

How India Won Her Freedom
by Rani M Dawson

Table of Contents

1. Foreword

2. Preface

3. Introduction

3.1. The Coming of the English and the Spread of British Power – Part I

3.2. The Spread of British Power – Part II

4. How India Won Her Freedom

4.1. India under the rule of the East India Company

4.2. The Great Revolt of 1857

4.3. Consequences of the Revolt of 1857

4.4. Birth of Nationalism in the 19th Century – I

Social and religious movements

4.5. Birth of Nationalism in the 19th Century – II

Effects of British rule

4.6. Birth of Nationalism in the 19th Century – III

Beginnings of the Indian National Congress

4.7. The Indian National Congress from 1885 to 1905

4.8. The Extremist Movement

4.9. Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement

4.10. Rise and Growth of Muslim Communalism

4.11. The Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909

4.12. The Indian National Movement 1909 to 1919

4.13. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Or The Act of 1919

4.14. The coming of Gandhi

4.15. The Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

4.16. The Swaraj Party and the Simon Commission

4.17. The Civil Disobedience Movement and the three

Round

Table Conferences

4.18. The Act of 1935

4.19. Congress Ministries and the Second World War

4.20. The Quit India Movement and the Demand for Pakistan

4.21. Partition and Independence

1. Foreword

Mrs. Rani M. Dawson's book on India's Freedom Struggle, written for the young citizens of India, is valuable not only for the young but for the old also. It clearly describes the various stages of India's struggle towards purna swaraj. To know the facts is to be aware of the noble aims of the founders of the freedom struggle. Such a knowledge helps the readers understand the gulf between aspirations and achievement. After all, the young citizens are going to be the future electorate in our democratic society.

On them lies the future of our country; their action is momentous in the history of India. These serious young men and women will find in this book the right and proper food for thought.

Let me congratulate the author on composing such a book of national importance, as it is an impartial account of recent Indian history through which the author herself has passed.

Nagercoil
8-8-1988

Signed R. S. Pillai
(Dr. R. S. Pillai)
Retd. Prof. of English
Presidency College, Madras.

2. Preface

It is widely felt that the young people of the post-independence era know little about the freedom movement which ended the British rule in India. Nor do they know much about the significant part played by our national leaders such as Gandhiji, Nehru, Patel, Azad, Rajaji and others. They might have gone through brief biographical sketches of these leaders but it is unlikely that they are conversant with the sequence of events which finally led to the departure of the British from Indian shores.

In this book, an attempt has been made to present the history of our freedom struggle as a simple narrative for the benefit of young people. May they realize what a privilege it is to live in a free India under a democratic form of government.

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British Entry Into India

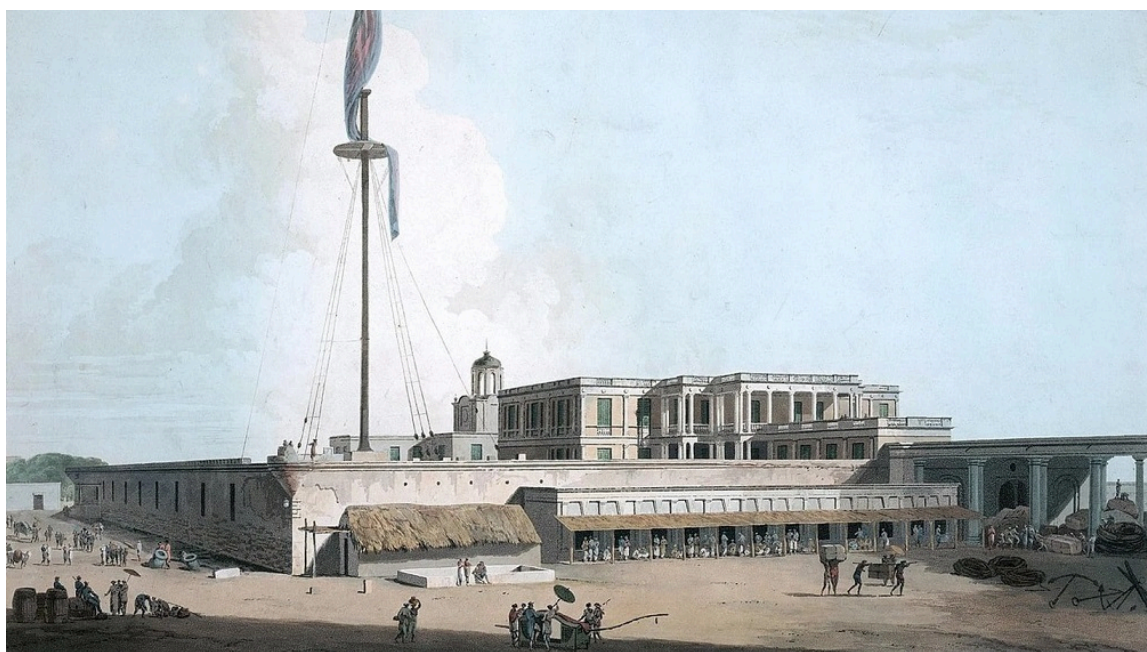
3. Introduction

3.1. The Coming of the English and the Spread of British Power – Part I

i

The English first came to India as traders. On 31st December 1600, the East India Company received a charter from its ruler, Queen Elizabeth I of England, granting it the monopoly of Eastern trade. In 1615 this company obtained permission from the Moghul Emperor Jahangir, to start a factory in Surat. In the following years, the East India Company established factories in Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach. Two other European powers, the Portuguese and the Dutch had already established their factories in India. There was much rivalry among the European powers.

In 1639 the English bought a piece of land in the South and founded the city of Madras, where they built the historic Fort St. George. In 1662, the island of Bombay came into the possession of the East India Company. By now the French too had received permission from the Moghul Emperor and carried on their trade in different parts of the country.



Fort St. George

The European trade centres in India were generally known as factories. They were well fortified to protect their trade interests. The English stationed Indian troops in their factories. These were well trained in western methods of warfare. In course of time, the factories became the bases for military activities.

In the beginning, the Europeans were content with just trade. They did not have any idea of conquering the land. But from 1740 onwards, they changed their attitude because of the disturbed condition of the land. Their defence centres proved very useful in promoting their

political ambitions. In the course of the 17th century, the British gained supremacy over their Portuguese and Dutch rivals and practically drove them out of India.

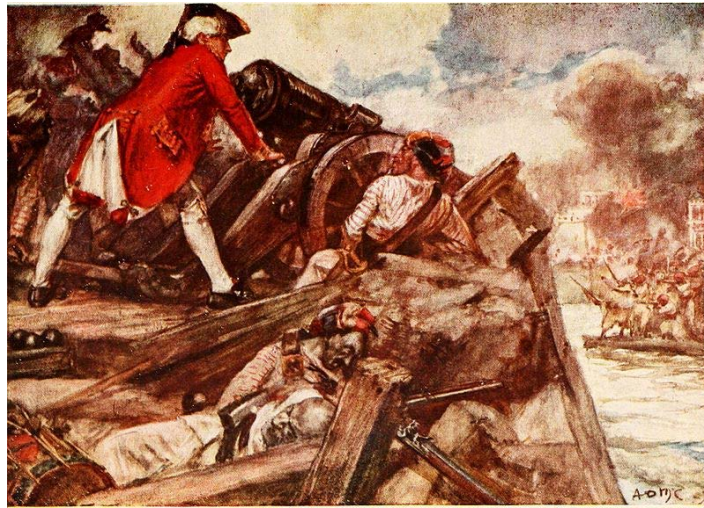
The Moghul Empire began to weaken during the reign of Aurangzeb from 1658 to 1707. He was a strict puritan and had no love for art or literature. He angered the Hindus who formed the great majority of his subjects by imposing on them the hated Jeziya poll-tax and destroying their temples. He offended the proud Rajputs who had been the main support of the Moghul Empire. In the North, he antagonized the Sikhs by destroying their temples.

During the first half of the 18th century, the Moghul Empire began to break up by slow degrees. One by one, the major provinces of India became more like independent states, their Viceroys or Nawabs or Subedhars, calling themselves kings, though formally paying allegiance to the Moghul Emperor in Delhi, who was now Emperor only in name, and quite powerless.

ii

The East India Company had its military establishments to protect its trade centres. The British represented a higher political and military organization, with very able leaders. Also, they were better informed through their spies about the Indian rulers and their territories. Their command of the seas gave them safe bases and opportunities to add to their resources. The British took full advantage of the disunity and rivalries among the native rulers. By taking sides in local disputes and helping one rival against another, the East India Company began to spread its influence and acquire territories.

British expansion in India started with the Carnatic Wars. The Coromandel Coast in the East was known as the Carnatic Region. It was ruled by a Nawab, appointed by the Nizam of Hyderabad who was the Subhedar or Viceroy of Deccan. In 1740, the Carnatic was in utter confusion because of internal quarrels and frequent raids by the Marathas from the west. There were rival claimants to the throne. The British supported one claimant and the French his rival. Three Carnatic wars were fought in this connection. The real fight was between the English and the French while their Indian rulers were mere stooges. In the third Carnatic war, fought in 1763, the French were utterly defeated by the English General, Robert Clive. The Indian rulers including the Nizam, lost their power along with the French. Now, the English were in command of the whole of the Eastern Coast. This was the beginning of their expansion in India.



Similar chaotic conditions existed in Bengal. The Moghul Emperor had become a figurehead. Real power was exercised by his Subhedars. The English found it easy to enter into the faction-ridden politics of Bengal. In 1757, Robert Clive fought the battle of Plassey defeating Srajuddaula, Nawab of Bengal. This victory gave the English a firm foothold in Bengal. The year 1757 is said to mark the beginning of the British Empire in India. Seven years later, the British won the battle of Buxar. And now they were in command of the territories of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa which brought them vast revenues.



In all these campaigns, the British showed much daring, diplomacy and resolution. At the same time, they were guilty of much trickery, bribery and corruption. On the other hand, the native rulers were often quarrelling among themselves and utterly incompetent in administering their domains. It was easy for the foreigners to divide them further, subjugate them and deprive them of their territories.

There was no longer any need for the East India Company to draw money from England to meet their expenses in India. The revenues from the conquered territories enabled them to meet not only the cost of the administration of the land but also the expenditure incurred for their subsequent wars in India. Thus the resources of men and money for their expansion in India, came from India itself.

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3.2. The Spread of British Power – Part II

iii

In Mysore, the rise of Hyder Ali was a threat to the influence and power of the British in the South. From 1767 to 1798, four wars were fought in Mysore. Hyder Ali and after him his son Tippu Sultan could not prevail against the superior military skill of the British, despite their best efforts. After their victory, the British installed KrishnarajaWadayar as the ruler of Mysore and appointed a British Resident to help him in administering his domain.



Hyder Ali

Tipu Sultan

Besides Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, there were several polygars and chieftains in South India who tried, but without success to stem the spread of British power. Among them were VeluThambi, Puliathachen and Palasi Raja in Kerala; Kattabomman, Oomaithurai, Pulithevan and MarudaPandyar in Tamil Nadu and DheeranChinamalai of Kongu Nadu. The last had the distinction of defeating British forces in three battles before being over-come by superior forces and firearms. Some of their names have become household words in the South and their heroic deeds are remembered in song and legend.



MarudaPandyar

Mysore having fallen, it was now the turn of the Marathas. There were constant quarrels between the Peshwa and his deputies, Scindia, Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaikwar. The British divided them more and weakened them. The last of the three Maratha wars were fought in 1817-1818 in which the English defeated the Marathas completely and annexed their territories. And now, the British power spread as far as Delhi.

The only remaining power of considerable importance was that of the Sikhs in Punjab, on the northern borders of India. In 1809, the East India Company entered into a treaty of friendship with Ranjit Singh, the ruler of the Sikhs. As long as he was alive, both parties honoured the terms of the treaty. After his death in 1839, there was no strong leader in Punjab. This encouraged the British to take a bold step. They were anxious to have control over the whole of the Punjab and the nearby territories, for the security and defence of the northern boundaries. The East India Company declared war on the Sikhs in 1848-1849, defeated them and annexed the Punjab and Kashmir.



Ranjit Singh

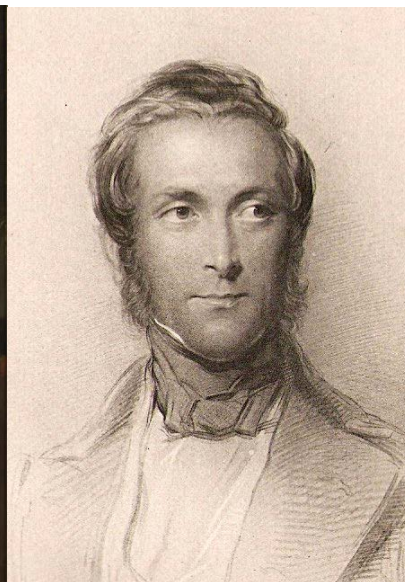
Similarly, they declared war on the Amirs of Sindh and defeated them. In 1843, Sindh became a part of the British territories.

Besides wars, through alliances and agreements, the British occupied various parts of the country without any expense. Surat was annexed in 1799 and Banares and Carnatic in 1801. The Nizam of Hyderabad was made to cede to them the districts of Cuddapah, Kurnool, Bellary and Anantapur. These were later known as the ceded districts. In 1856, Oudh State was annexed by the East India Company on the pretext of misrule by the Nawab.

Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General of India between 1798 and 1805, introduced the system of Subsidiary Alliances by which he tried to control the external policy of the Indian princes and to undermine their military strength. According to this system, an Indian Prince was forced to keep a body of British troops in its domain and pay for its maintenance. Also, he had to agree to have a British Resident representing the Governor-General's authority in his court. In return for these measures, the British would protect him against other powers. Among the bigger states, brought under subsidiary alliances were Baroda in the West, Mysore and Travancore in the South and Gwalior and Hyderabad in the Deccan. This system of Subsidiary Alliances increased the power and prestige of the British to a very great extent.



Lord Wellesley



Lord Dalhousie

Lord Dalhousie, who was the Governor-General from 1848 to 1856 applied the Doctrine of Lapse and extended the British Empire to its farthest extent. According to this doctrine, the sovereignty of the dependent states lapsed or was transferred to the British, if the rulers died without heirs. This doctrine did not recognise the right of adoption of heirs to the throne, a right till then exercised by Indian rulers, and sanctioned by the Hindu religion. Using this principle, Lord Dalhousie brought under British control, Satara (1848), Jaipur and Sambalpur (1849), Bhagat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Nagpur (1853), Jhansi (1854) and Tanjore (1855) by ousting their successors. He abolished the titles and pensions of several Indian princes. The princes who still ruled over their states were puppets placed there by the British.

By 1857, British expansion reached its climax. The British had brought the whole of India under their political control through different stages between the years 1757 and 1857.

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4. How India Won Her Freedom

4.1. - India under the rule of the East India Company

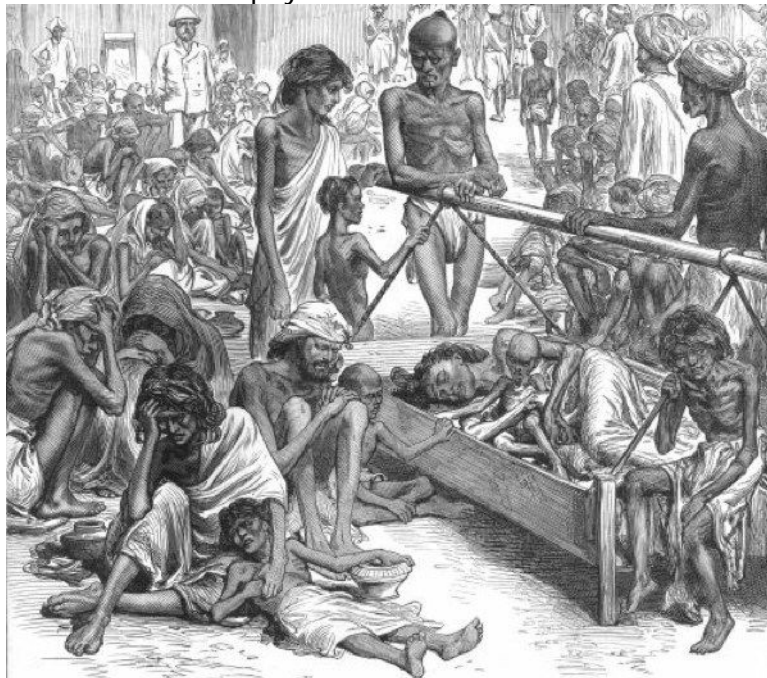
After the battles of Plassey and Buxar, fought in the years 1757 and 1764 respectively, the East India Company acquired the right to collect revenues from the conquered territories. But the administration of the land was placed under the authority of the Nawab of Bengal. For this, he was paid annually, a fixed sum by the Company. This arrangement enabled the Company to collect the revenue without shouldering the responsibilities of administration. Such a division of authority however caused many difficulties to the Nawab. He was always in need of money to meet the expenses of administering the land but he could not collect the revenue.



Battle of Buxar

Moreover, the Company's servants entered into private trade defying the authority of the Nawab. His officers were corrupt and this enabled the Company's men to fill their pockets with ill-gotten wealth. The British framed all their economic policies to their advantage. In the name of trade, Bengal was practically plundered. They encouraged the hand-loom industry but they forced the Indian weavers to sell their products to them at low fixed prices. The weavers were not allowed to sell their cloth to any other customer for a higher price. The Company monopolized the sale of raw cotton and the weavers were forced to buy it from them at the price fixed by the rulers. Similar fate overtook other handicrafts in India. There was a regular "legalized exploitation" of the artisans. Native industries were completely ruined. The silk weavers were forced to work in the Company's factories and were forbidden to weave in their own homes.

This system of double government in Bengal led to a reign of corruption and oppression. The sufferings of the people were increased in the famine that broke out in 1770, in which one-third of the population of Bengal died. The starving people migrated to other provinces, which meant a huge loss of revenue to the company. To make up for this loss, the British increased the rent on land-holdings. If a farmer failed to pay the enhanced rent, his land was auctioned.



Bengal Famine

The company got into financial difficulties and approached the British Government for a loan. This enabled the British Parliament to intervene in the affairs of the Company. Already the British people had heard about the sufferings of the people of Bengal. As a result, the Regulating Act of 1773 was passed in the Parliament. Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal from 1772 to 1785 put an end to the double government in Bengal.

According to this Act, the Governors of Madras and Bombay would be subordinate to the Governor of Bengal who was now called the Governor-General of Bengal. Till now, the three Governments of the Presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Bengal were separate and independent of one another. There was no uniform policy or coordination of work. But now the Governor-General was authorized to superintend and control the Governments of Bombay and Madras. A council of four members was appointed to assist the Governor-General. He was authorized to make laws and issue ordinances for the good government of the territories in the possession of the Company

The Regulating Act marked the beginning of the Parliamentary Control over the affairs of the East India Company. In the following years, other Acts were passed which increased the control of the British Parliament over the Company's affairs and strengthened the hands of the Governor-General.

According to the Act of 1813, the East India Company's monopoly of Indian trade was ended. Indian trade was now open to all British subjects.

In the 19th century, as the Industrial Revolution progressed in Britain, goods were manufactured at increasingly lower cost. Indian handicrafts were unable to face the unequal competition brought on, by the machine-made goods of Great Britain. In 1884, England raised import duties which went against the interests of Indian traders. As a result, the price of Indian goods went up in England and the demand for them fell rapidly. The Indian export trade suffered; and Indians engaged in hand-loom, silk, sugar and such industries were put out of business and countless workers lost their jobs. Thus, British policy resulted in a systematic exploitation of the masses.

There was no attempt to associate the people with the administration of their land. The land revenues and other taxes, collected often under torture, were used to finance the wars of expansion which the British fought in India and elsewhere. They threatened the rich Rajas, Zamindars and businessmen, forcing them to give cash and gifts which were all sent to Great Britain. The Company paid high salaries to its offices serving both in India and in Great Britain. This drain of her wealth made India very poor.

From 1813 onwards, Christian missionaries were allowed to come to India to spread the religion of Christ and to introduce western education. They built Churches, hospitals and schools. Their work was mostly among the humbler sections of society, many of whom became Christians, there were a few converts from other sections as well.

By an Act passed in 1833 in the British Parliament, all restrictions were removed on the immigration of British subjects to India, for trade, missionary work or any other lawful purpose. Englishmen were permitted to buy land and settle down permanently in India if they wished. The powers of the Governor-General were increased. He was now known as the Governor-General of India and a separate Governor was appointed for Bengal. The Governor-General was given full powers and authority to control the civil and military administration of the provinces of Madras, Bombay and Bengal. He was empowered to make laws for all persons, British or native, for all courts of justice in all the Indian territories. He was assisted by the Legislative Council which was now enlarged to contain twelve members, including one representative each, from the 3 Governments of Bombay, Madras and Bengal and the North West Province of Agra division.

During Lord Dalhousie's period from 1848 to 1856, the Indian Railway system was inaugurated. The Postal department with its half-anna postage was introduced and also the telegraph services. Wherever possible Grand Trunk Roads were laid. Irrigation schemes were introduced and the Ganges canal was completed.

The establishment of the Department of Public Instruction was a most welcome step. Schools, colleges and universities were started. The Universities of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta were inaugurated in 1857. Harbours and light houses were built and Indian sea-ports were thrown open to world trade.

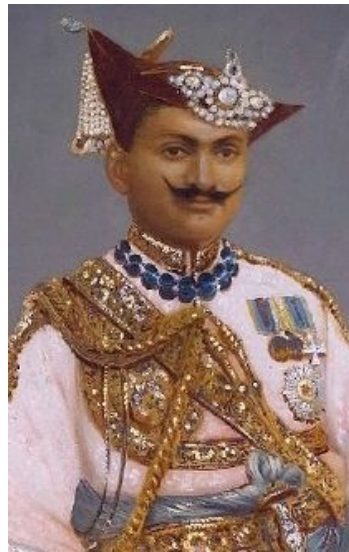
In undertaking all these projects, the British were motivated chiefly by self interest. They needed the roads and railways to consolidate their rule, collect their revenues and to transport their goods and raw materials, especially cotton, which was sent to England to the cotton mills of Lancashire and Liverpool.

Introducing western education enabled them to appoint Indian graduates in all the subordinate services. However, all the higher posts were reserved for the Britishers. This was resented by educated Indians.

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4.2. - The Great Revolt of 1857

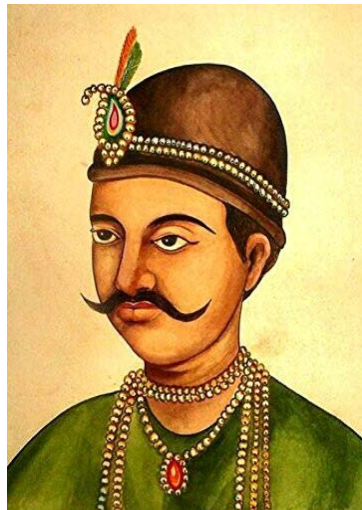
The great revolt of 1857 was the first attempt made by Indians to throw off British rule. It was India's first struggle for independence. There was long, careful planning behind the people's uprising but a premature outburst upset the political awakening among the people of India. Leaders such as Nana Sahib, Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, Tantia Tope and Bakht Khan played a heroic part in this struggle.



Nana Sahib



Rani Lakshmi Bai



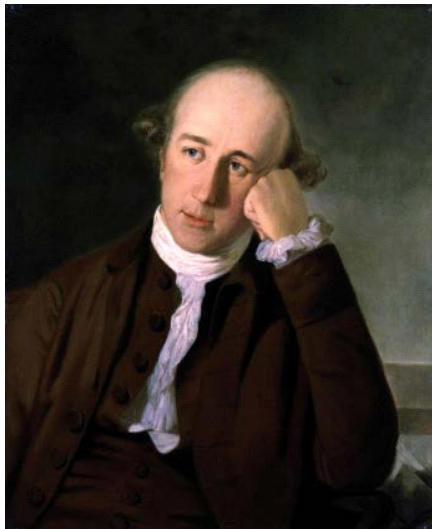
Tantia Tope



Bakht Khan

The causes that led to the revolt were many. There were political, economic, social, religious and military causes.

Political Causes: The British annexed the whole of India bit by bit between the years 1757 and 1857, under one pretext or other. Governor-General Wellesley (1798 to 1805) in the name of Subsidiary Alliance brought many princely kingdoms under British protection. Warren Hastings and Ellenborough waged aggressive wars and annexed territories. Dalhousie, utterly disregarding the people's sentiments implemented the Doctrine of Lapse and annexed vast territories. Hindus felt hatred towards the British for ending the rule of venerable dynasties.



Warren Hasting



Bahadur Shah Zafar

The Nawabs of Oudh had been very loyal and faithful to the British from 1765 onwards. The State was quite rich in resources and the soil was fertile. Often it had helped the British Government with money. But Dalhousie annexed the State of Oudh in 1856 alleging misrule and ousted its Nawab. Muslims felt hurt by his high-handed behaviour. A large number of soldiers in the army of Bengal belonged to Oudh. They were shocked to hear of the annexation of their homeland by the Governor-General. Sepoys and peasants were filled with discontent.

Hindus and Muslims grew indignant at the way the British treated Bahadur Shah, the Moghul Emperor. The alien rulers did not permit him to hold Durbar. He felt humiliated when Dalhousie ordered that his successors should not live in the Red Fort in Delhi. These acts of the British hurt the popular sentiments of the people and they began to dislike the British intensely.

Economic Causes:

Due to the economic policy of the East India Company, cottage industries and handicrafts were utterly ruined. India which was once famous for its cotton fabrics was forced to buy cheap

machine-made cloth, manufactured in the cotton mills of Lancashire. India was turned into a British colony which exported raw materials and imported machine-made goods. Farmers groaned under the burden of heavy taxation. Many of them gave up tilling the land. Distress and poverty increased.

Hitherto artists, artisans, writers, poets and religious divines were patronized by Indian rulers. The foreign rulers who replaced them had no regard for native culture, language and religion. Having lost princely patronage, many lost their livelihood as well. Similarly, the middle classes who had served the native rulers in administrative posts lost their jobs. All these affected people spread discontent against foreign rule.

Social Causes:

The racial arrogance of the British offended Indians. The British ridiculed Indian culture and tradition; therefore when they tried to introduce social reforms they were misunderstood by the people. In 1829, William Bentinck introduced a law abolishing the practice of Sati. This merciful measure was then considered by certain sections of Hindus as interference in the practice of their religion.

In 1832 and 1850, reforms were introduced entitling converts to Christianity, to ancestral properties. Education for women and widow remarriages were strongly recommended by the British rulers. All these measures were considered by people as threats to Indian social life and ancient traditions.



William Bentinck

Religious Causes:

From 1813, Christian missionaries had been coming to India in large numbers and establishing their institutions all over the country. They built churches, schools and hospitals in remote

villages. The study of the Bible was made available in the schools run by them. While Christian establishments spread, native schools declined. This was resented by Indians. As there was no link between the rulers and their subjects, the Britishers had no way of learning of the people's grievances.

Military Causes:

It was the East India Company's sepoys who led the revolt in 1857. The sepoys had always been loyal to the Company. They had fought several battles for the Company against their own countrymen, enabling the British to build their empire in India. Instead of showing due regard to the sepoys, the British officers were snobbish and overbearing in their attitude towards them. Indian sepoys had no prospect of getting higher or more responsible jobs in the army as these were all reserved for white men. Previously the sepoys were given 'batta' for serving in distant provinces like the Punjab and Sind but this practice was soon stopped.

The sepoys had other grievances too. They felt that the Company was interfering with their religious and social customs, with the aim of converting them to Christianity. Hindu sepoys were forbidden to wear caste marks, turbans and beard. In 1856, an Act was passed making it compulsory for the sepoys to go over-seas if necessary, to fight for the Company. High Caste Hindus opposed it since crossing the seas was forbidden by their religion and led to the loss of caste. Sepoys from Bengal had served the Company loyally from its early days, but now they found that the Sikh sepoys and Gurkhas who were recruited later were paid better salaries and were enjoying more privileges. They felt sore at this injustice.

Indians as a whole were filled with a fervent desire to secure freedom from English bondage. Soldiers and civilians alike fretted with anger against the foreign rulers. It was a combination of military grievances, national hatred and religious sentiments against the English occupation of India. After long and careful planning, May 31, 1857, was the day originally fixed for the outbreak of the revolt on a country-wide scale. Unfortunately, it broke out earlier because of certain events that happened early in May.

The immediate cause of the mutiny and revolt:

The British introduced a new brand of Enfield rifles for which greased cartridges had to be used. A rumour went around that the new cartridges were greased with the fat of cows and pigs required biting before they could be used. The religious sentiments of the Hindus and Muslims were offended as the cow is held sacred by the Hindus, and Muslims detest pigs intensely. On 6th May 1857, the new cartridges were issued to 90 Indian Soldiers in Meerut. Eighty-five soldiers refused to bite them with their teeth. They were court-martialled. A few sepoys were hanged and the rest sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment. At this turn of events the other sepoys, too impatient to wait till 31st May, grew wild and massacred the entire white population including women and children; and set free their imprisoned comrades. This was a

signal for the rising against the foreigners throughout the northern states. The mutiny spread rapidly and assumed the character of a popular rebellion, a war of Indian Independence. In Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Cawnpore, Aligarh, Lucknow, Muzaffarnagar, Ferozepore and Barrackpore, the sepoys revolted and killed their British Officers.



Enfield cartridge

On 10th May, the Indian troops were joined by thousands of able-bodied civilians and they all marched on to Delhi. The hastiness of the Indian troops in Meerut saved the British raj from its impending ruin. Had the uprising started simultaneously, throughout the country on the day fixed i.e. 31st May 1857 as planned, not a single Englishman would have escaped alive.

Indian troops consisting of about two thousand soldiers entered Delhi on 11th May 1857. Within two days Delhi was freed from English control. The rebels declared Bahadur Shah as Emperor and rallied under the Moghul banner. This news spread like wildfire all over the country and was received with great jubilation by the people. And for some months the Emperor sat on the throne of Delhi.

Nana Sahib led the revolt in Kanpur. He killed a number of English men and women. In Oudh, Begum Hazrat Mahal and Wazir Ali Khan were the leaders. In central India, Rani Lakshimibai of Jhansi and Tantia Tope resisted the British forces. In Bihar, Raja Kanwar Singh and Amar Singh joined the forces of revolt. The common people also joined the revolt and helped the sepoys to carry on the fight.

Both Hindus and Muslims took full part in the revolt. But the Indian princes as a whole kept aloof from the revolt, fearing to risk losing what they had acquired or managed to retain. They did not wish to incur the displeasure of their British masters to whom they owed their position and allowances.



Begum Hazrat Mahal



Wazir Ali Khan

The British acted quickly, bringing armies by rail from different parts of the Country. Lord Canning the Governor-General showed the presence of mind at this critical hour, by ordering all the Indian troops in the affected provinces to be disarmed speedily. He tried to break the unity between Hindus and Muslims. He frightened the Muslims by telling them that the Hindus wanted to establish their rule because they were in the majority. He told the Hindus that the Muslims were planning to establish Muslim rule again. He succeeded in getting help from the States of Patiala, Nabha, Hyderabad, Gwalior and Rajputana. Nepal and Punjab provided excellent recruits to the ranks of British soldiers.

The English Commander-in-Chief marched with his army to Delhi and laid siege to the city. The siege continued for several months. Indian troops within Delhi did not have a strong leader to inspire them to joint action. Through espionage and bribery, the British gained the upper hand. They got the military secrets of the enemy from Mirza IllaliBaksha, a close relative of the Emperor. Because of his treachery, Bahadur Shah fell into British hands and his two sons were shot dead. The Emperor was deported to Rangoon where he died in 1863. Delhi was recaptured by British forces. The rebel leaders were caught and publically hanged on 18th June 1858.

The Fall of Delhi:

The fall of Delhi was followed by the massacre and loot of the people by British troops. The outrage committed by the army was unbelievably horrible. A wholesale vengeance was taken without distinction of friend and foe. In trying to restore order the British committed great atrocities, the memory of which rankled in India's mind long after the uprising was suppressed. The English killed their prisoners ruthlessly, without any trial. Lakhs of civilians were put to death in Delhi and in the country-side around.

Rani Laxmibai, a girl, 20 years old died while fighting on horse-back against British troops. Tantia Tope, the bravest of all the rebels was betrayed by one of his friends and hanged on 18th April 1859. Nana Saheb, Begum Hazrat Mahal and Amar Sing escaped to Nepal. Thus the great struggle which began in May 1857 was suppressed completely by April 1859.

Causes for the failure of the Great Revolt:

The rebel forces were poorly equipped and short of men and money. The British recruited soldiers from the Punjab and Nepal and their forces far out-numbered the rebel armies. Worst of all, many native princes by their ready help to the British ensured and hastened the failure of the revolt.

The rebel armies had no experienced generals to lead them, whereas the British forces were commanded by well-trained and experienced generals. There was no outstanding leader among the rebels who could rally all the forces and face the British armies. Furthermore, the rebels lacked quick means of communication and transportation. On the other hand, the British had all the facilities of postal, telegraph and railway services at their disposal, to move their forces quickly.

Lastly, since the upsurge did not take place simultaneously in all the different parts of the country, the British were able to get the warning in time, enabling them to collect and send their forces wherever necessary.

Nature of the revolt of 1857:

Suppression of the revolt of 1857 marked the end of India's first attempt to secure freedom from British rule. It began as a mutiny of sepoys but later developed into a widespread revolt. Hindus and Muslims joined together in their desire to drive the foreigners away. The uprising was a mighty effort, on an extensive scale, to shake off the religious and political domination of an alien race.

But essentially, the revolt was a feudal outburst headed by feudal chiefs and fanned by the wide-spread anti-foreign sentiment. It was confined to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Bengal was practically untouched by it. Punjab and the Southern states had no part in it. There was hardly any national feeling or unifying sentiment among the leaders of the rebellion. There was no central power to rally the various elements of the uprising and withstand the might of the British.

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4.3. - Consequences of the Revolt of 1857

The Revolt of 1857 marked the end of an epoch in Indian History – the epoch of British diplomatic tactics and aggressive wars to expand the British Empire. The events of 1857 brought the rule of the East India Company to an end. Racial ill-will increased between the British and the natives. The arrogant Englishmen stopped having any association with Indians. Having lost their faith and trust in them, the British decided not to offer them any key posts in the administration of the land.

To ensure the stability of British rule, they took steps to make the learning of English popular, so that Indians may start appreciating British laws and system of justice. The rulers lost their trust in the loyalty of Indian sepoys. They re-organized the Indian army by increasing the number of British Officers. The army was reformed on the basis of religion, province and caste. This was intended to cause divisions among the sepoys in order to prevent them from uniting against one force.

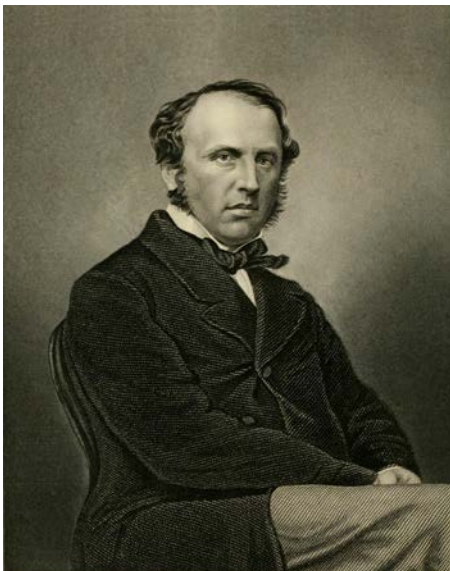
The British Government realized that it was a mistake to antagonize the rulers of the Indian States. Many native princes had helped the British in putting down the revolt. Therefore they decided to befriend them from henceforth. The princes were assured that all the treaties made with them earlier by the East India Company would be honoured by the British Parliament and no further attempt would be made to deprive them of their territories or titles. Gone were the days when a Governor-General could annex a state on the pretext of misrule or by applying the Doctrine of Lapse. The right of adoption of heirs by native rulers was recognized. They were assured of territorial integrity of their states, and of help and protection in the event of any external attack. The princes were happy and relieved to hear these assurances from the British Government. They became loyal allies of the British and were energetic in putting down any national movement of the masses that might arise in their domains.

According to the Act of 1858 passed in the British Parliament, India was henceforth to be governed in the name of Her Majesty, the Queen of England and the Governor-General was to be called the Viceroy of India. The Crown had the power to appoint the Viceroy of India and the Governors of the Presidencies. A Secretary of State for India was appointed to run the administration of the land through the Viceroy and the Governors of the provinces. He was to be a member of the British Cabinet and as such was responsible to the British Parliament. He would be assisted by a council of fifteen members called the India Council. The salaries of the Secretary of State for India and the members of the India Council were to be paid out of the revenues of India. This practice which was greatly resented by Indians, continued up to 1919.

The Secretary of State and his India Council had the power to make appointments to the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and the Governors of the Presidencies. They could also exercise control over the civil and military servants of the Crown.

Proclamation of Queen Victoria:

To celebrate the occasion of the taking over of the Government of India by the Crown, a durbar was held at Allahabad when Lord Canning was Viceroy, to read the Queen's proclamation to the princes and the people of India. It declared, "We have resolved to take upon ourselves the Government of the territories in India, hitherto administered in trust for us by the Honorable East India Company." It assured the princes that their rights, dignity and honour would be respected and that Britain desired no more extension of her territorial possessions in India.



Lord Canning

The people of India were assured that none would in any way be favoured or disqualified because of his religion. All citizens would enjoy equal and impartial protection of

the law. Indians, whatever their race or creed would be freely admitted to Government offices and appointments, provided they were qualified according to the rules and regulations.

Land-owners were assured that in framing and administering land laws, due regard would be paid to the ancient rights, practices and customs of India.

The Queen's Proclamation laid the foundation of a new policy in India. It provided peace and prosperity to the people, protection of their rights and privileges, promotion of peaceful industries and works of public interest and administration that would benefit all citizens, native and foreign. Above all Indians could now hope to enter the higher services of the state if duly qualified.

Nevertheless, in spite of the hopes raised by the Queen's Proclamation, Indians were given very little share in the administration of their own land. They demanded that there should be adequate representation of the people of India in the Government. The Legislative Council of the Viceroy consisted of only official members who were all British and had no sympathy for Indian aspirations.

By the Act of 1861, the Viceroy's Executive and Legislative Councils were enlarged; so also were the executive and legislative councils of the provinces. Non-official members were now included in these councils, but these were Rajahs and Maharajahs of States or their Dewans who did not represent Indian public opinion; nor did they know the English language. The real purpose of the British politicians was, not to have any representation of Indian public opinion in the councils but only to placate the Rajahs and Maharajahs who could help them later on to stabilize their rule.

In the following years the number of non-official members nominated to the Viceroy's Council, was increased. Besides the ruling Princes or their Dewans, big Zamindars or retired officials were included. These members did not show any interest in the legislation for British India since it did not affect them. The Indian members of the Central and provincial councils generally supported the British Government, as they were not elected by the people and so did not represent public opinion.

The legislative councils were more like committees assisting the executive councils in making laws which were nothing but the orders of the Government, members had no power to exercise any check on the Government nor could they call for any information they required. The Viceroy was given veto powers to override the decisions of his Council if he wished. Also he had the power of issuing ordinances which made him almost a despot over India.

4.4. - Birth of Nationalism in the 19th Century - I

Social and Religious movement: India owes a great deal to the social and religious movements of the 19th century led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, for its resurgence and national awakening.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1774 – 1833) was a great reformer and a passionate champion of humanitarianism. He studied all living religions. Himself a devout Hindu, he had no prejudice against any other religion but believed in the fundamental truths and unity of all religions. To him, brotherhood of man was the essence of all religions. Nor was he reluctant to borrow what was good in European culture.



Raja Ram Mohan Roy



Lord Bentinck

He was opposed to the practices of Sati and polygamy and favoured re-marriage of widows. It was on his insistence that Lord Bentinck the then Governor-General of India banned the inhuman practice of Sati. Also, Ram Mohan Roy condemned and discouraged idol worship.

He declared that his mission was to cleanse the Indian society of all its social evils. To this end, he founded the Brahma Samaj on 23rd January 1830. It is a reformed form of Hinduism with no idol worship or priestly dominance. He also opposed the caste system with its evils of untouchability. He once said that the distinctions of caste, introducing divisions among Hindus, had entirely deprived them of political feelings because their outlook was limited to their particular caste or community.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great champion of the liberties of the people and an agitator for constitutional, social, legal and administrative reforms. He stood for the political rights of the people and the freedom of the press. He advocated the western type of education with an emphasis on the study of science. He believed that British rule in India was of divine dispensation, and so did not aim at complete independence for India, nor did he favour India breaking her ties with Britain.

He reminded Indians of their glorious past and how the study of it could lead to political awakening in the country. He defended Hinduism and tried to purge it of all its evils, making it a strong and living faith. He has been rightly described as the Father of Indian Renaissance and the Prophet of Indian Nationalism. In the words of Rabindranath Tagore, Raja Ram Mohan Roy "inaugurated the modern age in India." According to Miss Colet, an English writer, ".....He was the arch which spanned the gulf between ancient caste and modern humanity, between superstition and science, between despotism and democracy....."

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824 – 1883):

Another religious and social movement that was started in the 19th century was the Arya Samaj, founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a renowned scholar of the Vedas. His aim was to break the chains of superstition and ignorance that had fettered Indian society. He was a great rebel – a rebel against orthodox Hinduism, a rebel against dominant Christianity and a rebel against all that was alien to the Vedic spirit of India.



Swami Dayanand Saraswati

Dayanand condemned the idea of superiority based on birth. He gave a death-blow to untouchability, child marriages and animal sacrifice practised in the name of religion. He travelled widely across the country spreading his beliefs.

Dayanand was a staunch nationalist. It was his belief that in the past, Vedic idealism had saved India during the periods of her great trials. Hence he pleaded for the revival of Vedic learning. He preached fearlessness and freedom, both in spiritual and political matters. To him, India was the land of philosophers. He wrote in his book 'Satyarth Prakash' that a

foreign government however good and benevolent can never make its subjects happy. It can never be a substitute for self-government.

He wanted Hinduism to resist alien influences which might draw it away from its original roots.

Dayanand contributed to the rise of Indian nationalism by making the study of Hindi popular. He wrote his commentaries of the Vedas in Hindi. This bond of a common language united the people of North India.

Dayanand was also the first Indian to advocate the principle of Swadeshi. He sincerely believed in the regeneration of his beloved motherland.

The Arya Samaj was a great influence in fostering Indian nationalism in North India, especially in Punjab, and produced great nationalists like Lala Lajpat Rai. It raised a new militant spirit among Hindus. Anglo-Vedic educational institutions in northern India breathed new life into the nation. Young men came out of D.A.V. college filled with great patriotism and a fervent love of freedom. Rabindranath has said, "...Dayanand preached and worked for our self-respect and vigorous awakening of mind that could strive for harmonious adjustment with the progressive spirit of the modern age and at the same time keep in perfect touch with the glorious past of India..."

Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1835 – 1886):



Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Another great personality who influenced men's way of thinking in the 19th century was Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Saint of Dakshineswar near Calcutta. He was a man of enlightenment and liberal outlook. A devout Hindu, he had great respect for other religions also. He said that Indian culture was definitely superior to western culture, which was purely materialistic. This made young men think of their ancient culture with new respect and regard.

His teachings gave a blow to the awe and attraction that western culture had for Indian minds. The core of Ramakrishna's teachings was, 'God dwells in the heart of man' and 'service to man is really service to God who is enshrined in his heart.'

The Ramakrishna Mission:

After the death of Ramakrishna Paramahansa in 1886, his work was continued by his devoted band of disciples who founded the Ramakrishna Mission in memory of their beloved Master. This mission has contributed much to the religious and national regeneration of India. Its headquarters is in Calcutta, and it has branches all over India and in some western countries as well. The mission had done much humanitarian work along religious, educational and medical lines. Full of the ideal of patient loving service, like the Franciscans of old and the Quakers in modern times, it engages in relief work whenever calamities such as cyclones, floods, famines and pestilences occur anywhere in India, and even outside India sometimes.

Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902):

The foremost disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda carried the message of his master throughout the length and breadth of India. During his travels, he was much pained to see the sufferings of the poor. His heart bled for them and he spent many sleepless nights thinking of their misery. When he came to Madras he was accorded a most loving and enthusiastic welcome.



Swami Vivekananda



Justice Ranade

*** "It was in Madras where many of its most advanced young men became his devoted adherents. It was in Madras where he rose to his highest levels and gained a group of staunch disciples who were largely instrumental in securing the funds with which he was enabled to go

to America.....It was his Madrasi disciples who widely circulated his message even when he was working in the west."

He attended the Parliament of Religions held in September 1893 in Chicago, U.S.A. In his speech on the first day, i.e. September 11th, 'He greeted the youngest of the nations (America at that time) in the name of the most ancient monastic order in the world – the Vedic Order of Sannyasins'. He presented Hinduism to the assembled delegates, as the Mother of Religions. After the conference, he was invited to give lectures in several cities in America and England. Wherever he went, rapt audiences listened eagerly to his words. Many men and women in the west became his disciples.

Back in India, he said to his countrymen that religion must come out of the caves and forests and enter men's daily lives. It should become their very life-breath. He warned his co-religionists that the harsh treatment they were meting out to the poor and less privileged sections within the Hindu fold was turning many poor Hindus to other religions, attracted by their teachings.

Swami Vivekananda made Indians feel proud of their ancient heritage. He said spiritual strength combined with fearlessness must be their stand in politics. He stressed the need for building the national character on the principles of the Vedanta. He was a strong critic of the tendency for westernization among Indians. He condemned educated Indians for imitating western ways, in dress and manners.

****The Life of Swami Vivekananda by His Eastern and Western Disciples Vol I pg 231.*

PrarthanaSamaj: Based on the ideals of Brahmo Samaj, the PrarthanaSamaj was founded in 1857 in Maharashtra. It brought about social reforms and encouraged the new spirit of nationalism.

Justice Ranade was one of its staunch supporters. Through educational institutions run by the Samaj, a new consciousness and vitality entered the languid society of Maharashtra. The religious philosophy of the Samaj was based on that of Brahmo Samaj. It opposed untouchability, casteism and idol worship; and advocated women's education and widow remarriage.

The Theosophical Society: The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 in New York by a Russian lady, Madam Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott. At the invitation of Swami Dayananda they visited India in 1879. Col. Olcott spoke highly of Hinduism; and at the same time emphasized, that the evils such as untouchability and child marriage which had crept into it, must be removed. The Theosophical Society has its World Head-quarters in Adyar, Madras.



Madame Blavatsky

Mrs Annie Besant, an Irish lady came to India in 1893 as a Theosophist and made it her permanent home. She showed a keen interest in Hinduism and expressed her faith in the Vedas and the Upanishads. She believed in the superiority of Hindu culture and religion over western culture and religion and dedicated herself to making the Hindu religion and culture popular.

She reminded Hindus who were imitating the west blindly, of the greatness of their spiritual and cultural heritage. She wrote several books on education, Theosophy and politics. She had true sympathy for India's endeavour to achieve political freedom. Two of her major works are 'India, a Nation' and 'How India wrought her freedom'. She started the Home Rule Movement in collaboration with B.G.Tilak in 1916 and went to jail for the cause of India's freedom.

Thus the religious and social reformers of the 19th century namely Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his great disciple Swami Vivekananda impressed on the minds of the people, the greatness of Hindu religious thought and culture. They urged men to go back to their ancient wells of spiritual wisdom and strength. Their stirring messages awakened in Indians a keen desire for national regeneration on the basis of all that was best in their past heritage.



Annie Besant



Subramania Bharathi

Subramania Bharathi (1882 – 1921):

In the early decades of the twentieth century, a new voice was heard in South India, hailing mother India. Poet Subramania Bharathi sang of political freedom for his beloved motherland. He sang of economic freedom for the poor downtrodden masses whose sufferings touched him to the heart.

He sang of the 'New Woman' who would no longer keep herself house-bound but would walk with her head held erect, doing her part in the freedom struggle and contributing her share in building a new, free India.

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4.5. - Birth of Nationalism in the 19th Century – II

Effects of British Rule:

The revival of interest in ancient Hindu scriptures was accompanied by other forces equally powerful, in the growth of nationalism in India in the 19th century. The alien rule which was indifferent to the sentiments of the people aroused in them a great urge for freedom. The arrogant and proud Britishers paid no heed to the traditions, social customs and religions of the people. The British ruling class kept itself aloof from Indians to maintain its prestige. There were two worlds: the world of the British officials and the world of India's millions, there was nothing to connect them. Indians were crushed ruthlessly. Every Indian was filled with indignation against the ruling race.

Although Queen Victoria, in her proclamation had promised that Indians would not be discriminated against, on the basis of caste, creed or colour, yet this policy was not followed in practice. No attention was paid to national education, agriculture, industries, irrigation and sanitation. Indians were kept out of all the higher offices of administration. People began to agitate against this injustice.

On the other hand, British rule brought blessings also to India. There was one central administration for the whole of British India; and maintenance of law and order throughout the land.

English became the language of administration and communication. The network of railways and telegraphs helped people to move freely into other provinces and communicate with the people there. This fostered a feeling of oneness and unity in the country.

Through lectures and correspondence, Indians could exchange ideas. Political leaders began to have wide publicity and larger audiences at their meetings.

Western Education: The spread of western education played a significant role in the growth of national awakening. It was more prevalent in Bengal which had come earliest under British rule. Whereas Vedic idealism and revival of Hinduism produced a sense of self-confidence and self-respect in the people, English education brought them into touch with the political philosophies of western thinkers, with their emphasis on nationalism and democracy. Indians who studied the political systems of western nations were filled with aspirations for self-government and representative institutions. Furthermore, English education brought about a widening of the Indian outlook, admiration for English literature and institutions, and growing demand for political reforms. It enlightened the people, filled them with liberal ideas and gave them a scientific outlook. Educated Indians lost their belief in superstition and outmoded customs. University education produced a new class, consisting of lawyers,

doctors, professors and clerks. When these were denied more responsible jobs in government offices, they began to protest against this unfairness.

Surendranath Banerjee was qualified for the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.) in 1869 but the Government on one pretext or another refused to give him an administrative post.

Aurobindo Ghose was another victim of racial prejudice. He passed the I.C.S. examination in 1877 but was rejected on the trivial excuse that he was not good at horse-riding.

Later the age limit for the candidates appearing for the I.C.S. examinations was lowered from 21 to 19 years. Such a move was definitely directed against Indian candidates for whom it became almost impossible to compete for the civil services. There was nation-wide agitation against this step. Surendranath Banerjee toured the country and addressed crowded meetings, to register his protest against this decision of the British Government. He also demanded that the open competitive examinations for the I.C.S. should be held simultaneously both in England and in India, and not only in England as the practice was till then. The Civil Service agitation all over India produced a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people, especially among the intelligentsia.



Surendranath Banerji

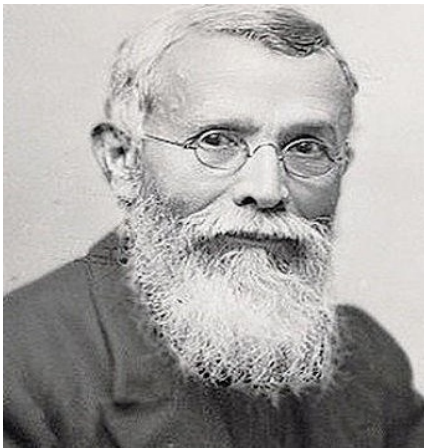


Aurobindo Ghose

Economic exploitation of India: A good deal of the anti-British feeling was created by the economic policy followed by the Government of India. Systematically, the English ruined Indian trade and native industries. Import duty on English-made cloth was removed to encourage English textile manufacturers. In his 'Discovery of India' Jawaharlal Nehru says, "The British market was closed to Indian products through legislation and the Indian market was open to British manufacturers. Vigorous attempts were made to restrict and crush Indian manufacturers by various measure

and internal duties which prevented the flow of Indian goods within the country itself. British goods meanwhile had free entry. The Indian textile industry collapsed affecting vast numbers of weavers and artisans. It (the process) continued throughout the 19th century breaking up other old industries also, ship-building, metal works, glass, paper and many crafts.”

India was flooded with British goods which led to rapidly increasing unemployment and poverty among the masses, especially the artisan classes. India became an agricultural colony of industrial England, supplying raw materials and providing markets for England’s industrial goods. The unemployed artisans now found their ancient skills useless. They drifted through the land but the land was fully occupied and could not possibly absorb them profitably. Thus the poverty of the country increased and standards of living fell to very low levels.



DadabhaiNaoroji

Another cause for India’s poverty was the flow of India’s wealth to England. In his book, ‘Poverty and the un-British Rule in India’, **DadabhaiNaoroji**, a great patriot and devout political worker wrote, ‘It is at India’s cost and blood that this British Empire has been formed and maintained up to this day....you (the English) have brought India to this condition by the constant drain upon the wealth of that country.....This drain consists of two elements – first that arising from the remittances by European Officials of their savings and for their expenditure in England and from Government expenditure in England and India. And the second arising by similar remittances by non-official Europeans’.

As the drain prevents India from making any capital, the British by bringing back the capital which they had drained from India itself secure almost a monopoly of all trade and important industries and thereby further exploit and drain India, the source of evil being the official drain.” DadabhaiNaoroji pointed out that, ‘England was eating India’s resources at the rate of 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 pounds a year.

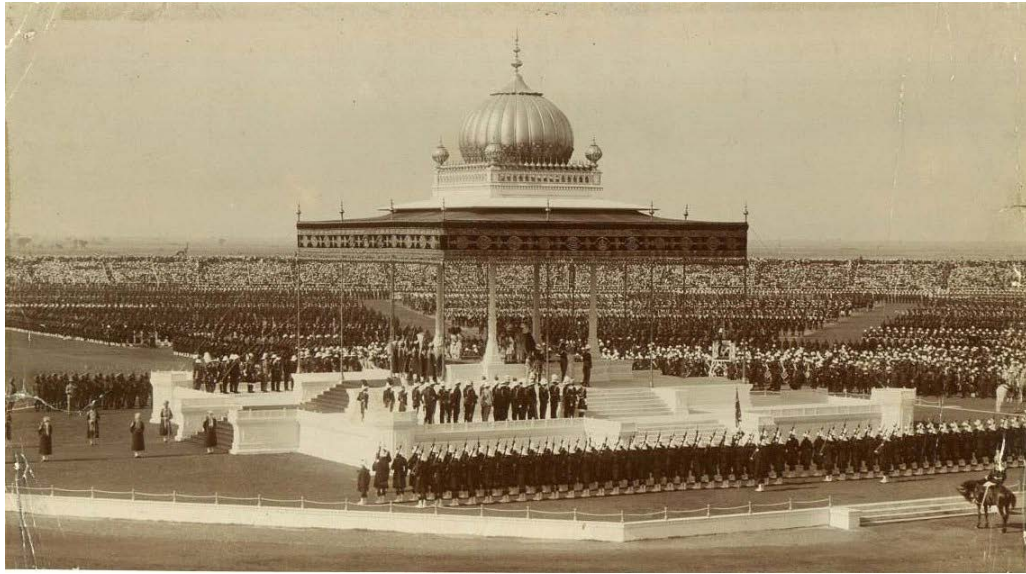
Mr Garret, an English historian also pointed out, “The interest of the educated class in nationalism has always been partly economic and partly religious and it is an undeniable fact that the deteriorating economic position of the country and the anti-national policy followed by the Government, together with the policy of excluding Indians from the higher ranks of services were responsible to no small extent for arousing anti-British feelings and the national spirit among the people of India.”

The Role of the Press: In the beginning, there were only English newspapers owned and edited by Englishmen. They were pro-government and anti-nationalist. In due course, news-papers in Indian languages were also started. These began to criticize the policies and actions of the Government of India. The Government felt annoyed with the hostile attitude of the Indian language papers and imposed restrictions on the press in 1878 by an Act known as the ‘**Vernacular Press Act**’. The Act provoked a lot of resentment both in India and in England and was revoked after four years. But soon other measures were adopted by the Government to deny freedom of thought and speech to the people. Such high-handedness of the Government of India also intensified the anti-British campaign by national leaders.



Lord Lytton

Repressive measures by Lord Lytton: In 1875, a famine broke out in South India and took away thousands of lives. The rulers were indifferent to the sufferings of the famine-stricken people. This filled every Indian with bitterness and hatred towards the alien rule. While people were starving in millions, Lord Lytton held a durbar in Delhi in 1877 to announce that Queen Victoria had assumed the title of ‘Empress of India’. The vain show cost millions of rupees to the Indian treasury. The Government was bitterly criticized for this extravagance. Sharply stung by the criticism from the Indian language newspapers and national leaders, Lord Lytton passed the aforesaid unpopular Vernacular Press Act in 1878.



Durbar at Delhi

It was during the tenure of office of Lord Lytton that the Arms Act came into force. Possessing or carrying arms without license was made a punishable offense and heavy penalties were imposed upon those who broke the law. What pained the people most was that Europeans were exempted from this law. The natives of India took this as a national insult. By the time Lord Lytton completed his term as Viceroy of India, the country was approaching a state of revolution.

***Bill Brought by Ilbert the Law Member: Under an existing law, a European who was guilty of any crime could not be tried by any Indian judge but only by a European judge. In order to do away with this racial discrimination, Mr. Ilbert, the law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, moved a Bill in 1883 which was intended to empower Indian magistrates to judge European offenders also. Indians welcomed the move but the Europeans organized such a strong opposition to this bill that it had to be withdrawn. This discrimination fostered political discontent among the educated classes.

All the above mentioned factors combined to produce a spirit of nationalism among Indians.

**** 'India since 1956' by V.D.Mahajan and R.R.Sethi.*

4.6. - Birth of Nationalism in the 19th Century – III

Beginnings of the Indian National Congress: The British rulers were snobbish, and usually kept themselves aloof from the natives. But there were exceptions to this general attitude. There were a few British Officers among the bureaucracy who had sympathy for Indians and their aspirations. As early as 1817, Sir Thomas Munro, who was Governor of Madras pleaded in vain for the employment of Indians in the administrative services. Lord Ripon who was the Viceroy of India in 1881 suggested that more Indians should be elected to the Viceroy's Executive and Legislative Councils to enable him to know public opinion. But his suggestion was turned down.



Sir Thomas Munro,



Viceroy Lord Ripon

Another Officer who loved India and the Indian people was Allan Octavian Hume. He was District Officer of Etawah in U.P. from 1849 to 1867. He had no prejudice against Indians, unlike many Englishmen.

He always stood for an enlightened policy towards Indians. When he was only 26 years old, he became the Chief Executive Officer in charge of Etawah District. He was a zealous social reformer and a born administrator. During his tenure of office, he established free elementary schools in Etawah, to be supported by voluntary contributions from landed proprietors. He introduced police reforms and built juvenile reformatories. He showed a keen interest in the Vernacular Press and deplored the liquor traffic which led to drunkenness and crime.

The people of Etawah, rich and poor alike, respected and loved him, so much so, at the time of the Great Revolt of 1857 when his life was in danger, his men risked their lives and some even lost them, in trying to protect him from the attack of the rebels. After he retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1882, he continued to live in India. He did not go away to England, unlike other retired British officers.

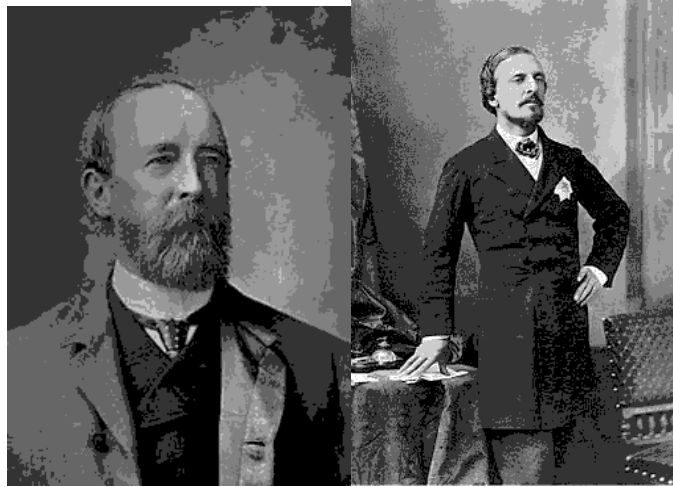
India was in a state of ferment in the eighteen-eighties. The press and popular leaders were urging the people to unite and form a national front to protest against the domination of the rulers.

Mr.A.O. Hume was quite convinced that the subdued fire of discontent in the Indian mind had reached a point from where it could burst out any moment. From well-wishers from different parts of the country, Hume received warnings of the danger to the Government and the future welfare of India, from the economic sufferings of the masses and the alienation of the intellectuals from the Government.

Political unrest had already manifested itself in the southern parts of Bombay Presidency. Riots in Deccan started with robberies until the bands of dacoits combining together became too strong for the police and the army had to be called out to put them down. Mr. Hume had the opportunity to read secret police reports and he knew the inside story. He was aware of the wave of popular discontent and underground activities which had become a potential danger after the famine of 1877.

He realized only too well that the British Government administered by foreign officials on autocratic lines, was out of touch with the people. There existed no channel of communication between the rulers and the ruled; no means of keeping the official circles informed about the conditions and feelings and sufferings of the people. There was a great gulf between the foreign bureaucracy, complacent and self-centred on the heights of Simla and the impoverished millions toiling in the plains below. Mr. Hume's heart was full of sympathy for the unfortunate masses of India who were suffering from disease, famine and poverty.

Mr. Hume realized that the ferment due to western education, western ideas and invention was at work among the educated classes with increasing intensity. It was of great importance to find for them a proper channel to express their ideas and sentiments, their needs and grievances against the government. He wanted to organise them into a union for their common good. He believed that it would be a great advantage to the country if leading Indian politicians could be brought together once a year to consider the problem of the country and other social matters.



Allan Octavian Hume

Lord Dufferin

He discussed the project with Lord Dufferin, the then Viceroy of India and got an encouraging response from him. Lord Dufferin said that there was nobody or persons in this country which performed the functions which Her Majesty's opposition did in England. The news-papers were not reliable and the English were ignorant of what was thought about them and their policy, by Indians. It would be very desirable in the interest of the rulers as well as the subjects if Indian politicians could meet yearly and point out to the government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved. Mr. Hume accepted this suggestion of the Viceroy.

He believed that India's progress must come through her sons, especially through her educated sons. What was needed was an organisation of the political leaders of the land which would bring them together and enable them to work for the moral, social and political regeneration of India. Mr. Hume sent a circular letter proposing the formation of such an organisation to the graduates of the Calcutta University and later to the graduates in the rest of the country. This proposal from one, trusted and beloved by the Indian people brought forth encouraging response from all parts of India. Local committees were formed in Karachi, Ahmedabad, Surat, Bombay, Poona, Madras, Calcutta, Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra and Lahore. They all promised to send their representatives to attend the first conference of the "Indian National Congress" as the new organisation came to be known in the following years.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was held on 28th December 1885 in Bombay. The first President of the Congress was Mr. W. C. Banerjee of Calcutta. The meeting was attended by 72 delegates from different parts of the country. Among them were the 17 founding fathers of the Congress. They were S. Subramanialyer, P. Rengiah Naidu and Ananda Charlu from Madras. Narendranath Sen, Surendranath Bannerjee and M. Gosh from Calcutta. V. Mandlik, K. T. Telang and Dadabhai Naoroji from Bombay.



WC Banerjee



Dadabhai Naoroji

V. Vijay Ranga Mudaliar and Pandurang Gopal from Poona. Sardar Dayal Singh from Banares. Harischandra from Allahabad. Koshi Prasad and Pandit Lakshmi Narayan from the North West Province. Charu Chandra Mitter from Bengal and Shri Ram from Oudh. Mr. A. O. Hume, as the General Secretary of the Congress, told the delegates that the aim of the Congress was to organise public opinion on questions of national importance and to promote nationalism in the country.

The national awakening of the 19th century had given an incentive to the demand for representative institutions. First of all, the Madras Mahajan Sabha gave the lead in this connection in demanding representative institutions in December 1885. It made a fervent plea to the government that the selection of members for the legislative councils should be made by an electorate, consisting of local bodies, the universities and the Chamber of Commerce. Later, in that same month when the Indian National Congress had its first session in Bombay, it followed the lead of the Madras Mahajan Sabha and demanded that elected members should be included in the central and provincial legislative councils. It also demanded that the budget should be presented to the members for discussion and that they should have the right to ask questions. In the first session of the Indian National Congress, the main resolution was moved by Mr. K. T. Telang C.I.E.; it was seconded by S. Subramanialyer and supported by Dadabhai Naoroji. It ran as follows: "Resolved.....That this Congress considers the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing Local Legislative Councils, by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members, essential." It was also proposed that a Standing Committee of the House of Commons should be formed to receive and consider any formal protests made by the majorities of the central and provincial legislative councils against the exercise of the powers of the executive councils, and against certifying by the government what had been rejected by the people's representatives

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4.7. - The Indian National Congress from 1885 to 1905

The second session of the Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta in December 1886 with Dadabhai Naoroji as the President. In his Presidential address, he again emphasised the need of including elected members in the Councils.

The attitude of the government towards the Congress was friendly in the beginning. Congress delegates were entertained by the English Governor at garden parties. But this attitude changed after three years. Lord Dufferin lost his sympathies for the Congress. Nevertheless, he supported the popular agitation for increasing the membership of the councils. He sent a proposal to the British Parliament suggesting that the councils be expanded into small parliaments, that two-fifths of the non-official members should be elected members. "The main object" he said, "was to give a still wider share in the administration of public affairs to such Indians as are fit to assist with their counsel, the responsible rulers of the country." At the same time he made it very clear in his letter that Indians were not to be entrusted with the administration of the country. The enlarged legislative councils were to act merely as consultative bodies to help the government with advice and suggestion. The British Parliament after receiving the Viceroy's proposals passed The Indian Councils Act in 1892.

The Act of 1892 was only an amending Act. The structure of the Government of India remained the same as it had been since 1861. As a result of the pressure brought by the Indian National Congress, the government agreed to introduce the elective element in the councils. However, the elected members could take their seats only after being nominated by the Governor. For example, to send a member to the Central Legislature, the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce had to submit a list of names chosen by election; and from this list the Viceroy nominated one name. The same was the case in the provinces where the Municipal Committees, District Boards, Zamindars and University Senates recommended the names of elected persons to the Governor who made his selection for the Legislature from the lists submitted.

Still the Act of 1892 made a definite advance over the act of 1861 since for the first time the elective principle was accepted and introduced by the Act

Criticism of the Act of 1892: The Act of 1892 although a great step forward, granted much less than the national demand. It did not provide for direct election of representatives to the legislative councils. The persons who got into the legislature through indirect elections did not represent the people in a real sense.

The right of discussion on the annual financial statement was allowed but members could not move any resolution nor demand voting thereupon. In fact even before the budget could be discussed, the estimates were already finalised by the Executive Councils, both in the

centre and in the provinces. The official members being in the majority, they had no difficulty in imposing their will on the House and the voice of the elected members was not at all effective.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya said that the Act did not give Indians any real voice in the administration of the country..... Members found that the amount of taxation levied by the government was higher than was necessary for the purpose of administration; the military expenditure was far more than what the country could bear; much of the country's revenues was being spent on what may be called imperial purposes. The people were powerless to prevent such inordinate expenditure.



Madan Mohan Malviya

Feroze Shah Mehta

The control of the Secretary of State over the Government of India was not relaxed. The Indian government being subordinate, was bound to obey all directions issued by the British Parliament through the Secretary of State. All non-official bills intended to be introduced in the Central Legislative Council had first to get the approval of the Secretary of State. Similarly, no non-official bill could be moved in the Provincial Councils without the prior approval of the Viceroy. The official members of the Councils both in the centre and in the provinces voted enbloc, according to the instructions of the higher authority (the Viceroy at the Centre and the Governors in the provinces). Therefore, the measures introduced by the non-official members in the councils had very little chance of success.

Though the non-official members were in a minority and conscious of their limited powers, yet when they got the opportunity to express their opinions, to criticise the government and to seek the redress of public grievances, not a few of them distinguished themselves highly by their eloquence and parliamentary ability. Some well-known Indians like Gopala Krishna Gokhale, Rash Behari Ghosh, P.S. Charlu, Syed Bilgrami, Surendranath Bannerjee, Feroze Shah Mehta and Mathusudan Das who sat in these councils left a deep impression of their extraordinary ability, eloquence, wisdom, statesmanship and foresight, on their hearers.

Constitutional Proceedings of the Congress: The Congress was from the very beginning, a national organisation representing all classes of society. Its main object was to secure more political reforms and a more representative membership in the enlarged legislative councils. It also demanded more powers for the legislative bodies. Up to 1888, the Congress made very modest demands. It petitioned the government to increase the number of elected members in the legislative councils, to empower the legislature to discuss the budget and to take steps for the Indianisation of the army. But Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy refused to accept the above-said demands for the reason that the number of educated Indians was quite small; and since the Congress represented only a tiny minority, it could not be given any share in the administration of the land.

For twenty years, the Congress was led by those members known as Moderates, who believed in constitutional methods for getting reforms. They had steadfast faith in the British sense of justice and fairplay. They were sure that the government would sooner or later accept all their reasonable demands and carry out all the necessary reforms. It was their firm belief that British rule was for the benefit of the people of India. They wanted to acquire self-government within the British Commonwealth. They felt grateful to the British Government for all the many benefits it had conferred on India. Such Moderates included leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji, Feroze Shah Mehta and Surendranath Bannerjee. In the then existing conditions, co-operation with the government was the only sensible approach to political questions. Securing council reforms was itself a difficult task and the Moderates planned to proceed step by step without displeasing their British rulers.



Gopal Krishna Gokhale



Surendranath Banerjee

Till 1906, the political goal of the Congress was a greater share in the administration of the Country and the expansion of representative institutions, rather than political independence. But the British Government was indifferent to Congress demands.

Lord Curzon was the Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905. He had no sympathy for the aspirations of the people of India. He declared that the highest ranks of civil employment must, as a general rule be held by Englishmen. He emphasized that Indians were not fit to rule themselves. His anti-Indian policy added to the discontent already prevailing in the country. The exclusion of the intelligentsia from all the higher jobs in the country created bitterness.



Lord Curzon

In 1899, Lord Curzon passed the Calcutta Corporation Act, according to which all the members of the Calcutta Corporation were government officials with European majority. This measure was condemned by the people.

In 1904, the Indian Universities Act was passed which reduced the size of the Syndicate, Senates and Faculties in order to give prominence to Europeans.

In the same year was passed the Official Secrets Act, which increased the powers of the government. The definition of the term 'sedition' was widened. This Act covered not only military secrets but also official secrets relating to civil affairs and news-paper criticism.

Partition of Bengal in October 1905: To top all the above grievances, came the announcement that Bengal would be partitioned. The people of Bengal regarded the partition, as a challenge to their nationalism; and a strong agitation flared up. Bengal was a big province including Bihar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur. For the convenience of administration, partition was necessary and useful too. But the people felt that Lord Curzon had the ulterior motive of creating a Muslim majority province and thereby causing division between Hindu and Muslims. He instigated Muslims to favour this proposal. To Bengalis, the partition of Bengal meant the partition of a Nation, an attempt to divide a homogeneous people, a deliberate and cruel attack upon the traditions, history and language of the people.

Lord Curzon found Bengal politically well advanced. The educated classes were well versed in Western political theories on nationalism and democracy. The Viceroy wanted to suppress the national movement in Bengal by dividing the Hindus and Muslims and thereby destroying the solidarity of the people of the province. Bengalis resented this policy strongly. The rest of India stood by Bengal in its fight against partition; as it was widely felt that this measure was a deliberate attempt to weaken the nationalist movement, by a policy of divide and rule.

Thousands of students, lawyers and teachers marched in the streets of Bengal shouting 'VandeMatheram' (Hail! Mother India). Agitation against the partition of Bengal soon turned into a mass movement for the country's freedom. The leaders exhorted the people to use Swadeshi goods and boycott foreign goods. At many places, foreign cloth was publicly burnt and shops selling foreign goods were picketed. The Government banned the shouting of 'VandeMatheram' in the streets; and the volunteers of the Swadeshi movement were mercilessly beaten. Instead of considering the legitimate demands of the people, the Government used repressive measures. Patriots were subjected to brutal treatment.

Nevertheless, the boycott movement was a tremendous success. The burning of English cloth in public places set ablaze the popular discontent with the British administration. Thus the partition of Bengal in October 1905 gave birth to the double movement of Swadeshi and the boycott of foreign goods.

Sri Gopal Krishna Gokhale went to London and requested the Secretary of State of India, to cancel the partition of Bengal. His efforts were unsuccessful. In this policy of the Moderate group in the Congress had failed. Gokhale admitted that young men were beginning to ask what was the good of constitutional methods for gaining reforms, if they were unable to prevent the partition of Bengal. At the Benares session of the Congress in December 1905, over which he presided, he agreed to the principle of Swadeshi and the boycott of British Goods.

With the passage of years, the agitation against the partition grew in intensity. The weapons used by the agitators were Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods, which proved very successful. Shops owned by Englishmen and Indian merchants dealing in foreign goods were full of unsold fabrics. Many were forced to close their shops. In due course of time, the agitation became a great national movement with all Indians joining it. It was a demonstration on a large scale, of the capability of the nation to oppose injustice from their foreign rulers. It was a period of trial to the patriots, who withstood British repression and high handedness with a courage that rose to unparalleled heights; and served as a valuable example for all future struggles against foreign domination. The prolonged indifference of the government to Indian public opinion paved the way for the growth of the extremist movement and later the terrorist movement.

One unfortunate effect of this official policy was that the Muslims were driven farther from the Congress. The Hindus, in order to acquire more political gains, drew closer to the British. The system of communal representation intensified the religious animosity between the two communities which climaxed in the partition of the county 1947.

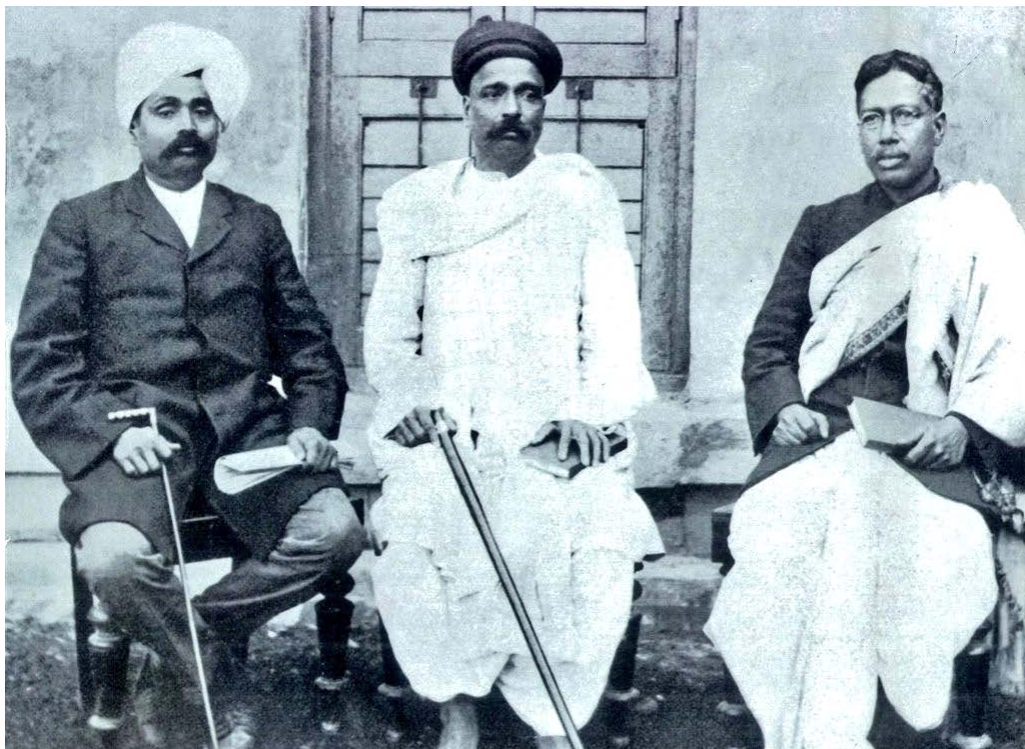
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4.8. - The Extremist Movement

From 1885 to 1906, the Congress submitted petitions and led deputations to the government without much success. The government showed no inclination to agree to their demands. The Moderates felt disillusioned, but still they did not admit defeat. Prominent among them were G.K Gokhale, Dadabhai Noroji, Feroze Shah Mehta, Surendranath Bannerjee and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. They still had faith in the efficacy of constitutional methods.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale followed the principle of toleration and forbearance both in thought and in action. He and other Moderates often praised the benefits conferred upon India by British rule. They believed that it was to the advantage of India to grow gradually towards self-government, by making the ties between India and England stronger and durable. In their opinion, British rule alone could maintain in the country, peace and order which were necessary for the growth of India as a nation, composed of various elements as she was.

In spite of its apparent failure, the Congress contributed much in those early years towards national awakening and political education and also in uniting Indians and producing in them a sense of common nationality.



Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal (Lal-Bal-Pal)

But disillusionment over the government's indifference to Congress demands was so great that a few Congress leaders began to feel that a more revolutionary method would yield quicker and greater results. They were Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandrapal and Lala Lajpat Rai. Known as the trio 'Bal, Pal and Lal', they became aggressive nationalists or extremists within the Congress. They were opposed to political mendicancy, and preferred strong agitation to begging for political concessions. They had no patience with the Moderates and their gentle methods. Tilak suggested a militant course to obtain self-government. His aggressive nationalism found favour with the masses and he became a national hero. He declared that freedom was the birth-right of every Indian. He and his friends provided dynamic leadership to people. However, the Moderates had still a hold on the Congress. Consequently, Tilak and his associates including Sri Aurobindo Ghose could not gain the upper hand during those early years.

Causes for the birth of the Extremists Movement: Apart from the dissatisfaction over the reforms of 1892 and the continued economic exploitation of India by Britain, there were other immediate causes which gave rise to the extremist movement. Between 1895 and 1903 terrible calamities of war, famine and pestilence struck India, but the government remained indifferent to the distress of the people. This roused much indignation against British rule in India.



FAMINE-STROKEN NATIVES BEGGING AT THE ZENANA MISSION AT BHOJJI PANAGAN



These photographs, which are sent forwarded to various agencies, show the state of the people who have been driven to the streets by famine. The Government of India, through the Hon. Secretary of State, has been requested to send a large number of these poor people to the temporary establishments reserved for the cholera. At Bhojji Panagan, where the relief work is being carried out by the Government.

A GROUP OF NATIVES WAITING FOR RELIEF AT THE ZENANA MISSION AT BHOJJI PANAGAN

THE FAMINE IN INDIA
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN BERG, JOURNALIST

A great famine broke out in India in 1896 and 1897. It affected about twenty million people. The government did nothing to provide relief to the starving millions. The people cursed the rulers openly. Instead of helping the people, the government spent enormous sums for expanding the military forces and in holding a splendid durbar in Delhi to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose while delivering the Presidential address of the Indian National Congress at Madras in 1903 said, ".....even if half the vast sum spent in connection with the Delhi durbar had been made over for the purpose of famine relief, it might have been the means of saving millions of men, women and children from death and starvation." Vast sums of money were spent on an empty pageant when famine and pestilence were stalking through the land.

Soon after the famine, the bubonic plague broke out in Poona. The officials mishandled the situation. No consideration was shown for the sentiments of the people. Mr. Rand, the plague Commissioner was most ruthless in his operations. He moved with an army of coolies and policemen, pulled down the infected dwellings and forcibly removed the inmates to segregation camps. Bedding and clothes were burnt and essential articles of life destroyed. Armed Indian police and European soldiers with revolvers in their hands, rushed into the inner apartments of houses where the women lived and the idols were kept, to see if any plague

cases were hidden. Mr. Rand was criticized strongly by the people, particularly by Tilak in the paper 'Kesari' edited by him. The popular resentment became so great that a desperate young man shot dead Mr. Rand and his associate, as they were returning home after attending the celebrations connected with the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. The young man, DamodarChapekar, along with a few others, was hanged. Tilak was arrested and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment. Other editors in Poona were also arrested and imprisoned for various terms. Not content with this, the government used severe methods to punish even innocent people. Special police were stationed in Poona.



DamodarChapekar

SurendranathBannerjee condemned the imprisonment of Tilak and other editors and said, ".....A nation is in tears. We are resolved by every constitutional means that may be available to us, to assert under the providence of God, our rights...."

Split in the Congress: Although the Congress had accepted the proposals of the Extremists in 1906, the Moderates were still not prepared to execute them. As the talks with the British Government regarding further constitutional reforms were in progress, the Moderates were opposed to any immediate change in their programme. When the Congress met next at Surat in 1907, there was a split in its ranks, leading to a complete rupture between the two wings of the Congress. The Moderates held a separate convention and drafted a new constitution. The Extremists who were not prepared to go back from the position taken at the Calcutta Congress in 1906 were left out altogether. Thus, the Congress was divided into two camps – one led by Tilak and the other led by Gokhale. The constitution drafted by the Moderates stated that the aim of the Congress was to attain Dominion Status for India in stages, by peaceful and constitutional means.

The government at this stage began to crush the Extremist movement. Earlier in the same year, the government had arrested Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh for launching a peasant movement in the Punjab; and deported them to Mandalay jail in Burma. In 1908, it passed the "News-paper's Incitement to Offences Act" which gagged the press. Lokamanya Tilak was

sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment on the charge of writing inflammatory articles against the government in the paper 'Kesari'. He was also sent to Mandalay jail in Burma where he was imprisoned from 1908 to 1914.



The article that led to Bal Gagadhar Tilak's arrest

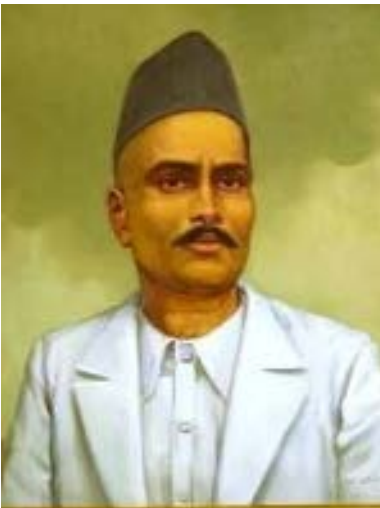
One direct outcome of the repressive measure of the government was the increase in terrorist activities. The frustrated Indian youth turned to violent methods to fight against the government. "No freedom without armed fight" echoed in the mind of every patriotic young man. Secret organisations were formed and secret bomb factories were started in Bengal, Maharashtra and the Punjab.

4.9. - Terrorist and Revolutionary Movement

The terrorist movement started in India towards the end of the 19th century and continued through the early years of the 20th century. Terrorism was one of the stages of militant nationalism but it differed radically from the political extremism of Tilak. The revolutionaries did not believe in methods of appeals, persuasion and peaceful struggle. They were convinced that without violence it was impossible to uproot British imperialism which was supported by brute force. The merciless, repressive policy of the government exasperated them. They believed in violent action to demoralize the administration and its Indian collaborators.

The revolutionaries held secret meetings and spread militant nationalism through personal contacts. They organised the fiery young men who preferred death to slavery, into secret societies. They were ardent patriots and no sacrifice was too great for them if it helped them to break the chain of their bondage. They wanted to bring in a revolution in the political set-up of the country. They had faith in democracy; and aimed at removing all social and economic inequalities. Their ideal was to bring in the rule of farmers and workers and reconstruct a society based on equality and justice. They adopted the path of bloodshed, a more dangerous course than that adopted by the Moderates and Extremists. They planned to kill English Officers only when they were tyrannical in their treatment of Indians.

The earliest act of revolutionary nationalism took place in Maharashtra. In 1897, Mr. Rand, the hated plague commissioner of Poona and his associate were shot dead on the day of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria's reign. His assailant Chapekar and a few others were hanged.

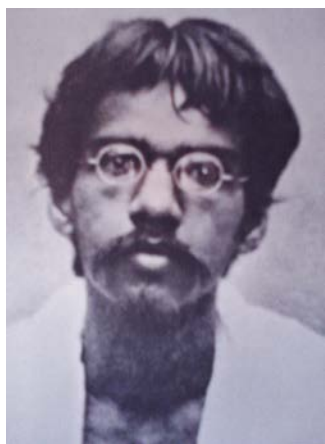


Ganesh Damodar Savarkar

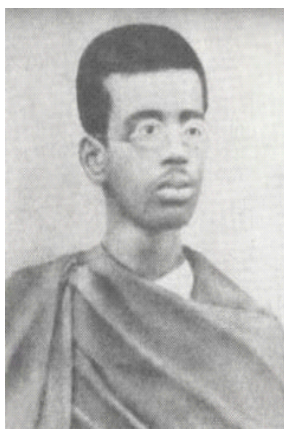
Ganesh Damodar Savarkar wrote poems full of patriotic fervour. At the instigation of Sir Curzon Wylie, the political A.D.C. at the India Office in London, Mr. Jackson, the Collector of

Nasik arrested Ganesh on the hollow excuse of possessing seditious poems and spreading hatred against British rule. For this petty offence, Ganesh was sentenced to life imprisonment and transportation on June 8, 1908. The revolutionaries who were members of the Abhinava Bharat Society of Nasik decided to murder two English Officers. Mr. Jackson was shot dead on 21st December 1909. For the murder of Mr. Jackson, three young men were executed and twenty-seven others sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. This was known as the Nasik conspiracy case.

Revolutionary propaganda was carried out in Bengal by Barindra Kumar Ghosh, the brother of Sir Aurobindo Ghosh and Bhupendranath Dutta, the younger brother of Swami Vivekananda. B.K. Ghosh started the paper 'Yugantar' and through its columns conveyed political and religious instruction to the masses. A programme of Swadeshi Conferences and boycott meetings were arranged. Also plans were made for the manufacture of weapons and the smuggling of arms from foreign countries. As a result of the work of B.K. Ghosh and his colleagues, a number of revolutionary societies were formed, all following a policy of terrorism. The government discovered a conspiracy in Calcutta and confiscated some bombs, dynamite, cartridges and correspondence. This led to the arrest and trial of 39 persons including Aurobindo Ghose and his brother B.K. Ghosh. Two youths, Kanai Lal Dutt and S.M. Bhowse were tried and executed. Heavy punishments were inflicted on the rest of the accused.



B K Ghosh



Kanailal Dutt



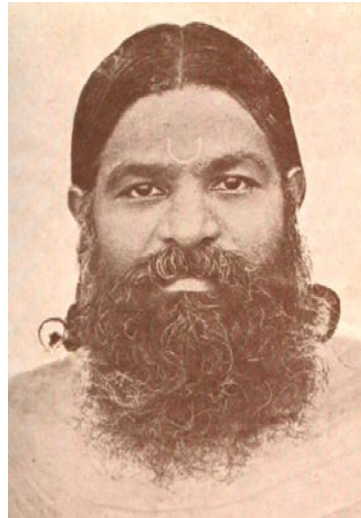
Madanlal Dhingra

Madanlal Dhingra, a young man who was in England at that time, protested against the inhuman punishments inflicted on the terrorists in India. He knew that Sir Curzon Wylie, the political A.D.C. at the India Office in London, was partly responsible for the imprisonment of Ganesh Savarkar. On the 1st of July 1909, he shot dead Sir Curzon Wylie. In the court when he was tried for the crime he said, "...I believe that a nation held in bondage with the help of bayonets is in a state of perpetual war, and since the guns are denied to me I drew forth my pistol and attacked". My only prayer to God is that I may again return to the same Mother (India) and die in the same cause till Mother is freed.....VandeMatheram." Madanlal was sentenced to death and hanged on August 16th, 1909.

At this time, Ganesh Savarkar's younger brother, Vinayak Savarkar was in England studying law. He was also implicated in the Nasik Conspiracy case. He was brought to India and tried, and sentenced on 22nd March 1911 to fifty years' imprisonment and transportation. He was 28 years old then and was sent to Andamans. When the jailor feelingly exclaimed, "O God; fifty years!" Savarkar replied in a cool, confident tone, "Why worry! Is the British rule going to survive these fifty years?" In his prison cell in Andamans, Savarkar was subjected to inhuman treatment. Many years later, in 1937 when a Congress ministry was formed in Bombay he was released. By then, he had spent 26 years in jail. The Hindu Mahasabha honoured him the same year by electing him as its President at its Ahmedabad session. Even after his release, Savarkar continued his political activities. He died on 26th February 1966.



Vinayak Savarkar



VVS Aiyar

***Pondicherry in the south was also a centre of revolutionary activities. M.P. Thirumal Acharya and V.V.S Aiyar were the leading spirits. Mr. Aiyar trained young men in the use of revolvers in Pondicherry. One of the young men was Vanchinathan, who shot dead Mr. **Robert William d'Escourt Ashe**, the District Magistrate (Acting Collector) of Tirunelveli on 17th June 1911 for sentencing to life imprisonment, on sedition charges, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, the fearless Indian navigator who had fought for the rights of Indians. Soon after killing Mr Ashe, Vanchinathan shot himself and committed suicide. His companions were later arrested and executed in what came to be known as the famous Tirunelveli conspiracy case.

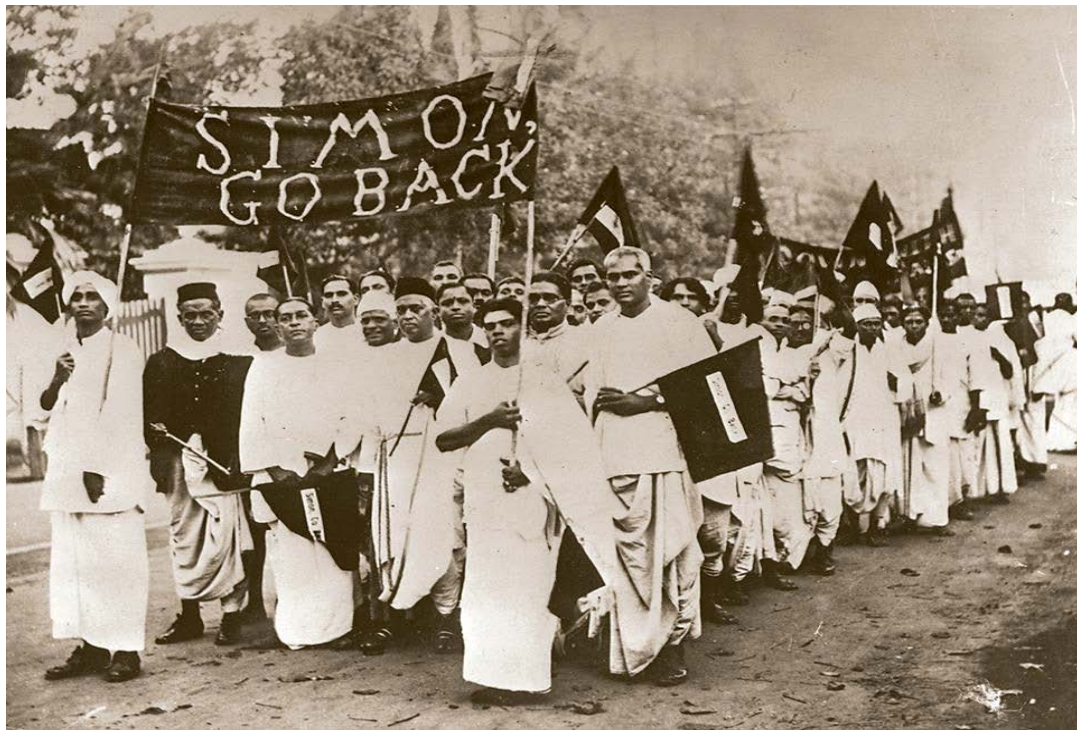
The revolutionary movement was very active in Bengal and in Punjab during the years 1913 and 1916.

In the course of years, countless young men, most of them educated and from good respectable families, faced death or long imprisonment, for trying to break their chain of bondage under an alien and unsympathetic domination. There were the Alipore conspiracy case (1908), the Delhi conspiracy case (1914), the Lahore conspiracy case (1916), the Madras conspiracy case (1933) and various other conspiracies in which many revolutionaries lost their

lives or were sentenced to imprisonment and transportation. Many a young revolutionary as he mounted the gallows, sincerely believed that he was sacrificing his life on the altar of freedom for his beloved motherland.

In 1928, Mr. Saunders, a police officer, rained fatal lathi blows on the head of Lala Lajpat Rai who was leading a procession, in protest against the Simon Commission. In reprisal, revolutionaries shot him dead on 17th December 1928. Three young men, Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev were hanged on March 23, 1931, for this crime.

***India since 1526 by V.D. Mahajan and R.R. Sethi



Simon Go Back Protest



Sukhdev Thapar



Bhagat Singh



Shivram Rajguru

The revolutionaries had no intention of creating lawlessness in the land, but they certainly wanted English officers to know that they would be killed if they resorted to cruel, repressive methods. But for the acts of the terrorists, the ruthlessness of the English officers would have exceeded all limits; and the Congress movement would have been crushed long before, with brute force. Eventually, the government felt the urgency of appeasing the Congress by giving them more concessions. These were later included in the Act of 1909.

The Moderates in Congress strongly disapproved the methods of violence and bloodshed adopted by the revolutionaries. Even some of the Extremists were against violence. Tilak never approved of political murders nor did he ever incite people to take up arms. He had faith in the constitutional methods of protests and agitations.

The Decline of the Revolutionary Movement in India: There were many causes for the decline of the revolutionary movement. It was confined to a small circle of young men, with no central organisation to direct their activities. Nor was there any public support for the movement. The upper middle-class leaders were not sympathetic towards this movement. In fact, Sri S.N. Bannerjee requested the government to take drastic steps to check the terrorist activities. The emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of the Indian national movement, also led to the gradual decline of the revolutionary movement. The Gandhian technique of non-violence, non-cooperation and civil disobedience appealed to the people of India more than the violent methods of the terrorists.

Still, the revolutionaries in the following years played a valiant part during the rebellion of 1942, in the Crusade of the Indian National Army of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose during the years 1944 and 1945, and during the mutiny of the Royal Indian Navy in 1946.

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4.10. - Rise and Growth of Muslim Communalism

Communalism in Indian politics has been a great obstacle to India's constitutional advance. The rift between Hindus and Muslims was partly caused by the British as a political device to continue their rule. 'Divide and Rule' had always been the corner-stone of British administrative policy in India. Not only did the British statesmen prevent the welding of the two communities into a single nation, but they also tried to create ill-will between them, so as to use their mutual differences as an excuse for not transferring power into Indian hands.

After the revolt of 1857, for many years the British Government nursed a grudge against the Muslims, who were largely responsible for the outbreak. The British considered the revolt as an attempt by the Muslims to revive Moghul rule in India. Muslims were crushed and debarred from occupying important posts both in the civil administration and in the military organization. *** "In 1871, out of a total of 2141 persons employed in the Bengal Government, there were 711 Hindus, 1338 Europeans and only 92 Muslims." The British Government deliberately adopted policies which resulted in the economic ruin of the Muslims and their intellectual stagnation. The Muslim upper classes having been deprived of all their titles, privileges and position felt bitter resentment against the rulers. Also, they felt a religious hatred for English education. The Hindus who had received western education were more advanced than the Muslims and occupied many important posts in the administration. Just as they had taken to the study of Persian under Moghul rulers, they now took up the study of English and gained immensely thereby.

The rise of a strong nationalism among the Hindus found favour for a number of years with the Muslims who were also anti-British. These sentiments of unity were noted with disfavour by the British Government. They decided to create a division between the two communities in order to make their own rule lasting. This policy was given effect to, in two ways. The first was the reorganization of the army which till then had both communities mixed up in the ranks. To encourage separatist tendencies, regiments and battalions were now formed on the basis of caste and religious differences. Secondly the government began to patronize the Muslims with a view to preventing them from joining hands with the Congress. They realized that the Muslims had now become too weak to rebel again against their rulers. The time had come to take them into alliance rather than continue to antagonize them. The British warned the Muslims that they would be worse off under the administration of Hindus than under the British. They encouraged the Muslims to demand separate electorate and even a Muslim majority state. The partition of Bengal was the first step in that direction.

Thus the communal problem in India was not merely religious in character as claimed by the rulers; it was propped up by them for political reasons. It was a deliberate creation of British imperialism for continuing their rule over India.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817 – 1898): Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was a leader and mentor of Muslims. He encouraged them to grow out of their prejudices and take up western education for their own advantage. He founded the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh which in course of time became the Muslim University, Aligarh.

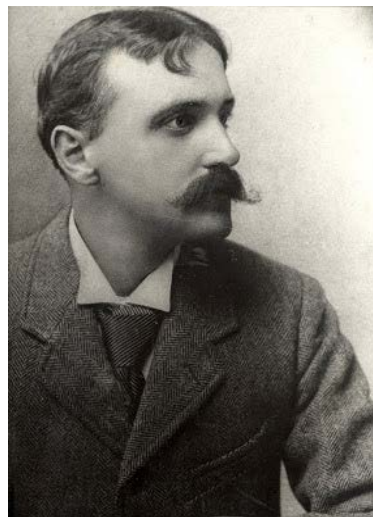
*** *Constitutional History of India by Agarwal*

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had nationalist feelings in the beginning. On one occasion he said, "In the word 'nation' I include both Hindus and Mohammedans, because it is the only meaning attached to it. With me it is not worth considering what is their religious faith, we inhabit the same land, are subject to the same rule of the same Governors, the fountains of benefit for all are the same and the pangs of famine also we suffer equally....."

But such tolerant views of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan soon changed into communal animosity. He became the arch enemy of the Congress and nationalism. He opposed the Congress demand for the holding of simultaneous competitive examinations in England and in India for the Civil Services. He believed that if India was given an elective system based on worth or education or principle, as demanded by the Congress, the Muslims would have very little chance of being elected. His policy was based on the fear of permanent domination of Muslims by Hindus educationally, economically and politically. As a loyal friend of the British he was all for Anglo-Muslim alliance.



Syed Ahmed Khan



Theodore Beck

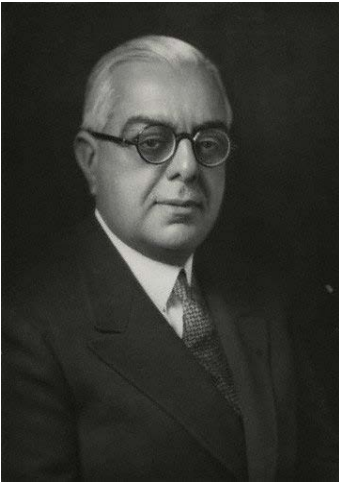
The change in his attitude is said to have been brought about by Mr. Beck, the Principal of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh in the 1880's. Mr. Beck impressed upon him the need for co-operation with the British for the advancement of his community. Sir S.A. Khan became a

pawn in the British game of creating communal divisions in India. In an address to Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, in 1877 he said that, "The chief aim of founding the M.A.O. College was to reconcile oriental learning with western literature and science, to make the Muslims of India worthy and useful subjects of the British Crown, to inspire in them that loyalty which springs, not from a servile submission to foreign rule but from a genuine appreciation of the blessings for good Government."

To remove from the Muslims the blot of having been mutineers, Sir S.A. Khan started a paper called "Loyal Mohammedans of India." Through his articles and speeches he tried to convince the rulers, that Indian Muslims had got reconciled to foreign rule and had become loyal to the British Government. He advised Muslims to shed their dislike for Christianity. He tried hard to bring about a rapprochement between Muslims and the government. For this reason he tried his best to keep his community away from the influence of the Congress which was nationalist and anti-British. He started the annual Muslim Educational Conference in 1886, the year after the Indian National Congress was started. At the instigation of the government he founded the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Defense Association in 1893. The object of this body was to persuade Muslims to strengthen the hands of the Government and to protect their political interests.

Muslim demand for Communal Representation: The partition of Bengal in October 1905 caused much resentment among the Bengali speaking people of that province. The government proceeded diplomatically. It demarcated East Bengal as a predominantly Muslim area. Lord Minto the then Viceroy of India, wanted to widen the gulf between Hindus and Muslims and discourage the growth of nationalism in Bengal. Mr. Smith, the Private Secretary of the Viceroy wrote to Mr. Archbold, the then Principal of the Aligarh College, that the Viceroy would be glad to meet a deputation of Muslims and consider their demands. Mr. Archbold passed on the message to the Secretary of the College. He advised the Secretary to demand nomination or representation on communal basis, for Muslims. He offered to draft the address himself. The Secretary of the college arranged for a committee of leading Muslims, headed by Sir Agha Khan to meet the Viceroy, at Simla. The deputation submitted the following demands before the Viceroy of 1st October 1906.

1. Separate electoral constituency for Mohammedans.
2. Representation of Muslims in legislative assemblies and other elected bodies, not on the basis of the numerical strength of the community but on its political importance.
3. Reservation of seats in the State Services for Muslims.
4. More state aid for the setting up of new Muslim Universities.
5. Preference to be given to Muslims in nominating members to the Viceroy's Council.



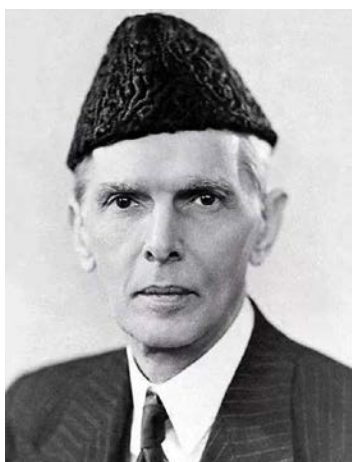
Aga Khan

Lord Minto in his eagerness to please the Muslim said, "The pith of your address as I understand it, is a claim that in any system of representation, whether it affects a Municipality, a District Board or a legislature in which it is proposed to increase the electoral organization, the Mohammedan community should be represented as a body. You justly claim that your position should be estimated not merely on your numerical strength but in respect to the political importance of your community and the service that it has rendered to the Empire." From the Viceroy's speech it is obvious that he was fully in favour of introducing communal electorate as requested by the Muslims. The newspaper 'Statesman' which was pro-government, nevertheless, criticised the principle of separate electorate.

Communal Movement of the Muslim League: The success of the Muslim deputation that waited upon the Viceroy at Simla encouraged the Muslims to start a separate political organisation of their own. British officialdom was interested in this new proposed body which could counterbalance the influence of the Congress. Consequently on the 30th December 1906 the Muslim League was formed at Dacca with the aim of supporting whenever possible, the measures brought forth by the government; and also to advance the political rights and interests of Muslims throughout the country, to check the growing influence of the Indian National Congress and to enable educated Muslim young men to join the League, who for want of such organisation had till then joined the Congress.

Thus, the Muslim League provided a political and communal platform to the Muslim community. From the beginning it was an anti-national organization with the proclaimed aim of promoting loyalty to the British Government. The first conference of the All India Muslim League was held in Amritsar in 1908. The leaders of the League at this conference demanded more weightage to the Muslim in the legislative councils and in the Civil Services. They demanded equality of representation with the majority community in the Viceroy's Executive Council. These demands were voiced again in the succeeding Muslim League conference held in 1909 and 1910.

Changes in the policy of the Muslim League: Nevertheless, the Muslim League did not get the support of the entire Muslim intelligentsia. Its communal character proved distasteful to nationalist Muslims. Even Mr. Jinnah who later carved Pakistan out of India, was for many years an opponent of the Muslim League. In the Allahabad session of the Congress in 1910 he moved a resolution condemning the system of communal representation. His resolution was seconded by Maulana Mashar-ul-Huq who advocated greater friendship and understanding between Hindus and Muslims. At a time when Muslims were very happy over the undue representation given to them in the elected bodies, according to the Act of 1909, it was certainly an act of great courage for the nationalist Muslims to criticise the system of separate electorate and to make an appeal for Hindu-Muslim unity. Nawab Syed Mohamed, Maulana Shibli Naumani, Maulana Mohamed Ali, and Maulana Azad, not only refused to have any dealings with the League, but also attacked the communalism of the League and its loyalty to the British Government. There were also other progressive eminent Muslim leaders who disapproved of the communal principles of the League.



Muhammad Ali Jinnah



Maulana Shibli Naumani



Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad

Under the pressure of the nationalist and other eminent Muslims, the League was compelled to modify its constitution and bring about certain changes in its aims and objects. With the popularity of the nationalist Muslims growing, the influence of the League began to decline. Eventually the Muslim League gave up its anti-nationalist stand and moved closer to the Congress. It included in its constitution the promotion of goodwill between the two major communities and the attainment of Swaraj under the patronage of the British Crown.

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4.11. - The Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909

The period between 1892 and 1909 was full of storm and stress. During the years when Lord Curzon was the Viceroy there was a lot of agitation and discontent in the country. Even after Lord Minto took over from Lord Curzon there was no improvement in the situation. The agitation against the partition of Bengal was widespread. The Government of India used every harsh measure to put down the nationalist movement in the country. At the same time the government wished to win over the Moderates. To appease them, it passed an Act in 1909, known as the Minto-Morley reforms. After securing their approval of the new Act the government tried to crush the terrorists ruthlessly.



Lord Curzon

Lord Morley

Much enthusiasm was aroused by the high sounding promises made by Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India before the Act of 1909 was passed. But when the rules and regulations of the Act were published there was widespread disappointment. Even the Moderates felt disillusioned. The Act was no doubt an improvement upon the preceding Act of 1892 but it was not up to the national expectation. Supreme power continued to be vested in the executive councils both in the Centre and in the provinces. The Viceroy at the Centre and the Governors in the provinces still continued to hold autocratic powers. Indians were still considered unfit for higher posts in the administration of their own country. The local bodies continued as before to have government officials as members.

While introducing direct elections for the first time the Act of 1909 perpetuated divisions on the basis of religions and classes. This led to creation of political camps opposed to one another. It made people think as partisans and not as citizens.

The Act of 1909:

1. The Act provided for the enlargement of the councils both at the Center and in the provinces.
2. Still, the official majority in the Central Legislative Council was retained to avert any difficulty arising in the passage of government bills.
3. The Act dispensed with the official majority in the provincial legislatures, but the combined strength of officials and nominated non-official members still outnumbered the elected members. They formed a solid pro-government bloc to support all the moves of the government.
4. The most unfortunate feature of the new Act was the introduction of the harmful system of communal electorate. Undue importance was given to communal interests. The Act favoured Muslims by giving them representation disproportionate to their population. The reason given was the 'political importance' of Muslim community. Separate representation was also given to Presidency Corporations, Universities, Chambers of Commerce and land-lords.
5. The Act of 1909 empowered the members to discuss the budget and other matters of public interest and to move resolutions before they were finally approved. Thus they got the opportunity to criticize the members of the Executive Council and make suggestions for better administration. But the resolutions adopted by the House were not binding on the government. The President of the House was authorised to drop any resolution or any part thereof in the name of public interest, without giving any reason.
6. One significant feature of the Act was the appointment of Indians to the Executive Councils at the Center and in the provinces. Mr. S. P. Sinha was appointed as the law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He was the first Indian to become a Member of that Council.
7. The Act of 1909 for the first time introduced direct elections for the appointment of non-official members of the Councils. Unfortunately, the electorate for electing the representatives were divided on the basis of class, community and interest; for instance, for the Central Legislative Council, only those land-owners from the Land Owners' Constituency who had a certain specified income which varied from province to province were entitled to vote.

The qualification for voting rights varied between Muslims and non-Muslims considerably. The Muslim community was shown undue favour. A Muslim who paid income tax on an annual income of Rs.3000/- was given the right to vote; whereas, a Parsi, a Hindu or a Christian was denied voting rights even if his taxable income was three lakhs. Again, a Muslim graduate of five years' standing had the right to vote but a graduate of any other community could not claim it even twenty years after graduation. So the Act of 1909 did great injustice to non-Muslims. A fixed number of seats was reserved for Muslims in the Councils and in the public services. Separate constituencies of Muslim electorate were created. This widened the gulf between the Hindus and Muslims. Jawaharlal Nehru said that a political barrier was created around Muslims isolating them from the rest of India and reversing the unifying influences that had been going on for centuries bringing the two communities together.

The granting of separate representation began a period of gross communalism in Indian politics. It gave a cue to other minority communities such as Sikhs, Harijans, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and Indian Christians to claim for themselves similar privileges; and they, by providing their loyalty to the British Government did succeed in getting separate representation under the later Acts of 1919 and 1935.

4.12. - The Indian National Movement 1909 to 1919

The Moderates, the Extremists and other political parties were disappointed with the reforms of 1909 because they made no significant change in the autocratic character of the government. The reforms introduced the elective principle of democracy but at the same time added the anti-democratic policy of communal representation.

The Moderates, in spite of the shortcomings of the Act of 1909 wanted to co-operate with the government in working out the reforms but the Extremists refused to do so. Thus the split in the Congress ranks widened. In Bengal, terrorist activities were crushed firmly, though temporarily. Aurobindo Ghosh who had taken an active part in the anti-partition agitation in Bengal, retired from politics and took up a life of prayer and meditation in Pondicherry. The Extremists, however, remained active, using the press as a platform to voice their protests against the new Act. Lord Hardinge the Viceroy retaliated by imposing the 'Indian Press Act' and the 'Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act' to control the press; and also to control honest criticism of the government, through public speeches. The 'Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1913' defined conspiracy and made it an independent offense. All the aforesaid measures armed the Executive Council of the Viceroy with boundless powers to suppress militant nationalism.



Lord Hardinge

Nevertheless Lord Hardinge tempered his repression with sympathy for the aggrieved people of Bengal. He wrote to the British Government in England suggesting the re-unification of Bengal. His suggestion was accepted and the partition was annulled on 19th December 1911 on the occasion of the visit of the Emperor George V to Delhi, which was now the capital

of British India in preference to Calcutta, the erstwhile capital. This gesture of British goodwill was welcomed by the Indian National Congress.

The First Great War 1914 – 1918: the First Great World War broke out in Europe in August 1914. It had an important bearing on events in India and her constitutional development. The British Government declared that it was fighting against Germany and her allies to make the world safe for democracy. Many Moderate leaders of the Congress thought if Britain was fighting for saving democracy in Europe, surely she could not deny the same to India, which was her due. Lord Hardinge was the Viceroy when war broke out. He had won the sympathy of the Indian people by his tactful and sympathetic handling of the political situation. Therefore the Princes of the Indian states and the people of British India offered all help to the British Government. The President of the Indian National Congress session of 1914 declared that India and Britain were fighting a devastating war, side by side for honour, liberty and justice. Lord Pentland, Governor of Madras attended the open session of the Congress when the resolution of unswerving allegiance to Britain was passed.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who had done much for alleviating the sufferings of Indians in South Africa was in London when war broke out. He extended his full sympathy and support to the British Government in their crisis. Gandhi and Surendranath Bannerjee urged their countrymen to give all help to Britain in its hour of need and enlisted a great number of recruits to the army. Similarly the Indian Princes lent their full support to the British Government. The Maharajas of Bikaner, Jodhpur, Kishengarh, Patiala and Sachin went into the battlefield at the head of their state forces. India sent over a million and quarter men including those who served in the labour corps in the different theatres of war. She subscribed thirty million pounds sterling annually to the British government besides handsome donations to the Red Cross; and subscriptions to war loans amounting to seventy-five million pounds sterling.

In England, statesmen and political leaders of all parties were highly impressed by India's significant contribution in all fields. Mr. Asquith the Prime Minister of Great Britain observed, 'We welcome with appreciation and affection their (Indians) preferred aid, in an Empire which knows no distinction of race or class. We all alike are subjects of the king Emperor'. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India spoke of the common devotion of great Britain and India to the idea of freedom.



HH Asquith



Edwin Montagu

War had created a feeling of self-respect in India. There was profound pride that she had not fallen behind the other parts of the British Empire, but had stood shoulder to shoulder with them in the hour of great trial. Indians were accorded with equal status with the representatives of the dominions of the British Empire, in International Conferences. The representatives of India were one of the signatories of the Paris Peace Agreement. India thus became one of the original members of the League of Nations along with the dominions.

Thus war also produced a greater demand for self-government because it had created a greater awakening in India. All the assurances of Mr. Asquith, the British Prime Minister that henceforth, Indian questions would be viewed from a different angle; and the declaration later on by Mr. Lloyd George, the next Prime Minister that the principle of self-determination would be applied to "tropical countries also" raised new hopes and expectations amongst Indians. They thought that they were fighting against despotism to preserve democracy, and that after the war in lieu of the services rendered to the British Empire, they would be accorded Dominion Status. The high sounding words of President Wilson of the U.S.A. that 'after the war the right of self-determination would be granted to small nations and nationalities' had further heightened their expectations. If the war was being fought to make the world safe for democracy, it was hoped, that India would soon be on the road to self-government



Lloyd George

Country-wide collection for the war-fund had resulted in financial bankruptcy. There was also political awakening among the masses. The Indian soldiers and officers who had fought in foreign lands saw for themselves, the tremendous differences between the status of a slave and that of a free citizen. They came back to the motherland with injured feelings and wounded and mutilated bodies. The country which had lost many of her sons in the war and was facing bankruptcy, naturally expected a substantial reward in the form of Dominion Status.

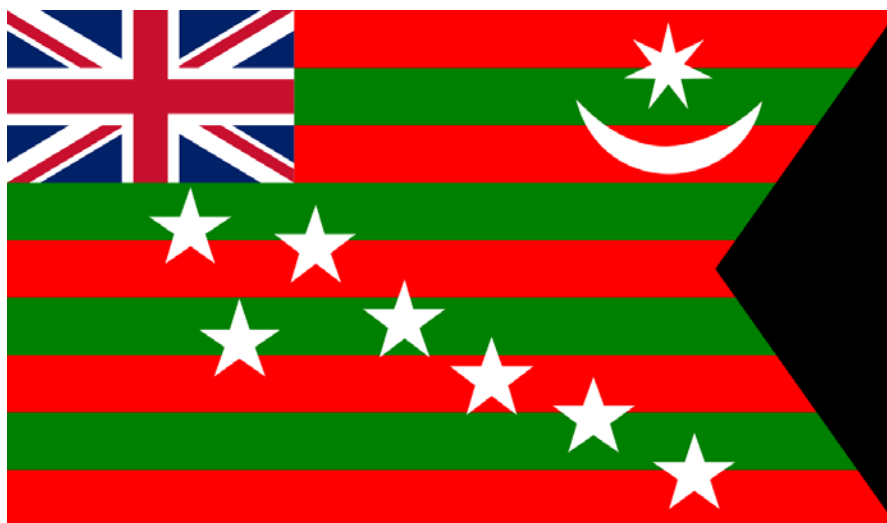
But the British Government puffed up with their recent victory in the First World War, and gave a cold shoulder to Indian National demands. This attitude on their part led to increased activities of the revolutionaries.

LokamanyaBalagangadhar Tilak was released from jail on June 16, 1914 after six years' imprisonment in Mandalay, Burma. Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914. Tilak's first reaction to war showed no bargaining spirit. He chivalrously declared in a statement on August 27, 1914, "At such a crisis the duty of every Indian, be he great or small, rich or poor is to support and assist His Majesty's Government to the best of his ability." He added that in India, the need was for a reform in the system of administration, and not the overthrow of the government. He condemned the acts of violence which were being committed by revolutionaries in different parts of India.

But soon this attitude of Tilak changed. He foresaw that the British Government was only interested in getting maximum help during the war crisis and was not ready to give any concession to Indians. Therefore Tilak demanded that the British Government must promise self-government to Indians in return for the help that India was rendering to the British Empire, during the war years.

In February 1915 Gopala Krishna Gokhale passed away. He was a gentle leader of the Moderates. In the words of Prof. Hoyland, "He was a constructive statesman of the first rank, a bringer together of the East and West in the common service of the needy; above all an idealist, a foreseer, a prophet of a new era of inter-racial goodwill and cooperation." During the same year in November, Sir Feroze Shah Mehta also passed away. He too was a staunch supporter of the Moderate point of view among the Congress members. Thus the Congress lost in the same year two pillars of the Moderate group.

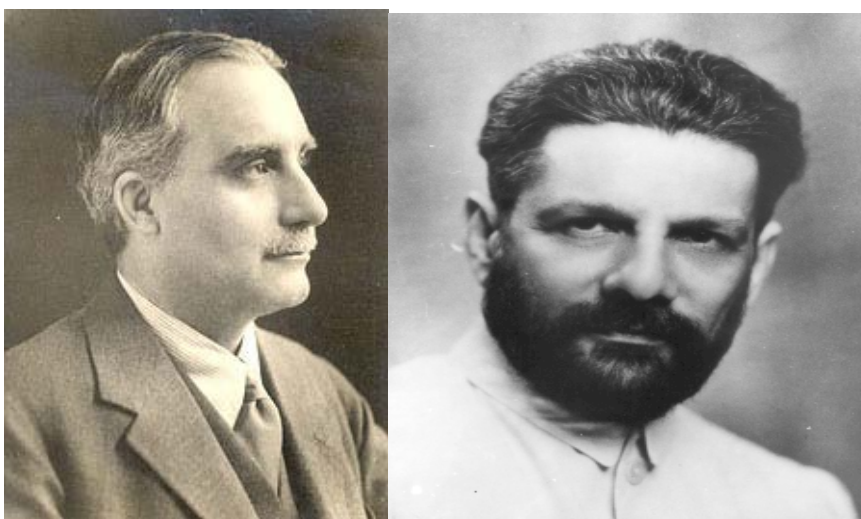
The Home Rule Movement: The Home Rule League was established by Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant on April 28, 1916 at Belgam, with the aim of attaining self-government within the British Empire, by constitutional means; and also to educate and organise public opinion towards the attainment of self-government. Mrs. Annie Besant started a branch of the Home Rule League in Madras in September 1916; and Tilak started a branch in Poona about the same time. Mrs. Besant and Tilak gave an inspiring lead to the Home Rule Movement. It gained momentum during the war years and many Indians saw in it the best opportunity to gain some concessions from the British Government. Mrs. Besant was Irish by birth, but Indian by domicile and religious out-look. She had great regard for Indian culture and Vedic philosophy. She realized that the misery of Indians was the result of their political subjection, and demanded Home Rule or Dominion Status for India.



Home Rule flag

The Home Rule League raised the slogan "Home Rule for India" and advocated the principles of Swadeshi and national education. The Home Rule movement spread with lightning speed. The Bombay Government imposed restrictions on the activities of Tilak. Action was also taken against Mrs. Besant by the Madras Government. She was arrested along with her two co-workers, Sri Arundale and Sri Wadia. This high-handedness of the authorities raised a storm of protest all over the country. Public anger compelled the government to release Mrs. Besant. In recognition of her valuable services the Congress

elected her President of the Congress in 1917. The Home Rule Movement reached its height in 1917. Thereafter it lost its force after the declaration of Montague, the Secretary of State for India in August 1917, that Indians will be accorded responsible government by stages.



George Arundale

BP Wadia

The Lucknow Pact or The Congress-League Scheme of 1916: The war and other international events had a significant effect on the political parties of India, particularly on the attitude of the Muslim League towards the Congress. The Muslim League was founded on 30th December 1906 with the sole aim of preventing Muslims from joining the Congress. In 1912, there occurred a change in the attitude of the Muslim League towards the British Government and the Congress.

Turkey was considered to be the only living temporal power of Islam. Indian Muslims owed their allegiance to the Turkish Khalifa. The Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 gave the impression to the Muslims that all the Christian powers were conspiring against Turkey. They interpreted the campaign against Turkey as a struggle between the Cross and the Crescent. The annulment of the partition of Bengal had disappointed them earlier. During the First Great War, Turkey was on the side of Germany. German propaganda convinced the Muslims of India that Turkey was engaged in a holy war against England; and therefore it was their religious duty to thwart and sabotage the war preparations of the Allies. This brought about a rupture in the alliance between the League and the British Government. The support given by the League to the British rulers was transferred to the Congress which was dominated by the Moderates up to 1915. The Muslim League came close to the Congress which sympathized with Turkey. Nationalist Muslim leader like Maulana Azad, Mohamed Ali, Shaukat Ali, Dr. Ansari, Hakkim Azmal Khan and M.A. Jinnah exhorted their co-religionists to throw aside their distrust of Hindus and join in the struggle for freedom. The Muslim League, at its Lucknow Session in 1913, had declared that its aim was to secure self-government under the patronage of the British Crown. Thus similarity of interests and aims, opened the door for co-operation between the Congress and the Muslim League.

As soon as war broke out in Europe the Indian Muslims became highly critical of the British Government. The authorities applied the "Seditious Meetings Act" and arrested prominent Muslims for their outspoken words against the government. These arrests brought the League closer to the Congress. As a step towards strengthening their ties of friendship both parties held their meetings simultaneously in Bombay in 1915.

Prominent Congress leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Malaviya and Sarojini Naidu, besides speaking at Congress meetings, also spoke from the League platform. The League appointed a committee to prepare a scheme for India, in consultation with the Congress. The report of this joint committee, known as the 'Lucknow Pact' or the 'Congress-League Scheme' was confirmed by both parties at their annual sessions held in 1916 at Lucknow.



The workers of the Muslim League in 1916.

Some of the main features of the Lucknow Pact were as follows:

- India must be raised to the status of a self-governing state as an independent unit of the British Empire like the dominions.
- The number of elected members in the Provincial Legislature should be raised to four-fifths of the total strength. The minorities should be given adequate separate representation in the elected bodies.
- The scheme accepted the right of the Viceroy and the government to reject a bill or refuse to give their assent to it if they thought it necessary.

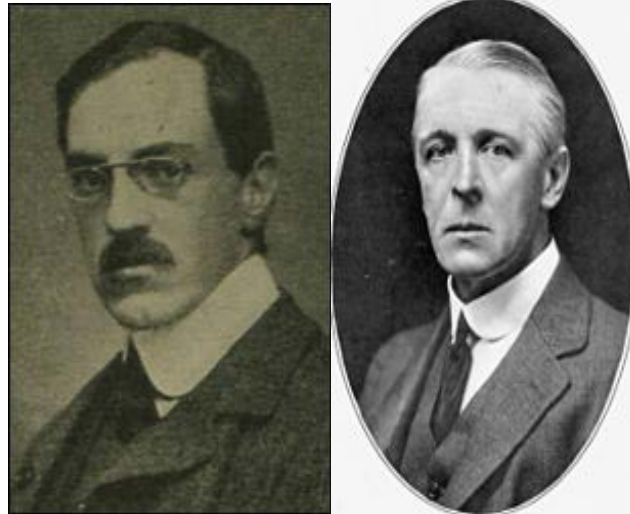
- At least half the members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy should be Indians, elected by the members of the Central Legislature. The same procedure should be adopted in the case of the Provincial Executive Councils.
- The Provinces should be given a large measure of autonomy in their own sphere. The Central Government should restrict itself to acts of general supervision over them.
- The membership of the Central Legislature should be raised to 150, one-third of whose elected members should be from the Muslim community, elected by the Muslim electorate.
- The scheme laid down that the Government of India should be free from the control of the Secretary of State of India, in legislative and administrative matters. The Indian Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished and replaced by two permanent Under Secretaries of whom one should be an Indian. The salary of the Secretary of State should be paid out of British revenue and not charged on Indian revenue.
- Indians should be declared eligible for all the military and naval services. Adequate provision should be made for their selection and training in India.

The Congress-League Scheme was considered by its authors, as the latest, most complete and most authoritative presentation of the claims of the leading Indian political organizations. But in fact, the Congress, in trying to win Muslim support, committed blunders, the chief being, giving them the right of electing Muslim representatives by a Muslim electorate. Such a concession to Muslims would divide the nation into two separate communities, and the breach would be widened by the foreign ruling power. Furthermore, the Congress had given Muslims disproportionate representation, much in excess of their numerical strength. According to many political thinkers, the Lucknow Pact marked the beginning of the appeasement policy of the Congress towards the Muslim community. In other words the Congress was trying its best to bring the two communities together. Still, elections based on separate electorates, could only lead to unavoidable the division of the country.

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4.13. - The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Or The Act of 1919

The Secretary of State, Montagu's declaration of August 20, 1917 The growing unrest in India compelled British Statesmen to look at Indian affairs from a new angle.



Edwin Montagu

Lord Chelmsford

Mr. Montagu, the new Secretary of State had a sympathetic attitude towards Indian aspirations. In his statement before the House of Commons in August 1917, he said that British policy in India would thenceforth be directed towards securing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and progressive realization of responsible government in India. Following this policy, Parliament passed the Act of 1919, also, called the 'Montague-Chelmsford Reforms' or simply 'Montford Reforms'.

From the preamble of the Act several points were obvious:

1. India was to remain an integral part of the British Empire.
2. There would be a decentralization of authority without however loosening the supreme hold of the Central Government.
3. The time and manner of gradual advance towards responsible Government should be decided, not by Indians but by the British Parliament.
4. The Preamble proposed giving partial responsibility in the Provinces. The Government of India was to remain responsible to the British Parliament. In order to get the co-operation of the people of India the size of the Central Legislature would be enlarged.

The Preamble thus made no change in the character of the Central Government nor in the control of the British Parliament over Indian affairs.

Parliamentary control of Indian Affairs: The Act of 1919 did not make any significant change in the functions of the Secretary of State for India. He continued to be the supreme head of the

British administration of India whom the Viceroy and the Governors had to obey. Till the enactment of 1919, the Secretary of State was paid out of Indian revenues. Indians had always resented this burden of maintaining him and the members of his council. According to the new Act, his salary was henceforth to be paid from the British revenues.

Under the new Act the administrative subjects were divided under the heads 'Central' and 'Provincial'. The Provincial subjects were further divided into 'Reserved' and 'Transferred' subjects. The reserved subjects were to be administered by the Governor and his Executive Council, while the transferred subjects were to be placed in charge of Indian Ministers who were responsible to the Legislature.

The Viceroy and his Executive Council: The Government of India remained responsible to the Secretary of State for India and through him to the British Parliament. The Central Legislative Council was enlarged and made more representative. The Government at the Center remained an autocracy as before, except that the Indians were given more opportunities of influencing the Government. The Act of 1919 did not introduce any fundamental change in the composition and powers of the Viceroy and his Executive Council. The unrestricted and despotic powers of the Viceroy were left untouched. The Central Legislature had no effective control over him. Although he was required to make all decisions in his Executive Council, he was in no way controlled by that Council. In short he was a benevolent despot.

The Act of 1919 empowered the Viceroy to have direct control over external affairs and the political department. Through the latter he exercised his power of supervision and control over the Indian Princely States. He maintained a Resident in every state to keep him duly informed about the affairs of the state.

The Act provided for including three Indians in the six member Executive Council of the Viceroy. However, only relatively unimportant departments were entrusted to Indian Councilors. The Executive Council remained as usual free from the control of the Central Legislature. As the Councilors knew that the Legislature could not remove them even by a vote of censure, they cared little for the interests of the people at large. Thus the promise of giving the right of self-determination to Indians remained as distant as before.

Central Legislature: The Act of 1919 set up two Houses of Legislature at this Center instead of one Legislative Council presided over by the Viceroy. The two Houses were known as 'The Legislative Assembly' and 'The Council of States' having 145 members and 60 members respectively. Both Houses had a majority of elected members. The elective seats were distributed among the provinces in accordance with their populations. The seats fixed for a province were further distributed among its communities and castes. Elections were direct as under the Act of 1909. The method of separate electorate was adopted for giving representation to Muslims, Sikhs and Europeans. Also the Act created separate constituencies for land-lords and Indian Commerce. To safe-guard the interest of Anglo-Indians, Indian-

Christians and the labour classes, the Act authorized the Viceroy to nominate members from those sections. Out of the 145 members in the Central Legislative Assembly, 41 were nominated and the rest were elected.

Composition of the Council of States: The Council of States or the Upper House of the Indian Legislature had 60 members – 33 elected and 27 nominated. The function of the Upper House was restricted to reconsidering the bills passed and forwarded to it by the Legislative Assembly. It consisted of Capitalists, businessmen and land-lords.

Changes in the Provincial Government: For the first time during British rule the Indian provinces obtained a partial responsible government under the Act of 1919. Till 1919 India had a unitary form of government; that is, there was centralization of authority. All the departments of administration were looked after by the Center. The Provincial Governments acted as the agents of the Central Government. The new Act defined clearly the subjects to be dealt with the Centre and by the Provinces. The Provincial subjects were divided into 'reserved' and 'transferred' subjects. The reserved subjects were administered by the Governor of each province with the help of the Executive Council whose members had no responsibility towards the Provincial Legislative Council. For the administration of reserved subjects the Governor was answerable to the British Parliament, through the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, and not to the voters of the province.

The transferred subjects were administered by the Governor with the help of Indian Ministers who were responsible to the legislature. This double arrangement in the provinces came to be known as 'Diarchy' or 'Double Government'. The reserved list included police, land revenues, justice, irrigation and canals, famine relief, control of news-papers, forest, etc. The subjects included in the transferred list were local self-government, public health, sanitation and medical services, education, public works including roads, bridges and tramways, fisheries, excise, technical education, agriculture, etc.

The Governor selected his ministers from among the non-official members of the local legislature. Madras, Bombay and Calcutta had three ministers each, while the remaining provinces had two ministers each.

The Act of 1919 entrusted the Governor with many special responsibilities. Under the pretext of discharging his special responsibility, the Governor could go against the advice of his Ministers on any important matter, and do whatever he liked. Thus in practice, the Indian Ministers were far from being the real masters of their departments.

There were 4 members in each of the Executive Councils of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, while in each of the other provinces, there were two. Half the members of the Executive Councils were chosen by the Governors from among the non-official members of the

legislature. Executive Councillors were ex-officio members of the legislative council, without being responsible to it for any act of omission or commission. Unlike the Ministers they were not removable by the legislatures' motion of censure or no confidence. The Governor acted as the head of the legislative council. He was given the power of over-riding the decision of the council, if he considered such an action necessary, for the safety and peace of his provinces.

Composition of the Provincial Legislative Council: The Act of 1919 provided for seventy percent of elected representatives and not more than twenty percent of nominated officials, in every provincial legislature. Besides the elected members and officials, the legislative council had a few nominated non-officials. Thus the provincial legislatures began to have a majority of elected members. To give adequate representation to backward classes, the Governor was authorized to make nominations from those sections.

The Act gave the Governor extensive powers of legislations. He could stop the consideration of a bill at any stage on the ground that it was harmful to the safety and peace of the province. He could veto any bill passed by the legislative council. The Act gave the legislative council some measure of control over the finances of the province. But its financial powers were much reduced by the over-riding powers of the Governor.

The Legislative Council and the Governor's Executive Council: The provincial legislative councils were not sovereign law-making bodies nor could they secure obedience from the Executive Councilors. In the new set-up only the Ministers were made responsible to the people's representatives and not the Councilors, who were almost like autocrats. The House could only ask them questions and supplementaries. It had no right to criticize them.

Nature and working of Diarchy in the Provinces: Diarchy or double government was adopted in the provinces from 1920 to 1937. Thereafter it was replaced by provincial autonomy. This scheme met half-way, the popular demand for responsible government. It was a gradual transition from non-responsible to responsible government. The provinces were considered the most suitable domains for trying the scheme.

Causes for the failure of Diarchy: Diarchy worked with varying degrees of success in different provinces. Nevertheless the scheme had some serious defects leading to its failure. A Governor had described it as a 'cumbrous, complex, confused system having no logical basis'. Many considered it unsound in principle and unworkable in practice.

The national leaders felt that diarchy was based on distrust. The very assumption that the people could not be trusted to govern themselves, particularly in the reserved subjects of provincial administration, roused much indignation in them. The division of executive work under diarchy into two halves was unnatural and unscientific. Furthermore the Executive Councilors and the Ministers were divided in their loyalties. One set was responsible to a

foreign government while the other was responsible to the Indian electorate. The two halves in their attempt to please different masters often clashed with each other.

Most of the Governors were unwilling to let the Ministers work freely. They were expected to show tolerance and foresight in not offending the Ministers by the frequent exercise of their superseding powers. But unfortunately most of the Governors were not so tolerant. The Ministers faced a number of difficulties in the working of the diarchic system. Haphazard and illogical division of the subjects led to insufficiency in administration. An ex-minister of Madras Mr. K.V. Reddy said, "I was a Minister for 'development' without 'forest'. I was a Minister for 'agriculture' without 'irrigation'. I had nothing to do with the 'Madras Agriculturists' loans Act.'.... Famine relief of course could not be touched by the Minister of Agriculture." Similar was the lot of the Minister for industries who had no control over factories, mines, water, power, etc. the Minister for education had nothing to do with European and Anglo-Indian education which was looked after by an Executive Councillor. The Ministers were much dependent on the reserved departments, particularly on the finance department.



KV Reddy

A great economic depression occurred in India at the end of the first world war. The 'transferred' departments were badly hit by shortage of funds. The defense expenditure went up from thirty crores annually in prewar days, to over eighty crores annually after the war. A major portion of the provincial revenues had to be given away every year to the Central Government. The financial position of the provinces became deplorable. The finance department often withheld funds from the 'transferred' departments. The 'reserved' departments got all the money they required before the 'transferred' department could get what they needed. Lack of co-ordination between the Ministers and the Councilors proved disadvantageous to the Ministers and these began to demand immediate constitutional reforms.

The greatest complaint against the Act of 1919 was the attitude of the British Government. Instead of winning the affection and good-will of Indians at the close of the war, the government acted like a tyrant. People felt let down and deceived. Their war services were unrecognized. Instead, they got lathi charges, firing and martial law. This breach of faith

on the part of the British Government changed Gandhiji from a co-operator to a non-co-operator.

Achievement of Diarchy: Diarchy remained in operation in the provinces for nearly sixteen years and was replaced by provincial autonomy in 1937. In spite of its drawbacks it brought certain gains. It made many Indians familiar with administrative procedure, and trained them in the art of self-government. It served as a bridge between autocracy and responsible government. Besides its educative value, it gave the legislature an opportunity to look into the working of the government, and criticise its anti-national policies, if any. The speeches by the members both within the House and without, drew the attention of the people to unjust laws.

Another gain of Diarchy was that the Ministers got the opportunity to deal with social evils without any fear of popular opposition. Two such concrete steps were the passing of the Hindu Religious Endowment Act in Madras and Children's Aid Act in Bengal.

Without the introduction of partially responsible governments in the provinces, a beginning was made towards Indianisation of public services. Lord Sinha was made Governor of Bihar and Orissa.



Lord Sinha

In short the Act of 1919 was a significant advance towards self-government. All the same the people continued their struggle for freedom and gained another notable victory in 1935.

4.14. Chapter 14 - The coming of Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2nd October 1869 in Porbander, a small state in Kathiawar to the North of Bombay. His father was the Dewan or Prime Minister of Porbander. Mohandas was his youngest son. Both his parents were devout Hindus, upright in their ways. They were also influenced to a certain extent by Jainism, with its emphasis on ahimsa. As a child, Mohandas had often watched his mother fasting and praying and had accompanied her to the temple. Perhaps from these early beginnings, Gandhi acquired that great devotion to truth which was the guiding light of his life. Many years later when he was in the thick of political activities, he often said, "God is truth". He never took any important step in his life without listening to the 'still small voice' within.

After a young Mohandas Gandhi passed the matriculation examination he was sent to England in 1888 to study law and become a barrister. He was enrolled in one of the legal societies in the Inns of Court in London. Three years later he finished the course and returned to India, now a fully qualified lawyer. He settled in Rajkot, his home-town with his family and started practicing as a lawyer. But he felt unhappy by the dishonesty he saw everywhere around him. For this reason he was eager to leave Rajkot. Soon he got a chance.



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

A business firm of Porbander which had big business interests in South Africa had an important legal case in the court of South Africa. They wrote to his brother asking him if Mohandas Gandhi could come to South Africa to work for them, for about a year, in connection with that case. Gandhi accepted the offer and in April 1893 he sailed for South Africa leaving behind young wife and two small sons. Towards the end of May his ship reached the Port of Durban, in Natal in South Africa. He soon noticed that the white people who ruled South Africa were very rude and snobbish in their behavior towards Indians however educated and refined they might be.

A few days after reaching Durban, Gandhi was asked to go to Pretoria to represent the firm in connection with their case. They bought a first class ticket for his railway journey. When Gandhi got into the first class compartment he was the only passenger occupying it. In one of the subsequent stations a European got into the same compartment. The European objected to traveling with an Indian and called the railway guard. The guard ordered Gandhi to get out of the carriage and go into the compartment set apart for African people. Gandhi said that he had a first class ticket and refused to go. The guard sent for a policeman who entered the carriage and pushed Gandhi out on to the platform and threw his luggage after him. The train left the station leaving Gandhi behind. This was Gandhi's first brush with racial prejudice and arrogance in South Africa. All through that night his soul was in turmoil. Thoughts of returning home to India crossed his mind but he gave up the idea. He felt that he should finish the work for which he had come to South Africa, before leaving that land. He tried to think calmly as to what he should do next. The next day Gandhi continued his journey in another train. Part of this journey had to be made in a stage-coach. In this also he had to face much humiliating treatment. At last he reached Pretoria.



Pietermaritzburg Railway Station where Gandhi was evicted from the train.

Gandhi wanted to study the conditions of the Indian community in South Africa. He tried to meet the leading Indians in Pretoria and discuss with them their problems and consider ways of improving their lot in South Africa. Indians were not allowed to stay in good hotels nor eat in good restaurants. They could not go to theatres nor walk on pavements. All these places were reserved for white people. In certain parts of South Africa, Indians were made to suffer great hardships. They had no right to vote and were often subjected to humiliating treatment.

Gandhi, through his own bitter experiences came to understand the unhappy lot of his countrymen in South Africa. The poor class of Indians who had come to Africa to work as labourers on a five-year contract fared even worse. Their lives were little better than those of slaves.

At the end of a year in Pretoria, Gandhi's work in connection with the legal case ended happily. He persuaded the two parties to settle their differences out of court and they agreed to do so. Now that the case was over Gandhi prepared to return to India. But his friends pleaded with him to postpone his departure for some time, in order to oppose a bill which was about to be introduced by the government, to deprive the Indians in Natal, their right to elect members to the legislative council. Gandhi agreed and organised a vigorous campaign against the bill. While he was fully occupied with the campaign, his Indian friends in Natal begged him to settle there permanently and fight for their rights. Complying with their wishes Gandhi decided to stay in Natal.

He applied and was enrolled, not without difficulty, because of his colour, as an advocate of the Supreme Court of Natal. Still, he considered the unpaid public work he had undertaken to do for the common good, as more important than his legal practice. He and his friends decided to have a public organisation in Natal to unite Indians and take up their cause, to make life better for them in South Africa. It was named the Natal Indian Congress. Gandhi was chosen as its first Secretary.



Members of the Indian Natal Congress (Gandhi - top row, fourth from left)

He was particularly desirous of serving the large numbers of Indian coolly labourers in South Africa, who had been employed by their white masters on condition that they would work for them for five years at a stretch. The coolies had to work terribly hard and for the lowest wages, but could not get release till the five years were over. Gandhi gave legal support to one of these coolies who had been cruelly beaten by his master. This led to other labourers also

seeking his help. Very soon Gandhi was looked upon by the labourers as their friend and champion. Thus Gandhi, an obscure young lawyer, was slowly being transformed into a fighter for the rights of the oppressed Indians.

At that time there were many unjust laws against Indians in South Africa, which made life very difficult for Indians. Gandhi led his followers in a prolonged struggle against these anti-Indian laws. However, he wanted the struggle to be carried on in a peaceful manner. He chose the path of non-violence following the dictates of his 'inner voice'. This non-violent campaign by Indians against government injustice was first called 'passive resistance'. Later it came to be known as 'Satyagraha' the word meaning 'firmness in truth'. Those who took part in it were called 'Satyagrahis'.

After a stay of three years in South Africa, Gandhi went to India and returned a year later with his family. He believed in simple living, and encouraged his family to follow the same principle. In 1904 he purchased a hundred acres of land near Durban. On this land he began a settlement called the 'Phoenix Settlement'. Those who lived on this land were expected to earn their living as farm workers. They would receive a remuneration of three pounds a month each, no difference being allowed for race or nationality. In their spare time they were to print the paper 'Indian Opinion' which published various items of news helpful to Indians in South Africa. Gandhi lived in the Phoenix settlement with his wife and children.

*** 'Mr. Gandhi' by Ranjee Shahani.

The Satyagraha movement continued against the government's anti-Asiatic laws, such as the Asiatic Registration Act and the 3-pounds poll-tax. Thousands of Indians who opposed these laws non-violently, went to prison. Soon the jails were overflowing. To provide shelter for their families Gandhi founded another settlement, near Johannesburg. "The land for this was donated by Herman Kallenbach, a German Architect and a close friend and admirer of Gandhi." It consisted of eleven hundred acres and was named 'Tolstoy Farm' after the great Russian writer whom Gandhi admired much. In this settlement many people, Indian, European and African,, lived together in brotherhood, helping one another. Though of different races and religions, they lived together as one family.

In 1912 G.K. Gokhale, the great Indian patriot and a close friend of Gandhi, visited South Africa. He was deeply interested in the problems of Indians there. Indians as well as Europeans welcomed him warmly. He advised Gandhi to return to India and work for his motherland. Gandhi was much impressed by Gokhale's personality and considered him as his political guru. He agreed to return to India and join the Indian National Congress.

After long years of struggle, the Indians in South Africa were able to gain a certain measure of success in their efforts to redress their disabilities in that country.

And now it was time for Gandhi to return to India. The unknown young man who had gone to South Africa in 1893 for a year's legal work had spent more than twenty years in that country. During those years he had gained experience as a crusader against the unjust laws of the South African Government. Also he had used a novel weapon, Satyagraha, in his fight against anti-Asiatic legislation. He was much encouraged by the success gained, by this non-violent method. He had been the beloved leader of thousands of Indians who had willingly gone to jail at his call. He himself had tasted life in prison. The news of his activities had reached India and thrilled millions there who were fighting for national independence.

Early in January 1915 Gandhi and his wife Kasturibai arrived in India. They were accorded a great welcome. Rabindranath Tagore bestowed on Gandhi the title of 'Mahatma'. From henceforth he was known as Gandhiji, denoting the high respect and affection in which he was held by his countrymen. In his political views Gandhiji was a moderate as his guru Gokhale. He agreed with Gokhale's policy of co-operating with the government, in working out constitutional reforms. He had full faith in the sincerity of British intentions which according to him were not against the interests of the Indian people. He took pride in calling himself a citizen of the British Empire. He had great admiration for the English sense of justice and fairplay. During the First Great War, he helped the government in recruiting Indian soldiers and in offering ambulance services. Recognizing his services the Government of India awarded him the Kaiser-I-Hind gold medal.

After the war, when the British Government refused to transfer power to Indians, nearly all the national leaders were much disappointed and lost their faith in British promises. Gandhiji alone refused to change his views. While C.R. Das, B.C. Lal and others rejected the reforms of 1919 because they were inadequate and unsatisfactory, Gandhiji favoured the idea of working out the Mont-Ford reforms. He wrote in his weekly 'Young India', "the Reforms Act coupled with the proclamation is an earnest expression of the intention of the British people to do justice to India.....Our duty is not to subject the reforms to bitter criticism but to settle down quietly to work so as to make them a success."

*** *Mr Gandhi by Ranjee Shahani*



C R Das

But soon Gandhiji's faith in British fairness and justice was severely shaken. Certain events which happened in Punjab changed Gandhiji from a co-operator to a non-cooperator.

4.15. - The Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

In the beginning of the twentieth century there was much revolutionary and terrorist activity in India. The chief reason for the increase in violent activities was the arrogant, overbearing attitude of the British Officers. The partition of Bengal, the unpopular land laws in the Punjab, the famine in South India and the plague that devastated Maharashtra, all contributed to increase the discontent of the people. Revolutionary organisations began to work more vigorously during the First Great War. The government passed the Defence of India Act to increase its powers to suppress the revolutionary activities. This Act was to be discontinued at the end of the war but the government decided to keep it in force even after the war. It appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Justice Rowlatt to study the problems of revolutionary activities and submit its report. On the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee the Government of India moved two bills in the Central Legislature in February 1919. they came to be known as the Rowlatt Bills. They armed the Government of India with unrestricted powers to control the press, to try political offenders without the help of juries, and to arrest and detain a person suspected of revolutionary activity, for any length of time, without any trial.



Justice Rowlatt

There were violent protests against the Rowlatt Bills. The war was over and there was hardly any revolutionary activity in the country, yet the Defence of India Act continued to be in force. Nationalists feared that the Rowlatt act would be used to suppress even peaceful and legitimate agitations. It would strangle the elementary rights of the people. The whole country was stirred to action against the new Act. Gandhiji came to the forefront with a solemn ultimatum to the government that he would be called upon to lead an agitation if the new Act was passed. His warning was ignored. In spite of strong opposition within the Central

Legislature and from the public in general, the government passed the Act known as 'The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crime Act of 1919', otherwise known as the Rowlatt Act.

On 6th April 1919 Gandhiji started a country-wide agitation against the Rowlatt Act. He called upon the people to observe total hartal on that day; and the country responded to his call admirably. Processions were taken out to express public resentment against the new repressive legislation. Near the Delhi railway station there was a clash between the police and the people. The police opened fire which killed eight people and injured many others. Such incidents occurred in Lahore and in Calcutta also. Gandhiji left Bombay for Delhi on 8th April. On the way he was served with a notice banning his entry into Delhi and the Punjab. On his refusal to obey, he was arrested in Palwal near Delhi and sent back to Bombay.

The news of Gandhiji's arrest spread rapidly all over the country and led to disturbances at various places, particularly in Ahmedabad, Nadiad, Lahore and Kasoor. The government arrested two prominent leaders of the Punjab – Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlew. The citizens of Amritsar provoked by the arrests of their favourite leaders, marched in procession towards the residence of the District Magistrate. A military force barred their way and opened fire on the mob killing two and injuring many. The people carried the dead bodies on their shoulder and paraded along the main streets of Amritsar. On the way they set fire to the National Bank and killed the Bank Manager. In all, five Europeans lost their lives on that day and several buildings were burnt. On 10th April 1919 martial law was imposed on the city.



Saifuddin Kitchlew

It was announced by the local leaders that on 13th April, a public meeting would be held in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar. The place was enclosed on all sides by the back walls of houses. It had only one entrance and that too so narrow that no carriage could pass through it. The Martial law Administrator General Dyer let the people assemble at the Bagh and when it was packed to capacity, he led a force of armed troops to the place.

The peaceful gathering of about 20,000 to 25,000 people was being addressed by speakers who, one by one protested against the Rowlatt Act and demanded the release of their leaders. Without giving any warning to the people to disperse, Gen. Dyer ordered his men to fire at them, especially where the crowd was thickest. The panic-stricken people, caught like rats in a trap, tried to run out through three small exits; but the General ordered his men to direct their fire on the people trying to escape through the exits or climb the walls. For about ten minutes the firing continued till all the ammunition was exhausted. Then Dyer ordered his soldiers to withdraw. By then about two thousand men – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs – lay on the ground wounded, dying or dead. According to a later official report nearly 400 were killed and more than 1000 injured.



Jallianwala Bagh in 1919, months after the incident.



General Dyer

Later Gen. Dyer said that he wanted to teach the people a lesson, that he would have fired longer if he had more ammunition and that the massacre was a 'horrible duty' he had to perform. In approval of his action at Jallianwala Bagh, Dyer got a telegram from the Governor of Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, "Your action correct; Lieut. Governor approves." News from the Punjab was strictly censored and people in other provinces came to know of the massacre much later.

The Indian National Congress reacted sharply and speedily. It demanded a high level enquiry into the firing in the Punjab. To get first hand information, the Congress formed a committee consisting of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Ganhiji, Pandit Malaviya and others. The poet Rabindranath Tagore was so pained by the tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh, that he surrendered his knighthood. Gandhiji surrendered the Kaiser-I-Hind medal that the Indian Government had awarded him in recognition of his ambulance services during the war. Sir Shankaran Nair resigned his membership from the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Government of India was finally compelled to set up a committee to investigate and report on the tragic happenings in the

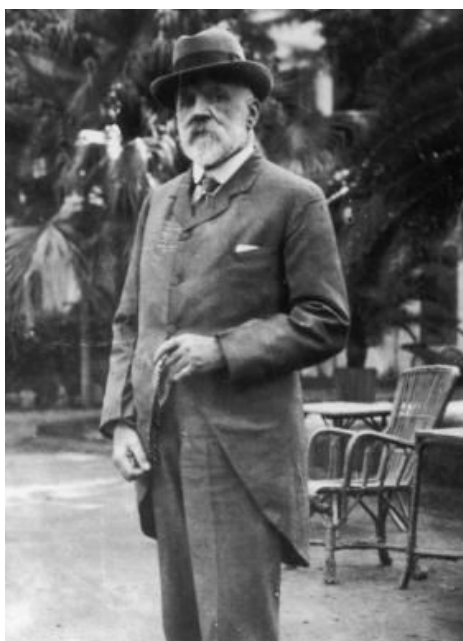
Punjab. The Hunter Committee was formed in October 1919 and it submitted its report in March 1920.

In the meantime the Government of India passed the 'Indemnity Act' absolving all the concerned officials, of any trial or punishment in connection with the Punjab firing incident. The Hunter Committee in its report also tried to whitewash the conduct of the British Officers. It did not consider any of them guilty except Dyer for whom it suggested compulsory retirement. The only charge that the Committee made against Dyer was that he committed 'a grave error of judgment.' Worse still, in May 1920 when Dyer returned to England, the British Press and Parliament showed praises on him and hailed him as a saviour of British rule. "In July 1920 the 'Morning Post' an influential Tory paper, launched a fund to raise money for 'The Man who Saved India'. Money poured in from all over Britain and even from India. When the fund finally closed, more than 26,000 pounds had been raised. Dyer retired almost a rich man."

The news shocked Gandhiji as well as the whole country. The enquiry committee appointed by the Congress reported that the number of the dead in the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy was considerably greater than the official figures. It vehemently condemned the reign of terror that was imposed upon the Punjab after the

Massacre at Amritsar by Alfred Draper.

Sir Valentine Chirol and Sivaswamy had given an account of the martial law administration in the Punjab. Chirol refers to the indiscriminate flogging and whipping, the arrests and 'fancy punishments' that were inflicted, not so much to punish individual rebels but to terrorise and humiliate people in general.



Sir Valentine Chirol

The Congress demanded adequate punishment to be meted out to the officials responsible for the firing, and monetary compensation to be given to the dependants of the victims of the firing. The government ignored these demands. This cruel indifference of the government to the public good was one of the reasons which turned Gandhiji into a non-cooperator. He lost all faith in British sense of justice.

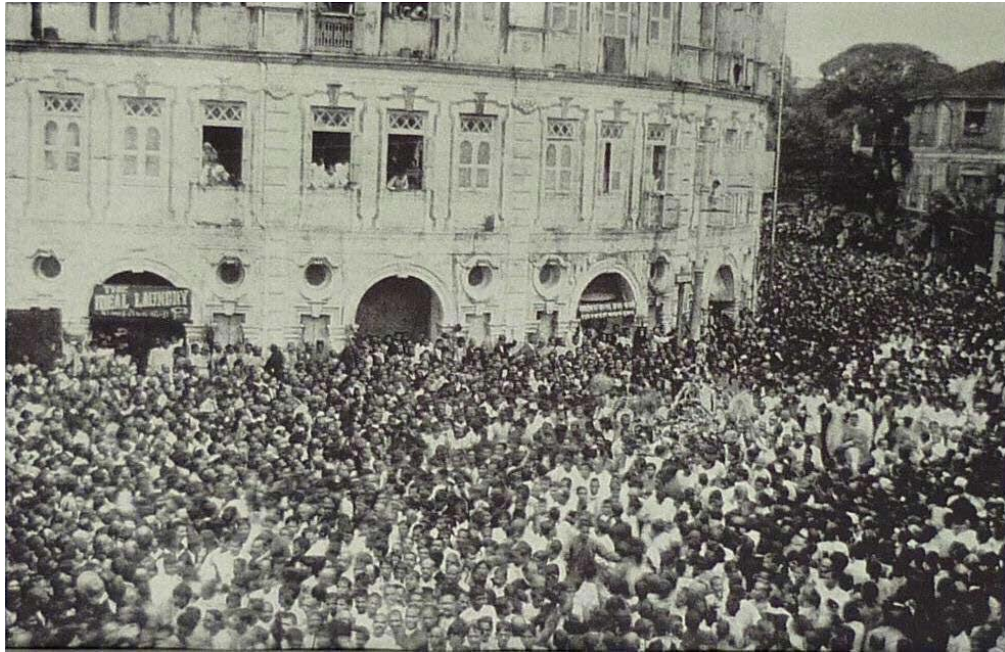
The Khilafat Question: The second reason which alienated Gandhiji against the British was the Khilafat issue. Indian Muslims considered the Sultan of Turkey as their spiritual head. During the first Great War, Turkey joined Germany and fought against England. The Indian Muslims were in a dilemma as to whether to support England or Turkey. They feared that if defeated, Turkey would be dispossessed of many parts of her empire. In order to win the support of Indian Muslims, the British Prime Minister Mr. Lloyd George declared in parliament that Britain was not fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which were mostly Turkish in race. Misled by this assurance Indian Muslims gave whole-hearted support to England in her war effort. But after the war in which Germany was defeated, the British Government refused to honour its pledge. Thrace was given to Greece and the Asiatic portions of the Turkish Empire were divided between England and France. The Indian Muslims felt cheated. They adopted a hostile attitude towards the British. A powerful Khilafat movement was started in India.

To Mahatma Gandhi the rupture between the British and the Muslims seemed to offer a chance of uniting Hindus and Muslims. He knew that without Hindu-Muslim unity and a strong opposition, the English could not be driven out of India. So he took up the cause of the Muslims and enlisted their support for a common front against the government. He sympathised with their grievance and convened a Khilafat Conference on November 24, 1919, he himself occupying the Presidential Chair.

After the Turkish Empire was broken up and its territories were distributed among the allied powers, a High Commissioner was appointed to rule over Turkey. The Sultan was almost a prisoner in his palace. Indian Muslims were filled with indignation at this humiliation of their religious head. Gandhiji put before them his non-cooperation programme and they accepted the scheme.

Thus the two main factors which led to a change in Gandhiji's attitude towards the British Government were its failure to heal the wounds of the Punjab firing and non-fulfilment of the promise made by the British prime Minister in connection with the Khilafat issue. In a letter to the Viceroy written in August 1920 Gandhiji said, "Events that have happened during the past month have confirmed in me the opinion that the Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner..... Your Excellency's light hearted treatment of official crime, your exoneration of Michael O'Dwyer....have estranged me from the present government and have disabled me from rendering, as I have hitherto wholeheartedly rendered, my total co-operation." He added further, "I consider that I will be

less than truthful if I did not describe as Satanic, a government which has been guilty of fraud, murder and wanton cruelty, which still remains unrepentant....."



The funeral of Bal Gangadhar Tilak

On 1st August, 1920 Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak passed away. The great contribution of Tilak was that he taught the philosophy of defiance to the people of India. He expressed the national urge for freedom when he declared, "Swaraj is our birth right and we shall have it." Under his guidance Congress men, from being admirers of the British Government changed into rebels against the British Empire. It has been said that Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were able to build the grand edifice of Swaraj on the foundation laid by Lokmanya Tilak.

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- The Non-co-operation Movement.

When Gandhiji lost all hopes of getting any fair and just treatment at the hands of the British Government, he planned to start the Non-cooperation Movement. In this he hoped to get the support of Muslims who had now become anti-British on the Khilafat issue. He made a fervent appeal to Hindus to support the cause of Muslims. A committee was appointed to draw up the details. It suggested, to begin with, the boycott of schools, colleges and law-courts. Gandhiji and the Ali brothers, Maulana Shaukat Ali and Mohamed Ali toured the country and explained to the people the meaning and significance of the non-cooperation movement.



Ali Brothers

A special session of the Congress was convened at Calcutta in September 1920 to approve of the scheme. It was presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai. The delegates passed several resolutions condemning the British Government, for breaking its promise on the Khilafat issue and for its failure to protect the innocent people of the Punjab from the atrocious behaviour of the officials. The Congress declared that there could be no contentment in India without redress of the two afore-mentioned wrongs. The only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent the repetition of similar wrongs in the future, was the establishment of Swaraj. The resolution further said that there was no course left open for the people of India but to approve and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi, until the afore-said wrongs were righted and Swaraj was established.

The resolution on non-cooperation caused a heated controversy in the Congress session. Several delegates including C.R. Das, Pandit Malaviya and Mrs. Annie Besant opposed it strongly but it was carried through by 1886 delegates voting for and 884 delegates voting against the scheme. The resolution on non-cooperation was put forth again, at the Nagpur Congress held in December 1920. This time it received greater support than it had received earlier in Calcutta.

The Indian National Congress changed its creed of using only constitutional methods for bringing in reforms; and defined its object anew as the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means. A working committee was formed to look after its day-to-day work. Formerly, the two factions of the Congress, the Moderates and the Extremists had no programme agreeable to both. The Moderates aimed at attaining self-government within the British Empire, while the Extremists claimed complete independence without any relationship with the British Government. The Nagpur session was important in that it changed the constitution of the Congress in a way that satisfied both sections. The nature and scope of Congress activities to achieve its goal was also widened from constitutional means to peaceful and legitimate means which included not only sending petitions to the Government but also the more effective and direct measure of refusal to pay taxes. Nagpur thus marked a new era in the history of the freedom struggle. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Mrs. Annie Besant and Mr. B.C. Pal did not approve of such a radical change in the means adopted for the freedom struggle and they left the Congress.

The Programme of the Non- co-operation Movement:

1. Boycott of foreign goods and the use of Swadeshi cloth.
2. Surrender of titles and honorary offices; resignation of members occupying nominated seats.
3. Refusal to attend official durbar and functions.
4. Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants.
5. Boycott of Government and State aided schools and colleges.
6. Boycott of elections to the new Legislative Councils and refusal by the voters to vote at the elections.
7. Refusal by clerks, soldiers and other workmen to serve in Mesopotamia. (i.e. the Middle East)

In addition to boycott measures, Congress started a constructive programme. This consisted of the opening of national educational institutions, setting up of panchayats as a substitute for British courts, popularization of charka spinning and hand-weaving, promotion of communal harmony and the removal of untouchability. Ahimsa or non-violence was to be strictly observed by the non-co-operators.

Progress of the Non-cooperation Movement: The response to the Congress programme of non-cooperation was quite enthusiastic. Gandhiji and his fellow workers toured the country and

mobilized public opinion in favour of the new movement. They persuaded students to stay away from state institutions and seek admission in national schools and colleges. For their benefit several national institutions were started, such as the Kashi Vidyapith, Benares Vidyapith, Gujrat Vidyapath, Bihar Vidyapath, Bengal National University, National College of Lahore, Jamia Milia of Delhi and the National Muslim University of Aligarh. "The industrialist Seth Jamna Lal Bajaj declared that he would give one lakh rupees a year for the maintenance of non-practicing lawyers. Forty lakhs of volunteers were enrolled by the Congress. The people started settling their disputes through arbitration instead of going to law courts. There was wholesale burning of foreign goods. Many students left their schools and colleges and entered the national institutions. Lawyers of great standing and lucrative practice gave up their profession and dedicated themselves to political work." Such were C.R. Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vithal Bhai Patel and Rejendra Prasad, who became wholetime workers of the Congress.

Prominent Muslim leaders like Dr. Ansari, Maulana Azad, Shaukat Ali and Mohammed Ali toured the country and called upon their fellow Muslims to support the movement. Hindus and Muslims co-operated with one another in all the activities connected with the movement.

*** "India since 1526' by V.D. Mahajan and R.R. Sethi.

Of all the boycott programmes the most successful was the boycott of the elections to the reformed Councils set up according to the Act of 1919. Thousands of voters stayed away from the polling booths and no Congress candidate stood for election. The Congress being out of the field, Members of the Liberal Party, Opportunists and Loyalists of the government fought the elections and entered the Legislative Councils. "to make the non-co-operation movement a mass agitation, the Congress decided to collect one crore rupees for the Swaraj fund and to enroll one crore members, and to introduce 20 lakh charkas in the country. Soon the fund was over subscribed by fifteen lakhs. Hundreds of people willingly renounced their honorary titles."



Prince of Wales in India

When the Prince of Wales landed in Bombay on 18th November 1921, a complete hartal was observed in the city on that day. Meetings were held in different parts of the city. The government tried to crush the non-cooperation movement. There was indiscriminate beating of the non-cooperators; and their meetings were dispersed with force. The Seditious Meetings Act was passed and thousands of persons were arrested. All the Congress leaders except Gandhiji were arrested. He was not arrested because the government was afraid of the consequences that would follow his arrest. In all about 25,000 people were arrested. When the Prince of Wales was about to visit the city of Calcutta, Gandhiji called for a total hartal in the city on the day of the visit. Before the Prince visited Calcutta, Lord Reading the Viceroy tried to come to terms with Gandhiji. But the talks failed because the Congress wanted the Ali brothers to be released as a pre-condition for the settlement. This the Government was not prepared to do.

At the Ahmedabad session of the Congress in 1921 it was decided to start individual and mass civil disobedience under the sole leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. On February 1, 1922 Gandhiji gave an ultimatum to Lord Reading to withdraw all repressive laws and release all non-violent non-cooperators who had been put in jail. If not, he would start a mass civil disobedience in Bardoli; and sanction the no-tax campaign in Guntur which was begun on 12th January 1922. He gave seven days to the government to comply with his demands.

*** 'Constitutional History of India' by Agarwala



Lord Reading

But, before the period of seven days was over, the tragedy of Chauri Chaura occurred which changed the course of Indian history. A mob of three thousand persons killed 21 policemen and one Inspector, some of whom were burnt alive in the police station. This was too much for Mahatma Gandhi, who stood for complete non-violence. Straight away he gave orders for the immediate suspension of the non-cooperation movement. Gandhiji feared that similar troubles would erupt in other parts of the country.

The reaction to the withdrawal of the movement by Gandhiji was adverse. Many Congress leaders such as C.R. Das, the Nehru family, the Ali brothers and Lala Lajpat Rai who were in prison criticized Gandhiji for his abrupt action. Gandhiji's popularity waned and the government took advantage of this and arrested him. His trial began on 18th March 1922. In his statement before the Judge, Gandhiji accused the government of committing satanic acts which could convert any person from a loyal subject to a seditionist. The Judge sentenced Gandhiji to six years' simple imprisonment. But he was released in February 1924 because of ill health, after less than two years' imprisonment.

Defects of the Non-cooperation Movement: The chief reason for the failure of the movement was, the country was not yet prepared to go through such a mass agitation in a disciplined manner. As the non-cooperation movement progressed, acts of violence became frequent. On 20th August 1921, the Moplah Muslims of Malabar took the law into their own hands and killed a few Europeans and thousands of Hindus. When the Prince of Wales came in November 1921, there was a clash between loyalists and boycotters resulting in an outbreak of violence. The incident at Chauri Chaura was the last straw. Gandhiji took upon himself the sole responsibility for the riots in Bombay, Madras and Chauri Chaura.

The sudden suspension of the movement by Gandhiji was considered a blunder by the other leaders. They felt that if the movement had continued a little longer the government would certainly have agreed to negotiate with the Congress. Gandhiji's sudden stopping of the movement had spoiled the chances of settlement.

The people were filled with a sense of frustration. The greatest shock was felt by those who had made great sacrifices at the call of Gandhiji and taken part in the movement. The faith of the people in the Congress programme and particularly in Gandhiji was shaken.

Lastly, Gandhiji's approach to the Khilafat question was too idealistic. He took up the Khilafat issue with a view to forge Hindu-Muslim unity. But the sudden suspension of the non-cooperation movement angered the Muslims and the rift between the two communities became wider than it was ever before, resulting in communal riots in various parts in the country. The Muslim League took advantage of the situation and began to discredit the Congress. It spread the malicious propaganda that the Congress had used the Muslims as tools during the non-cooperation movement, to achieve its selfish ends, and that it had deceived the Muslims by calling off the movement abruptly. One point that Gandhiji had overlooked as regards to the Khilafat question was that it was a religious issue in which even the Muslims of Turkey had no interest.

When **Kemal Pasha** came to power in Turkey he called off the Khilafat Movement and made the Khalifa leave Turkey. For confusing a religious issue with the national struggle Gandhiji had to face bitter criticism from the other leaders of the Congress.



Kemal Pasha



A khadi store in Bombay.

Contribution of the Movement to the National Struggle for Freedom: The Non-cooperation Movement, in spite of its failure, brought in many gains. Of all the movements launched by the Congress from the year of its birth till 1920, the non-cooperation movement was the most important. It marked a change in the object and programme of the Congress, bringing in a new era in the political life of the country. For the first time the Congress declared that its goal was the attainment of Swaraj, not just reforms. It also changed the means to achieve its goal from merely submitting petitions, to direct action against the government. It introduced mass agitation with the result that every Indian was filled with patriotic feelings. The suppressed anger of the people against their white rulers reached its highest point and they came out in thousands to take part in the movement. They were prepared to lose all that they had for the sake of dear freedom. The torch of patriotism was carried and lighted in every home. The struggle for freedom which hitherto had been confined to a few educated politicians, became a mass struggle in which every man took part.

Another salutary effect of the non-co-operation movement was that Indians learnt to face the police and military authorities boldly. Formerly the very idea of going to jail was a terror; and criticising the government taboo. Under the dynamic leadership of Gandhiji, going to jail for the national cause, became an act of patriotism. Criticising the government became common and every one spoke about Swaraj. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote that the movement put a new life into Indian nationalism. The old feeling of oppression and fearfulness was completely gone.

The weapon of Satyagraha which the Congress employed in the non-cooperation movement proved unique. The government did not know how to tackle this new method of resistance. Satyagraha paralysed the striking power of the authorities. In addition, the movement had great educative value. It gave the necessary training to Satyagrahis for their fight for freedom in the coming years.

The Constructive side of the Movement: Charka-spinning and hand-weaving became popular. People took to wearing khadi and Swadeshi cloth. The boycott of foreign goods gave a great blow to the British trade interests in India. The national schools and colleges became training grounds for young patriots. The use of Swadeshi provided employment to thousands of weavers. In the words of Subhas Chandra Bose "The year 1921 undoubtedly gave the country a highly organized party organisation.....(Before that the Congress was a constitutional party and mainly a talking body. The Mahatma not only gave it a new constitution and a nationwide basis but also converted it into a revolutionary organisation).....the British language lost its importance and the Congress adopted Hindi as the lingua franca of the whole country.....Khadi became the official uniform for all Congress men."

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4.16. - The Swaraj Party and the Simon Commission

After the suspension of the non-cooperation movement and Gandhiji's arrest and imprisonment, the country was left without any programme to carry on the struggle. A void was created which was later filled by a new party called the Swaraj Party. There was a lot of dissatisfaction in the country on account of the abrupt manner in which Mahatma Gandhi had suspended the non-co-operation movement.

The Government continued to follow its policy of repression. There were many patriots in India who wanted to obstruct the work of the government by entering the legislative councils, and thereby, preventing the passing of the laws proposed by the government to strengthen its own position. As the Congress had boycotted the general elections held under the government of India Act of 1919, many opportunists had entered the legislature. Many patriotic Indians felt that it would have been better if they, instead of giving way to opportunists and loyalists of the government, had stood for elections and entered the legislature.

When C.R. Das was in jail he formed a scheme for setting up a Swaraj Party. But in the Gaya Session of the Congress held in 1922, this scheme was not approved. However in a special session of the Congress held in Delhi in September 1923 under the Presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad the Swarajists won. A resolution was passed by Congress, permitting those members who wished to enter the legislatures, to do so. They were free to stand for elections in the forthcoming elections.

Although Mahatma Gandhi was not in favour of the Swarajist programme, he gave his consent to the majority decision of entering the legislative councils. A sort of compromise was arrived at by which a constructive programme was to be carried on by the Congress, while the Swaraj Party was to fight the elections and obstruct the work of the government through the legislatures. In this way a split in the Congress was avoided.

The Swarajists and the Congress had the same aim, that is, attaining Swaraj or Dominion Status within the British Empire. Only, their methods were different. The Swarajists wished to follow a policy of, 'uniform, continuous and consistent' obstruction within the legislatures. They wanted to throw out budgets and reject all proposals and measures by which the bureaucracy proposed to consolidate its position. On the other hand they wanted to introduce measures and bills which were necessary for the healthy growth of the national life of India. They wanted to prevent the drain of public wealth from India to England, by checking all activities leading to the exploitation of the national resources. Outside the legislatures, they gave whole-hearted support to the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi, and worked unitedly with the Congress.

When the elections were held in 1923 the Swarajists did very well. They got a clear majority in several Provinces including M.P. and Bengal. In the Central Legislative Assembly,

the Swaraj Party whose leader was Pandit Motilal Nehru was able to capture 45 out of the 145 seats. On 8th February 1924, the Swaraj Party succeeded in carrying through the Central Assembly, a resolution moved by Motilal Nehru, demanding a Round Table Conference to recommend a new constitution for India, based on the principle of full responsible government.



Motilal Nehru

Many bills introduced by the government were thrown out at the instance of the Swaraj Party. On many occasions it staged 'walk-outs'. Its members refused to attend functions and parties arranged by the Viceroy or held in his honour. For some time the Swaraj Party followed vigorously its policy of "uniform, continuous and consistent" obstruction. However, with the passage of time there was a change in its programme. The members of the Swaraj Party realised that mere obstruction was sterile politics; there was a need for construction and reconciliation.

After the death of C.R. Das in June 1925, the Swaraj Party began to move towards co-operation with the Government. Instead of obstructing the legislature from within, they participated and co-operated with the Government. The government also tried to adopt a policy of conciliation towards the Swaraj Party. Nevertheless some members of the Swaraj Party did not approve of this trend. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai left the Swaraj Party and set up a National Party in the interest of Hindus. The result was that the Swaraj Party came to an end in 1926.

The critics of the Swaraj Party pointed out the contradiction in their policy of obstruction. If the government was to be obstructed on every point, there was no meaning in entering the legislative councils. However, it cannot be denied that the Swaraj Party did some useful service to the national cause. The activities of the Swarajists put new hope and enthusiasm into the masses and drew the intelligentsia and all thinking people closer to the Congress. By throwing out budgets and bills introduced by the government, they were able to create interest

among the people in the work of the government. They were able to discredit the government in the eyes of the world. The spirit of resistance against the foreign government was maintained among the people. The Simon Commission was appointed two years earlier than the due date, on account of the activities of the Swaraj Party. It was as a result of their efforts that the British Government finally agreed to end diarchy and grant autonomy to the provinces.

Communal Problem: After his release from jail in February 1924, Gandhiji engaged himself in constructive work while the Swarajists entered the legislatures and carried out their programme. Thus in the period between 1922 and 1927 there was a lull in the activities of the Congress. The sudden withdrawal of the non-co-operation movement in 1922 came as a great shock to the Indian Muslims. The communal harmony which existed during the years 1920 to 1922 disappeared forever. The Muslim League took up hostile attitude towards the Congress. Even the Ali brothers turned against Gandhiji and the Congress. For five years from 1922 to 1927 the country suffered from a series of Hindu-Muslim riots. In Malabar in 1922, Moplah Muslims raided Hindu homes and massacred the inmates in cold blood. Muslims deliberately destroyed the lives and properties of Hindus. Muharram and Holi festivals were the usual occasions for communal riots. The Muslim League proclaimed that the Congress aimed at establishing Hindu Raj. Indirectly it sided the British and destroyed all attempts made by the Congress to form a united front against the British rulers. On its part the government was unconcerned about the riots which were disrupting national unity.

The growing menace of Muslim attacks necessitated a strong Hindu organization to protect the lives and properties of Hindus. Accordingly, the Hindu Mahasabha was formed. Another such organisation was the Rashtrya Swayam Sevak Sangh whose chief aim was to unite all Hindus for the regeneration of Bharat.

The saintly heart of Gandhiji was deeply pained to see Hindus and Muslims shedding one another's blood. He observed a twenty-one day fast in 1924 to protest against the communal fury raging in all parts of the country. The leaders who were fanning the flames of communalism realised their mistake and formed a committee for reconciliation. Gandhiji was the head of this Peace Committee; some of the other members were Hakim Azmal Khan, Lala Lajpat Rai, Dr.S.K. Dutt, Master Sunder Singh and G.K. Nariman.



Gandhi during his 21 day fast.

Simon Commission: According to the Act of 1919, a commission was to be appointed ten years after the introduction of the Act to review the political situation in India. Such a commission was due in 1929. But Lord Irwin the Viceroy of India, announced the appointment of a Royal Commission in 1927. It was to be led by Sir John Simon, a member of the British Liberal Party. The earlier appointment of the commission was in response to the demand of Indians for an early revision of the constitution. The aim of the Commission was to enquire into the working of the constitution in force then, and to find out how diarchy was working in the provinces. Also it was to report on the functioning of representative institutions in the country. The Simon Commission consisted of only British members. The exclusion of Indians from the Commission which was to discuss Indian problems, was considered outrageous by Indians. Nearly all political groups and sections in India boycotted the Commission. When it landed in Bombay on 7th February 1928 it was greeted with black flags and hostile demonstrations. The same was repeated at every place the Commission visited.



John Simon

In Madras, Prakasam headed a procession of demonstrators. In Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai led a similar procession. A British police officer, Mr. Saunders rained lathi blows on Lalaji, inflicting serious injuries, resulting later in the death of the great patriot. This was taken as a great national insult. The revolutionary group of Bhagat Singh and his friends avenged the wrong by murdering Mr. Saunders. Three years later they were hanged in Lahore for this crime. At Lucknow the demonstrations against the Simon Commission were organised and led by leaders like Pandit Pant and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. They were also lathi charged.

The Simon Commission published its report two years later in May 1930 but its recommendations fell far short of the national expectations. It did not recommend Dominion Status for India, nor even partial responsibility at the Centre. The defence of the country was still left under the charge of the British Government. The Army would be loyal to His Majesty's Government although its cost was to be borne by Indian tax payers. The Commission abolished diarchy and recommended Provincial Autonomy but the powers of the Ministers were greatly restricted by the special over-riding powers of the Governors and the Viceroy. Every national leader expressed his dissatisfaction at the meagre reforms suggested by the Commission. The Simon Commission report showed little understanding of the young national movement which had spread all over the country filling people's minds with patriotic fervour. Notwithstanding that Indians rejected the Simon report, many of its recommendations were later included in the Government of India Act of 1935.

4.17. - The Civil Disobedience Movement and the three Round Table Conferences

The Nehru Report: An All-Parties Conference was held in Delhi in February and March 1928 with the aim of drafting a constitution for India which would satisfy all communities and groups. This Conference appointed a committee with Motilal Nehru as its President to draft the constitution. The draft was prepared and presented at an All-Parties convention at Calcutta in December 1928. According to the draft, India was to be a secular state with no state religion. Instead of communal electorates there would be joint electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims in provinces where they were in a minority. Such reservation was to be in accordance with their population. This report known as the Nehru Report recommended Dominion Status for India.

Muslims as a whole rejected the Nehru Report. Mr. Jinnah who was now the President of the Muslim League put forward his own draft of a constitution consisting of fourteen points as the minimum demands of the Muslims. In his draft he declared that one-third of the total seats in the Central Legislative Assembly should be reserved for Muslims. At least one-third of the total member of Ministers in the Central and Provincial Cabinets should be drawn from the Muslim community. This was out of proportion to the numerical strength of the Muslims who formed one-fourth of the total population; and hence Jinnah's draft was unacceptable to the Congress.

At the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1928 there was a difference of opinion among the delegates. The older members led by Pandit Motilal Nehru favoured accepting the Nehru Report with its goal as Dominion Status. The younger members led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were for complete independence. They were about to pass a resolution declaring complete independence as the goal of India when Mahatma Gandhi intervened. Accepting the recommendation of the Nehru Report he stated that Dominion Status was the goal of India. If by the end of 1929 the British Government did not confer Dominion Status on India he assured them that he himself would lead the movement for independence.



Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chandra Bose.

In England, general elections were held in May 1929. the Labour Government came into office with Mr. Ramsay McDonald as the Prime Minister. Soon after the polls Mr. McDonald declared at a conference of Commonwealth Labour parties, "I hope that within a period of months rather than years, there will be another Dominion added to the Commonwealth of Nations, a Dominion of another race, a Dominion which will find respect as an equal within the Commonwealth. I refer to India." This declaration by the British Prime Minister revived hopes in Indian hearts. But they were doomed to disappointment as no concrete proposals about conferring responsible government to Indians were put forth till December 1929.



Ramsay McDonald

Independence Resolution at Lahore Conference: The next Congress session was held at Lahore with Jawaharlal Nehru as the President. There was frustration in every heart. All the leaders were now convinced that the British Government would not give into petition nor to

persuasion. There was no alternative but to demand complete independence from British rule. 31st December 1929 was a historic day when at midnight, the resolution for complete independence was voted upon and adopted by the majority. The resolution said, ".....All Congressmen will henceforth devote their exclusive attention to the attainment of complete independence for India. As a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for independence, the Congress calls upon Congressmen and others taking part in the national movement, to abstain from participating directly or indirectly in future elections; and directs the present Congress members of the legislatures and committees to resign their seats. This Congress appeals to the nation zealously to prosecute the constructive programme of the Congress and authorizes the All India Congress Committee, whenever it deems fit, to launch on a programme of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise, and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary."

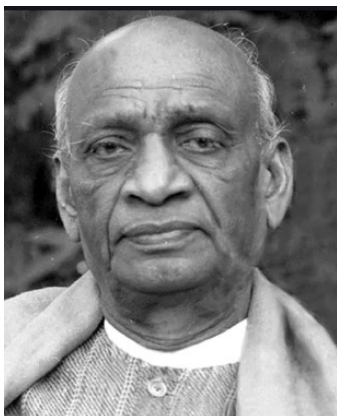
The Congress also issued a call to the country to celebrate 26th January 1930 as a 'Purna Swaraj Day'. The following pledge was to be taken on that day by every Congressman, "it is the inalienable right of the people of India to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they might have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives the people of their rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but also has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and ruined India. We believe therefore that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence." "We recognize that the most effective way of gaining freedom is not through violence."



Jawaharlal Nehru declaring the fight to attain Purna Swaraj (Total Independence).

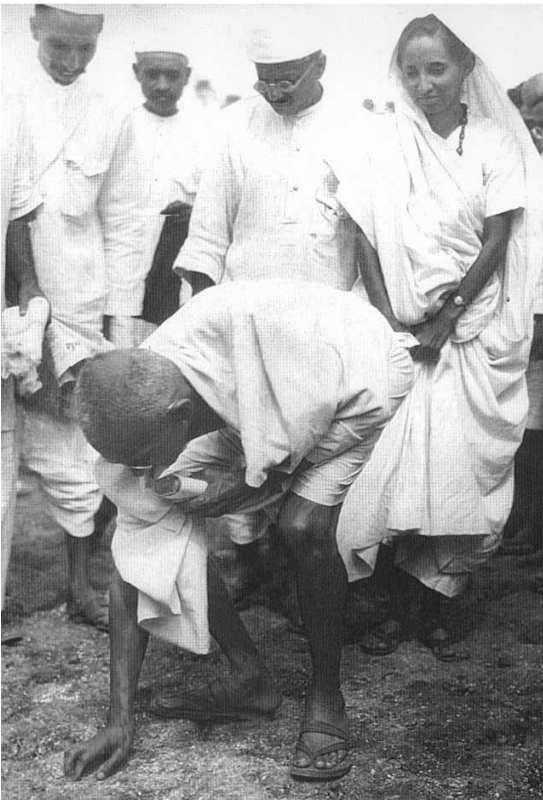
This pledge was to be repeated year after year. It roused the passion of the people for independence. The 26th January is still celebrated every year as the Republic Day of free India.

Civil Disobedience Movement 1930 to 1931: The patience of the Indian masses reached a breaking point. The intelligentsia of the country was convinced that the method of persuasion was no longer effective. The British Government had already rejected the Nehru Report. The Congress was therefore left with no alternative but to start a Civil Disobedience Movement. In 1928 the peasants of Bardoli had offered Satyagraha under the dynamic leadership of Sardar Vallabhai Patel. Their no-tax campaign was a partial success. The Congress decided to use the same non-violent weapon of Satyagraha against the government, on a large scale.



SardharVallabai Patel

Gandhiji decided to start the movement by breaking the salt laws. After the Lahore Congress session held in December 1929 he had selected a number of his ashram-mates to receive training in the technique of Satyagraha. The opportunity to use the technique came when the government increased the taxes on salt. Accompanied by a band of seventy-nine trained and disciplined Satyagrahis, Gandhiji started on foot on 12th March 1930 from Sabarmati Ashram and marched to Dandi on the sea-shore, 200 miles away. It took them 24 days to cover the distance. Thousands cheered the Mahatma on the way and thousands from the village joined the procession. The tour produced a great deal of patriotic fervour among the people. On 6th April 1930, after morning prayers, the Mahatma and his Satyagrahis started the Civil Disobedience Movement by picking the salt crystals lying on the sea-shore.



Mahatma Gandhi picking up salt crystals.

The Programme of Civil Disobedience:

The violation of the salt laws at Dandi was a signal to the country to start the mass movement. On April 13, 1930 Rajaji led a hundred Satyagrahis on padayatra from Tiruchi to Vedaranyam 88 miles away to break the salt laws. The salt law was broken in hundreds of other places all over the country. Gandhiji's orders were faithfully obeyed by the Satyagrahis. Soon, most of the leaders including Gandhiji were arrested and imprisoned.

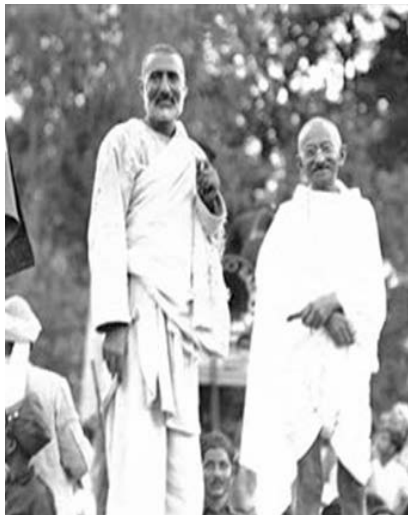
The programme of the Civil Disobedience Movement consisted of:

1. The Violation of Salt laws.
2. Abstention from attending educational institutions by students, and Government Officers by Government servants.
3. Picketing of shops dealing in liquor, opium and foreign goods.
4. Bonfire of foreign cloth.
5. Non-payment of taxes.

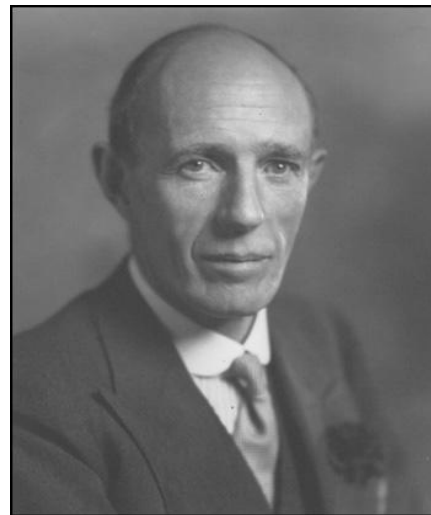
The movement gathered momentum soon. Thousands of women, even from orthodox and aristocratic homes left their houses to picket liquor shops. They were all arrested and imprisoned. Boycott of foreign textiles was started on a great scale. The police as usual resorted to merciless beating. Many Satyagrahis were badly wounded and some even died from lathi blows by the police.

The boycott of foreign cloth proved successful beyond all expectations. In 1930, the import of foreign cloth was reduced to one-fourth of the figures of the previous year. In Bombay sixteen English-owned textile mills had to be closed. This proved a blessing in disguise to Indian mill-owners. The peasants carried out the no-tax campaign with great zeal.

Very few Muslims took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The followers of Mr. Jinnah did not associate themselves with the movement. Muslim leaders who had co-operated with Gandhiji in the non-cooperation movement of 1921 refused to have anything to do with this movement. Only the Pathans of the Northwest Frontier Province under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as 'The Frontier Gandhi' carried out the Congress programme and bravely faced lathi blows and bullets like other Congress workers.



Abdul Ghaffar Khan with Gandhi



Lord Irwin

Repression by the Government: The movement gained strength and volume steadily. It reached its peak in June 1930. The administrative machinery was paralyzed in many places.

The police went into action and public places turned red with the blood of patriots. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President was arrested on 14th April. This was followed by the arrest of other leaders. Nearly 60,000 people went to jail. It was the first time that such a large number had courted arrest. Whoever wore Gandhi cap and Khaddar was either arrested or beaten. Indiscriminate lathi charge became the order of the day. An excited mob at Sholapur set fire to five police stations. The result was more firing and more deaths.

The First Round Table Conference: When the Civil Disobedience Movement was in full swing, the British Government convened a Round Table Conference in November 1930 in London. Out of the 89 delegates who attended the Conference, 57 were from British India, 16 from the Princely States and the rest represented British political parties. The conference was presided over by the British Prime Minister Mr. Ramsey McDonald. Delegates from British India consisted of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Harijans, landlords and workers. There was no delegate from the Congress since all the leaders were in jail. Mr. McDonald proposed a federal form of government for India. In the provinces he proposed full responsible governments, subject to the special

responsibility of the Governors, to safeguard the interests of the minorities. In the Centre he suggested diarchy with the Viceroy armed with special powers. All the delegates agreed to the proposal. The Princes agreed to join the federation.

One problem however, could not be solved. It was the communal problem. The Indian delegates could not evolve a formula agreeable to all of them. The Muslim delegates demanded separate representation. The Harijan delegates demanded reservation of seats. The Hindu delegates were prepared to provide reservation of seats for the minorities, but insisted on joint electorate.

In February 1931 Pandit Motilal Nehru passed away. He will be remembered as a close associate of Gandhiji and a leader of the Swaraj Party which was active in promoting constitutional reforms at a time when Congress activities were at a low ebb.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact, March 1931: The British Government knew that the Congress was the main political party of India and that its co-operation was essential for solving the constitutional problems of India. It realized the need for arriving at a settlement with the Congress. To create a congenial atmosphere for negotiation, the government released all the leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, unconditionally, on 17th February 1931. Through the mediation of the Liberal leaders, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Sri Jayakar a pact was concluded between Gandhiji and Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, on 5th March 1931.

According to this pact the Government agreed:

- (a) to withdraw all ordinances, and cases pending against political workers,
- (b) to release all political prisoners except those who were guilty of violence,

- (c) to permit persons living within a certain distance from the seashore, to collect or manufacture salt without being taxed,
- (d) to permit peaceful picketing of shops selling liquors, foreign goods and opium,
- (e) to restore properties seized in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement and
- (f) to return all moveable and immovable properties forfeited in lieu of land revenue.

On his side Mahatma Gandhi agreed on behalf of the Congress:

- (a) to suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement,
- (b) not to press for enquiry into police excesses,
- (c) to take steps to associate Congress with the forthcoming Round Table Conference,
- (d) to withdraw all boycott plans.

As regards constitutional questions, they were to follow the principles laid down by the first Round Table Conference.

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was welcomed by the people of the country as a great victory for the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi described the pact as a victory for both sides since both, he and Lord Irwin, sincerely wanted a settlement. However, there were also critics of the pact. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was shocked to read the reservations and safeguards for minorities to which Mahatma Gandhi had agreed, as this meant that the British Government would still continue their control over Indian affairs.

The Second Round Table Conference:

The Second Round Table Conference was opened on September 7th, 1931. Gandhiji attended the conference as the sole representative of the Congress. Two other members of the delegation were Pandit Madam Mohan Malaviya and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, both nominated by the Viceroy in their individual capacity. At the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji said that all the other parties at the meeting represented sectional interests. The Congress alone claimed to represent the whole of India, all interests. It was not a communal organisation. Its platform was universal. It was not only national organisation, and represented all the minorities. Thus he emphasised the national character of the Congress and demanded complete independence. He stood for full responsible government at the centre and undivided control by Indians over matters of national defence. The British Government agreed to meet his demands halfway by offering a partly responsible government at the centre.



The Second Round Table Conference.

Unfortunately, again the communal problem raised its head. The delegates representing the minorities put forth exaggerated demands for concessions and privileges. The British Government played off the Muslim League against the Congress. When Gandhi returned to India after the conference, two issues continued to cause him anxiety. The first was that the Harijan leaders considered Harijans as a class separate from other Hindus. The second was the uncompromising attitude of Muslims who played into British hands.

Repressive policy of Lord Willingdon:

In the absence of Gandhiji the new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon resorted to repression, as a matter of policy. He violated the condition laid down by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. He held the Congress guilty of instigating the peasants of Uttar Pradesh to refuse to pay land revenue; and also of inciting the Red Shirts to start the Civil Disobedience Movement in the Northwest Frontier Province under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Congress replied that the government was violating the agreement under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.



Lord Willingdon

There was repression all over the country. Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested for starting the no-rent campaign in U.P. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and his brother Dr. Khan Saheb were arrested in the Northwest Frontier Province. Bengal, U.P. and the N.W.F.P. suffered under the newly imposed ordinances.

The Civil Disobedience Campaign: As the government continued its policy of repression the Congress Working Committee decided to restart the Civil Disobedience Movement. On 3rd January 1932, Gandhiji called upon the nation to be ready for another Civil Disobedience Movement. He communicated his decision to the Viceroy also. The next day the government issued four ordinances and assumed wide powers to deal with the agitation. Gandhiji and Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the President of the Congress were arrested. The Congress party was declared unlawful and all Congress workers were put behind bars. The government confiscated the property of Congress men.



During the Civil Disobedience Movement

The police raided Congress offices and seized all the papers and documents. They were authorized to arrest any person on mere suspicion. This time the Congress was less prepared for the campaign than on the former occasion. Actually it was compelled to start the movement a second time because of the provocation by the government. Most of the leaders were in jail and the agitators were without any guide. Yet, in spite of all the drawbacks the people put up a tough fight. The movement continued for six months and more than 1,20,000 persons went to jail.

The Communal Award of Ramsay McDonald and the Poona Pact of 1932: Mr.

McDonald in his closing speech, at the end of the Second Round Table Conference had stated that the British Government would be compelled to impose its own decision on India if the various communities failed to work out a formula agreeable to all of them. As the delegates at the London conference could not offer a solution, Mr. McDonald announced his decision known as the 'Communal Award', on 16th August 1932. The main points of the communal award were :-

1. Allocation of seats to the various communities in the provincial legislatures.
2. Accepting the demands of Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and women for separate electorates.
3. Labour, commerce, industry, landlords and universities to be given separate constituencies and fixed number of seats. The award suggested the formation of general constituencies in which all persons except Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans were entitled to vote.
4. Harijans were recognized as a minority community. Separate seats were allotted to them
5. Hindus in Muslim majority provinces such as Bengal and the Punjab were not given the same concessions as were given to the Muslims in Hindu majority provinces.
6. Sikhs in the Punjab and Europeans in Bengal were given disproportionate representation in the legislature.

The communal award was much criticised in the country. Many saw it as a mischievous attempt to divide and weaken Hindus by separating Harijans from the parent body. The award was unjust to the Hindus and partial to Muslims. It split the Indian people into small mutually hostile sections. It was a direct hit on national solidarity and opposed to the spirit of democracy. Europeans who were only .01% of the total population were given 10% of the total seats.

Gandhiji's fast and the Poona Pact. September 1932:

The award of Mr. McDonald was a great shock to Gandhiji. His heart bled and revolted at the idea of Harijans drifting away from the Hindu community. He wrote to Mr. Ramsay McDonald that he would begin a fast unto death if this part of the award was not withdrawn. When the government did not comply, Gandhiji began his fast on 20th September 1932. Although some leaders criticised Gandhiji for taking this step, it had a good effect on the Hindu leaders who now realised the necessity of earning the goodwill of Harijans. The whole country was in a flutter. Leaders both in India and in England tried to prevent Gandhiji from continuing his fast. Pandit Malaviya, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Mr. Birla and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu started talks with M.C. Raja and Dr. Ambedkar, the leaders of the depressed classes. On the fifth day of the fast leaders agreed on a formula. This agreement known as the Poona Pact was signed by both parties on 26th September 1932. The same day Gandhiji broke his fast. The pact was later accepted by the British Government.



Mahatma Gandhi during the Poona Pact.



Dr B. R. Ambedkar

Terms of the Poona Pact:

1. According to the Poona Pact it was agreed by Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar that joint electorate should be retained. The number of reserved seats for the scheduled classes as fixed by the award of McDonald in the provincial legislatures was doubled. 148 seats were reserved for them against the 71 seats allotted by the Award.
2. All members of the depressed classes registered in the general electoral roll in a constituency, formed an Electoral College. This small body was to elect four candidates for each of the reserved seats. One of these candidates was to be elected for the reserved seat by the joint electorate.
3. Nearly 20% of the seats were reserved for Harijans in the Central Legislature.

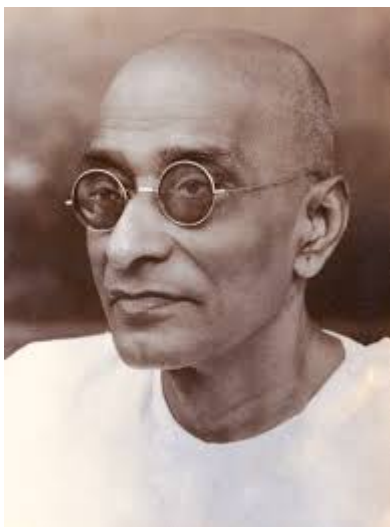
4. Adequate representation was given to Harijans in local bodies and public services.
5. Financial aid was promised to promote literacy among Harijans.

Third Round Table Conference:

Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India convened the Third Round Table Conference which met on 17th November and continued till 24th December 1932. Only 46 delegates who were considered loyal to the government, were invited this time. The Civil Disobedience Movement had not been called off and so no Congress delegate could participate in the Conference. The reports of the various sub-committee appointed during the Second Round Table Conference, formed the basis of the discussions. Three problems received special attention at this Conference. These were the safeguards to minorities, the terms under which the Princely States were to join the proposed Indian Federation and the distribution of residuary powers. The conclusions arrived at by the three Round Table Conferences were incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1935.

4.18. - The Act of 1935

The Act of 1935 was disappointing because it did not give an assurance of granting Dominion Status to India. Every political party of India condemned the Act. Mr. Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League described it as totally unacceptable. Mr.C. Rajagopalchari said that the new constitution was worse than diarchy. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru condemned it as "a new chapter of slavery". The new constitution said nothing about the fundamental rights of the people nor did it consider sympathetically the aspirations of politically conscious Indians. The new Act perpetuated the sovereignty of the British Parliament over India.



C Rajagopalachari.

Yet, in spite of its drawbacks the new Act had its own significance. It marked a second milestone on the road to full responsible government, the first being the Act of 1919. The main feature of the Act was a proposal to form a federation consisting of British India and the Indian States, autonomy in the provinces and a partly responsible government or diarchy at the Centre.

Provincial Autonomy:The new Act introduced provincial autonomy. It was definitely an advance on the Act of 1919. For the first time the provinces got a measure of democratic government. The system of diarchy or the division of subjects into 'transferred' and 'reserved' subjects was abolished. The Ministers were in charge of all the subjects. The hold of the Centre over the provincial subjects was much reduced. However the Governors continued to possess a set of over-riding powers, although in practice such powers were not exercised often.

All India Federation: The Act provided for an All India Federation consisting of the British Indian Provinces and the Indian States. The constituents of the Federation were, eleven British Indian Provinces, Six Chief Commissioners' Provinces and all those States which agreed to

join the Federation. The States were absolutely free to join or not to join, the proposed Federation.

Abolition of India Council: Indians had always been critical of the India Council. The new Act abolished the India Council. Instead, the Secretary of State was empowered to appoint his team of advisers whose number was not less than three and not more than six. With the introduction of provincial autonomy the control of the Secretary of State over the provincial subjects was greatly reduced. His control however remained intact over the powers of the Viceroy and the Government.

Criticism of the Act of 1935: The new Act armed the Governors and the Viceroy with tremendous discretionary powers and this weakened provincial autonomy to a great extent. Although the Indian legislature had control over financial matters the final powers remained with the Governors and the Viceroy. They continued to have the last word in the preparation of budgets and allocation of funds to the various departments. The Act also gave the Governors and the Viceroy a set of responsibilities which were in the nature of over-riding powers. They were in fact a handy weapon to crush revolutionary activities and Congress movements. Using the same powers, even the civil liberties of the people could be suppressed at any time.

Defective Federation: Entry into the Federation was compulsory for the Provinces but voluntary for the Princely States. This means that the Federation would consist of dis-similar units. There were great differences in regard to population, areas, political importance and status between the provinces and the states. While the British Provinces were partly autonomous units, the states were still under the autocratic rules of the Princes. Secondly, the states were to be represented in the Federal Legislature, not by the elected representatives of the people but by the nominees of the Princes. Thirdly, the wide range of powers vested in the Viceroy was opposed to the spirit of a federation, since a real federation is a union of free independent states.

Extension of Communal Electorate: The Act of 1935 retained the system of Communal electorate and further extended its application in the case of Harijans, labourers and women. The motive behind this step was to separate the Harijans from the Hindu community.

Safeguards: The Act of 1935 armed the Viceroy and the Governors with extensive powers with the excuse of defending the minorities against the tyranny of Hindus who formed the majority community. The minorities were grateful to the rulers for protecting their interests and became their allies in obstructing the growth of nationalism. British diplomacy always used the Indian states, the minorities and the Government Services as tools against the Congress.

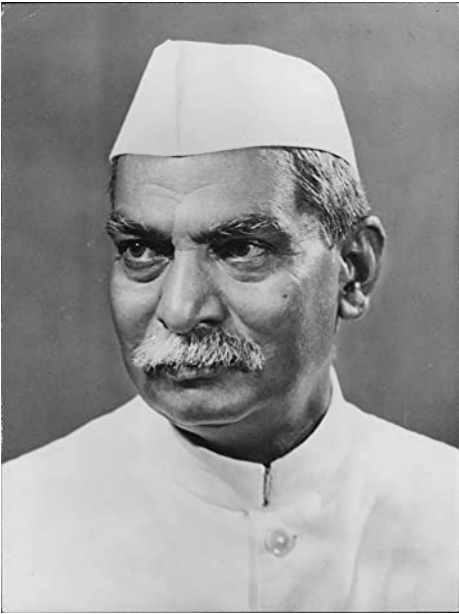
Refusal to grant right of self determination: Another flaw in the new constitution was denial of the right of self-determination to Indians. The new constitution was framed by the British Parliament which was to decide whether or not Indians were fit for Dominion Status. Indian

legislatures had no right to amend or alter the new constitution. Only the Crown had that right. The British Parliament and Secretary of State for India continued to be the virtual rulers of the country till the year 1947 when India became free.

Elections in February 1937: The federal part of the Act of 1935 could not come into effect because it was criticised by all the political parties on the one hand, and because of the reluctance of the Princes to join the proposed federation on the other hand. Only that part of the Act which related to the provinces came into force in 1937. Elections were held for the provincial legislatures in February 1937. Although the Congress was vehemently opposed to many provisions of the Act it decided to contest the elections, not to work it but to wreck it from within. The object of the Congress was to make the working of the proposed provincial autonomy impossible, by refusing to co-operate with the Government. The Muslim League and the Liberal Party also decided to contest the elections.

The elections yielded significant results. The Congress party gained clear majorities in Madras, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bombay. In Assam the Congress was the single largest party getting 35 out of 108 seats. In the North- West Frontier Province it gained 19 out of 50 seats. The Muslim League fared badly at the polls. It got only 51 out of the total 482 seats reserved for Muslims in provincial assemblies. Nationalist Muslims contested 58 seats on Congress tickets and gained 26 seats. The League could not show its strength even in the Muslim majority provinces of the Punjab, Bengal and the Northwest Frontier Province. It became evident from the election results of 1937 that the Muslim League had very little hold on the Muslims. In the Punjab the Unionist Party which was a coalition of all the parties, emerged as the strongest Party. In Bengal the Praja party and the Independents captured two-third of the total seats.

For some time there was an acute controversy in Congress circles over the question of forming ministries in the Congress dominated Provinces. Finally the Congress decided to form ministries in six Provinces namely:- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Madras and Bombay. In the North West Frontier Province and in Assam it formed coalition ministries.



Rajendra Prasad.

In the provinces where the Congress had gained a clear majority it did not take any Muslim League member into the Cabinet. It adopted this course for two reasons. It feared that a set of Ministers divided in their loyalties might not be able to work in a team spirit. The Muslim League members if included in the cabinet were also likely to obstruct the passage of land reform schemes. The non-inclusion of the Muslim League members in the Cabinet in Uttar Pradesh strained the relations between Hindus and Muslims. Mr. Jinnah availed himself of this opportunity to discredit the Congress. He launched a campaign in Uttar Pradesh blackening the Congress with lies and slander. He accused the Congress Ministers of suppressing Muslims. Dr. Rajendra Prasad the then President of the Congress denied the charges and suggested investigation by a committee. Mr. Jinnah however, declined to place his complaints before such a committee. He continued playing up Muslims against Hindus. The seeds of mutual animosity that he sowed, led later to the demand for Pakistan by Muslims.

The statement of Sir Haig who was the Governor of Uttar Pradesh at that time proved conclusively that the League's charges against the Congress ministries were unfounded. He said in 1939 that, "In dealing with communal issues the Congress ministries had normally acted with impartiality and a desire to do what was fair."

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4.19. - Congress Ministries and the Second World War

Applying the Act of 1935, self-governing Ministries were formed in 1937 in the eleven provinces of India. Of these eight were Congress Ministries. For the first time under British rule, Indians got a taste of parliamentary self-government. Soon after assuming office the Congress Ministers busied themselves with constructive work. They set about tackling the questions of elementary education, Industrial wages, Cottage industries and the uplift of Harijans. They provided relief to agriculturists who were in debt. Efforts were made to abolish the evil of drinking and to benefit the farmers by passing tenancy laws. Political prisoners were released and their properties restored. On the whole the Congress Ministers did laudable work during the years they functioned. Referring to the work of Congress Ministries, Prof. Coupland said, "The Congress Ministers proved themselves capable and hard working men with a high sense of public duty and responsibility.....The legislatures were well conducted, hardworking and except for an increasing tendency to ask unnecessary questions, business like....."

For Congressmen the working of provincial autonomy was a good training in public administration. The Ministers gained confidence in shouldering responsibilities. The short period of Congress rule gave a taste of self-government to the people whose desire for full independence became stronger day by day.

In Bengal, Sind and the Punjab non-Congress ministries stayed in Office for ten years till 1947, the year India became free.

The Constitutional Deadlock: On 1st September 1939, Germany invaded Poland after having annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia. Britain, foreseeing the danger to the free world, declared war on Germany on 3rd September. The reason given by the British Government for taking this step, was that it wanted to make the world safe for democracy. On the same day Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, declared that India was at war with Germany. It was a unilateral decision taken by the Viceroy without seeking or ascertaining the views of the Indian leaders. Nevertheless he got into touch with Indian political leaders in order to get their co-operation in war efforts. He met Gandhiji and requested him to extend his support. Gandhiji assured him that his own sympathies were with the allies. A few days later he wrote in his paper 'Harijan' that support should be given to British war efforts unconditionally. The Congress however, was not prepared to trust the British Government on its word of honour. It wanted some concrete proof of British goodwill towards India. At one end was Gandhiji who wanted to extend co-operation to the government unconditionally; at the other end was Subhas Chandra Bose who openly declared that Britain's difficulty was India's opportunity.

The Congress Working Committee met on 10th October 1939. It passed a resolution expressing its sympathy with the free world and condemning Germany's aggression. But it declared that it could not associate itself with the war unless the British Government publicly stated that India would be granted political independence at the end of the war. The Congress

also demanded immediate transfer of full control over the country's administration, to Indians. Congress leaders felt earnestly that without immediate transfer of power, willing help from the public might not be forthcoming. Jawaharlal Nehru declared, "In a conflict between democracy and freedom on the one side and fascism and aggression on the other, our sympathies must inevitably lie on the side of democracy." If Britain had entered the war to ensure the right of self-determination to every nation, it was in the fitness of things that a beginning was made then and there in India by granting her the right of self-determination. It was absurd to drag slave India for defending the freedom of other countries. Pointing out the absurdity of British request for war help, Mr.H.M. Brailsford and English writer said, "Unfree themselves, the Indians were to fight at our bidding, to free others."

In reply to the Congress demand for responsible government at the Centre, the Viceroy invited fifty representatives of different political groups; and after discussing with them, issued a statement on October 17th, 1939, wherein he gave an undertaking to India that at the end of the war the Government would be prepared to modify the Act of 1935 in response to Indian wishes. Mere promises were not going to satisfy Indians any more. Congressmen remembered the bitter consequences of the First Great War. The Viceroy's declaration disappointed the Congress leaders as well as the Muslim and the Liberals. The Viceroy promised on behalf of the Crown that India would be granted Dominion Status, but no definite date was set for the transfer of power. In response to the second demand of the Congress for immediate Indian control over the country's administration, the Viceroy promised to appoint an advisory body to consider it. Nevertheless the Congress was not satisfied with this response.

The Working Committee of the Congress criticised the statements of the Viceroy as a repetition of the same old imperialistic policy. It issued instructions to the Congress Ministries to resign immediately. In eight provinces the Viceroy declared the breakdown of the constitution and authorized the Governors to assume all powers hitherto exercised by the Ministers and the legislature.

Attitude of the Muslim League: While the Congress refused to help in the war effort the Muslim League was only too eager to do so. By a resolution passed on September 18th, 1939 the League showed its sympathy with the British Government and promised to help actively in the war effort on two conditions viz:

- (1) the interests of the Muslims must be safeguarded in the Congress dominated provinces; and
- (2) no constitution should be enacted by His Majesty's Government without consulting the League.

Thus the resignation of the Congress Ministries came as a boon to the Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah called on Muslims throughout India to mark and observe 22nd December 1939 as a day of deliverance from the "tyranny, oppression and injustice of the erstwhile Congress regime in

the provinces. Withdrawal by the Congress led to the autocratic rule of the government in several provinces. It also gave an opportunity to the Viceroy to rely more and more on the support of the Muslim League and to adopt a stiff and indifferent attitude towards the Congress. In fact Mr. Jinnah got a sort of veto on further constitutional progress. The Muslim League became so strong that soon after, it began to put forth its demand for Pakistan.

In February 1940 Mr. Jinnah publicly proclaimed that India's constitutional settlement must recognize that India was not one nation but two nations and that Muslims would determine their destiny themselves.

In March 1940 at Lahore the Muslim League adopted its famous Pakistan resolution, that Pakistan should consist of two independent States namely:

- (1) the Muslim majority areas comprising the Punjab, N.W.F.P., Sind and other provinces in the North-West; and
- (2) Bengal and Assam in the east, both states being autonomous and sovereign.



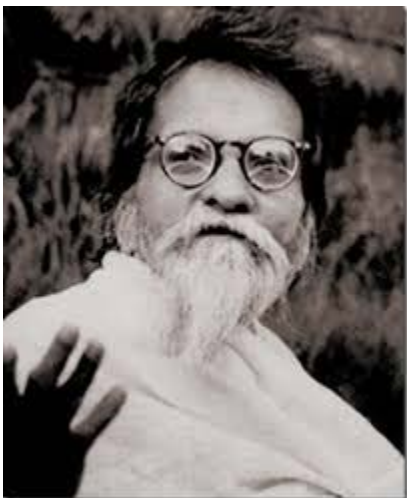
The Muslim League after adopting the Pakistan Resolution.

The war situation in Europe became grave. Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France had all been conquered by Germany by the middle of 1940. England too stood in great and immediate danger. It was being subjected to recurring air raids by German bombers. Hitler's Nazism posed a serious threat to democratic countries. In view of all this, Gandhiji felt that a change in the Congress attitude was necessary. He declared that India would not seek her independence out of British ruin. On his suggestion the working Committee of the Congress met at Poona and by a resolution offered help to the British Government on two conditions- the first was that the British Government should recognize India's right to complete independence after the war; and secondly, that it should agree to set up a national government composed of all the parties immediately. In reply to the Congress demand Lord Linlithgow made an offer in August 1940 to expand the Executive

Council of the Viceroy. His real aim was to secure the co-operation of Indians in the war effort. Since this offer did not meet with the demands of the Congress, it was rejected.

The Muslim League at first welcomed the August offer. Mr. Jinnah started negotiations with the Viceroy. He demanded that the League and the Congress should be given equal representation in the Executive Council of the Viceroy. This demand was too fantastic for the Viceroy to comply. Thereupon the working committee of the Muslim League met in New Delhi on 28th September 1940 and by a resolution declared that it was unable to accept the August offer.

Individual Satyagraha 1940: The rejection of the Congress demands by the Viceroy exasperated the Congress as well as Gandhiji. On 13th October 1940 the Congress Working Committee met in Wardha where Gandhiji put forth his plan of individual civil disobedience. England was facing the most critical period of her history. Gandhiji was too magnanimous to start a mass movement at this critical time; he did not wish to embarrass the government. Therefore he decided to begin Individual Satyagraha just to register the people's mild protest against the unbending attitude of the government. Gandhiji selected Vinoba Bhave, his disciple to inaugurate the movement. On October 17th, Vinoba Bhave delivered anti-war speeches and was arrested after four days. Jawaharlal was arrested next. Then came the turn of the members of the Congress Working Committee and former provincial Ministers; among them were Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Mr.C. Rajagopalachari ex-Chief Minister of Madras. The Satyagrahis in their speeches appealed to the people not to contribute to the war efforts of the Government. By May 1941 nearly 14,000 Satyagrahis had courted arrest.



Vinoba Bhave.

Expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council: Disregarding the Congress Satyagraha and its demands, the Viceroy decided to expand his Executive Council. He made the announcement on 21st July 1941 that he proposed to enlarge the Executive Council. He increased its strength from seven to twelve. The number of Indian members in it was also

increased from three to eight, all of them to be chosen from the outside the Congress and the League circles. The Indians thus became a majority in the Executive Council. The Viceroy made use of this fact to prove to the world that Indians were being given a major share in the administration of India. It was a mere make-believe. The vital departments of defense, home and finance remained in charge of British Members. It was clear indication of British distrust of Indians.

As a concession to public opinion the Viceroy announced on 3rd December 1941 the release of all the Satyagrahis who had been imprisoned.



The attack on Pearl Harbour.

In the mean-time the war situation in Europe had become more serious. Hitler's armies were marching triumphantly through Russia. On 7th December 1941, Japan struck at Pearl Harbour and extended the war in the Pacific. Next Japan overran Shanghai and Siam. After that, Singapore, Malaya, Indo-china and Indonesia fell to the Japanese forces which kept on advancing towards Burma. The deteriorating war situation demanded rethinking on the part of Congress leaders. They were convinced that British was a lesser evil than Nazi Germany or Japan. The Congress therefore called off the Individual Satyagraha Movement for the time being. They felt that a national defence corps should be organised to meet the emergency of war which was approaching the eastern coast of India.

Cripp's Proposals. March 1942: Japan's spectacular success in conquering one country after another disturbed the minds of British statesmen. Both England and the U.S.A. began to feel the necessity of revising their attitude towards India. The Individual Civil Disobedience movement had had a disturbing effect on the war efforts. In February 1942 Marshal Chiang Ki-Shek of China, and his wife visited India. Mr. Chiang during his stay conferred with the Government of India and several prominent leaders including Gandhiji and

Jinnah. In his farewell speech he made an appeal to Indians for help in the war against Japan. He also expressed the hope that Britain would, as early as possible give real political power to the Indian people. From America, President Roosevelt impressed on Churchill, the British Prime Minister, the need to concede to Indians the right of self-determination, at the end of the war. Mr. Evatt, the Australian Foreign Minister also expressed his wish in the Australian Parliament that India should be given self-government to enable her to extend war help effectively.



Sir Stafford Cripps.

Japan's success in Singapore, Malaya, Indonesia and Andamans alarmed the Allies. Japanese ships started patrolling the Bay of Bengal. On March 8th, 1942 Rangoon also fell. The fall of Burma frightened the British Government. Three days after the fall of Rangoon, Prime Minister Churchill declared that the British War Cabinet had decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps to India with a new plan. He was a member of the British War Cabinet and leader in the House of Commons. Sir Cripps arrived in Delhi on 22nd March 1942.

Cripps's proposals were a great advance on the offer made by the Viceroy in August 1940. Still, they did not come up to the expectations of the Indian Leaders. They promised Dominion Status to India soon after the end of the War. They accepted the right of the Indian Union to secede from the Commonwealth at will. The congress demand for a constituent assembly was also accepted by His Majesty's Government. Thus the Congress demands were met in substance.

But the States were given the option to join or stay out of the Indian Union. The State representatives in the Constituent Assembly were to be nominated by their rulers. The scheme also recognized the right of the Muslim majority and Muslim dominated Provinces to frame a separate constitution or retain their present constitutional position. Thus in substance Cripps's

proposals favoured the League demand for Pakistan. There was also the possibility that in the course of time the new policy could lead to the division of India into several independent states.

The Congress stood for undivided India. It was deadily opposed to the creation of Pakistan. The provision in Cripp's scheme giving the provinces the right to keep out of the Indian Union was a clear hint to the Muslims to demand Pakistan. In view of the above, the Congress rejected Cripp's proposals.

The Muslim League also rejected the scheme. One of the reasons given was that the proposals had not clearly accepted the League's demand for Pakistan.

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4.20. - The Quit India Movement and the Demand for Pakistan

Cripp's scheme had failed but the threat of Japanese invasion of India was becoming a grave reality. Long lines of Indian refugees from Burma, were pouring into India with their tales of woe and misery. The national leaders were beginning to think that the English would not be able to defend India against the enemy. This belief was strengthened by British reverses in Singapore, Malaya and Burma. On 5th July 1942, Gandhiji wrote in his paper 'Harijan' addressing the British "Don't leave India to Japan but leave India to Indians, in an orderly manner." In fact Gandhiji was telling the British to quit India.

"Quit India" Resolution, 8th August 1942: The Japanese were advancing at great speed but the government was not making any progress towards resolving the dead-lock with the Congress leaders. Gandhiji felt that some quick and strong action was needed to meet the challenge of Japan. But that step could not be taken unless Indians were free. It was intolerable for him to see people taking things lying down. He favoured some direct action even if it meant interfering with the war efforts. In order to give shape to Gandhiji's views the Congress Working Committee met on July 14th, 1942 at Wardha and adopted the Quit India Resolution. This resolution was accepted by the All India Congress Committee when it met in Bombay on 7th and 8th August 1942.

The Resolution called for the termination of British rule in India. The continuation of that rule was enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself, and in contributing to the cause of world freedom. If India became free a provincial government would be formed, of representatives from all the important sections of the people of India. Its primary function would be to defend India and resist aggression with all the arms and the non-violent forces at its command.

The resolution further said, "The Committee, therefore, resolves to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violence, lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle.....They (the people) must remember that non-violence is the basis of the movement."

The Quit India Movement: On the morning of 9th August 1942, following the adoption of the Quit India Resolution, Gandhiji and all other members of the Congress working committee were arrested. They were lodged in the Agha Khan Palace in Poona and in Ahmednagar Fort. The Congress organisation was banned and its funds were forfeited. The police raided its offices and used the severest measures to suppress the movement. The news of the sudden arrest of all the Congress leaders took the people by surprise. The leaderless masses did not know what course to follow. No clear instructions had been issued by the Congress. Gandhiji had called upon the people to 'do or die'. He had further added, "We shall either free India or die in the attempt." At the same time he had made it clear that he was opposed to open

rebellion. He had insisted that the Quit India Movement should be strictly non-violent in character. In this hour of confusion, the remaining leaders of the Congress put forth a twelve-point programme suggesting, peaceful hartal throughout the country, manufacturing of salt, non-payment of land revenue, strike by workers and government servants and so on. Police stations and district headquarters were to be put out of action through non-violent methods. Looting or burning of offices, banks, granaries, etc. was forbidden.



Procession in Bangalore during the Quit India Movement.

The movement passed through four phases. The first phase began on August 9th and lasted for four days. This period was marked by hartals, demonstrations, processions and meetings. The greatest enthusiasm was shown by labourers in mills and factories. As a result the textile mills, particularly those in Ahmedabad and Madras had to be closed. This obstructed war efforts, as the mills could no longer supply khaki cloth to the army. The Tata Iron and Steel Mills were also affected.

The workers employed in big factories and mills returned to their villages carrying the flame of revolution with them. As in the past the government resorted to repressive measures to suppress the movement. In Bombay alone the police opened fire thirteen times on the 11th August 1942. The casualties included women and children. This indiscriminate firing changed the character of the movement which henceforth became violent.

In the second phase of the movement, the people raided municipal and government buildings. Railway stations, police stations and post offices were also attacked and many of them set on fire. Wires were cut and rails were removed. Maximum damage was done to the railway departments in Madras, Eastern U.P. and Bihar where train services had to be suspended for a few days. In some parts, the mobs tried to burn government records and loot the government treasury. Troops were called in to control them.

The movement entered its third phase in September 1942. The mobs resorted to armed attacks in Madras and Bengal. In Bombay, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, bombs were thrown on the police. In its fourth phase the movement became mild as in the first phase with just demonstrations, processions and meetings to express the people's hostility towards the government. Sri Jayaprakash Narain and Srimathi Aruna Asaf Ali took a leading part in this stage of the revolt. The contribution of students, peasants and workers was considerable. This last phase of the movement continued till Gandhiji was released in May 1944.

Importance of the Movement: The revolt of 1942 was the last wide-spread mass movement launched for attaining India's freedom. The police and the military opened fire on 538 occasions. The official figure of the number of persons dead in the firing is 1028 but unofficial estimates vary from 10,000 to 40,000. 60,229 persons were arrested. The immediate goal of the great uprising of 1942 was to secure freedom. But it ended in failure.

Nevertheless the movement succeeded in awakening and emboldening the masses. The slogan 'do or die' entered the souls of the people and their fury shook British rule in India. Despite the failure of the revolt, the heroism and courage shown by the people and their spirit of sacrifice brought the country nearer to its goal of independence; and within five years of this uprising the country gained her freedom. All the national leaders, after their release from jail in 1945 stated that they were proud of the spirit of resistance shown by the people. Nehru declared, "I am very proud of what happened in 1942....." Sardar Patel said, "Never before had such widespread uprisings happened in India in the history of the British Raj, as they did during the last three years. We are proud of the spirit in which the people reacted."

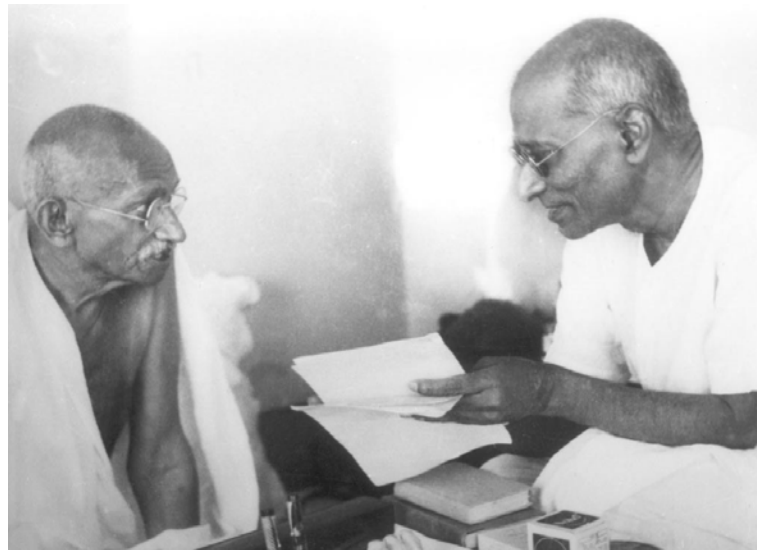


Gandhi with Rajendra Prasad during the Quit India movement.

One result of the movement was that the British and the Muslims, in their common hostility towards the Congress, came closer to each other. Mr. Jinnah acted as a staunch ally of the government and used all his resources to help the British war efforts. In recognition of Jinnah's faithfulness to the Crown, the British Government promised him Pakistan.

C. Rajagopalachari's Formula, March 1944: Alone among Congress leaders Mr. C. Rajagopalachari foresaw that unless the demand for Pakistan was conceded India would not be able to attain her independence. To solve the communal problem, even before the revolt of 1942, he had put forth a formula based on the demand for Pakistan. But the other Congress leaders strongly disapproved of such a step. They stood firmly for a united India. Rajaji thereupon left the Congress. Still in March 1944 he put forth another formula with Gandhiji's approval, for a settlement with the League. According to this plan India was to consist of two states- the first one comprising the Muslim majority provinces and the second composed of those provinces in which Muslims were in a minority. Both sections should have joint control over subjects like defence, commerce and communication. Mr. Jinnah objected to the last clause and insisted that Pakistan should include the whole of Bengal, Assam; Sind, the whole of the Punjab, North West Frontier Provinces and British Baluchistan. Besides these, he wanted a corridor or passage connecting West Pakistan with East Pakistan.

Thus with the rejection of this formula another attempt by the Congress to appease the Muslim League ended in failure.



Gandhi with Rajagopalachari.

Yet another effort to resolve the deadlock was made by Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Congress Party in the Central Legislative Assembly. This was known as the Desai-Liaquat Pact of 1945. But inspite of the honest efforts of Desai and Nawab Liaquat Ali Khan no settlement could be arrived at between the Congress and the League.

Wavell Plan and the Simla Conference – June 1945: The war in Europe ended but it was still raging in Asia. Japan was as yet unbeaten. World attention was now focused on the Eastern front. India was to be the base of military operations against Japan. The British now, more than ever before, needed the moral and material support of the Indian people. Hence the

British Government made a new offer. To enable Congress leaders to participate in the conference and to make the atmosphere congenial for a settlement, Lord Wavell, the new Viceroy ordered the release of all the members of Congress Working Committee who had been imprisoned. He sent invitations to twenty-one leaders, including the former Chief Ministers of Provincial Governments, the leaders of the Congress and the League in the Council of States, Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah and one representative each from the Sikhs and Scheduled Castes. The political conference began in Simla on 29th June 1945.

While deliberating on the new proposals put forth by Lord Wavell, the question of parity of Hindus and Muslims, in the Viceroy's Executive Council created a problem. The Congress, although quite unwillingly, agreed to equal representation of Hinds and Muslims in the Council. But it certainly was not prepared to lose its right of appointing nationalist Muslims. Jinnah however, maintained that only the Muslim League was competent to send Muslim representatives to the Viceroy's Executive Council. If the Congress had agreed to this unreasonable demand of the League, it would have certainly lost its national character and Jinnah would have called the Congress a purely Hindu organisation. The Congress President Maulana Azad, and the Punjab Chief Minister, Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana protested strongly against the League's exclusive claim of sending Muslims to the reconstituted Cabinet. Still, Mr. Jinnah refused to budge from the stand he had taken. He could not agree to the appointment in the Executive Council of Muslims who did not belong to the League. The talks thus crashed on "rock of communalism."



Lord Wavell

I.N.A. Trial – November 1945: Subhas Chandra Bose has a distinguished place among the revolutionary leaders of India. At first he was a member of the Indian National Congress. Twice, in 1938 and in 1939 he was elected President of the Congress. But he was turning extremist in his views which Gandhiji did not like. Therefore Subhas left the Congress

and founded a new organisation which he named 'The Forward Bloc'. The Second World War had started in 1939. The triumphant march of Hitler over the continent of Europe unnerved the British Government. Britain was facing a crisis. Subhas, as a student of political strategy, knew that the time was ripe for an armed revolt. He toured the country and told the people to put up a fight against the British Government if it did not concede complete independence to India within six months. When he returned home to Calcutta he was put under detention. However, he was released shortly after.

On 16th January 1941 Subhas Chandra Bose left India, disguised as a Pathan. From Calcutta he went to Peshawar and from there to Kabul. Then he went to Moscow and then to Germany. Subhas found the Germans quite helpful. He mobilized the Indians living in Germany and formed the Free Indian Army. In December 1941 Japan entered the war on the side of Germany and attacked Pearl Harbour. On 15th February 1942, Japan captured Singapore and then Malaya and then Burma. Rash Behari Bose the great Indian revolutionary who was living in Japan in exile, went to Singapore and summoned a conference of the representatives of the Indian settled in the various countries of South East Asia. He formed the Indian Independence League, and the Free Indian Army, consisting of British Indian Soldiers who had surrendered to Japan. They were 45,000 in all and were enrolled in the Indian National Army. The Conference decided to invite Subhas Chandra Bose from Germany to Tokyo and then from Tokyo to Singapore. Subhas accepted the offer and went to Singapore. On July 5, 1943 Rash Behari Bose conferred on Subhas Bose the Presidentship of the Indian Independence League. On 25th August 1943, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose assumed the Supreme Command of the free Indian National Army. He then set up a Provincial Government of Free India and formed a cabinet. The Free Governments of Japan, Germany, Philipines, Korea, China and the Irish Republic accorded official recognition to the Provisional Government of Free India. In 1943, the Japanese Government handed over the administration of the Andaman and Nocobar Islands to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose the flag of Free India was hoisted on the islands on 30th December 1943.



Subash Chandra Bose meets Adolf Hitler.

Early in 1944, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose began his historic march from Rangoon, at the command of the I.N.A. with the purpose of invading India. On 4th February the I.N.A. broke British defences on the Indo-Burmese border and liberated Ramu, Kohima, Palel, Tiddim and Manipur. Even the British Generals admired the skill and bravery of the soldiers of the I.N.A. But suddenly world events took an unexpected turn. Germany laid down arms on 7th May 1945. Japanese aggression in the East also slackened. Their armies were retreating from the countries which they had conquered earlier. In August 1945 American bombers dropped atom bombs on the crowded Japanese towns of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There upon Japan offered complete surrender. The news of the capitulation of Japan shattered the dreams of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. From Bangkok he hurried by plane to Tokyo. The plane unfortunately crashed on the island of Formosa i.e. modern Taiwan and the Commander of the I.N.A. died a premature death at the age of 48. He was truly one of the greatest heroes of India's epic struggle for freedom.



Prem Sehgal, Shah Nawaz Khan and Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon.

In November 1945 three officers of the erstwhile I.N.A., Sehgal, Dhillon and Shah Nawas were tried for treason in the Red Fort, Delhi. The three Generals, one a Hindu, the other a Sikh and the third a Muslim had fallen into British hands after the fall of Japan, on 14th August 1945. They were convicted for defecting from the British forces and joining the Indian National Army of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. To defend these brave sons of the soil, Jawaharlal Nehru appeared in court. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Bhulabhai Desai also acted as defence council. In spite of their best efforts the Judge found the accused guilty and sentenced them to death. Nevertheless all the three were released by the order of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Claude Auchinlek.

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4.21. - Partition and Independence

In July 1945 the Labour Party in England came to power. Mr. Clement Attlee replaced Churchill as Prime Minister. He was in sympathy with India's demand for self-government. In September 1945, Lord Wavell announced that the elections which had been postponed in India owing to the outbreak of war, would be held in the winter months. Accordingly elections took place during the last months of 1945. The Congress swept the polls in the general constituencies. However, it could not gain much in the Muslim constituencies. The Muslim League was more successful this time. It captured 446 Muslim seats out of 495. The Congress was able to form ministries in seven out of the eleven provinces. In the North West Frontier Province, the Red Shirts formed the ministry headed by Dr. Khan Sahib who was a Congressman. The Muslim League formed ministries in Sindh and in Bengal. In the Punjab a coalition ministry was formed by Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, with the support of the Congress and the Akali Party.



Clement Attlee

Naval Mutiny: On 19th February 1946 about three thousand ratings of the Signal School of Bombay held demonstrations, and went on a hunger-strike, complaining of 'untold hardships regarding pay and food and racial discrimination...' Batches of the ratings roamed the city in trucks and lorries. Congress, Communist and League flags flew from the tops of the lorries. During the next two days the strike spread to other parts – Karachi, Calcutta and Madras. The demonstrators even went to the extent of attacking their British Officers. When the British troops opened fire, the ratings retaliated with hand-grenades. By 22nd February the mutineers had got control of twenty naval vessels with guns mounted on them ready to open fire. At last Sardar Vallabhai Patel intervened and persuaded the mutineers to surrender on 23rd February. In the meantime disturbance broke out in Bombay. The police opened fire several times. As a result of the civil and naval turmoil over 200 persons were killed and more than 1000 injured.

The mutiny made the British realise that Indian nationalism could no longer be contained using armed forces, because Indian soldiers were also filled with national aspirations; and what was more significant, there were not enough British soldiers to control hostile Indian armies.

In March 1946 Mr. Attlee announced in the House of Commons that since nationalism was gaining ground in India, a Cabinet mission would soon be visiting India with the purpose of helping her to attain independence as speedily as possible. The Indians themselves were to decide the form of government that would suit them. He hoped that they would choose to remain in the Commonwealth. Concluding his speech he said, "We are mindful of the rights of the minorities, and the minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand we cannot allow a minority to place their veto on the advance of the majority." This significant and historic announcement was a severe blow to the fantastic demands of the League.



Gandhi receives Lord Pethick Lawrence.

Cabinet Mission Plan: The Cabinet Mission which consisted of the three British Cabinet members, Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Alexander arrived in New Delhi on 24th March 1946. The members of the Mission contacted and discussed with the various Indian leaders and put forth their plans. According to the Cabinet Mission plan, India was to be undivided. The League's demand for Pakistan was ruled out because in their opinion such a state would not be a workable unit. A constituent assembly should be formed on the democratic principle of co-operation. British interests would not be represented in the

constituent assembly as it would consist only of Indians. The plan suggested the formation of an interim government. All the members of the interim cabinet were to be Indians. They were to hold all the portfolios including that of defence. There would be little interference by the Viceroy in their day-to-day administration. The plan also recognized the right of India to secede from the Commonwealth if she wished.

After the elections the constituent assembly should meet at New Delhi and elect a chairman. The representatives of the provincial legislatures should then break up as follows:-

- Section A: Madras, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa.
- Section B: Punjab, N.W.F.P. and Sindh.
- Section C: Bengal and Assam.

The representatives of each section or group should confer separately and decide the constitution for the provinces within their group; and also the provincial subjects that should be dealt with in common, leaving the rest to be handled by the legislature of each province. Thus sections B and C of the provinces virtually meant West Pakistan and East Pakistan within the Union. Such a grouping of the provinces would enable the Muslims to follow their religion and culture in their own way.

The Congress and the Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Mission plan in June 1946. The Congress accepted the plan "with the aim of framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India." The League saw its dream of Pakistan inherent in the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Elections to the Constituent Assembly: Elections to the constituent assembly were held in July 1946. Out of 210 general seats allotted to British India Provinces, the Congress won 199. Out of the 78 Muslims seats the League got 73 and Congress Muslims 3. This meant that in a House of 296 members, the Congress had the support of 202 members whereas the League had only 73 members. The thumping majority of the Congress in the Constituent Assembly disappointed the Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah feared that the Congress would exercise its overwhelming majority to bypass the interests of Muslims. Further, he was hurt when Lord Lawrence and Sir Cripps in a statement to the press, questioned and rejected the League's claim to the sole right of nominating Muslim members to the Interim Cabinet. He decided to withdraw his acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan. He informed the government, of the League's decision to boycott the plan and launch direct action to gain its goal of Pakistan.

Direct Action by the Muslim League and the Establishment of the Interim Government:

As the Congress had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan which the League had rejected, Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India invited Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru to form the Interim Government. The Viceroy and Mr. Nehru both made earnest effort to bring round the League to participate in the coalition government. But Mr. Jinnah refused to comply. He decided to give up constitutional methods for gaining Pakistan and called upon his followers to observe 16th August 1946 as Direct Action Day. The Muslim League Ministries in Bengal and Sind declared 16th August, a public holiday. On that day Muslims took out processions and held meetings in all the big towns. Mr. Suhrawardy the Chief Minister of Bengal warned that if the Congress is put in power, Bengal would be declared a state, completely independent of the Indian Union. This led to lawlessness and bloodshed on an unprecedented scale in Calcutta, on that fateful day. The police were indifferent to the carnage that was going on. Suhrawardy encouraged the Muslims to kill Hindus and plunder their property. According to a rough official estimate nearly 5000 Hindus lost their lives and over 1500 were injured in Calcutta alone. Maulana Azad who was in Calcutta on that day wrote in his book "India Wins Freedom", "The 16th of August was a black day in the history of India. Unprecedented mob-violence plunged the great city into an orgy of blood-shed, murder and terror. Hundreds of lives were lost. Thousands were injured. And property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. The city was in the grip of goondas."

The Interim Government took up office on 2nd September 1946. The Viceroy renewed his efforts to induce the League to join the Cabinet and take part in the Constituent Assembly. The League agreed to enter the Executive Council i.e. the Interim Government, but rejected the other part of the Cabinet Mission Plan. As the League had a right to nominate five members to the Executive Council, five members of the Muslim League joined the Interim Cabinet. One of the five was Liaquat Ali Khan who held the portfolio of finance. In October 1946 there was a large scale outbreak of lawlessness, loot and arson in the Noakhali and Tipperah districts of East Bengal. In fact it was not hooliganism by goondas, but an organized attack planned by the Muslim League with the connivance of Government Officials. Hindus suffered enormously both in lives and properties. The happenings of Noakhali sparked off communal trouble in Bihar, Garh, Mukteswar and Ahmedabad. The Muslim League then insisted the Muslims in the Punjab and the N.W.F.P. to raid Hindu houses and kill the inmates.

Lord Attlee's declaration on British withdrawal from India: When the country was in the grip of communal frenzy and riots, when law was in the hands of goondas, the British Government decided to quit India by a fixed date i.e. June 1948 as announced by Mr. Attlee in the House of Commons on 20th February 1947. He added that if India should fail to draft a constitution agreeable to all the parties by June 1948, the government would be free to leave India to any party it liked. He also announced that Lord Wavell would be succeeded by Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India.

Partition of the Country: The statement of Lord Attlee aroused mixed feelings of joy and fear in the hearts of Indians. The Constituent Assembly met on 9th December 1946. The

League benches were empty. The Congress set about wooing the League again, but without any response from it.



Lord Mountbatten.



Jawaharlal Nehru with Lord Mountbatten

As a result of the League's 'Direct Action' the gap between the standpoints of the League and the Congress appeared to be unbridgeable. The country was in a grip of anarchy. Several parts of India witnessed the worst forms of communal riots. Thousands of lives were lost. Lord Mountbatten, the new Viceroy was called upon to take a quick and final course of action. He held discussions with the Congress leaders and tried to explain to them the inevitability of partition. Gandhiji was dead against partition. He once said that Pakistan would be formed on his dead body. In view of Gandhiji's rigid and unrelenting attitude, Lord Mountbatten argued with **Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru**. Both reviewed the past and foresaw the dark shadow of communal riots hanging over the country. Quite unwillingly they gave their consent for partition.

The following are some of the reasons which made them accept the Pakistan scheme:

1. Communal Riots – The League engineered organised raids on Hindu localities and caravans of refugees. The police and British officers stood away as silent spectators. Although defence had been entrusted to Sardar Baldev Singh in the Interim Cabinet, the British were still at the helm of affairs. If the British had wanted, they could have easily restored law and order in the country. But instead of remaining neutral, they encouraged riots so as to compel the Congress to accept the 'Two Nation Theory' of Jinnah. The British Government as well as the British Officers in India supported the demand for Pakistan; for they hoped to get more concessions in the new Muslim State.

The law and order situation continued to deteriorate day by day. The Congress leaders feared that if matters were allowed to drift, the country would soon be overwhelmed by the wild forces of communalism, riots and murder. On the one hand was the growing lawlessness in the country and on the other, the uncompromising attitude of the League. Every Congress leader began to feel that the only alternative to communal riots and civil war was the acceptance of the demand for Pakistan.

2. Intrigues of the British Officers – The British Officers sided with the Muslim League. It was so managed that the Muslims who were pro-league came to occupy all the key positions in the Police, Information and Defense. Brisk illegal traffic in arms was going on, not without the connivance and sometimes with the active co-operation of British and Indian Military pro-Pakistan Officers. It grew into an open scandal. Later the Congress High Command got documentary evidence of the complicity of the Political Department headed by British Officers.
1. Failure of the Interim Government – The difficult functioning of the Interim Government also convinced the Congress that a Coalition Government was not the solution to the communal problem. The League's representatives in the Cabinet obstructed most of the plans of the Congress. No department could work smoothly, for want of finance which Liaquat Ali Khan who held the portfolio of finances, refused to release.
4. Congress desire to make India strong – The great desire of the Congress was to end the riots and bloodshed. The League had been non-co-operative both in the Interim Government and in other public affairs. The League members in the Interim Government were openly talking about carving Pakistan out of India. The Congress felt that partition of the country would at least make it free from communal troubles; and enable Indians to make India a strong prosperous country. Then there would be no chance for the Muslim League to hinder its efforts.

The British Government advanced the date of its departure from June 1948 to 15th August 1947. Thus the Congress had to choose between two evils – the partition of India or civil war. It opted for Pakistan. Nehru said, "it was the compulsion of events and the feeling that we could not get out of the deadlock or morass by pursuing the way we had done. So we accepted the partition."

Mountbatten Plan, 3rd June 1947:

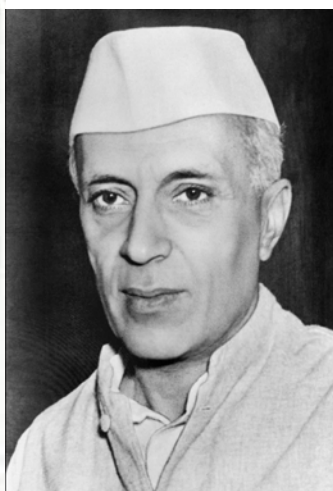
1. Mountbatten's plan set down the partition of India as a settled fact. It proposed the division of India into two Dominions and the transference of power to take place on 15th August 1947.

2. Contrary to the League's demand for a Pakistan including the whole of Bengal and Assam in the east, and the whole of Punjab in the west, the plan exclude Assam completely and suggested the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. The Provincial Legislature of Bengal and the Punjab were to meet separately in two parts, one representing the Muslim majority districts and the other the Hindu majority districts. The members of the two parts of each legislature were empowered to vote whether or not, the provinces should be partitioned.
3. Referendum in Sylhet and N.W.F.P – The Muslim majority district of Sylhet was to decide by referendum whether it wished to join East Bengal or remain in Assam. Similarly N.W.F.P. had to decide by a referendum whether to join Pakistan or India. The need for this arose because in the N.W.F.P. the Red Shirts who were the followers of Khan Abdul Gaffer Khan had formed a ministry headed by Dr. Khan Sahib who was a Congressman.

The representatives of the Hindu majority districts of the Punjab and Bengal in their respective assemblies voted in favour of partition of the provinces. Sylhet chose to join Pakistan. The predominantly Muslim population of N.W.F.P. opted for Pakistan. Mr. Jinnah at first refused to accept a mutilated Pakistan but ultimately had to submit to pressure from Mountbatten. The Viceroy pointed out that the arguments which Mr. Jinnah produced for partitioning India were equally applicable for the partitioning of Bengal and the Punjab since these provinces had fairly large populations of non-Muslims.



Pandit Pant



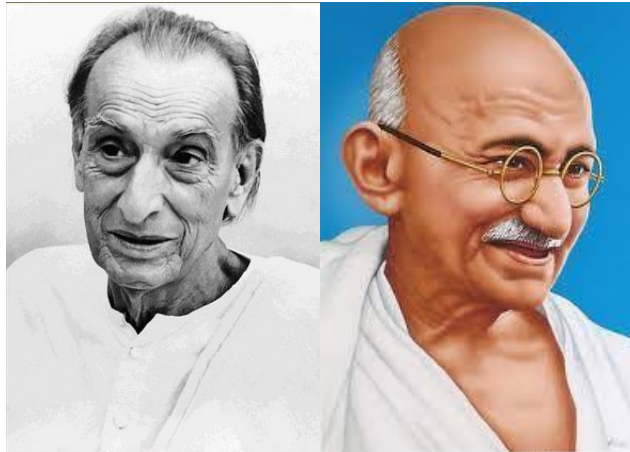
Jawaharlal Nehru



Vallabhai Patel

The Working Committee of the Congress met in Delhi on 14th June 1947 to discuss the Viceroy's plan. Maulana Azad and other Nationalist Muslims, Hindu Members representing Pakistan districts opposed the plan but Pandit Pant, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, Acharya Kripalani and even Mahatma Gandhi accepted it in view of the disturbed conditions prevailing in the country. Pandit Pant moving the resolution of acceptance said that, adopting the Viceroy's plan was the only way to achieve freedom and liberty for the country. After

partition the Indian Union would have a strong centre which would ensure progress. The choice then was between accepting the plan or allowing the present suicidal state of affairs to continue in the country.



Acharya Kripalani

Mahatma Gandhi

The British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act on July 5th, 1947 and it received Royal assent on July 18, to become operative on August 15th, 1947.

The Indian Independence Act 1947: This Act was based on the Mountbatten Plan of 3rd June 1947. The Act provided for the creation of two independent Dominions, India and Pakistan, from 15th August 1947.

It defined the territories of the two Dominions, adjustable after the award of the Boundary Commission. Two Boundary Commissions, one for the Punjab and another for Bengal were set up for that purpose, both under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliff. In each Boundary Commission two representatives of Hindus and two representatives of Muslims were included. Provision was made for the partition of the two provinces of Bengal and the Punjab. When the Dominion of Pakistan was born on 15th August 1947 after the partition of India, it consisted of two wings, Eastern and Western Pakistan. Eastern Pakistan consisted of East Bengal and Sylhet. Sylhet was a Muslim majority district in Assam, which had opted for East Pakistan in a referendum. The Western wing of Pakistan consisted of West Punjab, Sind, N.W.F.P., Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Baluchistan and eight other small princely states in Baluchistan.

Each of the Dominions was to have a Governor-General appointed by the British king for that purpose. The Constituent Assembly of each Dominion had the power to draft a new constitution according to its wishes, in addition to the right to withdraw from the British Commonwealth if so desired.

For the time being till the new constitutions were framed, the Dominions including the provinces were to be governed in accordance with the Act of 1935. Each Dominion was however authorised to modify the Act of 1935 as it pleased.

The British Government would not have any control over the Dominions, Provinces or any part of the Dominions after the 15th of August 1947.

The paramountcy of His Majesty's Government over the Indian States would lapse after the 15th August 1947. The British Government would have absolutely no relation or connection of any kind with the Indian States; and they would be free either to join India or Pakistan or remain independent

There were in all 565 princely states, big and small. Before 15th August 1947, all the states except Kashmir, Junagadh and Hyderabad had acceded to either the Indian Union or Pakistan. The transfer of power to the Indian Union from the states was smooth; and much of the credit for this goes to Sardar Patel, the Minister for States and his diligent assistant Mr. V.P. Menon, the Secretary to the States Ministry.

Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union in October 1947. After a referendum in February 1948, Junagadh became a part of the Indian Union. The Nizam of Hyderabad, the biggest of the States, still held out. In November 1947 he entered into a stand-still agreement with the Government of India. Nevertheless, helped secretly by Pakistan, he tried to raise an army to fight against the Indian Government. The latter had no choice but to take police action against the State in September 1948. The Nizam surrendered and acceded to the Indian Union in November 1948.

THE DAWN OF INDEPENDENCE:

In Pakistan: On the morning of Thursday, 14th August 1947 a colourful assembly of Punjabis, Pathans, Wazirs, Mahsuds, Afridis, Bengalis, and women covered in burquas gathered in the Assembly hall in Karachi to witness the birth of Pakistan, the most populous Moslem Nation in the world. The assembled guests were the representatives of 45 million people who would henceforth call Pakistan their homeland. Mr. Jinnah would be the first Governor-General of Pakistan and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan its first Prime Minister. The Viceroy sat at the head of the Assembly Hall. He rose to deliver King George's message of good wishes to his newest Dominion and added that the birth of Pakistan was a historic event which recent events had helped to create. He wished Pakistan prosperity and hoped that she would continue in friendship with her neighbors and with all the nations of the world.

Next Mr. Jinnah made his speech. He said that Britain and the people that she had colonised were parting as friends. He sincerely hoped that they would always remain friends.

He declared that Pakistan would not be found wanting in friendly spirit by her neighbors and all the nations of the world.

The short ceremony was soon over. The two men came out of the Assembly Hall and got into the black open Rolls Royce which was to take them to the Government House. All along the way they waved to the crowds which were lustily shouting 'Pakistan Zindabad'.

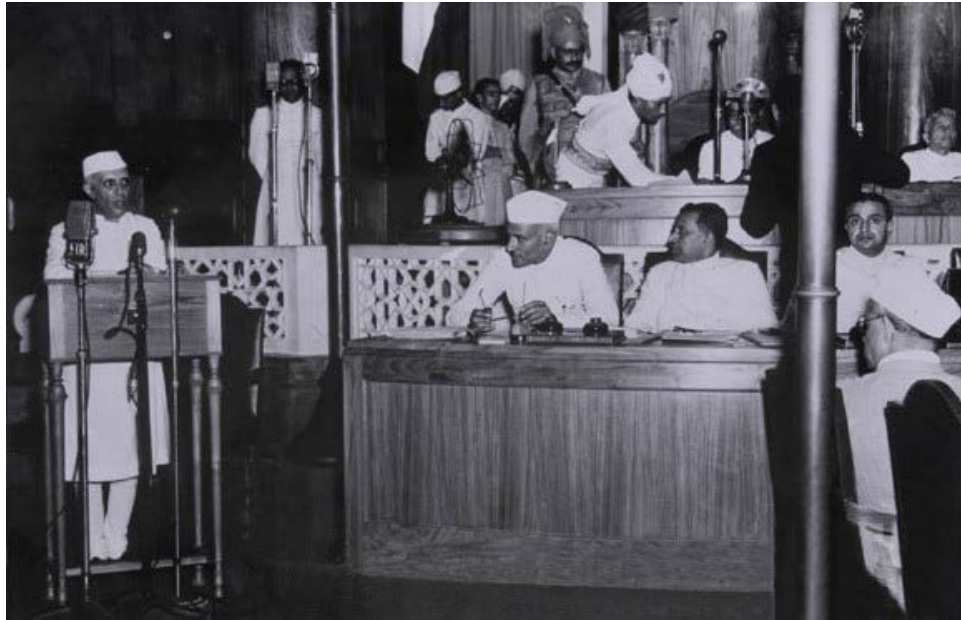
In India: At sunset on 14th August 1947 thousands of Union Jacks slid down their flag staffs for the last time, in military cantonments, at official residences, naval stations, government offices; at Fort William in Calcutta, Fort St. George in Madras, Viceregal Ledge in Simla; in Kshmir, in Nagaland, Sikkim and Assam. At sunrise on 15th August 1947 their places would be taken by the tricolour flags of Independent India.

Towards midnight the Constituent Assembly Hall in New Delhi was packed to capacity with India's leaders and distinguished guests waiting to herald a new dawn for millions of Indians. They were dressed in Khadi and Swadeshi, in princely robes, and costly silks. They were the representatives of the nation that was to be born that night. The people they represented were a mixture of races and religions, languages and cultures.

But Gandhiji the architect of India's freedom was not present in that August Assembly. The previous day the Viceroy had requested him to go to Calcutta as his 'one man boundary force' to maintain peace there, between Hindus and Muslims. Gandhiji had carried out his task admirably well. His fasts and prayers and self-sacrificing spirit had so impressed the people of Calcutta that Hindus and Muslims showed friendliness towards one another. Nearly 10,000 Hindus and Muslims attended his prayer meeting the first evening.

And now the Viceroy and Vicereine, resplendant in their regal robes were present in the Constituent Assembly Hall in New Delhi for the formal transfer of power, from Britain to India. Also present were Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of Free India, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru its first Prime Minister, along with other leaders such as Acharya Kripalani, Sardar Patel and others, all dressed in spotless white Khadi.

A short time before midnight Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave his memorable speech, "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour while the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom....A moment comes which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of the nation long suppressed finds utterance....."



Jawaharlal Nehru giving his famous Tryst With Destiny speech.

Nehru proposed that at the stroke of midnight they should all rise and pledge themselves to the service of India and her people. Exactly at 12 midnight the conch shell was sounded, heralding the birth of the New Nation, India; and the assembled company pledged themselves to serve their motherland. After the function as Nehru and the other dignitaries came out of the Hall, the Jubilant crowds waiting outside greeted the Dawn of Independence with joyous cheers.

Shortly after midnight a delegation of Indian leaders from the Constituent Assembly went to the Viceroy's House, now called 'Government House'. The leader of the delegation Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of India formally invited the ex-Viceroy to become India's first Governor-General. Mountbatten accepted the invitation pledging to serve India as if he were himself an Indian.

In the morning the official ceremony of the swearing-in of the first Constitutional Governor-General of the new Dominion of India, took place in the Durbar Hall. A 21-gun salute marked the event.

Across the length and breadth of India, in cities and villages, people celebrated the advent of freedom. They hoisted the tricolour national flags, went in processions and greeted one another. Many made grateful offerings in temples. There were scenes of rejoicing in Madras, Madurai, Bombay, Poona, Lucknow, Banares and other cities.

All across Calcutta on the avenues and throughfares Moslems and Hindus flew the tricolour flags and joyfully paraded and celebrated the great day together. They came in happy throngs to Hydari House where Gandhiji was staying, to get darshan of him. He greeted them

all cordially but there was sadness in his heart. He considered Independence Day as a day of mourning because of the partition. He spent it in prayer and spinning. That evening 30,000 people, Hindus and Muslims, gathered at his prayer meeting.

In Delhi the crowds were unprecedented. No one remembered having seen such a great concourse of gaily decked jubilant crowds moving about in the capital city. The climax of the new nation's Independence Day celebrations was to be the official hoisting of the Indian flag at 5p.m., in an open space near New Delhi's India Gate. Long before that time the multitudinous crowds, estimated to be more than half a million, had gathered at the site.

At 5 p.m. as the orchestra played the National Anthem, and the Governor-General of India, the President, the Prime Minister, Leaders and Officials stood saluting, the saffron, white and green flag of free India climbed up the flag-pole and flew triumphantly in the evening breeze. Great shouts of joy rose from a myriad throats, followed by wild scenes of rejoicing among the vast crowds stretching far in every direction.

JAI HIND

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