

# Quit India Movement (1942)

## Background and Events Leading to the Movement

### Resignation of Congress Ministries

- The Indian National Congress formed ministries in provinces like the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Odisha, Bihar, Chennai, Mumbai, Assam, and the Northwest Frontier Province.
- When World War II broke out in 1939, the British government dragged India into the war without consulting Congress leaders.
- Congress leaders protested, questioning how a colonized nation could support the war efforts of its oppressors. As a result, Congress ministries resigned in protest.

### Implications:

- The Viceroy welcomed the resignations as Congress was no longer in power in many provinces.
- Non-Congress ministries in Punjab, Bengal, and Sind did not resign.
- The Muslim League celebrated this event as a "Day of Deliverance" and claimed that Muslims couldn't expect fair treatment under Congress rule.
- In 1940, the Muslim League passed a resolution demanding a separate state, *Pakistan*, comprising Sind, the Northwest Frontier Province, Punjab, Kashmir, and Baluchistan.

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### August Offer (1940)

- With Winston Churchill becoming Britain's Prime Minister and threats from Nazi Germany growing, the British government made a proposal to India on **8 August 1940**, known as the **August Offer**.
- It promised India greater self-governance after the war, but Congress rejected it, considering the offer inadequate. The Muslim League also rejected it, as it didn't address their demand for Pakistan.

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### Cripps Mission (1942)

As Japan advanced toward Indian borders in 1942, the British sent Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate with Indian leaders and break the political deadlock. The mission proposed:

- Dominion status for India after the war.
- Formation of a **Constituent Assembly** with elected representatives from British India and nominated members from princely states.
- Provinces could opt out of the Indian Union and draft their constitution.
- Constitutional safeguards for minorities.

#### **Failure of the Cripps Mission:**

- It didn't offer complete independence, which led to its rejection by Congress.
  - The Muslim League opposed it as it didn't guarantee a separate state for Muslims.
  - The Hindu Mahasabha and other minorities also rejected it due to inadequate protection of their interests.
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#### **Japanese Threat (1942)**

- The Japanese army had attacked Burma and was nearing Assam.
  - Gandhi believed that the British presence in India invited Japanese aggression.
  - Many leaders concluded that it was time for the British to leave India, resulting in the launch of the **Quit India Movement**.
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## **Quit India Movement**

On **8 August 1942**, the **All India Congress Committee** met in Mumbai and passed the Quit India resolution, which had been drafted earlier at Wardha.

#### **Key Events:**

- The British government arrested Gandhi and other senior Congress leaders before the movement gained momentum, declaring the party illegal.
- Strikes and demonstrations erupted across the country. Protesters targeted symbols of British authority like post offices, police stations, and railway stations.
- Parallel governments were set up in some regions, including Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh.

#### **Prominent Leaders:**

- Aruna Asaf Ali, Jai Prakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, and Nana Patil were key figures who kept the movement alive despite intense government suppression.

#### **Government Response:**

- The British responded with brutal force, deploying the military, censoring the press, and using violence to quell protests.
  - By the end of 1942, approximately **10,000 people were killed**, and **60,000 were arrested**.
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## Impact of the Quit India Movement

- Although short-lived, the movement marked a turning point in India's struggle for independence.
- It exposed the British Empire's weakening control and strengthened the Indians' resolve for freedom.
- The movement brought together people from all walks of life—regardless of state, class, caste, or gender.
- It significantly boosted the **Congress Socialist Party**, with Jai Prakash Narayan emerging as a legendary figure.

With the failure of the Quit India Movement, political activity subsided until World War II ended. Meanwhile, the **Indian National Army (INA)**, led by **Subhas Chandra Bose**, continued its efforts to secure India's independence in collaboration with Germany and Japan.