

Achievement of independence-3

Quit India Movement and After

The failure of the Cripps Mission made the Indians frustrated and embittered. It was felt that time had now come for launching another mass movement against the British rule. Discontent of Indian people was increasing due to wartime shortages and growing unemployment. There was a constant danger of Japanese attack. The Indian leaders were convinced that India would be a victim of Japanese aggression only because of British presence in India. Gandhiji said, "the presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India". Subhash Chandra Bose, who escaped from India in 1941, repeatedly spoke over radio from Berlin arousing anti-British feeling which gave rise to pro-Japanese sentiments. The Congress under Gandhiji felt that the British must be compelled to accept Indian demands or quit the country. A meeting of the Congress Working Committee in Wardha passed the Quit India Resolution on 14th July, 1942 which was later endorsed and passed on 8th August at the Bombay session of the Congress. The Congress decided to launch a mass struggle on non-violent lines, on the widest possible scale. Addressing the Congress delegates on the night of 8th August, Gandhiji, in his soul stirring speech, said:

"I therefore want freedom immediately, this very night before dawn if it can be hadI 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 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 slavery.”

But before the Congress leaders could start the movement formally, all important leaders of Congress were arrested before the dawn of 9th August 1942. Congress was banned and declared as an illegal organization. The Press was censored. The news of the arrest of popular leaders shocked the nation. Their anger and resentment was expressed through numerous agitations, hartals, processions and demonstrations in all parts of the country. With most of the important leaders in jail, the movement took a different shape at different places. The people gave vent to their anger by burning government buildings, police stations, post offices anything that symbolized British authority. Railways and telegraphs lines were disconnected. At some places, such as in Balia district in U.P., Midnapore district of West Bengal and in Satara in Bombay, the revolt took a serious turn. Inspired by the ‘mantra’ of Gandhiji people were ready to make the supreme sacrifice. The British with its army and police came down heavily on the Indian people. The people were shot indiscriminately. The Quit India Movement became one of the greatest mass-movements of historical significance .