

## Quit India movement in Mumbai contributions

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### Abstract

The year 1942 is a great landmark in the history of the city of Bombay as far as the Indian national congress is concerned. It was on August 8, 1942 that the All India Congress Committee met at the Gowalia Tank Maidan in a saacious pendal passed the historic resolution popularly known as Quit India resolution. After the resolution was passed, Gandhi addressed the AICC for over two hours, explaining his plan of action, as a result of which the government decided that action should be taken simultaneously against the leaders in the early morning of 9 August 1942. Pattabhi Sitaramayya gives a lyrical description of Gandhi's speech verily like a prophet in a moment of inspiration, full of fire, purifying by its flames, but consuming by its contact, rising from the sordid depths of politics to the sublime heights of humanity, fellowship on earth and of peace and goodwill to mankind in a word full of the spirit divine. The 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942 was a unique day in the history of Bombay. For a brief spell Bombay was stunned by the news of the arrest of Gandhi and members of the Congress Working Committee. But by 8 o'clock in the morning, three hours after Gandhi's arrest, a large crowd gathered at Gowalia Tank and recorded its determination to carry on the struggle to the finish.

**Keywords:** Quit India movement, Bombay, Mahatma Gandhi

### Introduction

Quit India, the movement of India's most massive anti-imperialist struggle, provides a good opportunity for us to examine the contours of the Indian nation as it had emerged on the Quit India movement of course had a good deal to do with war-time conditions. Its distribution was determined by a number of contingent factors: the 'immediacy' of the war in different parts of the subcontinent, the government's preparedness to put down any resistance that might interfere with war supplies, the sharp differences of opinion among nationalist leaders and parties about the stand to be adopted in the face of the national and international crisis of 1942. Thus it was not without consequence that Rajagopalachari among Congress leaders, and the Communist Party among committed anti-imperialist parties, openly opposed the Quit India movement. The growth of an independent Muslim political leadership and a separate Muslim constituency contributed its own part in the general aloofness of the Muslim from the Quit India uprising.

The broad features of the movement are now fairly well known. If I refer to them here. It is partly because an 'introduction' to a collection of essays of this kind is expected to include something of a general survey. But there is another reason as well, which is that any investigation of the boundaries of a nation must indicate the limitations of the national movement, all the more so in a historiographical context where its strengths are more readily portrayed.

The strongest centers of Quit India lay in a wide arc across northern India, stretching from Bombay, Satara and Ahmadabad<sup>[1]</sup> in the west through upland Bihar in the north, to Bengal and Orissa in the east<sup>[2]</sup>.

Quit India might be fairly summed up as a popular nationalist

upsurge that occurred in the name of Gandhi but went substantially beyond any confines that Gandhi may have envisaged for the movement. In this respect it revealed tensions that prevailed widely even in the earlier nationalist campaigns of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. But 1942 showed them up in starker relief. Gandhi as the undisputed leader of a movement over which he had little command. This paradox has a good deal to tell us about the relationship between the Congress and the people in the final years of anti-colonial struggle against the British. It also helps to explain the remarkable ambivalence displayed by the Congress leadership in its response to Quit India in the months and years after August 1942<sup>[3]</sup>.

### Objectives of the study

- Study of Bombay
- To study Quit India movement in Bombay

### Material

Only secondary data use research paper.

- Book (published history book and article)
- Library (Use Library Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtri Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha, Maharashtra, 422001.)
- Internet and some useful website (related research paper)

### Bombay Resolution

The historic indeed, the epoch-making session of the AICC began on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1942 in the midst of tremendous tension both on the part of the members and the public in Bombay. Its venue was on the Gowalia Tank Maidan now christened August Kranti Maidan<sup>[4]</sup>,

After the resolution was passed, Gandhi addressed the AICC

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Pandey Gyanendra, (1988), published by Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta by K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, p.p.1

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.p. 2

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.p. 5

<sup>4</sup> Maharashtra State Gazetteers Greater Bombay District Volume 1 (1986), Government of Maharashtra, Maharashtra, p.p. 141

for over two hours, explaining his plan of action, as a result of which government decided that action should be taken simultaneously against the leaders in the early morning of 9 August 1942 (*Commissioner of police to secretary to government of Bombay, home dept. no. 5741/a320 date 10 August 1942*) patabhi sitaramayya gives a lyrical description of speech verily Gandhi spoke like a prophet in moment of inspiration, full of fire, purifying by its flames, but consuming by its contact, rising from the sordid depths of politics to the sublime heights of humanity, fellowship on earth and of peace and goodwill to mankind in a word full of the spirit divine. Indeed he spoke as the great leveler up the nations, the friend of the poor, the up lifter of the depressed and the emancipator of the enslaved. he spoken in the spirit of the famous words of Abraham Lincoln: ‘with malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as god gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace amongst ourselves and with all national; Gandhi ji spoke really as the chief servant of the nation and as such appealed to the united nation not to miss the opportunity of a lifetime. As such, too he called on all Indians to fell and behave as free men and had a word to say to the press and the princes, to the students and the teachers, to government servants and the public’ (*patabhi sitaramayya, op. cit, vol, p.348.*) Gandhi gave a clarion call of ‘do or die’. It was to be the biggest struggle for India’s freedom, the last fight as he called it. we shall either free India or die in the attempt, we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery... Take a pledge, with god and your own conscience as your witness, that you indeed government had begun their preparations to stemm the rising tide, the moment the first ripples appeared in the waters of political life. This is obvious from what came to be known as the pukle circular, date 17 July 1942, which was issued only three days after the wardha resolution. The government of India resolution of the 8<sup>th</sup> in stant, referred to above, must, therefore, be deemed to have been kept ready well in advance for publication in the wake of the arrests. The decision that the measures b government should be in the nature of a blitz, was kept a closely guarded secret (dr. gilder, however, narrates that on 8<sup>th</sup> august he got information that all leaders including Gandhi ji.

Would be arrested at dawn of the 9<sup>th</sup>. He sent a word to Gandhi ji, but the latter asked him to meet at 10 a.m. on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Gilder told the messenger ‘there won’t it be 10 o ‘clock tomorrow’)

A little after 4 a.m. the commissioner of police, with a few officers, arrived at Birla house to arrest Gandhi ji. The latter was not prepared for this move, but received the same with equanimity. “When are we to leave?” he asked the commissioner who was visibly nervous in the performance of the unpleasant duty. “At six,” he answered (G.D. birala’s eyewitness account in his book, in the shadow of the mahatma.) Gandhi was driven to Victoria terminus where a special train had been drawn up. As could be expected, all members of the working committee and 50 leading citizens of Bombay, were arrested, M.K. Gandhi, Mahadev Desai, Miss Miraben, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azaad, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Miss. Maniben Patel, J.B. Kripalani, Asaf Ali, Dr. Syed Mohammed, Govind Vallabh Pant, Shankarrao Deo, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Dr. Patabhi Siaramayya, Harekrishna Mehtab, Narendra Deo,

Morarji Desai, Nagindas Master, M. Y. Nurie, S.K. Patil, Ishwarbhai S Patel, Jinabahi P Joshi, Bhiwani Arjun Khaljis, Y.J. Maharani, Sunderdas Morarji, G.P. Huthee Singh, Manecklal N. Vakharia, Bhawanishankar Oza, Y.K. Parulekar, Ganapatishankar N. Desai, Purshottam Mithaiwalla, Abdali Jafferbhoy, Bhanushankar Yainik, G.G. Mehta, Ashok Mehta, Saad Ali, V.R. Modak, Kisan Dhymatkar, S.L. Silam, Vishwanath R. Tulla, B.B. Meheshri, Dr. T.R. Naravne, Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi, Mr. Shantabai Vengasarkar, Mr. Sophia Khan, Ratilal Mulji Gandhi, Manilal Jaimal Seth, Dr. Sushila Nair, Pyarelal Sharma.

#### Persons arrested and sent to thane.

Ambalal Talokchand, M.D. Dandekar, Keshav Borkar, G.A Savant, R.K. Acharekar, S.B. Mahadeshwar, F.M. Wagh, Sardar Pratap Singh, Ramniklal Joshi, Raja Ram Trivedi, Kashi Prasad, Singh, V.M.Kande, Shivaji D. Dongre, R.M. Khandrey and put in the special train waiting for its load. The process was so sharp and perhaps even unexpected that some forgot to take with them heir spectacles, some their mony purses, book and even clothing. But all met as a happy company –the old gang, in the corridors and compartments of the train. The train steamed out at 720 a.m. Gandhi ji Sarojini Naidu, Miraben And Mahadev Desai were detained at Chinchvad and taken to the aga khan place the Bombay group was detained at kirkee and sent to yearvada. The working committee members including Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Azad, J.B. Kriplani, Asaf Ali, G.B. Pant, Patabhi Sitaramayya, P.C. Ghosh, Dr. Syed Mohammed, Narendra Deo, etc., were taken to ahmadnagar, where they were lodged in a separate block of spacious halls in the fort of Chand Bibi. Kastubra Gandhi was allowed an option to accompany Gandhi ji. But when she chose to say back; she was arrested a few hours later and c confined to Arthur rosd prison in a stinking dugy cell. She was later taken top Gandhi ji abode after being taken ill <sup>[5]</sup>.

#### 10 august

The Bombay police resorted to firing on ten occasions. The military fired five times (nothing to say of tear gasing and lathi -charge). The result was 16 dead and 141 injured. a government communiqué issued of the situation of the 10<sup>th</sup> august stated that the demonstrations which began on Sunday morning following the detention of the congress leaders continued throughout Monday morning and afternoon. The areas worst affected were around gorgon at dadar. In both these areas and in other centers, numerous instances of mob-violence occurred. In the afternoon an attempt was made to set the B.B.C.I.railway station at dadar on fir, which was foiled by the police. Elsewhere, six police chowkis were set on fire and two of them were gutted. Some telephone wires cut, post boxes removed, a municipal lorry over-turned and a tram upset. In some areas buses were immobilized through air being let out of their tires. In the fort areas many small roads and lanes were blocked during the morning with bricks, stones and rubble <sup>[6]</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.p.p 142*

<sup>6</sup> *TOPE,T.K., Bombay and congress movement, (1986) publisher, Shri s.d. desh mukh secretary Maharashtra state board for literature and culture mantralaya, Bombay, pp.93*

**11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> august.**

In order to curb the high spirits of the people and calm the rising tempo of their bitterness the government of Bombay introduced the infamous emergency whipping act on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Bonfires were started by the people in different parts of the city on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, and hats, neck-ties and other European articles of clothing were freely burnt. The police opened fire twice before 10 a.m. on the 11<sup>th</sup> august tram, bus and other vehicular traffic was completely stopped. The G.I.P. and b.b. & c.i. railway lines were tampered with. The train stopped working for full two hours. The matunga railway station was attacked with. The trains stopped working for full two hours. The matunga railway station was attacked by the people who also smashed lamp post. Demonstrations were held at parel. The schools and colleges remained closed. Most of the mill workers remained on strike. The people cut telephone and telegraph wires, attacked post office, police chowkies, railway stations, etc, and the police made full use of fire-arms more than ten times, on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, to disperse the crowds in front of K.K. and king George school at dadar [7].

**The 13<sup>th</sup> august**

Post offices and post –boxes in andheri and vile-parle were damaged, set to fir, and some articles removed from andheri post office (dadar). Vile-parle and suburbs were plunged into complete darkness; all the electric lamp was completely smashed. Sydenham college students organized demonstrations. Traffic was disorganized in south Bombay.

**Strikes**

The city’ markets observed complete hartal. The stock exchange remained closed, as also the mangaldas and other markets in the vicinity. The municipal school remained closed for a week.

**Sabotages**

Telephone and telegraph wires damaged and one thousand arrests were made up to 13<sup>th</sup> august. According to the government there persons were killed and 42 wounded.

**14 The august**

Demonstrations were held and processions taken out in kalbadevi and other places. Local exchange, cotton and bullion markets, as also the seeds, yarn and cloth markets remained completely closed. 15 persons were arrested and 25 merchants detained under D.I.R. the police opened fire and made lathi charges. The people were slapped and caned. Two persons were killed and some injured.

**1<sup>st</sup> September**

The underground movement of young men and women continued paralyzing the government machinery. Some of the colleges and school in Bombay were reopened in September 1942, but thousands of students continued participating in public demonstrations, and picketing educational institutions. Five girl-students of Elphinstone College were arrested on 1<sup>st</sup> of September in this connection [8].

The total number of arrests in Bombay province throughout these two long years can roughly be estimated at 5000. of

these about 1000 persons were released after 2 month of detention, and 450-500 were convicted to various terms ranging from six weeks to five years. The maximum sentences passed fir holding flag salutation was 2 years [9].

**Labour**

Very little part was played by the Bombay labour in general and by textile labour in particular, in the movement. Far greater work in connection with the movement was done by the Ahmadabad labour. The communist influence on the Bombay labour was greater and the communist had recorded their dissentient voice when the ‘quit India movement ‘resolution was put to the vote. Moreover a great majority of Muslim labourers, who secretly sympathized with the [10] movement could not for various reasons take active and open part in it. The textile mills except for the first week after the 9<sup>th</sup> august, when they were closed owing to serious disturbances in the city. Remained working throughout the period. The general exodus of March 1942 was over and there was no question of unemployment. Lastly, with the arrest of all the workers of the kamgar seva sangh in the very beginning, the last link between the congress and the labour had been cut off and it was found very difficult later on to contact workers even for the purpose of distributing propaganda literature.

**The students**

The student’s community of Bombay had the opportunity of playing a noble. They sacrificed their studies and ventured their future for a cause which was so dear to their heart. Their example was emulated by their brethren in other provinces. about 80 per cent of the students participated in the movement.

**The municipal corporation**

The municipal corporation of Bombay was under congress control in 1942. After the arrest of congress leaders the municipal corporation denounced the government for its surprise attacks on the congress and as a mark of protest adjourned *sine die*. On the 10<sup>th</sup> April 1943 Shri nagindas t. master who in jail was elected as mayor of Bombay corporation. Out of 63 congressite city fathers 33 were in detention [11].

**Government data for the open revolt of Bombay**

Government data for the open revolt of Bombay	
Arrests	5000
How often police opened fire	195
How many men injured	332
How many men died of the police	5
How many police were injured man	527
How many public servants died	115
How many public servants were injured	1
How many times forces opened fire	14
How many bombs exploded	375
How many trains were vomiting due to sabotage	13

Sashay, Govind, (1946), The1942 of revolt, navyug sahitay sadan, indour, p.p, 78

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.p.p.94

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.p.p.96

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.p.p. 97

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.p.p 98

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.p.p 102

### **Conclusion**

The remarks clearly indicate the effect of 1942 movement. 'Quit India movement was in a sense a historical inevitability. Gandhi was the first man realized this. he also probably knew that the movement would be of a different nature than the one in 1930. Though 1942 movement was crushed by the British government, it did bring the end of the British rule in India nearer. The movement strangely enough brought also to an end the Gandhian era in Indian politics. After independence new challenges appeared before the leaders of the congress.

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