practitioners will be dropped, except those which relate to the acts of direct violence. However, proceedings/prosecutions against police and armed personnel would not be covered by this clause.
- All those who had **resigned** from their posts during the movement and wished to revert to their jobs would be reinstated, except relating to all those posts which had been filled up on a permanent basis.
- Right to protest near liquor shops in a peaceful manner.
- Right to make salt for their own use to people living on the seashore/coastal areas (not elsewhere)
- In return, as per this pact, Congress agreed to
 - Halt the Civil Disobedience movement.
 - Join the Second Round Table Conference.

Judgement on Gandhi-Irwin Pact:

Many people on the side of the Government as well as that of the Congress were not happy with the terms of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

- **British conservative elements** took it as surrender on the part of Lord Irwin.
 - British Conservative leader Winston Churchill said: "*it was alarming and nauseating to see Gandhiji-late Inner Temple Lawyer, now a seditious fakir, striding half-naked, up to the steps of the Viceroy Palace to parley on equal terms with the representatives of the King-Emperor.*"
- **Many Indians, including the Congressmen**, were dismayed by Gandhiji's consent to withdraw the movement at a very critical stage without achieving its basic objectives. There was discontent among the peasants as the movement was withdrawn in the mid-course.
 - Subhas Chandra Bose looked at it as an *act of surrender* on the part of Mahatma Gandhi.
 - Jawaharlal Nehru recorded in his autobiography, "*So I lay and pondered on that March night and in my heart, there was a great emptiness as if something precious had gone beyond recall... this is the way the world ends, not with a bang but with a whimper.*"

Despite opposition, the Pact was ratified both by the Working Committee and the Karachi Congress subsequently. In a way, it seems to be a major success of the Congress because for the first time Congress had bargained with the government on equal level. It was the first, and perhaps only, formally negotiated and signed pact between the Mahatma and the Viceroy of India. Besides, it also underlined the centrality of the Indian National Congress in general and that of the Mahatma in any future political settlement for India.

However, further developments prove that this pact could not prove durable. Gandhi himself was deeply disappointed by the British government's approach in the Round Table Conference and then he had to restart the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Meanwhile, Congress held **Karachi Session, (26-31 March 1931)**

- President: Sardar Patel

The Karachi resolution on fundamental rights and economic programme was nothing short of historic. Lahore Congress (1929) committed to the idea of Purna Swaraj, Karachi Congress gave a concrete shape to it.

Resolutions:

- The Congress expressed its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru who were executed on March 23, 1931, while also voicing its disapproval of political violence. It declared the execution of the three young men to be an 'act of wanton vengeance.'
 - Resolution on the martyrdom of **Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi**, a staunch secularist, who had been earlier assassinated during communal riots at Kanpur in 1931.
- The resolution reiterated the Congress Party's **commitment to 'Purna Swaraj.'**
- In addition to **fundamental rights** which protected **civil liberties**, the Resolution for the first time put forward a **list of socio-economic principles/rights** that the Indian state had to adhere to.
 - Wording: *This Congress is of the opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what 'Swaraj,' as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions.*
- The Karachi resolution was in three parts.
 - **Part I: the fundamental rights and duties of the people**
 - Rights of freedom of expression, free association, peaceful assembly, freedom of conscience and religion.
 - Right to property and their free movement
 - Due process of law
 - Abolition of capital punishment
 - The state was to desist from offering any titles.
 - Free and compulsory free education.
 - System of universal adult franchise
 - Right to bear arms subject to public regulations
 - Citizen military training for national defence
 - Access to public utilities for all castes
 - Under Gandhian influence, it prohibited intoxicating drinks and drugs.



- **Part II: Labour**

- Minimum wages, better working conditions, including regulated hours of work.
- Women workers were assured of maternity leave and equality in respect of wages, etc.
- Children were to be barred from being employed.
- Peasants and working class were given the right to form unions for the protection of their interest.
- Small peasants were assured of reduction of land revenue and rent and their exemption, if found necessary.

- **Part III: economic policy and programme**

- To protect textile and other indigenous industries.
- State to own key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport.
- Relief in respect of agricultural indebtedness and control of usury.

Thus, the Karachi resolution presented a concrete and comprehensive picture of citizen's rights in respect of civil, political, and economic liberty.

Second RTC (Sept-December 1931)

Mahatma Gandhi agreed to participate in the Second Round Table Conference which was to be held in London from 7 September 1931. However, **a lot of political change had taken place between the period of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (March 1931) and the Second Round Table Conference (September 1931)**. Thus, Gandhiji started having doubts whether any useful purpose would be served by his participation in the Second Round Table Conference in the light of the divided nature of the national movement and the new hostile attitude of the British officials. *"I have often wondered myself what we are going to do at the Conference when we know that there is such a gulf between what we want and what has been as yet offered at the Conference. But the considerations of a satyagrahi decided me."* – Mahatma Gandhi



MR. GANDHI LANDS IN ENGLAND WITH MRS. SAROJINI NAIDU [LEFT] AND SIR P. T. MADAN, PRESIDENT OF JHAYNAGAR STATE COUNCIL; THEIR ARRIVAL AT FOLKESTONE.

In London:

The main problem was the **Hindu-Muslim** problem. Despite his best efforts and his utmost sincerity, Mahatma Gandhiji could not achieve a breakthrough on the **issue of communal representation**. In the Minority committee, Gandhiji made a powerful speech in his attempt to allay the fears of minorities and pleaded with them to work unitedly for the independence of India. But he failed to persuade them.

Also, other minorities like scheduled castes, the Anglo-Indians, Christians and non-Brahmin groups also joined hands with the Muslims to assert that without adequate safeguard of their interests, no constitution for India would be acceptable to them. As the minority problem was not being solved, the conference turned out to be a big flop.

Reason for the failure and Gandhi's disappointment in the Second Round Table Conference:

- The composition of the Muslim delegates and other representatives was such that they were more committed to the Muslim cause rather than the cause of independence.
- The Labour Party Government, primarily responsible for the First Round Table Conference and the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement, had been replaced by the national Government which was virtually dominated by the conservatives.
- Gandhi was deeply disappointed when he felt that the British were treating the Congress like any other interest group or pressure group.



Thus, the Second Round Table Conference almost ended in a fiasco. This failure provoked Gandhiji to say that the '*parting of the way*' had come.

The Prime Minister declared that the communal difference would not be allowed to come in the way of further constitutional arrangements. But he also made it clear that if no agreement among the different sections of Indian people could be reached on the minority issue, *he would announce his own award on it*.

After returning to India, Gandhi realised that the Indian political scenario had changed under the **new viceroy, Lord Willingdon** (Nov 1931). He violated Irwin Pact by repressing Congress and other nationalists. Instead, he introduced a **policy of extreme repression**.

The **Gandhi-Irwin Pact**, for all practical purposes, **was dead**. All attempts by Gandhiji to revive its spirit failed as he was **not even given an interview by the new Viceroy**. While the old dispensation treated Gandhiji and the Congress with respect, the new one was out to humiliate them by showing them their place. Thus, the Congress was hardly left with any other alternative but to revive the mass Civil Disobedience Movement with renewed vigour. Hence, **Gandhi revived the civil disobedience movement** on 4 Jan 1932.

The renewed movement invited the worst repression from the government. More than that, there was fundamental change in the attitude of the Government after the collapse of the Second Round Table Conference

Within a few months the government apparently crushed the movement with all such barbaric measures. The movement continued, though its pace slowed down by the later part of 1932.

Now, when the movement was likely to die, to make the situation worse, the then **Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's** government announced a scheme, subsequently known as **communal award** (16 Aug 1932). British Government announced that members to the provincial legislatures would be elected from separate electorates demarcated on a communal basis. This award was a big blow to Indian nationhood and was designed to further fragmentation.

(a) It extended the principle of separate electorate to many Indian religious and caste groups. Thus, **each community was to be treated as a separate constituency** for the purposes of election for its representatives.

Ten communities were identified as minorities: (i) Muslims, (ii) Depressed classes, (iii) Backward areas representatives, (iv) Indian Christians, (v) Anglo-Indians, (vi) Europeans, (vii) commerce and industry, (viii) Land holders, (ix) university and (x) the labour. However, the award did not cover the Central Legislature



(b) Seat allotment

The actual distribution of seats in the provincial legislatures differed from province to province. Careful consideration was given by the Award to safeguard the British imperial

interests. Out of 1488 seats in all the 9 provinces, Hindus got only 776 (715 general seats +61 for the depressed classes) which was 52% of the total seats, whereas the Muslims got 489 (around 33%) when the population was not more than 25% of the population. Thus, the British game becomes clearer.

(3) It was more of an order rather than an award as the Congress Party was never a party to rendering any authorisation to McDonald in this regard. Perhaps, this is why it was made clear by him that in case Indian political groups would succeed in finding an all-agreed scheme, the award would be withdrawn and suitably substituted by it.

Gandhiji was deeply concerned about it, and he reacted sharply. On September 20, 1932, Gandhiji went on a fast unto death protesting a separate electorate for Harijans. He said, '*separation would kill all prospects of reform*'; '*when a man relies on a support, to that extent he weakens himself*'

Finally, it was resolved in September 1932 through the **Poona Pact**. With the persuasive intervention of some prominent Indian leaders including Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Poona Pact was signed with Dr Ambedkar, the leader of the depressed classes.

- Central and Provincial elections
 - **The concept of separate electorate would be discarded.** Instead, seats for the depressed classes would be reserved in general electorate, which would be joint in nature.
 - There would be 148 reserved seats in different provincial legislatures instead of 71 as provided under the Communal Award. In Central legislature, 18% of the seats allotted to the general electorate in British India would be reserved for them.
- This system of representation for the depressed classes (for both provincial and Central Legislatures) would continue till it would be terminated by the mutual agreement of the communities concerned.
- Other provisions
 - Every effort would be made to secure fair representation of the depressed classes regarding the election to **local bodies** as well as in their appointment to **public services**.
 - An adequate sum, out of the **educational fund of every province**, would be earmarked for providing educational facilities to the members of the depressed classes.

This agreement was signed not only by prominent national leaders like **Madan Mohan Malaviya, C Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, and GD Birla**, but also by prominent depressed classes leaders like **BR Ambedkar and MC Rajah**. The British Prime Minister immediately accepted these points of the Poona Agreement, which were relevant to the award already announced by him.

On the termination of the fast on 26 September 1932, Gandhiji turned his attention towards the problems faced by the Harijans.

First RTC	Nov 1930 – Jan 1931	Congress boycotted
Second RTC	Sept 1931 – Dec 1931	Congress attended
Third RTC	Nov 1932 – Dec 1932	Congress boycotted.
Soon after, in April 1933, a joint parliamentary committee was appointed which submitted its report on 19 December 1934. Finally, a Bill was introduced in the British Parliament which was passed on 4 August 1935 and became the India Act of 1935 .		

Winding up of the CDM:

The next **Congress Session was in Calcutta (Sept 1933)** presided over by **Nellie Sengupta**.

- Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, the President elect of the Congress, was arrested before the Calcutta Session of 1933. Nellie Sengupta was elected in his place, thus becoming the third woman, and the second European-born woman to be elected.
- In the Congress, resolutions were passed reiterating complete Independence as the goal of the Congress, endorsing the revival of Civil Disobedience, expressing complete faith in Gandhiji's leadership and reaffirming deep faith in non-violence.



This was the period when a new thinking was growing in a section of the Congressmen that there was a need once again for the entry into the Council. Ultimately, the **Civil Disobedience Movement was withdrawn** on 20 May 1934 and the **Congressmen were permitted Council entry**.

Bombay Session of Congress, October 1934

President: Rajendra Prasad

- **Major changes in the Congress constitution:**
 - Wearing of Khadi was made a necessary criterion for elective membership.
 - The delegates were to be elected at the rate of 1 per every 500 primary members, thereby making them representatives of the people.
- Jawaharlal Nehru moved the **resolution for convening a Constituent Assembly** to frame a suitable Constitution for free India at the Bombay session.
- Owing to the increasing difference of opinions between the tactics of Gandhi and Congress, **Gandhi's retirement from Congress as member was declared at this session**. He declared, "*I am a dead weight in the Congress now.*"

Gandhiji started vigorously the **Harijan Upliftment Program** and went on a tour of ten months from November 1933 in connection with Harijan work.

Did the Civil Disobedience Movement fail? (Critical evaluation)

Even though the movement didn't succeed in achieving its declared objective of complete independence nor did it immediately lead to self-rule or dominion status, we cannot take the entire CDM as a failed movement.

- **The massive support for the Congress** reached new heights. With it, the **social base** of the national movement was greatly widened. **Its influence in the rural area** was clearly visible.
- The movement provided an **opportunity to younger generation of congress to participate** activity in anti-British struggle. Young leaders like Pandit J.L Nehru and Sarojini Naidu played an important role in the movement.
- The movement manifested itself in the **radical form in certain areas** viz., NWFP, Nagaland
- The refusal of the soldiers of Gorkha regiment to open fire on peaceful agitations of Peshawar clearly indicates that spirit of Nationalist was no longer limited to civilian population only. The **British could no longer rely on blind support of Indian armed forces**.
- **Three major points**
 - Indian, British and world opinion increasingly recognized the legitimate claims of Gandhi and the Congress for Indian Independence.
 - The British also realized that control over India now depended completely on the consent of the Indians. The pressure builds by CDM forced the British to take Indian Nationalist leaders seriously. The round table conference granted Indian leaders a position of equality with British Government.
 - Congress received unprecedented public support amid this movement. Hence, it played a major role in the success of the Congress in the election of 1937.

The Strategic Debate: What to do next?

Following the withdrawal of CDM, there was a two-stage debate on the future course of action. Many Congressmen including Gandhi believed that mass movement must be followed with a period of reprieve in order to regain strength after prolonged mass movement, give chance to government to respond. (STS' strategy). **In the first stage**, three proposals were put forward.

1. There should be **constructive work on Gandhian lines**.
2. There should be **constitutional struggle and participation in elections** to the central legislature due in 1934; M.A. Ansari, Asaf Ali, Bhulabhai Desai, S. Satyamurthy and B.C. Roy supported this.
3. A strong **leftist trend** within the Congress represented by Nehru was critical of both the above options. Nehru was against this STS' strategy as he argued that India's National Movement had reached such a stage where continuous confrontation and conflict with imperialism was required till it was overthrown.
4. He proposed for *continued non-constitutional mass struggle* to achieve purna swaraj, because the situation was still revolutionary owing to continued economic crisis and the readiness of mass to fight. (**SV strategy** = struggle-victory)
5. He suggested to have class organizations: peasants, workers, traders, businessmen to prepare them for the mass movement. He suggested that these class organizations be affiliated with Congress to influence its policies and activities. He believed that there cannot be genuine anti-imperialist struggle without masses organised into classes.

Council Entry:

- Though Gandhi was principally against the council work, he realized that he was out of tune due to the power equation in Congress.
 - The reason given was that there are Congressmen who cannot actively participate in the constructive work or Satyagraha should not be kept unoccupied, they could express their patriotic energies through council work if they are not sucked into constitutionalism or self-serving.
- Nehru and the socialists thought that the British must first be expelled before the struggle for socialism could be waged, and in an anti-imperialist struggle, unity around the Congress, was indispensable. Thus, it was better, they felt, to gradually radicalise the Congress than to get isolated from the masses.
- The right wing was no less accommodating. Seeing all this, Gandhi decided to resign from Congress and decided to show his conviction through work and deed.

In the elections of Central Legislative assembly in Nov 1934, Congress captured 45 out of 75 seats reserved for Indians. It emerged as the largest legislative party.

The Act of 1935

After all, we framed the constitution... of 1935 because we thought ... it was the best way... to hold India to the Empire.

Lord Linlithgow

The Government of India Act of 1935 was the longest piece of legislation ever passed by the British Parliament. It was a comprehensive document consisting of 321 Sections and 10 Schedules. The Act provided a framework for the establishment of an All-India Federation at central level and a new system of government for the provinces on the basis of provincial autonomy.

The Act is of considerable significance. It did the groundwork for the negotiations that led to the final transfer of power into Indian hands. Though the Act was drawn up to perpetuate British rule, some of its provisions were so well thought out, that, they were incorporated into the constitution of independent India.

Features:

The basic conception of the Act of 1935 was that the *Government of India was the Government of the Crown*, conducted by authorities deriving functions directly from the Crown, in so far as the Crown did not itself retain executive functions. This conception, familiar in dominion constitutions, was absent in earlier Acts passed for India.

(A) Provincial level

- **Provincial Autonomy:** the most significant change
 - **Abolition of dyarchy → responsible government.**
 - There was to be a provincial Governor and a cabinet of ministers.
 - The ministers would be appointed from among the members of the Legislative Assembly. Ministers were appointed by the Governor but were responsible to popularly elected legislative assemblies.
 - **Provincial autonomy**
 - Provinces were freed from "the superintendence, direction" of the Secretary of State and the Governor-general. The provinces would henceforth derive their legal authority directly from the British Crown.
 - In the provinces, local power was increased. The ministers exercised complete control over the subjects allotted to them. They were given independent financial powers and could borrow money on their own security. In every matter the Governor had to act on the advice of their ministers.
 - Provincial legislature could legislate on subjects in provincial and concurrent lists.
- **Hedged and marred by various discretionary and special powers to the governors. Governors were the pivot of the entire constitutional structure.**
 - **Special power** in respect of minority rights, safeguard of British business interest and privileges of civil servants. It was also the special responsibility of a provincial governor to ensure adequate representation of minorities in the cabinet.

- They could, **dismiss ministers** at their discretion. Besides, the governor could also **take over the provincial administration** under certain special circumstances.
- What made the position of the governor more formidable was the fact that **40 per cent of the provincial budget was beyond the purview of the provincial ministries**. The governor also enjoyed the **power to restore the budget** even if it had been rejected by the legislatures.

(B) Central level

- A federal structure comprising *both British Indian provinces* as well as **Princely India**.
 - **Federal features**
 - Three lists, federal, provincial, and concurrent.
 - A federal court.
 - However
 - States were given full freedom whether or not to join the federation.
 - Federation was to come into being only if.
 - More than 50 per cent states decided to join it (52 seats out of 104)
 - Aggregate population of states in the above category should be 50% of the total population of all Indian states.
- **Bicameral legislature** at the centre

House	Composition	Election (communal electorate)	Duration
Lower house (House of Assembly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total 375 members: 250 members from the provinces and 125 members from the states. 250 = Hindus (104), Muslim (83), other minorities (26), industries and commerce (11), labour (10), landlords (7) and women (9). 	Elected by the members of the Provincial Assemblies by the system of proportional representation with a single transferable vote basis.	The duration of the assembly was to be 5 years.
The upper house (Council of State)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total 260 member: 105 elected, 104 from Princely India and 6 to be nominated by the Governor General. • 150 = General category (75), Schedule castes (6), Sikhs (4), Muslims (49), Women (6) and Anglo Indian (10). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 members were to be elected directly by voters with high property qualifications. • 104 members were to be nominated by the rulers of Princely India. (Not elected) • 6 members were to be nominated by the Governor General. 	Council of States was to be a permanent body with one-third members retiring every third year.

Note 1: Election to the Council of States was direct and that to the Federal Assembly, indirect.

Note 2: Members of Federal Assembly could move a vote of no-confidence against ministers. Council of States could not move a vote of no-confidence.

- **Executive: Dyarchical system** of the government at the central level.
 - Two categories of the subject list: reserved and transferred.
 - **The reserved subjects** were administered exclusively by GG with the help of his executive councilors. It included defence, external affairs, tribal administration and ecclesiastical affairs. The Indian legislature had no control on these affairs. As to these subjects the Governor-General was held directly responsible to the British Parliament and not to the Central Legislature.
 - **The transferred subjects** were to be administered by the Governor-General with the help of the ministers, who appointed by the Governor General from among the persons enjoying the confidence of the Central Legislature. Here too, the Governor-General kept certain 'special responsibilities'. It is clear that under the new Act there would be no responsible government at the centre.
 - **Role of Governor General**
 - The Governor-General could act in his individual judgment in discharging his special responsibilities. The Governor-General had the power **to overrule the advice of the council** of ministers or to force his decision on the ministers. He could restore cuts in grants, certify bills rejected by the legislature, issue ordinances, exercise his veto.
 - The Governor-general had **residuary powers**.
 - Before enacting any legislation, the legislature had to take the prior approval of the Governor-General.
- Additional Features
 - 80 per cent of the budget was non-votable.
 - The Act contained a provision known as **Instrument of instructions**. It was a set of instructions for GG and Governors for the exercise of their authority. (*later on it influenced DPSP in the Constitution of India 1950*)

Critical Analysis of the Act of 1935

The Act of 1935 was condemned and rejected unanimously by all sections of the Congress. The Congress demanded, instead, convening the constituent assembly elected based on adult franchise to frame constitution of free India.

- There was no sense of independence in the provisions of this Act. Even **Britain's earlier promise of the grant of the 'full dominion status'** was missing from its provisions.
- The Act provided a **rigid constitution** with no possibility of internal growth. The Right of amendment was reserved with the British Parliament.
- **Provincial Level:**
 - Provincial autonomy was hedged by the autocratic nature of the powers of the governor.
 - Provisions relating to safeguards and discretionary powers were made under the pretext of providing protection to minorities made the **provincial autonomy quite farcical**. The **real intention was to safeguard the British interests** and continuation of the British imperial rule.
 - Responsible government at the provincial level was a part of that larger strategy of the British.
- **Central Level:**
 - The system of **Dyarchy** introduced at center was strongly opposed because it had already failed at provincial level.
 - Indian nationalist wanted that **participation of native states** must be compulsory in proposed federation, but the act made it voluntary. The Congress wanted representatives of native states in parliament to be elected by people, but act provided their nomination by ruling princes.
 - The **federal part was never implemented**, primarily on account of the reluctance of Princely India.
- **Election**
 - Only 14-15% eligible to vote.
 - The system of religion-based and class-based electorates was further extended. It refurbished the idea of separatism by promoting separate electorates for the Muslims and other minorities. It helped the construction of communalism in a big way.

Silver lining: It marked a new departure in India's constitutional history.

- **Centre**
 - The ideas of federation **covered the entire country**.
- **Provinces**
 - Introduction of the **responsible government** at the provincial level.
 - The element of Indian representation made it certain that **Parliamentary institutions** would gradually become stronger.
 - **Administrative devolution to the point of no return:** provincial autonomy indicated that the next logical step was autonomy at center. In that situation India was to get dominion states.

- It provided for **greater association of Indians with the task of administration** because at provincial level all the subjects were to be handled by Indian ministers.
- System of provincial autonomy **allowed Indian leaders to gain crucial experience** in the working of government machinery. Because of this, Indians could manage efficiently when power was transferred to them.

- **More points**

- The **instrument of instructions** provided in the Act of 1935 imposed a moral obligation of Governor and GG to exercise their authority for the benefit of people. The British realized that aspirations of common masses cannot be neglected forever.

When the Constituent Assembly engaged itself in the task of constitution-making for independent India, the Act of 1935 came as a very handy and helpful document for the founding fathers of our constitution. It facilitated task of Indian constitution. This Act was adopted substantially by makers of Indian constitution. (Structurally, if not spiritually)

Faizpur Session of Congress (Jalgaon, Dec 1936)

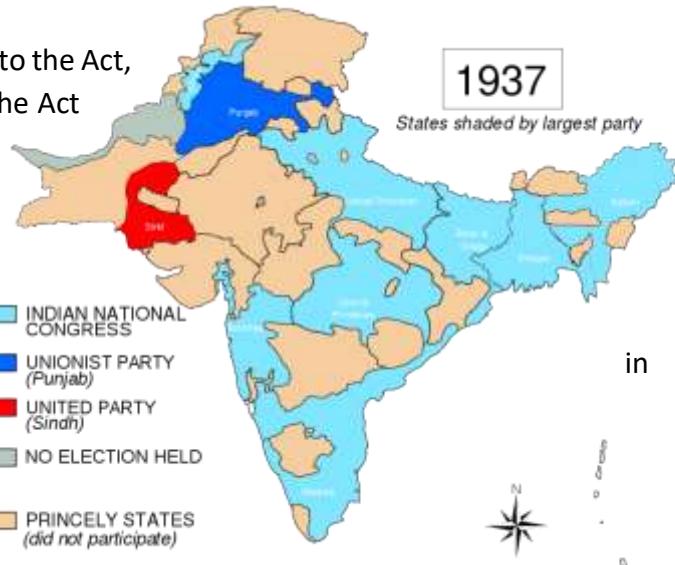
- President: Jawaharlal Nehru
- This was the **first Congress Session in a rural area**. Pandit Nehru said during his presidential address, 'A vaster and more pressing problem is that of the peasantry, for India is essentially a land of the peasants. In recognition of this fact, and to bring the Congress nearer to the peasant masses, we are meeting here today at the village of Faizpur and not, as of old, in some great city'.
- **Agrarian programme**
 - Its ratification demonstrated a change in ideological posture and generated expectations of socio-economic change.
 - Issues of 'freedom of organization of agricultural labourers and peasants', safeguarding of peasants' interests against intermediaries and 'just relief from agricultural indebtedness including arrears in rent and revenue'

Elections of 1927 and Formation of the Congress Ministries

Though the Congress was bitterly opposed to the Act, it decided to contest the elections under the Act of 1935.

• Council Entry debate

- Initially the Congress was hesitant as to whether the party would contest the elections. Jawaharlal Nehru, at the beginning, was not in favour of contesting the elections.
- Eventually even Nehru admitted that as many members of the Congress were in favour of taking office there was "no choice but to contest the elections". It was felt that by contesting the elections, the Congress would be able to demonstrate to the millions of the disenfranchised the ineffectiveness of the Act of 1935.
- The Congress and the Muslim League met separately in April 1936 and decided to contest the provincial elections, which were slated for January and February 1937.



• The Election

- The election campaign took off towards the end of 1936.
- The Congress swept the polls in most of the provinces.
 - Out of the 1585 seats in the 11 provincial legislatures the Congress bagged 706 seats.
 - It won absolute majorities in Madras, UP, CP, Bihar and Orissa.
 - It was the largest single party in Bombay, Bengal, Assam and NWFP.

• Office Entry debate

- This success, which was a surprise even to most Congressmen, gave a new turn to the office-acceptance question.
- **Nehru and Bose were opposed to forming government as it would mean responsibility without power and the constitutional work would sideline the revolutionary character of the movement.** The proponents of office acceptance argued that they were equally committed to combating the Act of 1935 but work in council was only short term as the availability of mass movement is a distant goal right now. They agreed that there was danger to be sucked in by wrong tendencies, but the right way is to combat them and not to abandon them. Despite limited powers, provincial ministers could be used to promote constructive work. **Gandhi** was against the office acceptance, but he agreed to the trial of Congress ministries.

- The hesitation of the Congress to form ministries even after such a landslide victory in the elections was because of the **special power of the Governor**, as laid down in the Act of 1935 to overrule legislation put through by the ministers.
- Finally, however, Congress ministries were formed in July 1937 **in seven out of eleven provinces**. Subsequently, the Congress formed **coalition governments in two others**. (Assam and NWFP)
- It was during the ministry formation that Jinnah wanted a coalition government, particularly in UP and Bombay. That was rejected by the Congress on ideological grounds. The spurned Muslim League went for rapid communalism,

- **Non-Congress Provinces**

- Unionist Party of Sikandar Hayat Khan – Punjab
- Krishak Praja Party of Fazlul Haq – Bengal
- Sindh Ittehad (Union) Party of Allah Baksh Soomro – Sindh

In the Offices: 27 months of the Congress Ministries

The formation of congress ministers resulted in psychological revolution in India because for 1st time The British Indian officers were taking orders from khadi clad, men and women who were harassed by them till that time. These Indians who were repeatedly Lathi charged and pushed in jails became the boss of white officials. The common Indians felt liberated when the responsibilities of government moved into hands of Indian ministers. According to Pandit Nehru, there was a sense of immense relief among the masses as if the colonial oppression going on since ages was no more.

Working with British

- The Indian ministers **worked fairly well with the British** authorities.
 - The special powers given to Governors by the new Act which had almost caused Congress to refrain from forming ministries, were applied on only one occasion.
- On the whole, the relation between Indian and British officials were characterised **by mutual trust and respect**.
- Though they **failed to bring about any fundamental change in the exploitative character** of colonial rule, they sought to give some comfort to the people **within the framework of the British rule**.

The disadvantages of the Congress ministries

- The Congress ministries **could not work independently**.
 - There was the **inevitable paradox of a party committed to Poorna Swaraj and having to implement decisions through civil service and police** with which its relations had so long been hostile.
 - The Congress had to work within the framework of the 1935 constitution and could not bring about any fundamental breakthrough.
- The most serious problem was the **balancing of diverse interests of communities and classes**.

- As the Congress had a **multi-class character**, as a ruling party it found impossible to go on pleasing the landlords and peasants, or businessmen and workers, at the same time.
- The principal problem which the provincial governments experienced was **financial stringency**.
 - The bulk of the Indian revenues was **controlled by the Central Government**. It was difficult for the Congress governments to freely undertake welfare programmes which required a steady flow of funds.
- As Congress policy was now formulated by the Parliamentary Sub-committee, it was not possible for the ministries to embark on any project without the **prior approval of the High Command**.

Despite the various disadvantages experienced by the provincial governments their achievements were significant. The Congress ministries performed a **herculean task within a short period of 27 months** between July 1937 and November 1939. Their performance was remarkable compared to the non-Congress ruled provinces.

- **Promotion of Political and Civil rights**

- The British rulers passed quite a few repressive acts to contain the rising tide of nationalism. The Congress ministries of different **provinces repealed some of the repressive acts** and released many political prisoners. Emergency power acquired by provincial government in 1932 was done away with.
- **The ban imposed** earlier on some political organisations was **removed**.
- Political newspapers/journals were given freedom **of expression**. Securities confiscated were returned to the newspapers. Pending prosecution against them was withdrawn. Blacklisting for the government advertisement was given up.
- **The arms** confiscated from Indian were returned, revoked licenses were restored.
- **Power of police** were reduced. Practices like shadowing political leaders and meetings by CID were stopped.
- Many prisoners, including revolutionaries involved in Kakori and other conspiracies, were also released. The revolutionaries convicted for violet activities could not be released because they could only be released by consent of governor which was not given.

- **Peasants**

- Steps were taken to restore land of those farmers which were confiscated by the government by CDM.
- As promised in the election manifesto the ministries helped the peasants by passing anti-usury and tenancy legislation.
 - Congress ministries tried to give economic relief to peasants and workers as quickly as possible.
 - The UP government enacted tenancy act which gave full occupancy right to the peasants working on a land for a long time, the landlords could not remove them. The illegal taxes collected by landlords from peasants were stopped. Practices like begar (forced labour) and Nazrana (forced gifts) were abolished.
 - Bombay government released more than 40,000 serfs tied to land.

- Bombay and Madras government abolished growing fees in forests.
 - The activities of money leaders were also curbed.
- In his book India Wins Freedom, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad while narrating the achievements of Congress during this period, makes special mention of "legislation on Zamindari or proprietorship in land, of liquidating agricultural indebtedness and undertaking a vast programme of education both for children and adults."

- **Workers**

- The Congress worked for the benefit of the workers too.
- The number of trade unions rose and the trade union movement received a fresh impetus.
- The wages of the factory-workers rose and on the whole, the condition of the working class improved.

- **Social Welfare reforms:** These included following:

- Prohibition imposed in certain areas. There were campaigns to discourage alcoholism.
- Measures for welfare and upliftment of Harijans: temple entry, use of public facilities, scholarships, an increase in their numbers in government service and police.
- Attention given to primary, technical, and higher education and to public health and sanitation.
- Encouragement given to Khadi through subsidies.
- Prison reforms undertaken.
- Encouragement given to indigenous enterprises

- **Standards of behaviour: honesty and public service (led by example)**

- The ministers reduced their own salaries drastically from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 500 per month.
- Most of them travelled in ordinary classes on the train.
- They were easily accessible to the people and tried to address common grievances.
- Sumit Sarkar however differs on this point and says, "the sudden access to power and patronage bred the usual evils of opportunistic place-hunting and factional squabbles."

Extra-Parliamentary Mass Activity of Congress

1. Launching of mass literacy campaign
2. Setting up of Congress police stations and panchayats
3. Congress grievances committees presenting mass petitions to Government
4. States Peoples' movements
5. Efforts taken to develop planning though **National Planning Committee** set up under Congress President Subhash Bose in 1938

Criticism

While the Congress Ministries did commendable job in general but there were certain objections.

Despite creditable performance, Muslim League kept on accusing the Congress Ministries of pursuing an anti-Muslim policy. The left parties and their front organisations like trade union and the Kisan Sabha also went on expressing their dissatisfaction with the overall performance of these ministries.

- **Madras government did not behave liberally** sometimes.
 - In July 1931, **Yusuf Meherally**, a socialist leader, was prosecuted by Madras government for making an inflammatory speech.
 - In Oct 1937, the Madras government prosecuted **S.S. Batliwala**, another Congress leader for making a seditious speech and send in 6 months imprisonment.
 - These cases created a massive uproar. Serious conflicts developed between C Rajagopalachari (premier of Madras) and pandit Nehru but finally Batliwala was released.
- However, the Congress governments were immensely popular. The Congress ministries initially gave a **major stimulus to all sections of the anti-imperialist movement**. Congress membership shot up from half a million in 1936 to 3.1 million in 1937 and 4.5. million in 1938.

Haripura Session of Congress (Gujarat, Feb 1938)

President: Subhash Chandra Bose was unanimously elected president of the session.

- He believed that the Congress ministries in the provinces had immense revolutionary potential.
- Bose supported economic development of the country through planning and was instrumental in setting up a **National Planning Committee** later (Oct 1938). Its main objective was to focus on *development of industries* in India.
- A resolution to give **moral support (not organizational help) to people's agitation in the princely states**. Individual leaders could participate, under the overall leadership of a special subcommittee of the Congress Working Committee.

Bose v/s Gandhi

- In January 1939, Subhash Bose decided to stand again for the president's post in the Congress. Gandhi was not happy with Bose's candidature. He instead supported another candidate, **Pattabhi Sitaramayya**.
- Bose said he represented the new ideologies and programs to sharpen the anti-imperialist struggle. However, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kriplani (members of CWC) pointed out that various working committees develop the ideologies and program. The position of the Congress president was more of a representative and symbolic of the unity of the nation.
- Subhash Bose won the election by 1580 votes against 1377; he got the full support of the Congress Socialist Party and the communists.
 - Gandhi congratulated Bose on his victory but also declared that "Pattabhi's defeat is my defeat." Now it became a Gandhi versus Bose issue.

Tripuri Congress (near Jabalpur, March 1939)

- With Bose's victory the polarization between the old guard and left in terms of ideology and method of future struggle was clear. **It led to a sharp internal crisis and showdown.**
 - 12/15 of the members resigned from the working committee.
 - In his presidential speech, Bose prophesized that an imperialist war was about to take place in Europe. He was in favour of giving a six-month ultimatum to Britain to grant the national demand of independence; if the ultimatum was rejected, he said, a mass civil disobedience movement should be launched. Gandhi believed that it was not the time for such ultimatums as neither the Congress nor the masses were yet ready for struggle.
 - Gandhi asked him to constitute his own Working Committee and refused all cooperation. Bose tried to patch up a compromise but failed, and ultimately at the AICC meeting in Calcutta in April 1939 he resigned and was quickly replaced by Rajendra Prasad.

- In May, Bose and his followers formed the **Forward Bloc**, as a new Leftist party within the Congress. But it didn't gain much support outside Bengal.
- When he staged a protest against the AICC decision to ban Congressmen from participating in civil disobedience without the prior permission of provincial Congress committees, the Working Committee at Gandhi's insistence **punished him for indiscipline**; in August 1939 he was removed from all Congress positions, notably the presidency of the Bengal PCC, and was banned from holding any executive office for three years. Later in January 1940, Gandhi wrote to CF Andrews describing Subhas as "my son" - but a "spoilt child of the family" who needed to be taught a lesson for his own good.

- **Resolutions**

- In February 1939, Nehru accepted the presidency of the AISPC and the Tripuri Congress endorsed the scheme of joint action with respect to state people.
- As a result of this evolving situation, in late 1938 and early 1939 many of the princely states witnessed an unprecedented escalation of popular agitation, spearheaded by the local praja mandals, clandestine Congress branches and outside political leaders from British India. Significant agitation took place in Mysore, Jaipur, Rajkot, Travancore, Kashmir and Hyderabad – **Gandhi himself taking a leading role in Rajkot.**

Beginning of World War 2: Resignation of Congress Ministries

In 1939, the Congress ministries resigned in protest of the Viceroy's unilateral decision to declare India in war against Germany during the Second World War. The Congress was stunned and demanded a concrete assurance in respect of Indian independence, which the government refused to give. As a protest, the Congress ministries resigned in October 1939. Thus, the popular rule in the Congress-ruled provinces came to an end and the government once again resumed its autocratic rule. That once again set the stage of another mass movement which was to engulf the country in the form of the Quit India Movement in 1942.

Evaluation:

Though by 1939 internal strife, opportunism, and hunger for power had started surfacing in the Congress, yet they were able to utilize Council work to their advantage to a great extent. The 28-month rule was significant also due to following reasons:

1. Contention that Indian self-government was necessary for radical social transformation got confirmed.
2. Congressmen demonstrated that a movement could use state power to further its ends without being compromised.
3. Ministries were able to control communal riots.
4. The morale of bureaucracy came down.
5. Council work helped neutralize many erstwhile elements (landlords etc)
6. People were able to perceive the shape of things to come if independence was won.
7. Administrative work by Indians further weakened the myth that Indians were not fit to rule.

Muslim Separatism and Lahore Resolution (1940)

Miserable electoral performance of AIML:

- In the elections of 1937, the Congress swept the polls in most of the provinces. The Muslim League, on the other hand could not do well in the elections.
- The only provinces remaining outside the Congress-orbit were Punjab, Sind and Bengal. None of these provinces, all of which had a Muslim majority, went to the Muslim League.
- The League won only 109 of the 482 seats reserved for the Muslims. Even Congress, which offered candidates in only 58 of these seats, won 26 of them.

Attempts at coalition:

- Despite the failure of his party, Jinnah, the President of the League, hoped that Congress-League coalition should be formed in several provinces.
- Some efforts were made to arrive at an agreement, but eventually the negotiations fell through. The Congress, after its landslide victory, had no need to rally the League on its side.

Jinnah now became hostile:

- The League now turned to bitter opposition to the Congress. From this point onwards Jinnah's attitude to Congress became hostile.
- He began to spread the cry that the Muslim minority was in danger of being engulfed by the Hindu majority. Jinnah now sought to consolidate the Muslim League by using a **communal strategy**.
 - He accused Gandhiji of "turning the Congress into an instrument for the revival of Hinduism" and of wishing to "**establish Hindu-raj in the country.**"
 - The League began to spread the idea that the **Muslim minority in India was in danger** of being engulfed by the Hindu majority.
- In October **1937** the Muslim League at its **Lucknow session** sought to create a broad-front by building up a populist image.
 - Jinnah-Sikandar Pact (1937): Sikandar Hayat Khan merged his Unionist party in AIML.
 - Jinnah propagated the ahistorical and unscientific theory that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations which could, therefore, never live together. Down through the ages, he said, the country was 'always divided into Hindu India and Muslim India.' In his Presidential address, at the Lucknow session he said that the Congress governments were nothing but Hindu governments out to oppress members of the Muslim nation. (**Two-Nation Theory**)
- Jinnah continued to spread separatism by **concocted accounts of Congress-repression** on the Muslim minority. The **1938 Pirpur Report** brought out by the League listed cruelties suffered by Muslims in the Congress-ruled provinces.
- In 1939, the Congress ministries in all the provinces resigned in protest of the Viceroy's decision to declare war against Germany during the Second World War. To celebrate the occasion he called for the observance of a '**Day of Deliverance and thanksgiving.**'

1940 Lahore Session and “Pakistan Resolution”

- At the Lahore session of the League, a resolution drafted by Sikandar Hayat Khan was passed calling for the grouping of '*geographically contiguous units in areas where Muslims pre-dominated, such as north-western and eastern India, which would form Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.*'
- The resolution was vague and ambiguous.
 - Neither Pakistan nor Partition were explicitly mentioned.
 - The idea of 'Independent States' implied separation but could possibly mean no more than full autonomy within a loose federation.
 - The resolution later came to be known as the 'Pakistan Resolution' though officially the word 'Pakistan' did not feature anywhere in the text of this document.
 - Still, the Resolution certainly widened the gulf between the two communities and paved the way for the birth of Pakistan. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's "two nation theory" was refurbished, and Muslim separatism was now in full blast.
 - It also provided fuel to the advocates of Hindu nationalism.
- Subsequent to the Lahore Resolution Jinnah frequently referred to the **notion of a separate Muslim state as the only solution** to India's political problems.

Congress Response was adequate

- INC rejected any form and shape of communalism. It disregarded the '2 nation theory' propagated by Jinnah and the Muslim league. The Congress leadership, Gandhi and the nationalist press **condemned** the Lahore Resolution in harsh language.
- Old policy of **projecting a few nationalist Muslims** to silence the League. They repeated their old **argument that the League was not the sole representative of the Muslims** of India.
- The Congress leaders helped to organize the **All-India independent Muslim Conference** in Delhi shortly after the Lahore Session of the League. The voice of the nationalist minded Muslims like Abul Kalam Azad was too feeble to match the voice of the separatist Muslims.
- Congress had **steadfastly refused to ally itself with Hindu Communalist groups**, but, on the other hand, it was unable to purge communalists from its ranks altogether.

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Ramgarh Congress, August Offer

There was a general sentiment of launching immediate mass struggle among some leaders, after resignation of the Congress ministries. However, different stakeholders responded as follows:

Gandhi and his supporters did not favour an immediate mass struggle. Gandhi was in favour of continued cooperation at the provincial level. He said that he would offer the British moral support during the war but on a non-violent basis. Gandhians believed that the cause of Allied forces (of which the British were a part) was just, Congress organization was not fit to lead another mass struggle immediately, there was a possibility that a mass struggle could degenerate into communal conflict and the masses were not ready to participate effectively in another conflict.

The leftists like Subhash Chandra Bose, Communist Party of India, Congress Socialist Party, the Royists – characterized the war as an imperial struggle and supported an all-out effort to dislodge British government from India.

- Bose continued with his strong militant stand of direct action against the colonial government forcing it to agree to the grant of freedom. Once again, he pointed out that Britain's difficulty was to be seized as India's opportunity.
- He even mooted the idea of forming another Congress party to lead a mass struggle but the CPI and CSP did not support him.

Nehru was against both imperial and Fascist powers but tilted against the fascist powers and therefore went along with Congress and Gandhi. He reiterated that complete independence for India must be a precondition for Congress support to the British war effort.

- **Ramgarh Congress (March 1940)**

- President: Abul Kalam Azad
- The Congress reaffirmed its demand for complete independence.
 - Indian freedom could not be in the form of dominion or any other status within the imperial structure. Sovereignty, said the Congress resolution, must rest with the people, whether in the States (the princely states) or the provinces.
- "Congress would resort to civil disobedience as soon as the Congress organization is considered fit enough or if circumstances precipitate a crisis."



Jawaharlal Nehru, industrialist
Jamnalal Bajaj, Sarojini Naidu,
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan,
and Maulana Azad at the 1940
Ramgarh Session

- It said that India never intended to establish a new nation on the ruin of British crown and accepted that Indian **Congress had no intention to support the extreme Nazi regime** as against the British paramount. The Congress further stated that it would support the British government to fight the war as it is meaningless to resort to non-violence when enemy is at the doorsteps. Thus, it appreciated the grave crisis with which the British were confronted with at that time, **agreed to cooperate** with the rulers on the conditions:
 - **Provisional National Government immediately**
 - Announcement of the goal of **Independence in India after the war.**

August Offer by Linlithgow (August 1940)

- In response, the British authorities made it clear that power could not be transferred to a body which was not accepted by the Muslims and other minorities. But they came up with the August Offer as a reply to the offer of cooperation made by the Congress towards the government.
- **Timing:** For many months the British government did not pay any attention to demands of Indian leaders but when **Battle of Britain** commenced in July 1940, Britain came under immense pressure. British government was at a worse situation, as almost all the nations of Europe fell before the German army. The deteriorating war situation in Europe forced them to seek all help from India, and thus appease India by conciliating them.
- **Proposals:**
 - **Long-term (post-war)**
 - India would be granted self-government or **Dominion Status**
 - Setting up of a **representative constitution-making body:** a Constituent Assembly after the war where mainly Indians would decide the Constitution according to their social, economic and political conceptions, subject to fulfilment of the obligation of the Government regarding defence, minority rights, treaties with states, all India services.
 - No future Constitution to be adopted without the consent of minorities.
 - **Interim**
 - Full Indian support was expected during war period.
 - **Increase in the number of Indians in the Governor-General's Council**
 - **A war advisory council** comprising Indian members would be established.



- **Congress Reaction**
 - It failed to satisfy the aspirations of Indian Nationalists It was rejected by congress immediately.
 - The Congress had been demanding **complete Independence** since 1930 but it promised **dominion status** after the end of the war.

- Indian leaders were **demanding transfer of response to Indian hands immediately**, but the August Offer contained no such provision, congress was not against the idea of drafting constitution, but it wanted that the constant making process should commence immediately not after the end of the war.
- The Government had taken the **adamant position that no constitutional advance could be made till the Congress came to an agreement with the Muslim leaders**. It was just a ploy, and they were very well of British intensions of dividing Indians so that British Rule could continue.
- The Indian politicians rejected this August offer' forthwith.
 - Nehru said boldly that the whole idea of 'Dominion Status' "was as dead as a doornail."
 - Gandhi declared that August Offer widened the gulf between the British and Indian nationalists.
- **Muslim League Reaction**
 - The League rejected the Offer and announced that it would not accept anything less than partition of India.
 - In March 1940, the League had demanded the creation of separate state for Muslims by adopting a **resolution at Lahore**. So, it wanted separate state for Muslims, but August Offer did not make any such promise.
 - The August Offer just promised to safeguard the interest of minorities, but the nature of safety was not elaborated.
 - AIML wanted the League to get equal representation in the reconstituted executive council of G.G but the government did not make any such promise.

Individual Satyagraha (Oct 1940 – Dec 1941)

- Meanwhile, the government issued **ordinance after ordinance** taking away the freedom of speech and that of the press and the right to organize associations. Thus, the Congress decided to resort to civil disobedience. Towards the end of 1940, the Congress once again asked Gandhi to take command.
- Gandhi insisted that it would be an individual or limited rather than mass movement of resistance. It would be a limited Satyagraha on an individual basis by a few selected individuals in every locality.
- **Objectives:**
 - He wanted to ensure that the British were not embarrassed at their hour of crisis.
 - To show that nationalist patience was not due to weakness.
 - To express people's feeling that they were not interested in the war and that they made no distinction between Nazism and the double autocracy that ruled India.
 - To give another opportunity to the Government to accept Congress' demands peacefully.
 - To prepare the people for the coming struggle the Congress organization was being put back in shape; opportunist elements were being discovered and pushed

out of the organization; and above all the people were being politically aroused, educated and mobilized.

- **Nature of Individual Satyagraha:**

- The Satyagrahi would **beforehand inform the district magistrate** of the time and place where he or she was going to make the anti-war speech.
- Public anti-war declaration by Satyagrahi: '*It is wrong to help the British war-effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance.*'
- And if the Government did not arrest a Satyagrahi, he or she would not only repeat the performance but move into the villages and start a trek towards Delhi, thus participating in a movement that came to be known as the '**Chalo Delhi**' (**onwards to Delhi**) movement.

- **Satyagraha**

- The carefully chosen Satyagrahis - **Vinoba Bhave** was to be the first Satyagrahi on 17 October 1940 and **Nehru** the second - were surrounded by huge crowds when they appeared on the platform, and the authorities could often arrest them only after they had made their speeches.
- By May 1941, 25,000 people had been convicted for individual civil disobedience.
- The Forward Bloc leader Subhas Chandra insisted that it was high time to launch a civil disobedience movement and strike at the enemy. Subhas Chandra launched a civil disobedience movement on his own which found a favourable response in Bengal.



Aftermath

- Withdrawal of the individual satyagraha movement in **December 1941**.
- The Congress leaders, released from jails, were anxious to defend Indian Territory and go to the aid of the allies.
- The CWC overrode Gandhi's and Nehru's objections and passed a resolution offering to cooperate with the Government in the defense of India, if:
 - Full independence was given after the war,
 - The substance of power was transferred immediately.
- It was at this time that Gandhi designated Nehru as his chosen successor.

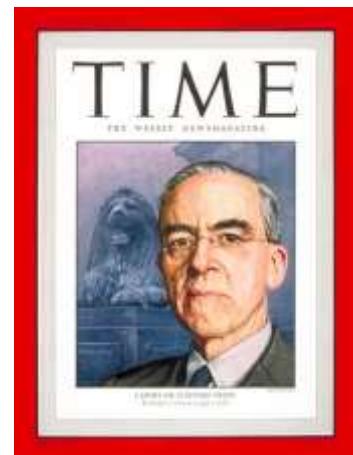
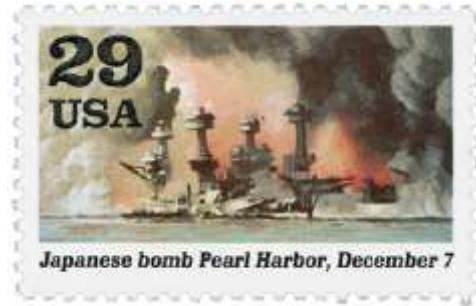
The Cripps Mission (Mar-Apr 1942)

Background reasons for the British to break the deadlock after the rejection of the 'August offer' in 1940 by the Indian leadership. Deteriorating war situation, particularly on the eastern frontier of India, forced both parties to engage in serious dialogue.

- In 1941, two major changes in world politics took place.
 - On June 22, 1941, **Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union**. Repeated success of the Germans in the War kept the British on their toes. Quite a few people in India were happy to discover their enemy number one in distress, but the Congress High Command refrained from doing anything which might multiply the difficulties for the British. The
 - On 7th Dec 1941, **Japan entered the WW** with a massive attack on American base located at pearl harbor, in which more than 2000 American soldiers got killed and the complete scenario of war got changed. Within a span of few weeks Japanese forces captured almost whole of southeast Asia, it was quite clear that **India would be next Japanese Target**.
- Even a diehard imperialist like **Premier Churchill** looked for support of the Indian people and their leadership to meet the challenge of the Japanese menace.
- **Indian leadership** also appeared inclined to open negotiation, as they were doubly concerned about the defence of India.
 - The Congress leadership had refused to go along with Gandhiji on his proposal to a non-violent resistance to war, so much so that he was relieved of his leadership after the withdrawal of the individual satyagraha movement in December 1941.
 - Thus, Congress leadership had no moral compunction in extending its support to the British war efforts if its demand for freedom was conceded by the British.
- During early 1942, **Chiang Kai-Shek**, visited India and extended moral support to the cause of the Indian independence.
- Interest was also shown by **President Roosevelt** in Indian affairs. Roosevelt even contradicted Churchill's statement that the Atlantic Charter was not applicable to the Indian situation.
- Not only that, **a section of the British Cabinet led by the Laborites** also favoured some fresh initiative on the part of the British to break off the Indian deadlock.

All this influenced the British Government to set up the Cripps Mission in March 1942.

Sir Strafford Cripps reached India on 22 March 1942 and stayed till 11 April 1942, engaging himself in serious discussions with the Indian leadership.



The Cripps Proposal

The preamble of the draft proposal clearly mentioned that the basic objective of the British Government was to usher India to a state of self-governance. To that end, the government contemplated the creation of a new Indian Union, having **dominion status**.

- **As a long-term measure (post-War)**
 - An **elected constitution-making body** would be set up to frame a new constitution for India.
 - **Electoral college**
 - Elected members of the provincial assemblies
 - Nominated representatives from the Indian states
 - The total number of the constitution-making body would be one-tenth of the number of the electoral college. The election would be held based on **proportional representation**.
 - This Constituent Assembly would frame the **new constitution** for India.
 - British Government committed itself to accept the new constitution **subject to two conditions:**
 - **A province** at any stage would be free to reject the new constitution and opt-out of the Union and could retain its existing constitutional position.
 - However, it would be also open to future accession to the Union on its own discretion.
 - Such non-acceding provinces could frame their own constitution, which, in the eye of His Majesty's Government, would have the same status as the Indian Union.
 - **Indian states** were given freedom to join or not to join the proposed union.
 - A new treaty arrangement would have to be re-negotiated in the light of the new situation. This would apply to both acceding and non-acceding states.
- **Interim phase**
 - Until the new constitution comes into being, His Majesty's government must bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the Defence of India as a part of their World War effort.
 - The government of India would bear the responsibility for mobilising the military, moral and material resources of India with the **cooperation of the people of India**.
 - Thus, **Indians** would immediately become **members of the Viceroy's Executive Council**, primarily with a view to prop up war efforts.
 - The leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people were invited for immediate and effective **participation in commonwealth as well as in the United Nations**.
 - Thus, they were exhorted to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task, which was vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

Indian Reaction

It was clear that whereas **the long-term goal was clearer and more specific; the short-term arrangements were left deliberately vague and inconclusive.**

Several political groups like the Hindu Mahasabha, the leaders of the depressed classes, the Akalis, Anglo-Indians, and the Indian Christians rejected the proposal for their own reasons. For example,

- **Dr. Ambedkar** rejected Cripps plan because there were no provisions to safeguard their interest.
- **Sikhs of Punjab** also rejected Cripps plan because they were apprehensive that if province of Punjab rejected new constitution they will be left at mercy of Muslims.
- **Hindu Mahasabha** rejected Cripps plan on the ground that the freedom given to provinces to accept or reject a new constant was a threat on unity and integrity of India. It wanted that the members of C.A should be elected without any safeguard for any community.

The only political party to welcome the scheme was the **Radical Democratic Party led by M.N. Roy**. But the two dominant political organisations which really mattered, viz., the Indian National Congress and the Indian Muslim league, entered a sustained negotiation with Cripps.

Negotiations with the Congress

The Congress Party was unhappy with the Cripps proposal.



- **Mahatma Gandhi**, after he came to know of the details of the proposal, asked Cripps to go back to his country by the first available plane. He even nodded his agreement when someone commented that the proposal was like 'a post-dated-cheque drawn on a crashing bank'.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru** was profoundly depressed by the contents, nature and implications of the proposal.

The Congress had serious objections to the long-term part of the proposal primarily on three counts:

- Instead of **Purna Swaraj** only dominion status had been conceded.
- Both the British provinces and the Indian states had been granted **the right to opt out** of the union, which would result in the dismemberment of the country.
 - Conceding the right of the British Provinces and the Indian states to opt out of the Union was nothing but **opening a Pandora's box for the balkanisation of India**.
 - The Cripps Mission gave a big **boost to the Muslim League** as it found in the proposal, a virtual **endorsement of its idea of Pakistan**.
- **Indian princes** had been given the right to nominate/appoint their representatives to the Constituent Assembly instead of the people being given the right to elect them directly.

However, the threat to the Japanese menace was too near to be ignored and the Congress leadership was interested in the optimal mobilisation of the people in defence of India. Hence, despite their reservation on the proposals, they willingly negotiated with Cripps on the nature and extent of immediate transfer of power to the people of India.

Thus, the Congress entered serious negotiations with Cripps on the interim arrangement to be made, even though it rejected its long-term arrangements.

Maulana Azad, the Congress President and **Jawaharlal Nehru** were the main negotiators on behalf of the Congress.

- The Congress leaders, at that time were looking for **certain concrete political gains** and they were not satisfied with mere promises for the future. They insisted that the **interim Government** must be a cabinet government with full powers including the defence portfolio. The Indian nationalists felt that the complete transfer of power to Indian hands was necessary to organise the war effort.
- The British refused to accept the Congress demand for the immediate transfer of effective power to Indians. The exigencies of the war were being used as a pretext to **deny substantial political concessions** to the Indian people, while it tried to extract maximum concessions from the Indian leadership.

The take it or leave it attitude of Stafford Cripps left Indians with no choice. **The negotiations between Cripps and the Indian leaders thus broke down.**

The Muslim League rejected the Cripps proposal as there was no assurance of a separate Muslim nation. The League did not like the idea of constituent assembly as such a body, they felt, would be dominated by the Hindus. The Muslim leaders claimed that partition was "the only solution" of India's constitutional problem.

Critical Analysis:

The Cripps Mission failed due to various reasons.

- **Cripps could not cope with the various demands floated by various Indian voices.**
 - To pacify the pluralist Indian political leadership, he too, spoke in many voices. He sought to please everybody, but in the end could not satisfy anybody.'
 - **His only ambition was to become the Prime Minister of Britain by making his mission to India a success.**
- Cripps alone was not responsible for the breakdown of the negotiation. The **Indian Viceroy, the bureaucracy, Lord Wavell and Churchill, the British Prime Minister** also contributed to the collapse of the scheme.
 - Winston Churchill could not hide his intentions when he flatly said, "I did not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire".

- It seemed more of a **window dressing** on the part of the British to meet the **pressure of the world public opinion**, rather than a genuine attempt to transfer substantial power to the people of India.

However, on several counts, the **Cripps Mission marked an important milestone** on the road to a negotiated constitutional settlement between the British Government and the people of India.



- For the first time, the British Government clearly **accepted the principle of self-determination** for the people of India. It conceded their **right to frame their own constitution**, which was a long-standing demand of the Indian national movement.
- **The British people** of all political hues got **committed to the idea of freedom for India**, which none of them could retrace subsequently.
- It was **the first major attempt of the Congress leadership to enter a detailed negotiation** with the British on their own: on all other earlier occasions, it was Mahatma Gandhi who had negotiated with the British.

But the immediate impact of the failure of the Cripps Mission was that it left the Indian people more determined to persevere on the path of struggle.

The failure of Cripps mission in satisfying Indian aspirations greatly disheartened Indian Nationalists. It also brought about a **distinct change in Gandhi's mood**. Earlier, he had been against launching any mass agitation against the colonial rulers during the war. He now asked for complete British withdrawal from India and was willing to go for a mass movement, despite the war. He realized that if British were so rigid in accepting Indian demands at a time when empire was fighting for its existence, their attitude won't be better after the end of the war.

It, therefore, provided a **historical backdrop to the Quit India Movement**.

Quit India Movement (August Revolution) (1942-45)

"Whatever the consequences to India, her real safety and that of Britain too lie in orderly and timely withdrawal from India."

Mahatma Gandhi

"No empire intoxicated with the red wine of power and plunder of weaker races has yet lived long in this world and the British Empire, which is based on organised exploitation of physically weaker races of the earth and upon a continuous exhibition of brute force, cannot live, if there is a just God ruling the universe."

Mahatma Gandhi

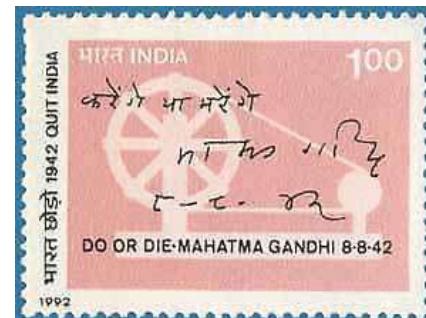
The failure of the Cripps Mission opened a new phase in India's struggle for freedom. Gandhiji had hitherto been hesitant in launching a mass movement against the British as they were busy fighting a global war. But, after the failure of the Cripps Mission, Gandhiji asked for complete British withdrawal from India. He made it clear that if the British failed to withdraw from India, he would not hesitate to launch a mass movement.

Deteriorating war situation on the eastern frontiers of India provided added urgency. As the Japanese invasion of India appeared imminent, a feeling grew that at the critical moment the British authorities might just leave the Indian people to their fate.

Causes for the Quit India Movement:

- The new popular mood of August 1942 caused by the rout of the British by the Japanese in S.E. Asia. The people came to believe firmly that the British rule was ending.
- Calculations by the Congress leaders.
 - Leaders like Gandhiji believed that the presence of British in India was inviting Japanese invasion because there was no such hostility b/w India and Japan.
 - Majority of the congress leaders, including Gandhi, began to calculate India's national interest in the event of an Allied defeat, which was very much on the card in the mid-1942.
 - When Europeans could not face the Japanese, they evacuated the whites and native were left behind at the evacuated the whites and natives were left behind at the mercy of Japanese forces. Indian leaders knew that scenario in India would be no different. Gandhiji decided to launch a mass movement against British rule, so that India could prepare its defense against possible Japanese invasion by expelling British from India.

- The arrogant behaviour of most of the foreign soldiers (British, American and Australian) stationed in India.
- The steeply rising inflation and the acute shortage of food stuffs caused by the war. The British, who were successfully managing the war economy at home, did not make any serious effort to do same in India.
- It had been more than 10 years of launching a mass movement against British. The anti-British discontent was reaching revolutionary proportions. Gandhiji knew that if a mass movement was not launched immediately the morale of people would get shattered. So, in spite of opposition from many Congress leaders, he decided to launch a mass movement.
- British provocation before and after the passage of the 'Quit India' resolution by the Congress were equally responsible for the Revolt of 1942.
- **AICC Meeting, Allahabad** (April-May 1942) and **CWC Meeting, Wardha** (14 July 1942)
 - It proposed **non-violent non-cooperation with the Japanese army**.
 - It simultaneously **called for a speedy British withdrawal** from India.
 - Once again **Gandhiji accepted the leadership of the Congress**, as it had broadly veered around his views. Now, Gandhiji started preparing for a new mass movement.
 - There was a remarkable change in Gandhi's attitude, and he seemed to be in a uniquely militant mood. He realised that the moment of his final engagement with the Raj has arrived.
 - Gandhi wrote in May 1942. "*Leave India to God... If that is too much then leave her to anarchy. This ordered disciplined anarchy go, and if there is complete lawlessness, I would risk it*".
- Historic **AICC meeting in Bombay** (8 August 1942)
(Gawalia Tank Maidan)
 - Approved **Quit India Resolution**.
 - Gandhi's speech, which followed the Resolution, clearly indicated the nature of the movement which he was to lead.
 - "*I, therefore, want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had.....I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom.....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....".

- The Quit India Resolution clearly brought about a new shift in the attitude of the nationalists. Gandhi demanded a **complete and immediate withdrawal** of the British from India. The stage was now set for the climax.

Initial Government Crackdown:

- Even before the Congress resolution of 7 August, the government had made **elaborate preparations for the suppression** of the movement.
- **Defence of India Rules**, along with several other ordinances, were issued to impose strict control over all walks of our national life.
 - On the next morning of 9th August, **all prominent leaders, including Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Azad, were put behind bars**, even before the movement was formally launched.
 - As a precautionary measure, even the **district leaders of the party were arrested**. This was followed by the **arrest of many political workers all over the country**.
 - **Many newspapers**, including the National Herald, Amrita Bazar Patrika as well as Gandhi's Harijan were banned.
 - All the branches of the **Congress were banned**. All Congress organisations were declared unlawful, and their funds were confiscated.
 - **Special courts** were set up to deal with the criminal cases. Some of them were even referred to the military courts.



Jawaharlal Nehru's room during his incarceration in Ahmednagar fort where he wrote Discovery of India (1942–1945)

The sudden arrest of our national leaders, followed by other draconian repressive measures, **failed to dampen the freedom-spirit** of the people. On the contrary, as the news of these arrests spread, tension mounted everywhere. The response of our people was instantaneous and spontaneous. The severe police repressions on peaceful public demonstrations proved to be counterproductive.

Phases of the Movement:

- **First Phase (9-15 Aug):**
 - Massive and violent but quickly suppressed.
 - Predominantly urban in nature. The first response to the government's repressive measures came from the **urban areas**.
 - Included spontaneous meetings, hartals, demonstrations, processions, strikes and clashes with the police and army in most cities. Public life came to standstill.
- **Second Phase (15 Aug – 30 Sept):**

- Focus being shifted to the countryside.
- Militant students fanning out from urban centres to rural areas in order to lead peasant rebellions and to destroy communications on a large scale.
- **Third Phase (Oct – Dec):**
 - Characterized by terrorist activity by educated youth directed against communications.
 - Least formidable: Such activities no longer posed serious threat to the British rule.

Characteristics of the Movement:

- **Region-wise**, the movement was very widespread.
 - **Four nerve-centres** of the movement were Bihar and U.P, Midnapore, Orissa and Maharashtra-Karnataka.
 - In these areas the movement took the form of a mass rebellion with elements of populism.
- The **working class** came openly in support of the movement.
 - In places like Lucknow, Kanpur, Bombay, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Madras, Delhi, and Jamshedpur the working class struck work as they favoured a national government.
 - The textile mills of Ahmedabad and the Tata Steel Mills of Tata Nagar were closed for quite some time in support of the movement.
- The **students** played a major role in the demonstrations and processions.
 - Students spread the message of "Quit India" by **writing slogans on the walls**, and even on the trees. They organized **mass meetings, distributed leaflets, pamphlets, and other revolutionary literature**. They **boycotted schools and colleges** and at many places hoisted our national flags by pulling down the Union Jack.
- **Women** played a commendable role in this movement.
 - **Matangini Hazra**: a peasant widow of 72 years, was remarkable. She led a crowd to occupy the Tamluk police station during the August movement.
 - **Kanaklata Barua and Bhogeshwari Phukanani**: was shot dead by police while leading a procession with national flag in **Assam**.
- Many **parallel governments** were set up, replacing the British administration.



- For some time, they took over the administration and virtually ran the government. Though they could not be sustained for a long time in the face of excessive use of force by the imperial administration, but for people's morale their psychological impact was tremendous.



Ballia	Eastern UP	Chittu Pandey (lion of Ballia)
Tamluk Jatiya Sarkar	Midnapore	Satish Chandra Samanta
Satara Prati Sarkar	Maharashtra	Nana Patil (Kranti Simha), YB Chavan

Participation:

However, the spread of the movement was uneven. While the Congressmen were in jails, almost all other parties opposed the Quit India movement-although for different reasons.

- The movement was **weak in Madras Presidency and Punjab**.
- QIM was opposed by a large section of the political elite, viz., the Akali Dal, Liberal Party, the Unionist Party, Ambedkar-led Scheduled Caste Federation, the Indian Muslim League, and even by the Hindu Mahasabha.
- **Muslim League** opposed it because it was now working closely with the British and saw it as a great opportunity to seek favours from the government.
- **The communists** opposed it because at this time Soviet Union was at war with Germany-and hence an ally of Britain-and the communists did not want British war efforts to be hampered by agitations in India.
- **Ambedkar** opposed Mahatma Gandhi's decision, in August 1942, to launch QIM. He declared that the "patriotic duty of all Indians" was rather to prevent such movements from creating "anarchy and chaos which would unquestionably help and facilitate the subjugation of this country by Japan". From 1942 to 1946, he remained as a member of Viceroy Executive Council.
- **The business class** remained aloof. **Landlord** were with the government because of the prominence of socialist ideas within Congress at this stage.
- Except in Mysore, the movement was also **weak in Princely India**.

Gandhiji's 21 days Fast (10 Feb – 3 Mar 1942)

- Since the beginning of the movement, the Government was squarely blaming the Congress for all the violence that was let loose in the country. It **accused Mahatma Gandhi of inciting violence**.
- **Gandhiji tried to explain** that the movement was designed to remain non-violent. He refused to condemn popular violence because he saw it as a reaction to the state's much greater violence.

- When he failed to convince the Government that the people's violence was **in response to violence of the Government**, he decided to undertake a 21 day fast. The fast was directed against the violence of the state.
- Tremendous pressure was brought on the Government to release Gandhiji while he was on fast:
 - Many **people returned the honors** conferred to them by the Government. Prominent among them was Allah Baksh Khan, the Premier of Sindh.
 - **Three members of the Viceroy's Executive Council**, namely, HP Modi, N R Sarkar and MS Aney followed suit and **resigned**.
 - Gandhiji's fast gave a new momentum to the movement as it **inspired several freedom fighters** to keep the flag of the movement flying.
 - Outsiders and inmates alike participated in sympathetic fasts. People travelled in secret to Poona to offer Satyagraha outside the Aga Khan Palace, where Gandhiji was imprisoned.
 - Thousands of letters and telegrams were sent to the government from people from all walks of life, including students and youth, men in trade and commerce, lawyers, ordinary citizens, and labour organisations, demanding his release.
 - It had **evoked worldwide interest** in India's cause. It put the case of Indian independence on the world agenda.
 - Newspapers such as the Manchester Guardian, New Statesmen, Nation, News Chronicle, and Chicago Sun, as well as the British Communist Party, citizens of London and Manchester, the Women's International League, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and the Ceylon State Council, demanded his release from across the seas.
- But the Government stuck to its position and refused to release Gandhiji.
 - The Viceroy and his officials, on the other hand, were unmoved. They arrogantly refused to show any concern for Indian feelings.
 - Winston Churchill's statement to his Cabinet, "*this our hour of triumph everywhere in the world was not the time to crawl before a miserable old man who had always been our enemy.*"
 - The Government brought out a pamphlet '**Congress Responsibility for the Disturbance of 1942-43**' blaming the Congress and its leader Mahatma Gandhi for violence during the movement.

The fast achieved the following purposes:

Gandhiji got the better of his opponents and refused to die. The fast had accomplished exactly what it had set out to do. The public mood was lifted, anti-British sentiment was heightened, and political activity was made possible.

1. Public morale was raised.
2. Anti-British feeling was heightened.
3. An opportunity was provided for political activity.
4. Government's high-handedness was exposed.

Subsequently, Gandhiji was released on 6 May 1944 on health grounds.

Suppression of the Movement:

The Government let loose a **virtual reign of terror**. Winston Churchill, British PM, said in the Parliament (September, 1942), "*the disturbances were crushed with all the weight of a Government... large reinforcements have reached India and the number of white soldiers now in that country, although very small compared to its size and population, are larger than at any time...*"

- The **government imposed collective fines** on 173 occasions, collecting over Rs one crore in fines from the people.
- With the arrival of the **military and mounted police**, a reign of terror was let loose. In many places **villages were looted and burnt, women were raped, men were slaughtered, and children were tortured**.
- All kinds of forces including **firing by machine-guns from the air** were used against the people. According to the Government's own records police firing was resorted to on 601 occasions in which hundreds of people lost their lives.
- More than a **hundred thousand people were put behind bars** in the course of the movement. Nearly 25,000 people were convicted and were sentenced to various periods of imprisonment. About 50 people were awarded the death sentence. According to unofficial estimates, at least 10,000 people lost their lives in the course of the movement.

Bipan Chandra says, "*India had not witnessed such intense repression since the Revolt of 1857.*" In face of such massive repression, it was not surprising that the Government succeeded in suppressing the major chunk of the movement by the end of 1942. Thereafter, the movement went underground.

Underground Phase of the Movement:

- **Congress Socialist Party led by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP).**
 - The prominent socialist leaders who were in the forefront in underground resistances **were Rammanohar Lohia, Ram Nandan Mishra, Acharya Narendra Dev, Basawan Singh, Achyut Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta** and others.
- The revolutionary movement in **Bihar** was strengthened by the presence of **Jayaprakash Narayan**.
- In **Bombay**, **Usha Mehta** and **Rammanohar Lohia** organised a secret **Radio Station** to broadcast the message of the movement.
- **Attack on the symbols of the government** like police stations, courts, post offices and railway stations.



However, the movement declined due to several factors:

- The chief weakness of the movement was **lack of coordination**.
 - It was a loose decentralized type of movement. There was no central command after the arrests of leaders to direct the movement in various provinces.
- There was **no proper organization and programme of action** in the movement.
 - Organization meant secrecy which had no place in Gandhi's notion of non-violent Satyagraha. When the first phase of the campaign was over, there was no further programme placed before the people.
 - Jayaprakash Narayan cited the instance of Ballia and some other places where the people had captured power but had no clear plan of future action.
- **Lack of funds** was another weakness of the movement.
- The movement was weakened **by various dissident voices** from within India.
 - Indian communists openly opposed the movement and did everything to help the British war-effort.
 - Muslims, excepting the small group of nationalists followed the advice of the Muslim League. They condemned the movement and kept aloof from the struggle.
- Most importantly, the movement went down in the face of **brutal repression** undertaken by the police and the military.



Success or failure?

It is true that the movement could not force the British to quit India at once.

- 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.
- **Intensity**
 - QIM was the most intense mass struggle of Indian nationalists against British rule. It infused great energy in anti-British struggle. The level of radicalization was carried to revolutionary proportions. It transformed India's struggle against British into an all-out war. It was the fight to finish because it was never suspended or called off.
 - 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.
- The **magnitude** of the movement was unprecedented. It was one of the biggest mass upsurges in the history of modern India.

- It commenced like a spontaneous revolution because with one call of Gandhiji, lakhs of nationalists jumped into fight against BR. Large scale agitations and demonstrations were witnessed throughout India. It appeared as if people were waiting for their final struggle against colonial British Rule.
 - The large-scale mass participation in QIM inspite of the arrest of all national level leaders exhibited the maturity of Indian nationalism. The contribution of local leaders was most important during QIM because they led the anti-British struggle from front.
 - The role of women was remarkable during QIM. Leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali led the anti-British struggle from front while Usha Mehta established a secret congress radio to transmit nationalist message.
 - The launching of QIM carried the level of nationalist awaking to new heights. Even the civil servants and armed forces got infected with the spirit of nationalism.
 - British administration was completely paralyzed by Nationalist activities at many places. Parallel governments were formed at Satara, Balia and Tamluk.
 - It transformed the anti-British struggle into a true pan India movement because for the first time the national movement was extended to native states.
- **Loyalty to Government suffered considerable erosion.** This also showed how deep nationalism had reached. The complete breakdown of law and order in many places and the rise of independent governments of the Indian people made the British realise that their days in India were numbered.
 - The British, thought succeeded in surprising the revolt, realised the advantages of trying for a negotiated settlement rather than risk another confrontation as massive and violent as this revolt.
 - In terms of its **ideological import**, it made a subtle departure from earlier Gandhian movements: It was a kind of open people's rebellion, in which participants were free to use all means at their disposal except overtly causing physical violence to the wielders of the imperial power. Though non-violence was to be its guiding norm, the people were not supposed to make a fetish of it.
 - In terms of **impact**, it stood out from all earlier movements as it virtually gave a deathblow to the British rule in India. It certainly demolished the very foundation of the British rule in India. It gave a loud and clear message to them-pack up and go home by the first available plane.
 - The movement put the Indian struggle on the **world agenda**.
 - The Indian struggle, standing on a high moral pedestal, turned out to be the trailblazer for the oppressed and the enslaved people of the world. It is not for nothing that Indian independence started a process of decolonization leading to the freedom of many enslaved people in the post-war period.

QIM shook the foundations of British Rule, as a result of which the British Indian empire came to an end within five years and British had to transfer power into Indian hands.

Famine of 1943

It resulted in the deaths of some three million people due to malnutrition or disease.

While many famines are the result of inadequate food supply, the Bengal famine did not coincide with any significant shortfall in food production. According to the Indian economist **Amartya Sen**, who himself witnessed the famine as a nine-year-old boy, the famine was the result of an **entitlement failure**. In other words, the distribution of the food supply throughout Bengali society was hindered primarily by economic factors that affected the ability of certain groups of people to purchase food.

Events in 1942 had a relatively minor impact on the supply of food. After Burma (Myanmar) and Singapore fell to Japan in 1942 in the midst of World War II, **rice exports** from those countries were halted. A **cyclone** in October 1942 also **damaged the autumn rice crop** and put pressure on the following year's crop because, to survive, many subsistence farmers had to consume grain meant for planting. Still, the 1942 halt in rice imports to India did not cause the famine, and the 1943 crop yield was actually sufficient to feed the people of Bengal.

It was **ultimately special wartime factors** that caused this difficult situation to become a disastrous famine.

- Fearing Japanese invasion, **British authorities stockpiled food to feed defending troops, and they exported considerable quantities to British forces in the Middle East.**
- They also **confiscated boats, carts, and elephants** in Chittagong, where the invasion was expected. This deprived fishermen and their customers of the ability to operate and generally inhibited the sort of low-level commerce upon which many Bengalis relied for survival.

In the wake of these actions by the British, anxiety about shortages caused **hoarding, speculation, and consequent price inflation** that put even a basic subsistence diet beyond the means of many of Bengal's workers.

The **government's failure to halt rice exports or seek relief supplies** from elsewhere resulted in a disaster that killed millions of people.

GS Foundation 2024: Modern India
Handout 41: The Indian National Army
Nikhil Sheth

"Netaji's name is one to conjure with. His patriotism is second to none. The lesson that Netaji and his army brings to us is one of self-sacrifice, unity — irrespective of class and community — and discipline."

Gandhi, Harijan 12 Feb 1946

The Quit India Movement had spent its fury by the end of 1942. Political activity inside India came to a standstill for the time being. Most of the established leaders were behind the bars. The Indian national movement, however, found a new dimension outside the country's frontiers. This time the movement centred round Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the most dynamic political leaders the country had ever produced.

• **Bose' stance**

- Bose became increasingly convinced that the much-cherished dream of freedom from colonialism could never be achieved through peaceful negotiation. He was convinced that freedom could be achieved only through direct armed conflict with the British and to achieve this he was prepared to take the help of foreign powers, if necessary. The Second World War and the international situation created by the War offered him the opportunity he was looking for.
- The British authorities in India were aware of Bose's ultra-radical and they considered him as the most dangerous element among the Indian leadership. Subhas Chandra was arrested under the Defence of India Rules in **July, 1940**, as soon as the Second World War broke out.
- Bose undertook fasting in jail and fell ill. On **December 5**, he was removed to his Calcutta residence and kept in confinement.

• **The Great Escape**

- On **16 January 1941** he managed to escape from his Elgin Road residence by dodging the police and slipped away from Calcutta. It was one of the exciting escapes in the history of the revolutionary movement of the world. He travelled by 'road, rail, air, pack animal and on foot if necessary' in different disguises (eg Pathan) to reach Afghanistan.



- Bose's prayer for military assistance, however, was turned down as at that time Stalin, who was hoping to strike an alliance with Great Britain against a possible German aggression.
- Being denied Russian help, he reached Rome, and from there he travelled to Germany.

- **In Europe**

- **18 March** Bose reached Berlin.
- He met both **Hitler and Mussolini** assured Bose of all necessary help. But in reality, he did not get much support in Germany.
- He delivered **anti-British speeches** from the **Berlin Radio**.
- With the help of the German Government, he set up the **radio station** called **Azad Hindustan** in January, 1942.
- In Germany, Bose raised a 3000-strong army called **Free Indian Legion** in Jan 1942. This army was comprised of the Indian PoWs captured by Germany in North Africa.
- Bose wanted the German government to make a categorical announcement for Indian independence, which the latter was not willing to do. Also, at the same time, Germany had started to face reverse in Russia (battle of Stalingrad).
- When he met Hitler in May 1942, his suspicions were confirmed, and he came to believe that the Nazi leader was more interested in using his men to win propaganda victories than military ones.
- Consequently, Bose did not see much of an independent role for himself from the German territory, which prompted him to look for an alternative.



- **Developments in SE Asia (Eastern Theatre)**

- Japanese jumped in the war fray and made spectacular success in the Southeast Asian war front. When the **Japanese captured Singapore** on 15 February 1942.
- **Mohan Singh** enlisted the support of **15,000-20,000 prisoner soldiers** out of 40,000 (being the total number of the Indian prisoners of war, who had surrendered at Singapore in early 1942).
- **Indian Independence League** was formed as the civilian-political wing in Feb 19342, in the cause of Indian freedom under the leadership of **Rasbehari Bose**.
 - **Tokyo Conference** (March 1942): to discuss war and the Indian situation. Here, the idea of the Indian National Army emerged.
 - **Bangkok Conference** (June 1942): Bigger conference.
 - Attended by some of the representatives of the Indian PoWs captured by the Japanese.
 - Decided to extend an invitation to Subhas Chandra Bose to take up the leadership of the Indian National Army.

- **First Phase of Indian National Army** (Formal inauguration on 1 September 1942)

- At that stage the INA was prepared to go into action against the British only on the invitation of the Indian National Congress. The outbreak of the Quit India movement boosted up the INA. However, on the issue of the independent role for the Indian army, Mohan Singh fell out with the Japanese and was even arrested for a while. Mohan Singh disagreed with the Japanese and faced imprisonment.



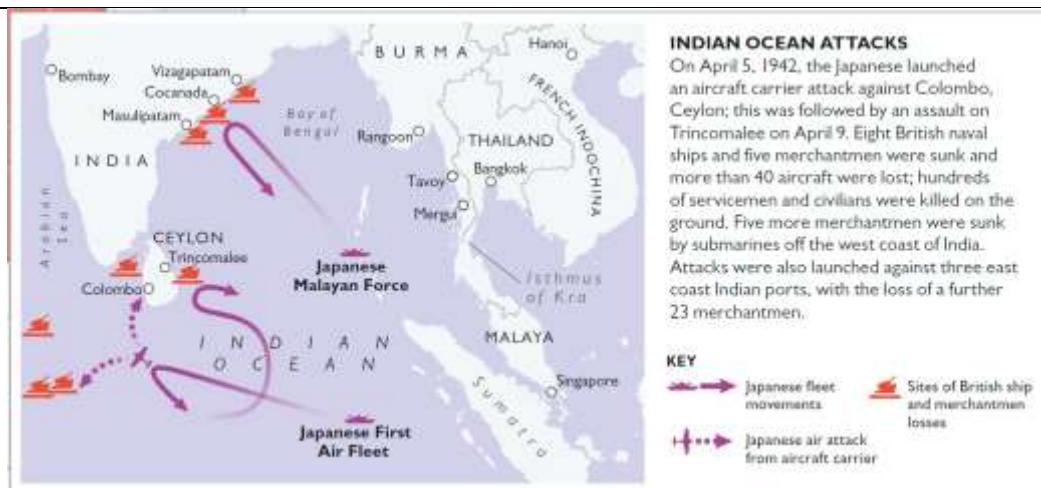
Mohan Singh, Major Fujiwara



Japanese Success in Burma and British Retreat

Japanese captured Burma in 1942. The British, cut off from the supplies and facing reinforced Japanese army, began messy retreat to India during which they left behind much of their equipment. After the invasion, Japanese installed a puppet government in Burma. Many Burmese came to believe that Japanese had no intention of giving them real independence. The

Burma National Army, created under the leadership of Aung San changed sides in 1944 and fought with Japanese on the sides of allies. The Japanese were evicted from Burma eventually in 1945. During the occupation, almost 1.7-2.5L Burmese civilians died.



- **Bose in the East**

- With Japanese progress in SE Asia and activiti

- o es of India Independence League, Bose visualized better role for himself in the cause of Indian Independence, in the South-East Asian region.

- Indian nationalist movement didn't view the Japanese as a friend of India as it was a Fascist govt. Its sympathies were with the people of those countries which had fallen victims to Japan's aggression.
- Netaji however believed that with the help of INA, supported by Japan, and a revolt inside India, the British rule over India could be ended. Thus, slogans of Chalo Delhi and Jai Hind are a source of inspiration.

- o 13 June 1943

- Netaji made a secret and hazardous 90-days (U-boat) **submarine voyage to reach Tokyo.**

- o June 1943

- Bose met Hideki Tojo, the Japanese dictator, who said that he envisaged independence for India after the War. He had failed to get from Hitler such **assurance on the issue of Indian independence.**
- Being assured by the Japanese that they had no territorial designs on India, he started a thorough reorganization of the Indian National Army.

- o 2 July

- He reached Singapore where a hero's welcome awaited him.



Netaji proclaims the Provisional Government on 21st October 1943, Singapore.



Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose reviewing his INA troops in Singapore in 1943.



Unity (Etihaad), Faith (Etmad), Sacrifice (Kurbani)



Rani Jhansi Regiment



Greater East Asia Conference in November 1943

Participants (L2R): Ba Maw, Zhang Jinghui, Wang Jingwei, Hideki Tojo, Wan Waithayakon, José P. Laurel, Subhas Bose.

- 4 July 1943

- Rashbehari Bose generously offered Netaji the Presidentship of the Indian Independence League.
- He appealed to all **people of Indian origin living in the South-East Asian region**, to extend every possible help in the cause of India's freedom.

- 5 July 1943

- Formation of **Azad Hind Fauz**
- Clarion call of **Chalo Delhi**.

- 25 August 1943

- Formally assumed the direct command of the Indian National Army.

- **Provisional Government**

- 21 October 1943: Formation of the provisional government of India

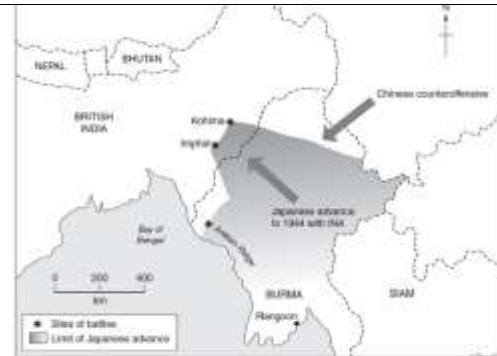
- Bose as the head of the Government and the C-in-C of the Army.
- AC Chatterjee was to be the in-charge of Finance.
- SA Aiyar as the in-charge of publicity and propaganda
- Laxmi Swaminathan as the in-charge of women's affairs.

- Activities of the Provisional Government

- Declared war against the Allied powers.
- Within a short period of time Japan and eight other countries (Germany, Italy, Croatia, Burma,



Indian National Army marching in Rangoon, 1944



Japanese advance in Burma, showing battles involving the INA in 1944.



Burma Campaign (1942-44)

Thailand, Philippines, Manchuria etc) offered diplomatic recognition to this Provisional Government.

- 6 November 1943
 - Japanese handed over the islands of Andaman and Nicobar to the provisional government of India, and Subhas Chandra Bose set his feet on the soil of India, renaming them as **Shahid and Swaraj Islands**.
- **Second Phase of Indian National Army**
 - After the arrival of Bose, it reached around 40,000.
 - Civilians, such as Indian plantation labourers in Malaya, petty traders in Burma and shopkeepers in Thailand, swelled its ranks.
 - “*Punjabi, Muslim, Sikh and Pathan professional soldiers mingled with Tamil and Malayali workers in a “national army” led by a Bengali*” - Ayesha Jalal
 - “*Bose’s instantaneous and electric leadership turned the INA affair from a footnote in history into enough of a threat to create serious concern among the British*” – Stephen Cohen
 - Bose set up two INA headquarters in Rangoon and Singapore. Recruits were trained and funds were raised.
 - Different training centers for male and female recruits.
 - The training period for the recruits lasted for six months.
 - Regiments
 - Gandhi Brigade, Nehru Brigade and Subhas Brigade (guerilla warfare)
 - Rani Jhansi Brigade headed by Laxmi Swaminathan (women recruits)
 - Important commanders: Shahnawaz Khan, G.S. Dhillon and P.K. Sahgal.
- **The INA Campaign was a part of the U Go Offensive (March 1944):**
 - It was a Japanese offensive aimed at the Brahmaputra Valley. The offensive culminated in the Battles of Imphal and Kohima. It was one of the last major Japanese offensives during the Second World War.
 - Bose was eager for the INA to participate in any invasion of India, and persuaded Japanese that a victory would lead to the collapse of British rule in India.
 - INA launched an organized armed struggle against the British from the north-eastern frontier of India. The idea was to march, along with the Japanese army, through Burma to Imphal (Manipur) and then to Assam, where the Indians were expected to join them in an open struggle to free India.
 - Achievements
 - Entered inside the Indian Territory near **Mowdock post** – fifty miles east of Cox's Bazar.
 - **Battle of Imphal, Battle of Kohima**
- However, Japanese as well as INA were first held and then pushed back. The Japanese defeats at Kohima and Imphal were the largest up until that time.
 - The British and Indian forces had lost around 17,000 men. The Japanese suffered 60,000+ casualties. Most of these losses were the result of starvation, disease and exhaustion.

- In May 1945, the British troops occupied Rangoon and 20,000 INA troops were obliged to surrender.

	
 Mountbatten of Burma with Joe Stilwell	 Stillwell Road or Ledo Road

Causes of the failure of INA

- Bad **monsoon**, tough and treacherous **topography** of the fighting zone.
- INA was not significant enough to militarily beat the British Indian Army.
 - Bose was aware of this and formulated his own strategy of avoiding set-piece battles, garnering local and popular support within India and instigating revolt within the British Indian army to overthrow the Raj.
 - **The Forward Bloc** underground within India had been crushed well before the offensives opened in the Burma-Manipur theatre, depriving the army of any organised internal support.
- **Big British counter-offensive (1944-45):** By May 1945, both the Japanese army and the contingent of INA had to withdraw from the Indian front when Rangoon was captured by the British force.
- **Withdrawal of the Japanese support** was the main reason for its defeat.
 - **Without air-support**, the INA became weaker as a fighting force.
 - **Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 1945):** Immediate surrender by Japan
- **Alleged death of Subhas Chandra Bose** in an air crash on 18 August 1945.

Thus ended the brilliant political career of one of the bravest sons India ever produced.

The larger perspective of Indian soldiers in World War 2:

Despite the opposition, the impact of INA soldiers, fighting on side of Axis powers, was slight compared to the Indian soldiers fighting on the side of Allies, in British Indian army. INA strength of around 15,000 while British Indian army expanded greatly in wartime, reaching around 26,00,000 in 1945.

The INA's role in military terms is relatively insignificant, given its small numerical strength, lack of heavy weapons (it utilised captured British and Dutch arms initially), relative dependence on Japanese logistics and planning as well as its lack of independent planning.

Indian units were deployed widely – in Iraq, Ethiopia, North Africa, Italy – but their main goal was to prevent Japanese from crossing over to India (1942-44) and to defend Burma against the Japanese. It failed in the spring of 1942 but succeeded in 1944-45, when they drove out Japanese from Burma, with the help of Allied forces.

The contribution of the Indian National Army:

It is true that the Indian National Army, despite its valour and dedication, failed to achieve its basic objective of freeing the country from the British yoke. There were many reasons for it including lack of resources, limited number of soldiers, lack of proper training and its dependence on Japanese support.

Despite apparent failure, it made a singular contribution in the cause of the Indian independence. It constitutes a glorious chapter in India's freedom struggle.

- The INA, during the war, **penetrated 150 miles inside** the country.
 - **4000+ Indian soldiers** gave away their lives in the war in a courageous attempt.
- The attempt of Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA **quickened India's freedom**. The tale of their bravery and sacrifices caught the imagination of people all over India.
- The sacrifice of INA men struck a sympathy in the hearts of Indian soldiers fighting on British side.
 - It soon affected the Indian army and revolt of the Royal Navymen was partly attributed to the resentment among the Indian armed forces against the INA trial. Perhaps the fear of a wider revolt by the Indian armed forces also contributed to the hastening of the end of the British rule.
- INA experiment underlined the fact of the composite nature of our culture and the fact of Hindu-Muslim unity. This was remarkable as it was during that period that the Muslim League led by Jinnah was playing its nefarious game of Hindu-Muslim disunity. INA played a glorious role in promoting the secular character of our freedom struggle.



(Padmashri) Janaki Thevar took over the (second in command) leadership of INA's Rani of Jhansi regiment in Burma when she was just 18 years old.



Nikhil Sheth with Captain Lakshmi Sahgal



Neven Thyne Collection
Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



INA Monument, Singapore

Bose built in 1945, Mountbatten destroyed it

Restored in 1995 with diaspora donations

"The future generations of Indians who will be born, not as slaves but as free men, because of your colossal sacrifice, will bless your names and proudly proclaim to the world that you, their forbears, fought and suffered reverses in the battle of Manipur, Assam and Burma. But through temporary failure you paved the way to ultimate success and glory."

—Subhas Chandra Bose while paying homage to the martyrs of the INA while laying foundation stone of the Former INA Monument at Singapore on 8 July 1945.

GS Foundation 2024: Modern India
Handout 42: The Post-war Upsurge (1945-46)

Nikhil Sheth

With the end of the Second World War in April 1945, India's freedom struggle entered the final phase. When the government lifted the ban on the Congress and released the Congress leaders in June 1945, they expected to find a demoralised people. Instead, they found tumultuous crowds impatient to do something. Indian people were now ready to launch the penultimate phase of their struggle. Popular energy resurfaced after three years of repression. People's expectations were heightened by the release of their leaders.

Red Fort Trials (Nov 45 – May 46)

"Laal quile se aayi aawaz, Sahgal, Dhillon, Shahnawaaz".

"[the trials] gave form to the old contest: England vs India...a trial of strength between the will of the Indian people and the will of those who hold power in India". – Nehru

- The political impact of Subhas Bose's effort was felt in India after his journey was over. The 20,000 INA soldiers who surrendered were interrogated and sent back to India.
- There were **ten trials in total**; the most celebrated one was that of the three INA commanders—**P. K. Sehgal, G. S. Dhillon and Shah Nawaz Khan**—in the Red Fort in Delhi. Sehgal, Dhillon and Khan were charged with **treason, murder and abatement of murder**. It was followed by the trials of Abdul Rashid, Shinghara Singh, Fateh Khan and Captain Malik Munawar Khan Awan.
- The government planned the **Public Trial**, but this **created a big stir in the politics of the country**. The government's idea behind the public trial was to appraise the public of the 'horrors' committed by INA and ruthlessly penalize the army officers for treason. The exact opposite came to pass.
- The **Congress leadership** spontaneously supported the INA and criticised the British Government.
 - Congress leaders, sensitive to public opinion, decided to defend the accused of the INA trial and the AICC announced the formation of a Defence Committee for these 'misguided patriots'. The Indian National Congress made the release of the three defendants an important political issue during the agitation for independence of 1945-6.
 - Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Jinnah joined the team of defence lawyers with Bhulabhai Desai and Tej Bahadur Sapru in defending the INA prisoners.
 - The Indian National Congress passed a resolution in September 1945 in their support.
 - Soon an INA relief committee was set up for fund mobilisation. The people liberally contributed to this fund.
 - An INA week was observed from 5 to 11 November and large number of meetings were held all over the country in which every political party participated, including the Muslim League.
- **Student Movement** in Calcutta (21-23 Nov 1945)



- The students in Calcutta organized massive protests and demonstrations in the city. There was a popular outburst in Calcutta which set a pattern of periodic upheavals in the city. A large procession was taken out, consisting of students as well as people, led by different political groups. A series of strikes in schools, colleges, offices, factories swept over the city. Several students were killed in this agitation which further spread in the subsequent days as it was joined by the working class and taximen.

- Communal harmony**

- This movement marked the **last major campaign in which the forces of the Congress and the Muslim League aligned together**; the Congress tricolor and the green flag of the League were flown together at protests. The **remarkable communal harmony** demonstrated in the riots unnerved the colonial administration.

- The INA trial had evoked a strong protest in the Indian army.**

- What disturbed the British the most was the impact of the INA trials on the loyalty of the army. Even though a majority of Indian army personnel remained loyal, there was great empathy and admiration for INA commanders.
- Several men in uniform not only contributed to the fund being raised for supporting the INA men, but they also attended in uniform the reception being extended to the released INA prisoners.

- Successful outcome**

- Despite this aggressive and widespread opposition, the court martial was carried out and all three defendants were sentenced to deportation for life. This sentence, however, was never carried out, as the immense public pressure of the demonstrations forced **Claude Auchinleck**, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, to release all three defendants.
- This was followed by a remission of sentences for the first batch of INA undertrials. Soon this was followed by the gradual withdrawal of Indian soldiers from Indo-China and Indonesia, which was one the major demands of the people.

- Rashid Ali and Calcutta Riots (Feb 1946)**

- But that was not the end of the matter. When **Abdul Rashid of the INA was sentenced to 7-years rigorous imprisonment**, Calcutta once again exploded, once again firing took place in which a number of people were killed.
- Both the Hindus and the Muslims participated in those demonstrations. Quite a few students died when the police opened fire on the demonstrations.



The INA Defence Committee: Katju, Sapru, Nehru, Asaf Ali, Bhulabhai Desai



Captain Ram Singh, who had composed the patriotic song 'Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja' plays the violin for Gandhiji at the Harijan Colony, 1945



The number of demonstrations and hartals in the country during 1945-46 was very high. There was not a single industry which was not affected by working class unrest. Discontent was widespread even among the Indian members of the Indian Air Force, Police, Post and Telegraph etc. This discontent found manifestation in the Royal Indian Navy uprising in 1946.

The Revolt of the Royal Indian Navy (1946) (RIN Mutiny)

INA might less successful directly but the army, main pillar of the Raj, was infected with nationalism due the activities of INA. Now it directed its guns against British themselves.

Sunil Khilnani

'the gulf that separated the people from the armed forces had once for all been bridged. The janata and soldier have come very close to each other.' – Nehru

"The discipline of the army cannot be tampered with since we will want an army even in free India." – Patel

The naval mutiny, which occurred in Bombay and other harbours of India, was one of the most heroic episodes in India's struggle for freedom.

- **Background**

- The R.I.N. was the most colonial of all colonial institutions. Racial discrimination in the crudest form continued unabated in the institution.
- To meet the war-time requirements there was a recruitment drive to enlarge the Royal Indian Navy which brought in men from all parts of the country.
- Their recent exposure to the wider world while serving the empire during the Second World War, excitement due to INA trial and the ongoing country-wide popular upsurge had a growing impact on the RIN.

- **Beginning and spread of Mutiny:**

- On **February 18, 1946**, the ratings of the naval ship **Talwar at the Bombay Port** went on hunger-strike against bad food and racial insults.
- They took control of the ships and with mounted guns, they were willing to open fire. The rebels jointly raised on the mastheads of the rebel fleet the tricolour, crescent and hammer-and-sickle. The ratings renamed the Royal Indian Navy as the Indian National Navy and announced that hereafter they would take orders only from the national leaders.
- A **Naval Central Strike Committee** headed by **M.S. Khan** was set up. They put forward five major demands.
 - Better food
 - Equal pay for both Indian and white sailors
 - Release of INA and other political prisoners
 - Indianization of the Navy
 - Withdrawal of British troops from Indonesia

- **Soon, the strike spread to other naval establishments:**

- The revolt quickly spread to Calcutta, Madras, Karachi and other ports. By 22 February, the strike virtually engulfed all the naval bases of the country involving 78 ships, 20 shore establishments and 20,000 Ratings.

- Mutiny in the city of Bombay**

- The rebel soldiers in Bombay organised demonstrations on the streets carrying the flags of the Congress, the League and the communists. They looted the armoury in Bombay. Admiral Godfrey asked the rebels to surrender. He threatened them to destroy the navy. The Maratha artillery refused to open fire on the vessels when they were ordered to do so.
- The rebels enjoyed the support of the common people. They were joined by the working class of Bombay, which struck work and joined demonstrations in their favour. Thus, the **R.I.N uprising took a mass character** in which thousands of people participated.
- On February 21, when the British forces opened fire on the sailors, the movement took a violent turn. The movement went on spontaneously until February 24. In several clashes between the army and the people more than 300 people were killed and 2,000 injured.

- Reaction by the National leadership**

- The rebels expected that the nationalist leaders would offer their support to the revolt. Nehru, Patel and Azad condemned the actions of the ratings.
 - Jinnah advised the ratings to surrender.
 - Gandhi suggested that if the British officials misbehaved with the Indian sailors, the latter had the right to resign from their jobs.
 - Even the communist leaders did not show much sympathy for the rebels.
- Finally, when Admiral Godfrey threatened to destroy the city of Bombay by repeated shelling, Patel managed to persuade the ratings to surrender on **February 23, 1946**, giving an assurance that the national parties would do whatever was necessary to prevent any victimization of the rebels.
- It is true that the RIN revolt had a short span of life. But it clearly demonstrated that the British could no longer take the loyalty of the Indian soldiers for granted. Besides, a stern message also went home to them that in future the people and the army might join hands to throw them out from the Indian soil. All this, perhaps, hastened the process of the British decision to end their occupation of India at their earliest.



HMIS Talwar, Bombay



C Rajaji Formula and Gandhi-Jinnah Talks (1944)

It was the plan prepared by C. Rajagopalachari with instruction from Gandhiji to settle the differences prevailing between Congress and ML in March 1944.

It proposed Congress-League cooperation on the following terms:

1. Immediately

- a. Muslim League to endorse Congress demand for independence. Both Congress and Muslim League should work together for the attainment of independence from British Rule.
- b. League to cooperate with Congress in forming a provisional government at centre.



2. Long Term

- a. The issue of partition will be decided *after* independence by holding a *plebiscite* in Muslim majority areas.
- b. Even in case of partition, both units shall maintain co-operation on essential matters such as defense, foreign affairs, communication, and currency.

3. The above terms to be operative only if England transferred full powers to India.

It was a tacit acceptance of the League's demand for Pakistan. Gandhi supported the formula. It was discussed by Gandhiji and Jinnah at Bombay in June 1944, after his release from jail.

The talks failed and the formula could not resolve the prevailing deadlock because Jinnah insisted that the issue of partition should be decided at *before* independence and only then he would co-operate for the attainment off independence. His points of objection were:

- 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.

Desai Liaqat Pact

Bhulabhai Desai was a Congress leader in central legislative assembly and Liyaqat Ali Khan was deputy leader of ML in the same house. With the blessings of Gandhiji in Jan 1945 they held talks to find solution for the political deadlock prevailing in India due to differences between Congress and Muslim League. They came up with the draft proposal for the formation of an interim government at the centre:

1. Both Congress and ML should have equal places in the interim government.
2. Both Congress and ML should work together for the attainment of Independence

These talks failed to find a solution for the prevailing political deadlock because when Jinnah came to know about it, he immediately repudiated the talks. 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.

The Wavell Plan and Shimla Conference (1945)

The Second World War came to an end in May 1945. Various international developments and developments within India, **convinced Britain, that, Indian independence could not be delayed**. The Plan was an **interim measure or a stop-gap arrangement**, basically to meet with some of the **commitments made in the Cripps proposal**, because:

- The war with Japan in the Pacific was still going on.
- General elections were soon to take place in Britain and any long-term decision could be taken only by the new government.

In this context, the real problem at this stage was to establish a transitional government acceptable to both the Congress and the Muslim League.

In June 1945, Wavell announced a scheme to ease the political situation and to push India forward towards her goal of full-scale self-government. This is known as the '**Wavell Plan**'.

The Wavell Plan offered **reconstitution of the Viceroy's Executive Council**:

- All the members of this executive council barring the Viceroy and the commander-in-chief would be Indians. The vital department of external affairs would be in the hands of an Indian member.



- The Executive Council was already predominantly of Indians at this time, but the members were non-political. So, Viceroy was now to pick members of the Executive Council out of persons nominated by the political parties.
- Different communities were to get a share in the Council and parity was to be ensured between Hindus and Muslims.

Most of the Congress leaders were **released in June 1945 to enable them to participate in the Shimla conference** (June 1945) called by the Viceroy to discuss the proposals and find a way out of the political deadlock, in order to setup a new executive council.

However, this conference ended in a failure because

- League demanded that Muslims not belonging to the League could not be appointed to the Executive Council. Jinnah insisted that the Muslim League should be taken as the sole representative of the Muslim masses.
- The Congress was not prepared to accept such demands of the Muslim League. Maulana Azad, as the leader of Congress delegation, maintained that Congress represented all the communities of India, and thus had the right to nominate Muslim members as well, and that it would not accept to be labelled as a Hindu party.

It was becoming gradually clear that **nothing less than Pakistan was acceptable to the Muslim League and Jinnah.**

Since the deadlock could not be resolved, the Viceroy dropped the proposal.

Wavell's Mistake: Wavell announced a breakdown of talks. It gave the League a virtual veto and strengthened its position. It came as a great encouragement for ML because Jinnah got convinced that no effort towards constitutional advancement in India would succeed without the consent of ML. It boosted ML's position, as was evident from the elections in 1945-46. Thus, the real character of the Conservative government of Churchill was exposed.

Cabinet Mission (1946)

It was the last attempt towards a negotiated settlement for Indian independence, while keeping its unity intact.

Background:

- In July 1945, the **general elections were held in Great Britain**. In this election the conservatives were defeated, and the **Labour Party under the leadership of Atlee** came to power. The Labour Party which assumed office was in favour of acceding to the Indian demands. In August 1945, Japan also surrendered, putting the final end to the World War 2.
- As a first step, Atlee announced
 - **General elections** would be held in India for the Central and the Provincial assemblies. It was also declared that an Executive Council would be formed and a constitution making body would be called after the elections.
 - He said that the high-power delegation would include three members of the British Parliament. This is known as the **Cabinet Mission**. It comprised of **Pethick-Lawrence**, the Secretary of State for India and two members of the British Cabinet **Sir Stafford Cripps** and **A.V. Alexander**. It was **to work out the details of transfer of power**.

Central and Provincial Elections (Dec 1945 – Feb 1946):

The election results showed communal polarization.

- **Central Assembly**
 - Congress won all the 59 general seats but none of the Muslim seats.
 - Muslim League won all the 30 seats reserved for Muslims.
- **Provincial Assemblies**
 - Congress won 90% of the general non-Muslim seats, including almost all the seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, and formed governments in 8 provinces.
 - ML got 446 (or 423) out 495 (or 491) Muslim seats and formed governments in Bengal and Sindh.
 - In **Punjab**, it had tremendously improved its position by winning 79 seats as against the Unionist Party getting only 10 seats. The result of the Punjab Assembly was more dramatic as in the 1937 election the League had acquired only one seat. A coalition government of Congress, Unionist Party and the Akalis was formed in Punjab.
 - Congress had fielded only 94 candidates for the 491 Muslim seats and won 34 – about 30/34 were in **NWFP** largely due to the influence of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan – the Frontier Gandhi'.

The results showed that while Congress had fully retained its hold over the Hindu electorate, Muslim League had been the biggest gainer since the elections of 1937. This was due to Jinnah's organisational activities as well as due to his vicious propaganda campaign. Thus, the

real significance of the 1945 elections was that the League boldly started claiming that it solely represented the voice of the Muslim masses in India.

Cabinet Mission in India:

- On March 24, 1946, the Cabinet Mission arrived in India.
- The members of the Mission held intensive discussion with all concerned, viz., leaders of the Congress, the League, Sikhs, the Scheduled castes and a host of other groups.
- The delegation rejected the demand for Pakistan forthwith and proposed for a weak Union of India consisting of British India provinces and the Princely States. Its proposals included:
 - A **Federation** comprising the British Indian territories and the Princely states.
 - **Central Government** in-charge of defence, foreign policy, communication. An **interim government** to govern until the new constitution was implemented.
 - In all other matters the **provinces** would enjoy complete self-government. To satisfy the Muslim League the plan provided for extensive powers for the provinces.
 - **Constituent Assembly**
 - The **provinces** would be classified into three **groups**,
 - A Category: six Hindu-dominated provinces
 - B Category: Muslim-dominated provinces in West
 - C Category: Muslim majority provinces in East
 - The representatives of the provinces or the three different categories would constitute the **Constituent Assembly** which would prepare a new constitution.
 - Each category would be **free, if they so desired, to form a separate group** of provinces. The provinces could secede from the groups but not from the Union of India. This was supposed to satisfy the Congress.



Concerns

The scheme was initially accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League, but later differences arose regarding the **interpretation of the proposals**.

	League	Congress
Long Term Problems	Ruled out the idea of an independent Pakistan	No immediate independence
Weak Centre	Provided considerable autonomy to the provinces, two of which it now governed.	Not the kind of federation it envisaged. There were apprehensions that with a weak centre, the provinces might secede in future.

		Congress was also disagreeable to the concept that in the Princely States, it would be the potentates and not the people who would decide about accession.
Grouping clause	All the six provinces, which the League wanted Pakistan to comprise, were put in Groups B and C which, in any case, would remain under the dominance of the League. Thus, as against six provinces under the Congress dominance, the League got six provinces almost bringing a kind of parity with the former. Thus, League accepted the Plan.	<p>Congress accepted the proposals but at the same time expressed reservations about grouping.</p> <p>It tried to wriggle out of the situation by putting its own interpretation on the grouping of the provinces that it would be optional and not compulsory, which was rejected by the Mission.</p> <p>The Congress accepted it partially because it was not happy with the system of grouping of provinces. Congress accepted those provisions of CMP which were related to establishment of Constituent Assembly.</p>

Note: The **Sikhs** were also against the prospect of being ruled by Muslims in case Punjab was grouped with Muslim majority provinces.

Wavell's "Breakdown Plan"

Wavell presented his plan to the Cabinet Mission in May 1946. This plan envisaged the withdrawal of the British Army and officials to the Muslim provinces of North-West and North-East and handing over the rest of the country to the Congress.

Though superseded by the Cabinet Mission Plan, Wavell's plan was evidence of

- British recognition of the impossibility of suppressing any future Congress-led rebellion.
- Desire in some high official circles to make a "Northern Ireland" of Pakistan.

First Attempt to form an Interim government (June):

The short-term objective of the Cabinet Mission Plan was the installation of an interim government, comprising all major Indian political groups. But the formation of the interim government became cause of friction.

In June 1946, the Viceroy made an abortive bid for the installation of an Interim Government. But he failed in his attempt because:

- Jinnah again claimed to be the sole representative of Muslims and would not let Congress nominate Muslims in the cabinet. He also insisted on the League's parity with the Congress as well as its exclusive right to nominate all Muslim members – an idea which was not acceptable to the Congress.

The Cabinet Mission left India for England on 29 June 1946, after having obtained the consent of two major groups but unable to form an interim government. It had failed basically because it was too late in the day to provide a practicable and acceptable solution and implementing its plan was sure to lead to fragmentation instead of mere partition.

Constituent Assembly Formation:

Elections (July 1946)

The elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in July, 1946. Members of the body were elected by the provincial assemblies through a system of proportional representation.

- The Congress won the elections by a huge margin. It won 208 seats – 199/210 general category seats, and 3 of the 78 reserved for Muslims.
- The Muslim League got 73 out of the 78 seats reserved for Muslims, which now confirmed it as the sole representative of the Muslims.

Nehru's statement:

Barely two weeks after the acceptance by the two major groups, **a statement by Jawaharlal Nehru on 10 July 1946** about the Congress interpretation of the plan threw a spanner in its scheme of implementation. Nehru declared that Congress was not bound by any restrictions of the proposals; he was only agreeing to join the constituent assembly, and it was for the constituent assembly to decide upon all the issues.

League's rejection of the Plan:

Nehru's statement raised a hue and cry on the part of the **League**, which ultimately led to **its rejection of the plan on 29-30 July 1946**. The League was apprehensive about the whole scheme of the Constituent Assembly in view of the overwhelming majority of the Congress. Thus, the **League backed**. It claimed that Congress was 'bent upon setting up a caste-Hindu Raj' in India with the connivance of the British and demanded the immediate establishment of Pakistan.

Second Attempt to form an Interim government (6 August):

On 12 August 1946, the Viceroy invited Nehru to form the interim government. The situation took a turn for the worse when Nehru offered 5 seats to Jinnah which was rejected by the latter. This again sparked off the demand for Pakistan.

Direct Action (16 August)

Jinnah now called on the 'Muslim nation' to resort to 'direct action'. August 16 was fixed as 'Direct Action Day' with a clearly stated objective of achieving Pakistan. The League's direct action was directed against the Hindus and not against the Government.

- In Calcutta, encouraged and protected by the local Muslim League government, League volunteers went on a rampage of arson, rape and murder. Hindus resorted to counter-violence and for several days riot ruled the streets. Thousands were killed and injured. This terrible episode is known as the **Great Calcutta Killing**.



- Soon the League-inspired riots spread to the other parts of the country, including eastern Bengal, Bihar and Assam as well. It entirely vitiated the whole atmosphere.

Finally, formation of Interim Government (2 September 1946)

On 24 August 1946, the Viceroy declared that an interim government comprising 12 members (6 Hindus, 3 Muslim and 3 from other minorities) would soon be installed. It was also announced that two more Muslim members would be subsequently added, taking its total strength to 14.

While communal violence continued to ravage the country, the interim government led by Nehru was sworn in on September 2, 1946.

League Joins Interim Government (13 October 1946)

The League was now persuaded by Wavell to join in. The League accepted Nehru's leadership and accepted portfolio (13 October).

But the League joined the interim government virtually on its own terms: it had neither withdrawn its resolution of 29-30 July 1946, rejecting the long-term component of the Mission plan, nor was it willing to join the Constituent Assembly.

In fact, with the League's joining the interim government, the situation took a turn for the worse, so far as the issue of governance was concerned. **Jinnah's intention was to sabotage** the working of interim government from within, because smooth working of the government only meant increase of Congress power, and dilution of the issue of partition. He wanted to paralyse the whole system till his demand for Pakistan was met.

- It continued to obstruct the functioning of the government to create a deadlock. Muslim League members of the cabinet would obstruct every decision of Congress ministers: Liaquat Ali as the finance minister would reject every proposal of Nehru making a mockery of the interim government.
- To further destabilise the whole administrative system Muslim League started a series of communal riots all over the country.
- Even the hopes that it would also soon join the Constituent Assembly were soon belied.

The whole situation appeared to be grim in the face of roaring communal violence all over the country.

Constituent Assembly (9 December 1946)

The Muslim League boycotted the Constituent Assembly when it ultimately met on 9 December 1946. There were in all 15 women members.

- 11 Dec: President Appointed: Rajendra Prasad, vice-chairman Harendra Coomar Mookerjee and constitutional legal adviser B. N. Rau
- 13 Dec: An '**Objective Resolution**' was presented by Jawaharlal Nehru, laying down the underlying principles of the constitution, which later became the Preamble of the constitution.

- Nehru declared the resolve of the Constituent Assembly to proclaim India an Independent Sovereign Republic – as a Union constituting of territories that comprised British India and the Princely States – as well as other territories willing to join the Union.
- The Muslim League retaliated by more street violence and law and order situation worsened, creating conditions of near anarchy.
- Thus, it adjourned till 20 January 1947, in the hope that the Muslim League members might join it by that time.

The Congress raised the demand that either the League members should join the Constituent Assembly or leave the interim government. **The League would neither leave the interim government nor would join the Constituent Assembly.**

When the Constituent Assembly reassembled on 20 January 1947, the Objective resolution unanimously adopted. But the Muslim member continued to boycott it.

Soon the League denounced the composition of the Constituent Assembly, which made the Congress demand the League's resignation from the interim government. But the **Viceroy hardly took any concrete steps to seek the resignation of the League** members from the Interim government or to make them join the Constituent Assembly.

The stalemate continued and all attempts to work out the Cabinet Mission Plan in its entirety had come to a naught by the beginning of 1947. Thus, the die was cast for the non-implementation of the Cabinet Mission Plan in its entirety. Thus, the **Cabinet Mission Plan, in its original form, was virtually dead.** The last attempt to keep India as a united country ended in a fiasco.

- **20 February 1947:** PM Attlee declared in the parliament, that the British would be leaving India by June 1948.
 - The historic declaration surprised many. The declaration, however, put it plain, that, the Indians would have to settle their differences within the stipulated period.
 - In the wake of Attlee's statement another series of bloody communal riots, fomented by the Muslim League, swept over the Punjab and Bengal. The country was moving towards a civil war situation.
- **Mar 1947:** Lord Mountbatten came to India as the Viceroy with a clear mandate to hasten the process of the British withdrawal from India.
 - Wavell who had favoured the continuation of the British rule for a few years more was replaced by Lord Mountbatten.
 - He was given a clear mandate to arrange for the transfer of power to the Indian hands as soon as possible.

Thus, new ideas for a constitutional settlement and the British withdrawal started being explored, leading to the Mountbatten Plan.

Freedom with Partition (1947)

I shall perhaps not be alive to witness it (the partition) but should the evil I apprehend overtake India and her independence be imperilled, let posterity know what agony this old soul went through thinking of it. Let it not be said that Gandhiji was a party to India's vivisection. But everybody today is impatient for independence. Therefore, there is no other help.

Mahatma Gandhi

Mountbatten

Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, the new Viceroy reached India on March 22, 1947 and took charge on 24th March.

Mountbatten had one year's time and was given "plenipotentiary powers" to complete the transition. Soon after arrival in India, he plunged into a serious discussion with all Indian leaders including the princes. He found the situation too explosive for a gradual transfer of power. He concluded that partition was the only practicable and feasible solution.



Mountbatten had initially proposed that all provinces would be independent successors. Each province would be allowed to choose whether to join constituent assembly or not. Punjab and Bengal would be partitioned by simple majority. This plan was the '**Plan Balkan' (Dickie Bird Plan)**' as it could have led to the balkanisation of India. It was presented in mid-April by General Sir Hastings Ismay to assembly of provincial governors in Delhi. This, this plan was also called "**Ismay Plan.**" But in view of Nehru's strong opposition to the plan, it was abandoned at an initial stage.

June 3rd Plan (Mountbatten Plan) and Partition of India:

An alternative plan, in which V P Menon had a hand (as constitutional advisor), was prepared which came to be known as the **Mountbatten Plan**. It had the following components:

- (1) India was to be partitioned and a new state of **Pakistan** was to be created along with a free India. The Muslim dominated provinces such as Sindh, Baluchistan, Northwestern Frontier Province, Western Punjab and East Bengal would constitute Pakistan.
- (2) **The Constituent Assembly** would go ahead with the task of framing the Constitution. The dissident group of the Muslim league would have its own Constituent Assembly. (Each dominion would be free to frame its constitution.)
- (3) **Partition**

- a. The provinces of Punjab and Bengal would be partitioned based on majority of population at the district level.
- b. In the NWFP and Sylhet, the people would exercise their choice of joining one or the other Constituent Assembly through referendum.

- (4) There would be a **negotiated settlement between the successor government and the British Government** about the matters arising out of the transfer of power.
- (5) The **British paramountcy** over the princely states would come to an end with the transfer of power. They would be absolutely free to decide their fate, they might join any one of the dominions or retain their autonomy.

This was followed by Lord Mountbatten's declaration on 4 June that the transfer of power would take place by **15 August 1947**.

Finally came the acceptance of the partition plan both by the Congress and the League.

- An AICC meeting during 14-15 June 1947 endorsed the plan with some opposition. As a consolation, the AICC, while accepting the partition plan, expressed the hope that ultimately, the doctrine of two nations would be discarded by all.
- This was soon followed by the acceptance of the plan by the Muslim league though it

Now, the plan was approved by the House of Commons and enacted as the **Indian Independence Act of 1947**. It received the royal assent on **18th July 1947**.

At the same time the **Radcliff Boundary Commission** was appointed to draw the borders separating India and Pakistan. Radcliff hurriedly drew the maps-some 8000 kilometres of border line-in just about 5 weeks' time.

On **15 August 1947**, two dominions of India and Pakistan came into being. Mountbatten released the Boundary Award on August 16/17, 1947.

The **Constituent Assembly of India** met on 14 August 1947 and as the midnight approached **Jawaharlal Nehru** delivered his memorable speech on India's '**tryst with destiny**'. He expressed the joy of millions of men and women in the following words: "*Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially*". The Congress President J.B. Kripalani, himself a man of Sind, said that it was "*a day of sorrow and destruction for India*." **Lord Mountbatten** was appointed as the first Governor-General of India and a new cabinet headed by Jawaharlal Nehru was sworn in by him.

Similarly, on the same, i.e., 15 August, came into being, the Dominion of Pakistan with **Jinnah** as the Governor-General and **Liaquat Ali Khan** as the Prime Minister. It was a special day for Jinnah who had singlehandedly succeeded in carving out a Muslim State by getting India partitioned. But he was far from happy with the Pakistan he got and he described it as "*truncated and moth-eaten*."

By an irony of fate, **Mahatma Gandhi**, who had spearheaded the movement for independence of India, was not present to participate in these celebrations. He was far away, fighting almost singlehandedly, the entire army of marauders maddened by communal frenzy.

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