

9. Last Phase of Struggle for Independence

In this chapter we are going to study the Quit India Movement, underground movement and the contribution of Indian National Army.

Act of 1935 : This Act made a provision for the British governed Indian provinces and Princely States to form a federation. According to this act, the working of British governed provinces will be handed over to the Indian representatives. If the princely states join the federation then they would lose their autonomy, hence they refused to join. Therefore the proposal of federal state in the Act was not brought into practice.

Provincial Cabinets : The Indian National Congress was not satisfied with the Act of 1935, but still decided to take part in the elections of Provincial legislature provided by the Act. In 1937, elections were held in eleven provinces in the country. Among these, Indian National Congress gained majority over eight provinces and came to power. In other three provinces none of the party could achieve majority and therefore mixed cabinet was formed.

The Cabinet ministers of Indian National Congress did useful work for the people such as release of political prisoners from jail, introduction of basic education, prohibition of liquor, measures undertaken to improve condition of the Dalits, passing of Act giving debt relief to the farmers etc.

Cripps Mission : During the second world war, England supported America against Japan. The Japanese army reached the eastern borders of India. The British realised that if Japan attacks India, then they will need co-operation from the Indians. Hence the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India. In March 1942, he put up a

proposal of India in front of the Indians. But none of the political party was satisfied with this proposal. The Indian National Congress rejected the proposal since there was no clear mention of complete independence. Since there was no mention of creation of Pakistan, the Muslim League also rejected the Cripps Mission.

Second World War and Indian National Congress : The Second World War began in Europe in 1939. The then Viceroy Lord Linlithgo declared that India has joined the war on the side of the British. England claimed that it is fighting to save Democracy in Europe. The Indian National Congress demanded that if the claim was true then England should immediately grant freedom to India. England refused to fulfill this demand and therefore the provincial ministers of Indian National Congress resigned in November 1939.

Quit India Movement : After the Cripps mission, the Indian National Congress decided to start an intense movement for attaining independence. The Working Committee of the Congress passed a resolution on 14 July 1942 at Wardha. The resolution demanded that the British rule in India be ended immediately and India should be given independence. If this demand was not fulfilled then the Indian National Congress warned to start a non violent movement for freedom of India.

Quit India Resolution : On 7 August 1942, the session of Indian National Congress was held at Gowalia Tank (Kranti Maidan) in Mumbai. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the President of this session. The British should leave India, this resolution passed by Congress Working Committee at Wardha was to be finally approved in the Mumbai session. On



Maulana Azad

8 August the resolution of 'Quit India' put forth by Jawaharlal Nehru got passed with great majority. It was also decided to start a nation wide non violent agitation under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji said, "Every one of you should,

from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman and behave like a citizen of free India.... we shall either free India or die in the attempt." Gandhiji made an inspirational appeal to the public to be ready to sacrifice with the feeling of 'Do or Die'.

Beginning of People's Movement :

The news of arrest of important leaders of Indian National Congress spread out all over the country. The angry mob took out processions at various places. Even though police lathi charged and opened firing on the public but still people were not afraid. The agitators attacked some places jails, police stations, railway stations etc. which symbolised the suppressive policy of the

Let us know...

Individual Satyagraha : The British Government was constantly neglecting the demands, hence the Indian National Congress decided to start anti war propoganda. For this it was decided that instead of a collective movement, every single person should disobey the laws. This was known as



Acharya Vinobha Bhave

'Individual Satyagraha'. Acharya Vinoba Bhave was the first satyagrahi of individual satyagraha. He was followed by nearly 25,000 satyagrahis who accepted imprisonment for their participation.

British. They tried to take control of Government offices. In Maharashtra, the young and old struggled with determination and boundless courage at places like Chimur, Ashti, Yavali, Mahad, Gargoti etc. and made the struggle immortal.



Do you know ?

Inspirational accounts of brave children :

The school students also contributed in the freedom movement. At Nandurbar, the school children, under the leadership of Shirishkumar, carried out procession holding the tri colour flag. The slogan of 'Vande Mataram' was given. The police became furious and opened firing on small children as well. In this firing Shirishkumar, Laldas, Dhansukhlal, Shashidhar, Ghanashyam, these school children became martyr.



Shirishkumar

Underground Movement : At the end



of 1942 the public movement got a new turn. The leadership of this movement went into hands of young socialist activists. Jayprakash Narayan, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Chhotubhai Puranik, Achyutrao Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Yusuf Meher Ali, Sucheta Kriplani, S.M. Joshi, Shirubhau Limaye, N.G. Gore, Yashwantrao Chavan, Vasantdada Patil, Maganlal Bagdi, Usha Mehta such leaders were in the forefront. The activist disrupted the transport and communication as well as the government machinery by causing the breakdown of Railway routes, cutting of telephone line, blowing up bridges etc. The impact of the movement was seen all over India. Hemu Kalani, in Sindh province,



Aruna Asaf Ali



Achyutrao Patwardhan

tried to destroy the railway along with his companions when he received the news of passing of a railway carrying British troops and supplies. The court punished him to be hanged to death.

Bhai Kotwal's 'Azad Dasta' in Karjat taluka of modern day Raigad district, General Awari's 'Lal Sena' in Nagpur such groups made the government helpless and witless for months. In Mumbai, Vitthal Zaveri, Usha Mehta and her companions established a secret transmission centre named 'Azad Radio'. Patriotic songs were sung on it. News of agitations in the country were broadcasted on it. Patriotic speeches were telecasted. This gave encouragement to the agitators. Such transmission centres operated at Kolkata, Delhi and Pune for some period of time.

Establishment of Parallel Government : At some places in the country, British officers were driven out and the 'People's Government' was established. These are called 'Parallel Government'. Parallel Government were formed in districts of Midnapore in Bengal, Ballia and Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh and Purnia in Bihar.

In Satara district of Maharashtra, in 1942, Krantisinh Nana Patil brought an end to the British government and established parallel government. At Kundal, under the leadership of Krantiagrani G. D. alias Bapu Lad, 'Toofan Sena' was established. Through its medium, collection of taxes, maintenance of law and order, punishment to criminals, such work was done by the Parallel

Government. People started accepting the verdict passed by the People's Court appointed by the Parallel Government.



Krantisinh Nana Patil

Opposition to money lenders, prohibition on liquor, spread of literacy, opposition to caste distinctions many such constructive work was done by this government. Due to it the Parallel Government became a source of inspiration for the public.

Importance of Quit India Movement :

The 1942 movement took up the form of a nationwide agitation. To fulfill the objectives of gaining independence lakhs of Indians made unlimited sacrifices. Many sacrificed their lives. The number of people participating in the struggle was so huge that even all the prisons in the whole of the country were not enough to contain them. The patriotic songs composed by Sane Guruji, Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj and others increased the enthusiasm of the agitators. This nationwide movement is also called 'August Kranti'.



Rashtrasant

Tukdoji Maharaj

Indian National Army (Azad Hind Sena) : Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose took phenomenal efforts for gaining independence of India. On the eastern borders of India, thousands of Indians stood in readiness to fight against the British. All these soldiers belonged to Azad Hind Sena. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was their leader.

Subhash Chandra Bose was an important leader of Indian National Congress. He graced the position of President of Congress twice. As per his opinion, while England was



Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

engaged in Second World War, the Indians should take advantage of it and make the movement more intense. If necessary India should seek the help of enemies of England. But there

aroused difference of opinion between him and other senior leaders of Congress. As a result, Subhash Chandra Bose resigned from the position of President. To place his views in front of the people he founded a party known as 'Forward Bloc'.

Through his speeches, Netaji appealed to the Indians to revolt against the British rule. Due to it the Government imprisoned him. Subhash Chandra Bose went on fast unto death in the prison due to which the British Government interned him in his residence. From there he escaped in disguise. In April 1941 he reached Germany. There he founded the 'Free India Centre'. From the Berlin Radio station in Germany, he appealed to the Indian people to join in an armed struggle. During this period, Rash Behari Bose invited Subhash Chandra Bose to Japan.

Formation of the Indian National Army :

Rash Behari Bose was staying in Japan since 1915. He had organised the Indian patriots living in countries of South East Asia and established the organisation named



Rash Behari Bose

'Indian Independence League'. In the early part of 1942, Japan conquered the territories in South East Asia which were controlled by the British. Thousands of Indian soldiers and officers in British army there, fell into the hands of Japan. Rash Behari Bose, with

the help of Captain Mohan Singh, formed a battalion of these Indian Prisoners of War. It was named as 'Indian National Army' (Azad Hind Sena). Later Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose led the Indian National Army.

In October 1943, Netaji established Azad Hind Government in Singapore. Shah Nawaz Khan, Jagannath Bhosale, Dr.Laxmi Swaminathan, Gurubuksh Sing Dhillon, Prem Kumar Sehgal etc. were his chief associates. Captain Laxmi Swaminathan was the Commander of Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Netaji appealed to the Indian people- 'You give me blood and I will give you independence'.

Achievements of Indian National Army :

In November 1943, Japan conquered Andaman and Nicobar islands and handed them over to Azad Hind Government. Netaji renamed them as 'Shahid' and 'Swarajya' respectively. In 1944, Indian National Army captured the Aarakan province in Myanmar. Posts on the eastern border of Assam were captured. In the same period the campaign of Imphal remained incomplete because Japan stopped helping the Indian National Army. But in adverse circumstances, soldiers of Indian National Army were dedicatedly fighting. But in the same period, Japan accepted defeat. On 18 August 1945 Subhash Chandra Bose died in a plane accident. On this background the soldiers of Indian National Army had to lay down their arms. Thus ended the thrilling phase of the Indian National Army.

Later, the British Government charged the officers of Indian National Army with treason. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapre these expert lawyers defended them. But the military tribunal held the officers guilty and they were sentenced to life imprisonment. Therefore there was severe unrest against the British Government in the minds of Indian people. Finally the British Government had to suspend the

punishments given by the military tribunal.

Revolts of Indian Navy and Airforce :

The navy and Air force soldiers, with the inspiration from Indian National Army, caused discontent against the British Government. It burst out on the British warship 'Talwar' in Mumbai on 18 February 1946. The soldiers unfurled the tri colour flag on the British warship. They raised slogans against the British Government. The British Government sent army to open fire on the naval soldiers. The rebels also made counter attack with firing. The workers and common people extended their support to the naval soldiers. Finally with the mediation of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the naval soldiers laid down their arms.

To support the uprising of naval soldiers, the Air force officers from Delhi, Lahore, Karachi, Ambala, Meerut etc. went on strike. These revolts were a clear indication that the sentiments of discontent against the rulers had reached a climax. In this way the period between 1942 to 1946 shook the foundation of British power in India. Through the Quit India Movement the severe discontent of Indian people against the British was expressed. Army, Navy and Air Force was the backbone of British power. They were also now opposing the British. Due to these incidents the British rulers realised that they will not be able to empower India for a long period of time.

Exercise

1. Rewrite the statements by choosing the appropriate options

(Andaman and Nicobar, August Kranti, Vinoba Bhawe)

- (1) was the first stayagrahi of Individual satyagraha.
- (2) The nation wide movement of 1942 is also called
- (3) In November 1943, Japan conquered islands and handed them over to Azad Hind Government.

2. Explain the following statements with reasons.

- (1) In November 1939, provincial ministers of Indian National Congress gave their resignations.
- (2) The Indian National Army had to lay down their arms.
- (3) The Parallel Government became a source of inspiration to the people.

3. Complete the following table.

Organisation	Founder
Forward Bloc	
Indian Independence League	
Toofan Sena	

4. Answer the following questions in brief.

- (1) How do you find the contribution of Shirishkumar to be inspirational?
- (2) Why did the British Prime Minister send Sir Stafford Cripps to India?
- (3) What kind of reaction was seen during the spread of news of arrest of main leaders of the Indian National Congress?

Project

- (1) Prepare a timeline of the events of the struggle of Indian National Army.
- (2) With the help of internet collect the pictures of Quit India Movement of 1942 and organise an exhibition on occasion of a national day.

