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Q3

What were the events that led to the Quit India Movement? Point out its results.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · GS I · 10 marks · The Freedom Struggle

The Freedom Struggle - its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country.

Core demand of the question

- State the events that led to the Quit India Movement
- Point out the results of the movement

Revision summary

Britain took India into World War II without Congress consent, and the provincial ministries resigned.

The Cripps Mission of 1942 offered post-war status without a real wartime national government.

The AICC in Bombay on 8 August 1942 launched Quit India, and leaders were jailed the next day.

Mass action, sabotage and local **parallel governments** followed, and then heavy repression followed those actions.

The Muslim League gained organisational space, and the government's claim to quiet rule did not recover.

Independence in 1947 had many causes. 1942 was the mass proof that delay had a political price.

Introduction

Quit India did not begin without warning in August 1942. It was the Congress answer to a **world war** that had taken India in without consent, to the failure of the **Cripps Mission**, and to **Gandhi's** view that British power would not bargain while it still felt secure. The results were mixed in the short run and large in the long run. The government crushed open protest, but it could no longer claim that India was a quiet colony.

Body

Events that led to August 1942

Britain declared India's war in **1939** without the provincial Congress ministries. Those ministries resigned. The **Individual Satyagraha** of 1940-41 tested civil liberty. It was not yet a mass revolt. The **Atlantic Charter** spoke of freedom, but the empire did not apply that promise fully to India. After Pearl Harbor, Japan advanced to **Burma**. Fear of invasion led London to send **Stafford Cripps** in March 1942. Cripps offered a post-war dominion-style constitution and a right of provinces to opt out. He refused a responsible national government

in wartime. Congress rejected the offer as a **post-dated cheque**. **Gandhi's** articles and the **Wardha** working-committee line then moved to a demand that the British **leave India**. The **AICC at Bombay on 8 August 1942** passed the Quit India resolution. **Gandhi's** phrase "**Do or Die**" named the mood. Leaders were arrested on **9 August**. The movement that followed was therefore both a planned call and a rising that soon lost its top leaders.

- **War without consent:** The events of 1939 and the collapse of provincial office taught Congress that the Raj would not share power in a crisis.
- **Cripps failure:** There was no immediate national cabinet. The secession clause also killed negotiation.
- **Military fear:** Japan at the border made delay look like a British use of Indian soldiers and resources, not a partnership.

Results

In the weeks after the arrests, students, peasants and workers struck. Rails were cut. **Parallel governments** appeared in places such as **Ballia, Tamluk (Midnapore)** and **Satara (Prati Sarkar)**. The government used lathi, shooting and jail on a scale that broke open revolt by 1943. Congress was banned. The **Muslim League** expanded its organisation in that vacuum. **Gandhi** was in detention. Talks with **Jinnah** later failed. **War inflation** and the **Bengal famine** of 1943 stood beside the political crackdown. The famine had more causes than Quit India.

- **Short run:** There was heavy suppression. Thousands were jailed. The Congress High Command was off the field.
- **Political map:** The League grew. Communal arithmetic toward Partition became harder.
- **Long run:** Britain's moral claim was weaker. After the war, the **INA trials**, the RIN ratings, and Labour's exhaustion made exit thinkable. 1947 was not caused by 1942 alone. 1942 did show that India could not be held by police forever.

Quit India failed as an immediate seizure of power. It succeeded as a national refusal that the empire never fully recovered from.

Flow diagram

WWII without consent -> Cripps Mission fails
Cripps Mission fails -> Bombay AICC 8 Aug 1942
Bombay AICC 8 Aug 1942 -> Quit India Do or Die
Quit India Do or Die -> Suppression and underground
Quit India Do or Die -> League space and 1947 path

Conclusion

Cripps's empty wartime offer, a war declared without Indian consent, and **Gandhi's** call produced Quit India. The government put down the streets in 1942. It lost the claim that India was a loyal barracks. Independence still needed the post-war crisis. Public life did not return to the quiet that had existed before 1942.

Facts & figures

Cripps Mission, 1942

Stafford Cripps offered a post-war constitution-making body and provincial opt-out, not immediate responsible government at the Centre.

AICC Bombay, 8 August 1942

The **All India Congress Committee** passed the Quit India resolution; **Gandhi's** 'Do or Die' speech named the campaign.

Parallel governments

Local parallel administrations are documented in Ballia, Tamluk in Midnapore, and the Satara Prati Sarkar.

Individual Satyagraha, 1940-41

Gandhi's limited civil-liberty protest before the mass 1942 call, with Vinoba Bhave among the first satyagrahis.

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