

## GS Foundation 2024: Modern India

### **Handout 25: Politics of Moderates (1885-1905)**

**Nikhil Sheth**

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The first 20 years of the INC is the era of Moderates. INC was **not a radical** organisation from the beginning. It was moderate in both goals and means. They hoped to gain freedom gradually and step-by-step.

Early Nationalists believed that massed need to be awakened before even taking the cause for freedom. Their **agenda** was:

- Creation of public interest in political questions
- Formulate popular demands on national basis
- Organize public opinion.

**Demands** (not complete independence but specific demands)

- **Councils Reforms**
  1. More Indians participation in both central and provincial legislatures. They should have real powers.
  2. By 1900, the claims for swarajya (self-government) like that in Australia or Canada.
- **Administrative Reforms**
  1. Indianization of ICS: Simultaneous exam, increase in age limit, remove limit on the number of Indians in the service
  2. Appointment of Indians to ranked officers in the army
  3. Separation of judiciary from executive
  4. Criticism of delays in and costs of justice delivery
  5. Opposed aggressive foreign policy and wars with Afghanistan, Burma, suppression of NE tribals etc.
  6. Urged government for public welfare activities, expansion of primary education and more facilities for higher education.
- **Defence of Civil Rights**
  1. Modern civil rights: freedoms of speech, press, thought and association.
  2. Promoting Jury system to protect rights of Indians
- **Economic Reforms**
  1. Imposition of custom duties on foreign goods to protect nascent Indian industries
  2. Reduction of land revenue
  3. To check exploitation of plantation workers
  4. Refer to Drain of Wealth section.

The **method** of the moderates was not street agitation, but **liberal constitutional means**. They didn't believe in mass political agitation but rather preferred:

- Forming associations (most important being the INC itself)
- Holding meetings
- Giving speeches
- Drafting/Submitting petitions and memorandums
- Journalism (criticism of govt policies through press)

Thus,

- Both demands and methods of the moderates were liberal in character. (**whiggish**)
- The moderates were progressive nationalists. They were inspired by the vision of better and brighter future of the people as well as the country.
- They were westernized in their outlook. Most of them were western educated.
- They were secular in character. The members of Congress were coming from all the permanent Indian faiths. The first four presidents of Congress were belonging to four different religions.
- Their method was nonviolent in character. They believed in the efficacy of peaceful means.
- Moderates were democratic in outlook. They demanded democratization of Indian politico-admin system so that Indians could participate effectively in running affairs of state.
- Moderate nationalists were egalitarian in their outlook. They were against discrimination on the basis of race culture or any others ground.

#### **Attitude towards the masses:**

- **Opposed militant mass movement and lacked faith in the politics of masses.**
  - Believed that militant **mass struggle** could be waged **only after** the heterogenous elements of Indian society had been **welded into a nation**.
  - They assumed that **illiterate masses cannot represent** themselves. They need middle class leaders. They assigned masses a **passive role**.
  - However, the notion that the masses had their political rights had not come at this point of time in India. All of this quickly changed in a manner of 2 decades in India.
- Their Swarajya was not meant for all, rather it is meant only for educated Indians. However, their demands were not only for the elites but concerned the common people as well.

In short, these are all liberal methods of constitutional agitations, all while continuously and sincerely professing loyalty.

- They believed that if **public opinion was created**, organized and popular **demands presented to the authorities** through petitions, meetings, resolutions and speeches, the authorities would concede the demands gradually. (*educate Indians*)
- Next to educating Indian public opinion, they worked to **educate British public** opinion. It required active public propaganda in Britain.
  - In 1889, a British Committee of INC was founded. It started a journal called India in 1890.
  - Dadabhai spent major part of his life and income in England in popularizing case for India.

### **Question of “loyalty”**

Moderates were sincere in their repeated profession of loyalty to crown

- First Congress: Three Cheers for Queen Victoria 27 times
- They had belief in **providential nature of the Raj**. Moderates believed that the British empire is the **force of modernisation**.
  - “In my belief, a greater calamity could not befall India than for England to go away and leave her to herself.” – Dadabhai
  - So, they expected the British government to bring essential reforms in India.
- They understood that the foundation of the **INC itself was the outcome of the British rule**.
  - Dadabhai in Calcutta Congress (1886) said that no such thing like INC would be possible in the time of Vikramaditya or Akbar. It is British who brought law and order, safety and now people could leave their property and family back and assemble in Calcutta. Thank you for that.
- Moreover, there was **fear of suppression**.
  - They also noticed how brutally British had suppressed 1857 and felt that time was not yet ripe for such a challenge.
  - India was not ready and culture of open opposition to the Crown was not yet there.
- They were influenced by **western liberal tradition**. They were not against the British rule, only against the un-British aspects of the British rule.
  - They didn't demand expulsion of British from India, rather they wanted democratic rights.
  - They even claimed their anxiety to get grievances addressed partly to help the Crown become popular in India.
- Later when they took note of the evils of the British rule and the failure of the government to accept nationalist demands for reform, many of them stopped talking of loyalty to the British rule and **started demanding self-government instead**.

In the early years, the INC had among its leaders some **Englishmen**.

Allahabad	1888	George Yule
Bombay	1898	William Wedderburn
Madras	1894	Alfred Webb
Bombay	1904	Henry Cotton
Allahabad	1910	William Wedderburn
Calcutta	1917	Annie Besant

### **Most important contribution was in the Economic Field.**

- Moderates' vision was to create India as an industrialized country under the aegis of Indian capital. Their major concern was to protect and promote Indian industries.
- Important exponents:

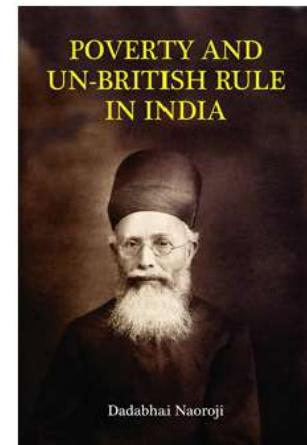
Author	Book
Dadabhai Naoroji	Poverty and Un-British Rule in India
Justice MG Ranade	Essays on Indian Economy
Romesh Chandra Dutt	The Economic History of India
William Digby	Prosperous British India
Subramaniam Iyer	Some Economic Aspects of British Rule in India

Other important exponents of the Economic Criticism

- Rao Bahadur GV Joshi
- Dinshaw Wachha

### **The details of the Economic criticism:**

- Detailed study the question of poverty.
  - Dadabhai Naoroji was first to attempt to calculate per capita income of Indians. He estimated that it was 20 Rs in 1867-68.
- After becoming aware of the poverty, attempted a scientific economic analysis.
  - Earlier, in the 18<sup>th</sup> c, it was loot and tribute thus visible. Now, in the 19<sup>th</sup> c, it is more sophisticated, less visible methods. It consists of Free Trade and Foreign Capital.
- Main thrust: Drain of Wealth
  - Meaning: unilateral outflow of capital to other country without anything in return
  - Pipelines of Drain
  - Various Estimates of Drain



- RC Dutt: 50% of net revenue (around 20 million)
- Ranade: 33% of net revenue
- Dadabhai: 25% of net revenue
- William Digby: 30 million per year
- Modern historian: 17m, represented less than 2% of exports value over this period.

Not only that the British were blamed for the growing backwardness and poverty but some solutions were suggested as **remedy**.

- Stop the Drain
  - Reduce land revenue burden on peasantry, abolish high taxes (eg on salt)
  - Condemned military expenditure.
  - Appoint Indians to as many high posts as possible
  - Opposed large-scale investment of foreign private capital in Indian railways, plantations and industries as it led to suppression of Indian capitalists and strengthened British stranglehold.
- Develop Indian economy
  - Development of agricultural banks to save peasantry from clutches of the moneylenders, large-scale extension of irrigation to save country from famines, extension of permanent settlement, repeal of forest laws.
  - Modern Industry and technology based on Indian capital
  - For rapid development of Indian industries – need for government protection through import tariff protection and direct government aid. (Opposed countervailing excise duty)
  - Spread of technical education
  - Popularization of the idea of swadeshi and boycott.

**Significance of Economic Criticism** (although economic argument, it had political and ethical consequences)

- It helped in the development of **Nationalism that is based on scientific anti-colonial analysis** and not obscurantist past. Of all the anti-colonial movements, Indian is the one most deeply rooted in the understanding of the nature of colonial exploitation.
- Exposed and attacked the **economic essence of colonization**.
  - Proved that **poverty** is due to British imperialism. Such conclusion questioned the basic purpose of colonialism itself.
  - Linked poverty to colonialism → undermined the ideological foundations/hegemony of the benevolent rule, corroded moral authority
- Easy to grasp for **common people**
  - Created anger and helped Indians unite

- To solve the economic issues → we need political rights
- It became the **major plank for all the future leaders** to criticize the British rule. It was accepted by Moderates, Extremists, Socialists, Communists, Gandhi, Nehru...

Limitation: Due to the own weakness of the moderates, they could not convert the anger generated into effective agitation. They didn't connect Drain of Wealth with Swadeshi as a political tool, which was later done by extremists.

## Survey of some important Moderate leaders

### • **Dadabhai Naoroji**

- Grand old man of India
- Huge contribution to the study of poverty and generating thesis of Drain of Wealth
- Didn't stop at discussing only the question of economy but spent 50+ years trying to get political rights in Britain and in India.
- East India Association (London, 1866)
- He canvassed in Britain, also contested many times and once became an MP in the House of Commons.
- Congress President 3 times: 1886, 1893, 1906



### • **Justice MG Ranade**

- Taught virtues of industrialization to the entire generation.
- Didn't exactly agree with DoW but focussed more on entire socio-economic regeneration.
- Founder of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1870), major force behind Prarthana Samaj (1867)
- Also formed Indian National Social Conference (1887)



### • **Pherozshah Mehta** (successful Bombay lawyer)

- Studying his contribution is like studying history of Congress from 1885-1915. He participated in the INC from the day one, initially as the follower of Dadabhai and once he left for England, he had his one-man control over INC organization.
- Considered as the Moderate among moderates.



### • **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**

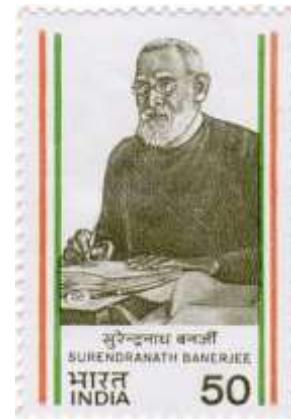
- Student of MG Ranade and later became the guru of Mahatma Gandhi
- Hugely respected for personal rectitude, support to gender cause and backward people.
- First major moderate leader to go for fulltime social-political work by rejecting profession.
- He gave the evidence of misuse of Indian finances to Welby Commission
  - Legislative work (Bombay Legislative Council 1899, Imperial Legislative Council in 1901)
    - Fearless, intellectual, and sharp criticism of government
    - Most famous for budget analysis.



- Asked for free and universal basic education.
- Attitude

- He didn't consider Legislative council as the battlefield, but an arena to change the opinion of the opponent.
- Converted the Legislative Councils into open universities for people.

- Servants of India Society in 1905 – to promote both nationalism and social service
- Congress President at Benares in 1905



- **SN Banerjee**

- One of the first-generation ICS officers from India but had to resign for no mistake of his own
- Brilliant orator and started schools/colleges and also newspapers etc
- Most effective phase: during Swadeshi movement – he sternly opposed the partition of Bengal and was not willing to compromise at all.
- Book: Nation in the Making

- **G Subramanya Iyer**

- Editor of **The Hindu** for first 20 years (1878-98).
- Also started **Swadeshmitran**, a Tamil language newspaper
- Honour of tabling first resolution in the first Congress (1885) with KT Telang.
- Play a significant role in economic nationalism



- Others

- **Badruddin Tyabji**
  - Efforts to bring Muslims in the Congress
  - Opposed by Wahabis as well as loyalists (led by Sir Sayyid)
  - Third President of Congress (1887)
  - Later became the first Muslim judge in the Bombay High Court.
- **Rahimatullah Sayani**
  - Congress President in 1896 (12<sup>th</sup> Session): This year is known for the first time singing of Vande Mataram in Congress Session
- RC Dutt
- Dinshaw Wacha
- C Vijayaraghavachariar
- P Ananda Charlu
- PR Naidu
- Sankaran Nair
- Ghosh – Lalmohan, Anandmohan, Manmohan

- WC Banerjee
- Madanmohan Malaviya
- Pandit Ayodhyananath

### **Assessment of limitations and weaknesses of the moderates**

During the moderate phase, the Indian National Congress met with **limited success** with respect to its declared objectives. They were unable to create effective pressure on the colonial regime to accept their demands in any meaningful way.

- Very meagre concrete immediate and direct achievements
- **Elite, English-educated, upper caste social background**
  - Lawyers, journalists, landlords, merchants etc
  - No special efforts to promote representation of lower castes as well as Muslims. (savarna bias)
  - No anti-zamindar or anti-moneylender proposal. They Opposed to Bengal Tenancy Act (1885), Punjab Land Alienation Act (1900)
- **Not full-time political activists**
  - Lawyers and Journalists made about 70% delegates
- **Ineffective methods** (Gandhi: Slow Party) due to inherent limits to the effectiveness of liberal constitutional methods under colonial framework
  - Politics of prayers, petition and memorials.
  - Gradualism: not ready to take a big jump.
- Constant **professions of loyalty** were not attractive to people.
- Failure to make INC a genuine full-fledged party. It remained a “**3-day tamasha**”, a part time affair during annual sessions. Thus, it limited its ability to respond and lead.
- They **lacked faith in the masses**, their propaganda didn’t reach the masses. As their mass base remained limited, and so did their power to pressure the government.
- **They didn’t keep the pace with changes**. They couldn’t see that their own success made their politics obsolete, and they failed to accept the new demands. Thus, they tried for exclusion of extremists from the Congress which further weakened them.

However, it doesn’t mean that the moderates were of all failure They were the torch bearers of Indian nationalism.

- **Congress pressure was responsible for**
  - **Council Act of 1892** included the provisions of the election for the first time, under moderates’ pressure.
  - **Welby Commission**
  - **Aitchison Commission**
  - In 1893, a resolution was introduced in the British House of Commons providing for holding of CSE simultaneously in India along with London.

- Moderates were the **first-generation nationalists**, they worked hard against heavy odds to convince the British of need of initiating reforms in India.
- **National awakening:** arousing feelings of common nation, exploitation and common enemy
  - The writings and speeches of moderates brought about maturity among Indian nationalists. As a result of this the national struggle could keep on gaining strength.
- **Political work based on concrete study** of hard facts and not narrow appeal to religious sentiments or emotional appeal to hoary past.
- **Mercilessly exposed** the exploitative character of the British empire. With the systematic economic criticism of the colonial economy, they exposed the hollowness of British claim of paternal regime. It was their most commendable achievement which exposed the true character of the British Raj.
- **Trained people** in the art of political work, popularized ideas of democracy, civil liberties etc. Indians became familiar with modern politics.
- **Formed Indian National Congress.** Their all India, secular approach gave legitimacy to the Congress, helping it emerge as a true representative of all Indians.
- **Represented Indians** in the provincial and imperial legislative councils
- **Evolved national political and economic programs/objectives** for future political struggle.

While the weakness of the Early nationalists was removed by the later generation, its achievements were to serve as the base for a more vigorous national movement in future. The perceived ineffectiveness of moderate politics inspired the next generation of nationalists to search for new methods of struggle. As a result, passive resistance and mass politics emerged as the preferred method of nationalists from the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, despite many weaknesses, the early nationalists laid the foundation for the national movement to grow upon.

## Handout 25: Extremist Phase

Nikhil Sheth

From almost the beginning, militant nationalism (Extremist) school existed but it started becoming popular in the late 1890s. However, it was at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they found favourable political climate to come forward. This led to radical transformation in Indian national movement and lead the second phase of the national movement.



### The factors behind the emergence of militant nationalism:

The emergence of extremism at the turn of the century was a response and reaction to the evils of colonialism and the politico-economic and cultural environment prevailing in India.

- **Economic Factors:**

- There was no development of Indian industries, and no protection/promotion by the Government. Instead, there was a series of terrible famines and bubonic plague around during mid-1890s. Between 1896 to 1900, about 90 lakh Indians died in the famines.
- Growing discontent among educated youth due to unemployment

- **Recognition of the true nature of the British rule (*not providential but exploitative*)** played the most important role.

- Primary and technical education was not making any progress. British, on the other hand, were highly suspicious of educated Indians.
- Complete disappointment with the Indian Councils Act 1892. Instead of giving more political rights, even the existing political rights were attacked.
- The promise of progress was not kept. Rather, the policy of divide-and-rule led to a series of communal riots.

- **Dissatisfaction with the moderates**

- Moderates brought questions of racist discrimination and economic drain to the fore but kept on professing loyalty to the Crown. It created the frustration among the people with the moderate style of politics.
- Thus, the politics of the moderates was based on the belief that the British rule could be reformed from within but the failure of moderates to attain practical success gradually undermined the belief. As British failed to accommodate any of the demands of the moderates, it produced disillusionment among the

nationalists. Consequently, the **weaknesses** of moderates' methods became apparent and a **demand for more vigorous political action** started.

- **Impact of cultural heritage and socio-religious movements: Growth of self-respect and self-confidence**
  - By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Indians acquired faith in their own capacity to **govern** and develop their country.
  - **Revivalist sentiments** aroused the feelings of pride in the past and self-respect. Vivekanand's triumphant **tours** inspired fresh hope of glorious future and superiority of East over West. (Also, **Bankim, Dayanand Saraswati**)
  - Tilak, Aurobindo, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Bipin Chandra Pal preached the message of **self-respect** and development of national character.
- **International influences** encouraged militant nationalism in India.
  - Rise of **Japan** was a warning of new wind **blowing over Asia**.
  - Defeat of Italy by Ethiopia (1896) and of Russia by Japan (1905)
  - Revolutionary movements in Ireland and Russia.
- **The policy of repression and suppression** pursued by the British Indian government also pushed nationalist of younger generation towards extremism.
  - In 1898, CrPC was amended by amending the **sedition clause 124 A**.
    - Tilak was awarded 18 months of RI for praising **Chapekar brothers** and raising nationalist issues.
  - **The reactionary policies of Lord Curzon** added fuel to the fire of **extremism**.
  - **Finally, the partition of Bengal** in 1905 created the circumstance required for emergence of extremism in **forefront** in anti-British struggle. The moderate politics lost its **mass appeal** because nobody was ready to listen that British was just and fair.

Old generation of Indian leaders was being replaced by **new generation**. This new age was started by majorly 4 important leaders: Lal-Bal-Pal + **Aurobindo**.

#### **Goals:**

- About immediate political demands, they had no quarrel with the moderates. But they **set in the goal of swaraj more boldly**. They *deeply hated the foreign rule* and declared Swaraj to be their clear-cut goal.
  - "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it"
  - The **meaning of Swaraj** was different for different leaders.
    - Tilak meant a **government formation by the Indians**
    - Aurobindo Ghosh interpreted it as **complete independence**
- They wanted reforms to happen **at faster rate**, leading towards their end goal. (**Impatient Party: Gandhi**)

## **Methods: (Petition → Agitation)**

### **reject**

- They spurned the moderate methods of petition/prayer as “mendicancy.”
  - They were critical of the deferential and supplicatory attitude of the moderates. They didn’t have belief in the British sense of justice and fair-play.
  - Instead, they wanted public agitation and mass mobilization to force British to grant concessions. They didn’t remain confine to only constitutional means, but also included extra-constitutional means.
  - Lala Lajpat Rai: “*No nation is worthy of any political status if it cannot distinguish between begging rights and claiming them*”
  - Aurobindo in ‘New Lamps for Old’ exposed the weaknesses of moderate politics.
  - Tilak: “*We will not achieve any success in our labours if we croak once a year like a frog.*”
- **Awakening and Mobilization of the masses**
  - Impatient to throw off foreign yoke, the Extremists concentrated on building mass support for national movement. They believed that Indians must work out their own salvation and make efforts to rise from their degraded position.
  - They had deep faith in the strength of the masses, and they planned to achieve swaraj through mass action.
    - Thus, their target audience was not British public opinion but Indian public opinion. They pressed for political work among the masses.
  - For mass mobilization however, requirement was:
    - Spreading the feeling of nationalism + Awareness about their rights
    - Generating self-confidence and not being afraid of British (Full of boldness and self-confidence, they considered no personal sacrifice too great for the good of the country.)
    - Finally, a mass agitation to seek resolution of grievances
  - Thus,
    - The movement no longer remained elitist in its social composition because most of the extremist leaders came from middle and lower middle sections of Indian society.
    - The movement started to assume mass character during extremist phase. Mass agitations and demonstrations were organized by the extremists leaders.
- However, for such mobilization of people and opinion, the extremist leaders readily used religious/quasi-religious issues. Thus, extremists:
  - **Rejected social reform as an attack on culture.** Extremists attacked the moderates and reformers incessantly as ‘de-nationalized’, lacking pride in country and culture. For them, the task of social reform was secondary issue and drained energies from the political struggle and also weakened the Hindu solidarity.

- Tilak broke with moderates on the issue of the Age of Consent Act. He wanted that reforms should be initiated by Indian **themselves** without allowing the foreign government to **intervene**.
- However, antipathy to untouchability and the need to eliminate it were **formulated** by Lala Lajpat Rai.
- To link the elites with the masses, they appealed to the three principal ties common to both **educated westernized elites** and the **peasantry** and lot of common people – **language, history, and religion.**
  - Casting off the **yoke** of English use wherever possible, they wrote and spoke in regional languages which were understood by common people.
  - As a means of **heightening patriotic fervor**, they **fostered pride** in glorious past, when **Hindu kings** and warriors rule the land.
    - **Shiv Jayanti** started by Tilak to create the culture of worship of national heroes.
  - The most effective was the use of religious symbolism and terminology to instill in Hindus a **fervent devotion** to the Motherland.
    - Religious ceremonies were used.
    - Homage to motherland in the form of **Vande Mataram** proved to be extremely emotive, and virtually touched the soul of the people of India.
    - Conceptualization of Bharat Mata – Avanindranath Tagore



Avanindranath Tagore painted Bharat Mata in 1905

According to Dr Karan Singh “For him, (Sri Aurobindo), India was no mere **geographical** entity, no mere **physical and material** land mass, no mere **intellectual concept**, but a **goddess incarnate**, a mighty mother who for centuries has cradled and **nourished** her children and who at that time, was groaning under the **yoke** of a foreign oppressor – her pride shattered, her glory ground to dust”. Thus India as a nation was **eulogized** by Sri Aurobindo as the mother, but a mother in chains, and the primary duty of her **sons** was to **win freedom** for the Mother, to **strive by every possible means** to liberate her from her shackles.

- Apart from Neo-Vedantism of **Vivekananda**, **Bankim Chandra's** eulogy of **Krishna** not only as an ideal man and a nation builder but also for his basic message of **Karmayoga** in Bhagavad Geeta
- Lala Lajpat Rai: "*Our first want, then, is to raise our patriotism to the level of religion and to aspire to live or die for it.*"
- Aurobindo: "*Nationalism is not a mere political programme; Nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live.... If you are going to be a nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instruments of god.*"
- Expansion of idea of nation:**
  - Moderates were primarily inspired by European experience of territorial nationalism, leading to the concept of nation-state, which was bound to be secular by definition.
  - Extremists made a departure by adding a religious symbolism and cultural dimension to it. The extremist concept of nationalism was developed around the notion of motherhood which underlined the inalienable relationship between a nation and her children.
- Thus, extremists focused on Indian values, culture for inspiration. Nationalist literature, paintings, and music were used to mobilise masses. Along with political-economic dimensions, the national movement assumed cultural dimension in this phase.
- Specific program** was based on *principle of reducing Indian dependence on the British in every possible way.*
  - Boycott** of foreign goods and promotion of **Swadeshi**
    - Boycott was the most effective instrument to dent the British interests in India. Along with the boycott of foreign goods, swadeshi goods were promoted to encourage Indian industries.
    - Use of parallel government instead of going to British administration and courts.
  - Promoting **National Education**
    - The objective was to educate Indian youth about the ideas of self-reliance, prepare them for the freedom struggle, free them from indoctrination by government schools and popularise the method of **Swaraj**.



Bombay Swadeshi Cooperative Store,  
1905

- At the same time, they wanted the youth to have a Swadeshi alternative to government schools.
- Non-cooperation or **Passive resistance**
  - Extremists were ardent preachers of non- cooperation.
  - For example, Tilak asserted that people of India are the 'great factor with which the administration of India is controlled.' According to him, cooperation of people acted like a 'great lubricant which enabled the gigantic machinery to work smoothly.' He reminded people of the power they possessed in 'making administration impossible if they choose to make it.'
- **Cooperative organisations**
  - Extremists encouraged cooperative organization on voluntary basis for rural sanitation, organising fairs and pilgrimages and relief work during calamities.

In essence, this program was much like Gandhian program produced in 1920.

In this entire process, the contribution of Lal-Bal-Pal and Aurobindo is seminal. They radicalised entire Congress, made mass appeal and mobilized entire country against Bengal Partition. Swadeshi movement launched in 1905 to oppose partition of Bengal was the finest example of the extremist movement.

#### A Speech by Tilak

Your revolution must be bloodless; but that does not mean that you may not have to suffer or to go to jail. Your fight is with bureaucracy who will always try to curb and suppress you. But you must remember that consistently with the spirit of laws and the bloodlessness of the revolution, there are a hundred other means by which you may and ought to achieve your object which is to force the hands of the bureaucracy to concede the reforms and privileges demanded by the people. You must realise that you are a great factor in the power with which the administration in India is conducted. You are yourselves the useful lubricants which enable the gigantic machinery to work so smoothly.

Though down-trodden and neglected, you must be conscious of your power of making the administration impossible if you but choose to make it so. It is you who manage the railroad and the telegraph, it is you who make settlements and collect revenues, it is in fact you who do everything for the administration though in a subordinate capacity. You must consider whether you cannot turn your hand to better use for your nation than drudging on in this fashion. Let your places be filled by Europeans on the splendid salary of eight annas a day if possible ! You must seriously consider whether your present conduct is self-respectful to yourselves or useful to the nation.

You must imitate your rulers only in one thing, namely, in maintaining an unfailing succession of public workers. If one Lala Lajpat Rai is sent abroad, another ought to be found to take his place as readily as a junior Collector steps into the shoes of a senior. It is vain to hope that your petitions will have the effect of releasing Lala, though it is well known that the Government do not mean to keep him a prisoner all his life. His deportation is intended not so much to penalise Lala Lajpat Rai as to terrorise those that would follow his example, and if their agitation stopped as soon as one deportation took place, Government will run away with the idea that terrorism had triumphed.

	Moderates	Extremists
<b>Social Basis</b>	Upper Middle Class	Lower Middle Class
<b>Objectives</b>	Largely similar. Moderates accepted Swarajya (self-rule) only under extremist pressure.	
<b>Programs</b>	Prayers, petitions, memorials	Completely rejected moderate methods as political mendicancy. Alternatively suggested “Passive Resistance”: Swarajya, Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education
<b>Perceptions of the west</b>	Believed in the providential nature of the British rule. They believed in the basic supremacy of western ideas like democracy, liberalism, secularism etc. Therefore, persistent appeal to British public opinion for redressal of grievances caused by Anglo-Indian bureaucracy.	Extremists considered this as an act of national humiliation. Extremists believed in rich cultural heritage of India. They were impressed with the scientific and technical development of the west, but they were not willing to accept western cultural supremacy.

## Some important Extremist leaders

- **Lokmanya Tilak** (firebrand politician, Father of Indian Unrest)
  - “No man preached gospel of Swaraj with such consistency and insistence of Lokmanya” by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920
    - Swarajya would not come easy or automatically, it would require sacrifice. Tilak’s entire life is a life of sacrifice and making people ready for sacrifices.
  - Public life of 40 years in two parts –
    - 1880-1900: Provincial Phase
      - Active in Deccan Education Society
      - Newspapers: Kesari and Maratha
      - Control of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha by 1895 by ousting Gokhale faction. Gokhale had to start his own Deccan Sabha
      - 1900-1920: National Phase
  - Books: Orion, Arctic Home of Vedas and Geeta Rahasya.
    - For Tilak, Geeta is the highest source of ethical life and call to duty. It is not a sectarian scripture. Philosophy of Geeta is rallying call for Indians to perform karma and not sannyas.
  - For mass mobilisation
    - Opposing social reform led by British.
    - Broke with moderates on the issue of Age of Consent Act 1891.
    - In 1895, he opposed moderates to hold National Social Conference in tandem with INC session as it would divide society.
  - Started Sarvajanik Ganapati (1894) and Shiv Jayanti (1895)
    - “Our ancestors have already left us occasions for gathering people together, lets use them”
  - Took up issues of popular distress
    - During 1896-97 famine that ravaged Maharashtra, he started No-Tax campaign by sending volunteers to the peasants to awaken them of their rights. He asked famine-stricken peasants to withhold tax payment if their crops had failed.
      - “Govt’s task is to legislate but it is we who have to ensure implementation. For that we are ready to write 100 times and ask 1000 times.”
    - **Swadeshi:** Like moderates he protested against the counter-veiling excise duty that hurt the cotton industry. However, unlike moderates, he called people to boycott and bonfire and promote the cause of Swadeshi.



- “British have not come here for philanthropy, but for their own selfish interests. If Indian people are made aware of that, we can attack those **selfish** interests”
- **Plague:**
  - After famine **1896**, there came plague epidemic in 1897 in Pune. British took stringent measures, **forcibly entering houses**. Tilak strongly denounced the harshness.
  - When **Rand** (anti-Plague commissioner) was murdered by **Chapekar brothers**, Tilak was implicated on charge of **inciting** violence (**sedition**). After sedition trial, he was sent to 18 months jail.
- Tilak had used press very effectively as an instrument of propaganda against the government.
  - Judge Strachey: “absence of affection is **disaffection**”
  - First national political leader to suffer imprisonment for political cause
- **Bipin Chandra Pal** (Bengal)
  - Roots in social reforms and **Brahmo Samaj** → thus moderate in 1890s. However, he spent **two** years in the west, and became **radicalized**.
  - Established journal **New India** in **1902**, with which he popularized the ideal of **Swaraj** to be achieved through **self-help** and **self-sacrifice**. In 1905, he started **Bande Mataram** (it was edited by Aurobindo secretly)
  - He was an excellent orator and **virtually** swept the country with brilliant and forceful explanation of the concepts like **Swaraj** and **Swadeshi**. He was **externed** from Madras Presidency in 1907 on account of ‘**inflammatory speeches**’.
  - Distanced himself from Tilak’s Hinduism as base of nationalism, and talked of ‘**composite patriotism**’.
  - After **1908**, he virtually retired from active politics.
- **Aurobindo** (born on 15 August 1872)
  - Main ideology in Bengal, produced similar to Tilak ideology of **extremism**.
  - Three phases of public life
    - 1893-1905: Returned to India after **14** years and spent some years in Baroda.
    - 1906-1910: Only about 4 years of active political public life
    - 1910 onwards: Spiritual Phase
  - Wrote **New Lamps for Old** series of articles in **Indu Prakash of Bombay** in 1893.



- Contempt for slow reforms. He was more inspired by French Revolution. Thus, he dismissed INC as ‘middle class organization’ and looked towards masses to overthrow British.
  - To arouse masses, he turned to Bankim’s Hinduism. Also emphasised on Shakti, which attracted him.
    - He wrote a pamphlet Bhavani Mandir (1905) which was inspired by Anand Math. He talked about Goddess Bhawani to link with Shivaji Maharaj.
  - *He was the first in India to declare that the aim of political action was to declare total independence from the foreign country.*
  - He played a critical role in formulating the policies of boycott and passive resistance including armed rebellion if needed. He was interested in forming secret associations, preparing for violence. With brother Barindra Ghosh, formed Anushilan Samiti.
  - In 1908, he was arrested in the Alipore Conspiracy Case and was acquitted in 1909. After the release, he tried to revive the nationalist movement and to that end, he started two journals – Karmayogi in English and Dharma in Bengali.
  - But he soon realized that the nation was not ready for such a movement. His Uttarpara speech (1909) marks the transition from political journey to spiritual one. He went to Pondicherry in 1910 to pursue spiritual goal and remained there until his death in 1950.
- Lala Lajpat Rai (Punjab)
- He had attended Allahabad Congress of 1898. He was sent to England in 1905 with Gokhale to canvass British political opinion for reforms in India. But he shared Tilak’s views on moderate policy of mendicancy and compromise.
  - In 1886, he helped in setting up Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School at Lahore. Himself Arya Samajist of College faction, he was unhappy over Congress efforts to win over Muslims.

Aurobindo was convinced that imitation of Europe was not at all conducive to India’s regeneration. He argued “For a nation which is not attempting to imprint its personality on such a movement is moving towards self-sterilization and death.”

He, therefore, exhorted the Indian people to uphold the Sanatana Dharma which was the essence of their national personality. “I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it, it moves and grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma.... That is nationalism”.

- This issue came to head when INC refused to take stance on **Punjab Land Alienation Act 1900**.
- He was **deported to Mandalay** in 1907 without trial for taking part in political agitation in Punjab.
- Believing that it was important to explain India's position to the world, he left for **Britain** in 1914. At this time, World War I broke out and he was unable to return to India, and therefore he then left for the **USA** to gather support for the Indian cause. In the USA, he founded the **Indian League of America** in 1917 and wrote a book called '**Young India**'.
- After coming **back to India**, he once again plunged into national struggle. He was brutally assaulted by the British police while opposing the Simon Commission in 1928
- His prominent works include:
  - Story of My Deportation (1908)
  - United States of America: A Hindu's Impression (1916)
  - England's Debt to India (1917)



## Critical Analysis of the Contribution of the Extremists:

### 1. Success

The extremists transformed the anti-British character of Indian national movement completely.

- a. The first and the foremost contribution of the extremists was the significant contribution to the **growth of concept of nationalism**. The imagery of India as the mother in bondage and the sacred duty of her children to free her continued to inspire the generations of patriots. They added cultural dimension to the national movement.
- b. With **great personal sacrifice and suffering**, the extremist leaders inspired a large number of people to work for the national movement. Tilak was the first to defy the British by opposing the repressive policies and gladly suffered 18 months of rigorous imprisonment. It was the first act of major defiance from among the political leaders of the new generation and he was hailed overnight as Lokmanya for it and emerged as the national icon.
- c. The movement started to **become mass-movement**, as a result of efforts made by extremists. Common sections of urban population, women etc started participating in national struggle.
- d. They gave **new programs and methods** of struggle to the national movement. Extremist brought anti British struggle in streets, during moderate phase it was limited to conference halls and chambers.
- e. Rise of extremists **infused remarkable energy** in anti-British struggle. Government came under serious pressure as a result of which the process of constitutional reforms gained speed. The enactment of reform Act of 1909 and 1919 can be cited as an example.

### 2. Limitations

- a. The extremist leaders **failed to appreciate the contribution of moderates**. They criticized moderated as weak nationalists and mendicants. This extremely critical attitude towards moderates resulted in serious ideological divide in the Congress. The Surat Split in 1907 was the outcome of the same.
- b. The use of **religious programs and slogans** by extremists adversely affected the secular character of national movement. It allowed the critics of Congress to portray it was a Hindu organization.
  - i. At times, the extremists' anger at Muslim collaboration with the British spurred them to engage in overtly anti-Muslim activity, heedless of the fact that in doing so they were ruining the chances of creating a united anti-British movement. It has been argued that it was one of the reasons for the formation of Muslim League in 1906. While it is true that Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan had dissociated himself from Congress quite earlier in 1887-88, the

religious nature of the new nationalism certainly contributed to further alienation of Muslim leaders and masses.

- ii. However, it should be noted that there were many shadings of views among Extremists. Some were quite insensitive to Muslim sensibilities, while others were not.
- c. The **reactionary elements** among the extremist sometimes took frontstage. The Age of Consent Act created the impression as if extremists were against social reforms.
- d. Despite all fury and bravado, and immense amount of personal sacrifice, the extremists **couldn't really build up a mass movement**. It was only during the anti-partition movement that they were able to mobilize masses to a respectable scale.
- e. They took **ambivalent stance towards the issue of violence**.
  - i. Aurobindo, of course, didn't rule out violent methods.
  - ii. Even Tilak had consistently taken an ambivalent attitude on the issue of violence though he never openly supported the violence methods.
  - iii. When Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported, they inspired a new revolutionary movement which became Ghadar movement.
  - iv. It is argued that extremists became the ideological progenitor of the violent revolutionary movement which subsequently emerged and occupied some of the space vacated by extremists on the national stage.

### **Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920): Address to the Indian National Congress, 1907**

Two new words have recently come into existence with regard to our politics, and they are *Moderates* and *Extremists*. These words have a specific relation to time, and they, therefore, will change with time. **The Extremists of today will be Moderates tomorrow, Just as the Moderates of today were Extremists yesterday.** When the National Congress was first started and Mr. Dadabhai's views, which now go for Moderates, were given to the public, he was styled an Extremist, so that you will see that the term Extremist is an expression of progress. We are Extremists today and our sons will call themselves Extremists and us Moderates. Every new party begins as Extremists and ends as Moderates. The sphere of practical politics is not unlimited. We cannot say what will or will not happen 1,000 years hence - perhaps during that long period, the whole of the white race will be swept away in another glacial period. We must, therefore, study the present and work out a program to meet the present condition.

It is impossible to go into details within the time at my disposal. One thing is granted, namely, that this government does not suit us. As has been said by an eminent statesman - the government of one country by another can never be a successful, and therefore, a permanent government. **There is no difference of opinion about this fundamental proposition between the old and new schools.** One fact is that this alien government has ruined the country. In the beginning, all of us were taken by surprise. We were almost dazed. We thought that everything that the rulers did was for our good and that this English government has descended from the clouds to save us from the invasions of Tamerlane and Chingis Khan, and, as they say, not only from foreign invasions but from internecine warfare, or the internal or external invasions, as they call it. . . . **We are not armed, and there is no necessity for arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott.** We have perceived one fact, that the whole of this administration, which is carried on by a handful of Englishmen, is carried on with our assistance. We are all in subordinate service. This whole government is carried on with our assistance and they try to keep us in ignorance of our power of cooperation between ourselves by which that which is in our own hands at present can be claimed by us and administered by us. The point is to have the entire control in our hands. I want to have the key of my house, and not merely one stranger turned out of it. **Self-government is our goal; we want a control over our administrative machinery. We don't want to become clerks and remain [clerks].** At present, we are clerks and willing instruments of our own oppression in the hands of an alien government, and that government is ruling over us not by its innate strength but by keeping us in ignorance and blindness to the perception of this fact. Professor Seeley shares this view. Every Englishman knows that they are a mere handful in this country and it is the business of every one of them to befool you in believing that you are weak and they are strong. This is politics. We have been deceived by such policy so long. What the new party

wants you to do is to realize the fact that your future rests entirely in your own hands. If you mean to be free, you can be free; if you do not mean to be free, you will fall and be forever fallen. So many of you need not like arms; but if you have not the power of active resistance, have you not the power of self-denial and self-abstinence in such a way as not to assist this foreign government to rule over you? This is boycott and this is what is meant when we say, boycott is a political weapon. We shall not give them assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when time comes we shall not pay taxes. Can you do that by your united efforts? If you can, you are free from tomorrow. Some gentlemen who spoke this evening referred to half bread as against the whole bread. I say I want the whole bread and that immediately. But if I can not get the whole, don't think that I have no patience.

I will take the half they give me and then try for the remainder. This is the line of thought and action in which you must train yourself. We have not raised this cry from a mere impulse. It is a reasoned impulse. Try to understand that reason and try to strengthen that impulse by your logical convictions. I do not ask you to blindly follow us. Think over the whole problem for yourselves. If you accept our advice, we feel sure we can achieve our salvation thereby. This is the advice of the new party. Perhaps we have not obtained a full recognition of our principles. Old prejudices die very hard. Neither of us wanted to wreck the Congress, so we compromised, and were satisfied that our principles were recognized, and only to a certain extent. That does not mean that we have accepted the whole situation. We may have a step in advance next year, so that within a few years our principles will be recognized, and recognized to such an extent that the generations who come after us may consider us Moderates. This is the way in which a nation progresses, and this is the lesson you have to learn from the struggle now going on. This is a lesson of progress, a lesson of helping yourself as much as possible, and if you really perceive the force of it, if you are convinced by these arguments, then and then only is it possible for you to effect your salvation from the alien rule under which you labor at this moment.

## Handout 27: Swadeshi Movement

Nikhil Sheth

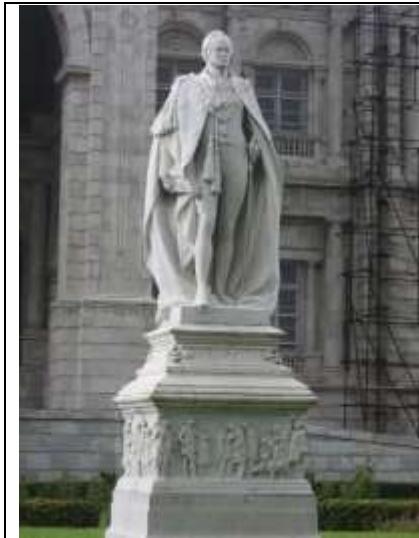
### Lord Curzon's Initiatives

*"As long as we rule India, we are the greatest power in the world. If we lose it, we shall drop straightaway to a third-rate power." – Curzon, 1902*

*Curzon's efforts 'to win the goodwill of people, and to prevent any powerful combination between them and the educated middle classes'. – Bipinchandra Pal*

Curzon's regime was responsible for creating a certain kind of militancy, a certain kind of disillusionment about British rule for its despotic pretensions. The net result was the beginning of quite a new phase in the history of Indian nationalism with the struggle against the Partition of Bengal.

- Second Delhi Durbar, 1903 (Edward VII)
- **Aggressive foreign policy** (last phase of Great Game)
  - Curzon believed Russia to be the most likely threat to British India.
  - Persia and West Asia: Flag-Waving Mission to the Gulf by Curzon himself
  - Afghanistan: Louis Dane Mission (1904)
  - Younghusband expedition to Tibet under Francis Younghusband in 1903–04
- **Economic Reforms**
  - Indian famine of 1899–1900 → McDonald Committee
  - Remissions of land revenue after the famine of 1899–1900
  - The salt tax was reduced, and the income-tax exemption limit raised from Rs 500 to Rs 1000 a year in 1903–04.
  - Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1900
    - Restricted transfer of property to urban moneylenders
  - Department of Agriculture was constituted in 1901
  - Irrigation Commission, 1901 (Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff)
  - Cooperatives Credit Societies Act, 1904
  - Agricultural Research Institute at Pusa in Samastipur, Bihar, 1905
  - Thomas Robertson Railway Commission, 1901 → appointment of Railway board
    - 6100 miles of new lines (the greatest expansion under any Viceroy)



Statue of Curzon, Victoria Memorial

- Department of Commerce and Industry
- **Administrative Reforms**
  - Creation of North-West Frontier Province, 1901
  - Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904
    - He commissioned the restoration of the Taj Mahal to its old glory which was until then severely neglected.
    - Curzon did show a genuine interest in India's ancient monuments.
  - Police Commission under Sir Andrew Fraser, 1902
    - Significant improvements in the number, training and salaries of the police force at an additional expenditure of Rs 15 million annually.
    - A separate Department of Criminal Intelligence was also set up to tackle political crimes, in place of Thuggee and Dacoity Department.
  - Calcutta Corporation Act, 1899
    - It reduced the number of elected Indian members.
  - Raleigh University Commission, 1902 → Indian Universities Act, 1904
    - The number of unofficial members was reduced in the university senate by this Act. Curzon tried to bring higher education in India under complete government control and restrict it to a handful of people.
  - Official Secrets Act, 1904
    - The native press was denied access to information on the ground that these were official secret.
  - Partition of Bengal, 1905

## Partition of Bengal

*"The partition of Bengal is an administrative measure aimed at improving governance and promoting efficient administration in the region." – Lord Curzon*

*"Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull in several different directions." – HH Risley*

*"The partition of Bengal is an insult to the unity and cultural heritage of our people." – Aurobindo Ghosh*

The Bengal Presidency as an administrative unit was increasing in size with the accretion of territories through conquest and annexation. Its borders touched Sutlej in the west and Arakan mountains in the east. At this time, the province of Bengal was comprising Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Its total population was 80 million and the capital was Calcutta.

Thus, the presidency was indeed of an unwieldy size and therefore the necessity to partition Bengal was being discussed since the time of the Orissa famine of 1866. From 1870s onwards, there were several attempts with different plans about how to reduce the size of the Bengal presidency to a manageable size.

### Earlier Plans: Administrative efficiency and convenience.

- In 1874 Assam was separated with 3 million people as Chief Commissioner's province. Three Bengali-speaking areas, i.e., Sylhet, Goalpara and Cachar, were also added to it.
- HH Risley, the home secretary during Curzon's regime, came up with another proposal to separate the East Bengal districts (Dacca, Rajshahi, Myemensingh) and attach them with Assam.
- The concerns were: Safeguarding the interests of Assam, rather than weakening Bengal, was an important consideration behind the policy decision at this stage. Thus, making Assam a viable administrative unit came to occupy British administrative attention.
  - It would reduce the **excessive administrative burden** of Bengal Government.
  - It would **solve the problem of Assam** which would become a Lt. governor's province with **separate civil service cadre**.
  - Substantial commercial benefits, as the interest of **tea gardeners, oil and coal industries** would be safeguarded. Assam planters would be having a **cheaper maritime outlet** through the port of Chittagong.
  - **Assam Bengal railways** would be brought under a single administration as it is extremely vital for economic development of Northeastern India.



All these plans indicate certain kind of administrative concern. However, when province of Bengal was partitioned by the government of lord Curzon in 1905, it didn't follow these plans.

### **Actual Plan of Partition: Demographic details**

- **West Bengal** was made weaker by clubbing together Bengal, Bihar and Odisha with Calcutta as the capital. Its population was 54m.
  - It was a Hindu majority province – 42m Hindus, 9m Muslims
  - 18m Bengalis, 36m non-Bengalis
- **East Bengal** consisted of regions like Dacca, Rajshahi, Malda, Chittagong along with Assam. Its capital was Dacca and the total population was 31m.
  - 18m Muslims, 12m Hindus

### Real political intention

- The manner in which the lines were drawn clearly indicated a communal basis and not administrative. It was to reduce the strength of Bhadralok nationalism.
- The province of Bengal was in forefront in anti-British struggle. The level of nationalist awakening was highest among the Bengal Hindus. Calcutta was the main centre of nationalist activity. Bengali bhadraloks were providing the leadership in the nationalist movement. Also, the spread of unity between Hindus and Muslims in Bengal was the main source of strength of Indian nationalism.
- Thus, the partition was planned in such way that:
  - Bengalis could be converted into linguistic minority in the west and religious minority in the east.
  - It would also shatter the Hindu-Muslim unity. "*Muslim unity never enjoyed since long time under Nawabs/Mughals*" Openly trying to encourage Muslim communalism.

Partition of Bengal was a master stroke of Curzon's internal policy. He wanted to counter the growing strength of Indian nationalism by dividing Bengal along cultural and religious lines. But the real consequences were completely different. While formulating partition, he didn't imagine the extent of reaction, he underestimated it.

The partition instead of dividing in weakening the Bengalis further united them through an anti-partition agitation. Instead of weakening Indian nationalism, it infused new energy in anti-British struggle. The spirit of radicalism and anti-British discontent lying in heart and mind of people came out in Anti-partition agitation.

## Phases of Swadeshi Movement

The agitation against the partition had started in 1903 but became stronger and more organised after the scheme was finally announced and implemented in 1905. The initial aim was to secure the annulment of partition, but it soon enlarged into a more broad-based movement, known as the Swadeshi movement, touching upon wider political and social issues.

It was now that the Indians stood against not only the partition of Bengal but against the Raj itself. This coming together of Indians was unprecedented and was a jolt for the British government and for Britain as a nation, as nothing of this sort had happened in previous five decades. It became the first all-India movement under Congress leadership.

### **First Phase (1903-05): Moderate Trend**

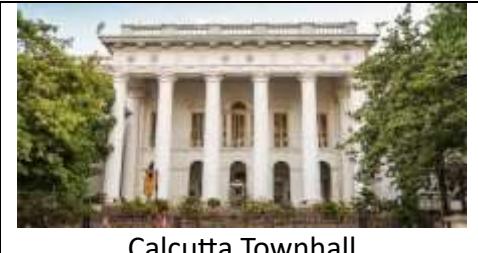
- The government's decision to partition Bengal had been **made public in December 1903**.
- This phase was dominated by the moderates.
  - **Leaders:** Surendranath Banerjea, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Anandmohan Bose, Prithwischandra Ray etc.
  - The **objective** was to exert sufficient pressure on the government through an educated public opinion in India and England to prevent the unjust partition of Bengal from being implemented.
  - Their **methods** included:
    - Petitions and signature campaigns, speeches, lectures and writing in order to appeal to the conscience of the British.
    - Signature campaign was signed by as many as 70,000 people.

Newspaper	Editors
Hitabadi	Dwijendranath Tagore
Bengalee	Surendranath Banerjee
Sanjeevani	Krishna Kumar Mitra
New India (weekly)	Bipin Chandra Pal
Bande Mataram	Aurobindo
Sandhya	Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya
Jugantar	Bhupendranath Dutta
Indian Mirror	
Anand Bazar Patrika	Sisir Kumar Ghosh

### **Timeline:**

- **19 July:** The plan of the partition was **officially announced**.
  - Thus, the failures of moderates and their methods were evident. Now the mood of the people became radical, and the **movement slipped out of the grasp of the moderates**.
- August: **Curzon resigned** and left India. **Lord Minto II** became the next Governor General (1905-10).

- **7 August:** *Townhall meeting*, Calcutta
  - With the passage of the Boycott Resolution in a massive meeting held in the Calcutta Townhall, the formal proclamation of the Swadeshi Movement was made.
  - Soon, the leaders dispersed to other parts of Bengal to propagate the message of boycott of Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt.
- **16 October:** The Partition plan came into force. It was the Day of Partition.
  - It was observed as a day of mourning throughout Bengal. Shops and marketplaces were shut for the day.
  - On Tagore's suggestion as a mark of unity the partition day was observed as **Raksha Bandhan Day**. People fasted, bathed in the Ganga and walked barefoot in processions singing '**Vande Mataram**', which almost spontaneously became the theme song of the movement.
  - '**Amar Sonar Bangla**', the national anthem of present-day Bangladesh, was composed by Rabindranath Tagore, and was sung by huge crowds marching in the streets.
  - **Anandmohan Bose** addressed the crowd of 50,000 and pledged to maintain the unity of Bengal.



Calcutta Townhall

### Second Phase (1905-06): Constructive Swadeshi

The methods of the second phase were starting of non-political programs under **constructive Swadeshi**, which signified the rejection of the mendicant politics in favour of self-help. These steps at self-reliance were termed as **Atmashakti by Tagore**.

It meant a certain kind of self-strengthening movement – strengthening the cultural basis of Indian society, economic foundation of India through self-help measures by philanthropic societies, volunteer corps and cooperative groups.

One of the other features of this movement was the revival of pride in everything indigenous like the use of vernacular language, beginning of Swadeshi enterprises, national education and so on. The constructive work under Swadeshi contributed to socio-economic regeneration of villages and mobilising the masses.



Tagore was the main ideologue of constructive swadeshi, and programme of atmashakti. Thus, he is called the great poet of the Swadeshi movement.

#### **(1) Economic Aspect:**

Swadeshi meant reliance on indigenous products and encouragement to indigenous Industries. By itself the concept of Swadeshi was floated a long time ago by leaders of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and Arya Samaj. Such attempts had started early, and the notable initial efforts in this regard were **Prafullachandra Ray's Bengal Chemicals** started in 1893, and **Rabindranath Tagore's Swadeshi Bhandar** in 1897. However, now it received necessary

political action and practical public platform for support. After 1905, swadeshi was popularized with a new energy and sense of purpose.

The swadeshi programme developed along two lines:

- **Reviving traditional crafts** that had been destroyed by competition from British goods
  - The revival of Indian crafts and a rise in demand stimulated handloom-weaving
  - Educated young men were taught the art of weaving and the fly shuttle loom was popularized through training centres.
  - There was also a partial revival of silkweaving in Murshidabad and Pabna.
- Building large-scale indigenous **industrial enterprise** on modern/western lines.
  - Textile mills: Mohini Mills of Kushtia, The Calcutta Weaving Company, the Tripura Company etc.
  - Leather industry: Dr. Nilratan Sircar founded the National Tannery, where new technologies of tanning were introduced.
  - Consumer articles: soap, matches, cheap cigarettes, buttons, candles, paper and sugar
  - Banking and insurance: Bengal National Bank in 1908, National Insurance Company in 1906
  - Inland trade: Bengal Steam Navigation Company in 1905
  - By 1909, Congress started printing the Directory of Indian Goods and Industries.
  - **See more initiatives in the regional section**



## (2) National Education

The other aspect was the building up of a parallel and independent system of 'national education', which used vernacular languages, instead of English, as the medium of communication.

Participation in the Swadeshi movement by the student community was met with repression by the British. The **Carlyle Circular of October 1905** is one example of repressive action by British that threatened student activists with disciplinary action. Consequently, the need was felt to develop national education and leaders began to work in this direction.

### Revivalist Aspects:

- Early nationalists had welcomed the spread of western education through English, initiated on a limited scale by the British government. However, the Swadeshi movement was more closely associated with an Extremist criticism of this system, because it neglected vernacular languages and 'indigenous values' in education.
- Rabindranath's Shantiniketan (1901) had also started on similar revivalist lines, but later broadened its vision and became Viswabharati (1921), a progressive university. For Tagore, educational reform was a crucial form of political activism in itself, because it would ensure that the movement reaches the masses.

### Encouragement to technical education and western science:

- **A National Council of Education** was set up in Calcutta in 1906 which designed primary, secondary and collegiate courses, which would combine literary and scientific education with technical training.

- The most important educational institution of the movement was the **Bengal National College and School**, 1906, with Aurobindo Ghosh as its principal.
- **Bengal Technical Institute** was established.
- Most noteworthy was the **proliferation of national schools** in districts and mofussil areas in vernacular language.
  - **Aswini Kumar Dutta**, a school-teacher of Barisal, through consistent social-work built up a strong mass-following for the Swadeshi-boycott movement in his district.

### (3) Cultural dimension

Swadeshi movement, crucially, helped in the imagination of the national cultural identity, which would support political mobilization against imperialist Britain. Therefore this period was uniquely characterized by intellectual upsurge and cultural efflorescence which articulated itself in literature, theatre, songs, poetry and art.

- An interest in **folk traditions** was also revived. In Thakurmar Jhuli (Grandmother's Tales), Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar compiled numerous fairy tales.
- The **patriotic songs** written by Tagore, Mukunda Das and Rajani Kanta Sen are popular even today.
- **Traditional folk theatre** forms like Jatras were used to spread the message of Swadeshi.
- **Historical research** progressed in the colleges burgeoning with bright young graduates. Akshoykumar Maitra wrote biographies of Sirajoddoula and Mir Kasim and founded the journal *Aitihasik Chitra* and the Varendra Research Society.
- The **scientific achievements** of P. C. Ray and J. C. Bose's discoveries in Plant Response became the source of great patriotic pride.
- **Indian art** in the late 19th century had come to be characterized by Victorian naturalism. However, artists like Abanindranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose made a conscious break from Western aesthetics by borrowing from Japanese artists and exploring indigenous Mughal, Rajput and Ajanta traditions.



Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951) became principal of the Art College of Kolkata in 1898. He founded the influential Bengal school of art, which led to the development of modern Indian painting: Swadeshi Chitrakala.

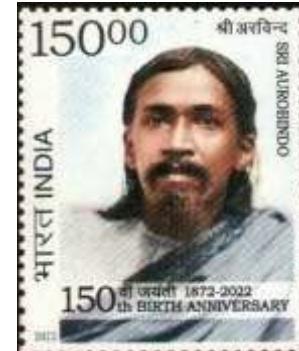
### Third Phase (1906-08): Political Extremism

The movement began to take **extremist & militant undertones** and came directly under the influence of extremist leaders.

- The main **leaders** of this phase were Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal. They held that without freedom no real regeneration of national life was possible.
- Now, **Swaraj** became the demand and not just constitutional reforms. It emerged in the imagination of many nationalists as the ultimate ideal.

## Boycott

- Swadeshi spirit articulated itself through the idea of boycott. It was a new kind of political language of extremists. The moderates were also unable to ignore the deep impact the idea of boycott was making on public mind.
- It was first suggested in Krishna Kumar Mitra's journal, Sanjibani in July 1905. It included boycott and public burning of foreign cloth, boycott of foreign-made salt or sugar, refusal by priests to ritualise marriages involving exchange of foreign goods, refusal by washermen to wash foreign clothes. This form of protest met with great success at the practical and popular level.
- The idea was to **hit Britain where it hurt most** – economy. The pecuniary loss was sure to hurt Britain and the government would be compelled to take correct measure.
- A section of **Indian business class** also saw it as an opportunity to boost sale of their indigenous products. They, along with workers of the textile mills, joined the boycott and bonfire of fire cloth wholeheartedly.
- **Debate surrounding Boycott:**
- **Moderates** were inclined to limit it as **an economic boycott only** – to the boycott of British goods.
- **Extremists** – in broader sense, boycott of British institutions also. It was a more comprehensive rejection of imperialism, and not merely the imported commodities.
  - **Aurobindo** denounced the self-help movements, swadeshim as inadequate. He visualized the **extension of boycott to a systematic non-cooperation**. British institutions such as legislative councils, municipalities, government services and, development of indigenous alternatives to be boycotted. For him boycott was the **first step towards passive resistance**. Passive resistance meant an extension of boycott beyond British goods to include the boycott of schools and colleges, law courts, government service and legislative posts.
  - With this, many samitis set up arbitration boards in rural Bengal, to settle local disputes. (e.g. Swadesh Bandhab Samiti at Bakarganj under the leadership of Ashvini Kumar Dutta)
- **Passive → Active Resistance**
- Aurobindo soon pleaded that the prevailing situation in India called for active resistance. It was the ultimate political strategy which Aurobindo propounded as the theory of organised and relentless boycott including civil disobedience of unjust laws if required. It would shake the foundation of British hegemony in India. He argued that the time had come for the Indians to defy the laws of the Empire if these laws were not acceptable to them too violent illegitimate laws of the empire.
- '*the essential difference passive/defensive and active/aggressive resistance is this: while the method of aggressive resistor is to do something by which one can bring about positive harm to the government, the method of a passive resistor is to abstain from doing something by which he would be helping the government.*'
- Even **individual violence**, if necessary, was to be pursued. These individual acts of violence were to setup examples for people to rise up in an **open rebellion** against the imperial state.
- He popularized these ideas through **Bande Mataram** newspaper.



### **Organisation of Samitis: (Volunteer bodies)**

- Samitis was one of the major innovations during the Swadeshi age.
  - The success of the boycott depended on popular mobilization.
  - The purpose of the samitis was to gather support by mobilising people and training them in physical and moral aspects.
- Different types some of the samities
  - Philanthropic samitis
  - Self-help societies following the atma-shakti ideal that Tagore
  - Physical culture societies (akharas)
    - The history of physical culture movement can be traced to the 1890s when the whole cult of manliness was propagated by the lay followers of Vivekananda who actually called upon his followers to cultivate manliness by practicing asceticism.

### **Some important Samitis: (In 1907, the police reported 19 samitis in Kolkata)**

Swadesh Bandhab Samiti	Ashwini Kumar Dutta
Anushilan Samiti	Pramatha Mitra
Dacca Anushilan Samiti	Pulin Das
Jugantar Group (Calcutta based Anushilan Samiti)	Khudiram Bose, Ulhaskar Dutta, Tarkanath Das, Barinda Kumar Ghosh, Prafulla Chaki
Midnapur Secret Society	
Atmonnyati Samiti	
Swadeshi Sangam, Tirunelveli (TN)	V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva

- These samitis generated political consciousness among the masses through:
  - Magic lantern lectures
  - Promotion of Swadeshi songs, plays and poetry
  - Providing physical and moral training to their members
  - Social work during famines and epidemics
  - Organisation of schools
  - Training in swadeshi crafts and arbitration courts.

In this phase, atma-shakti turned into **revivalism**.

- **Religious symbols and mythology** were looked upon for inspiration. Such symbols were **deemed necessary to connect with the larger society**.
- In 1906, Tilak came down to Calcutta and the Shivaji festival was celebrated in the city with great enthusiasm. **Saraladevi** introduced the **Veerashktami** celebration as a festival of the youth. In imitation of the Shivaji festival of Maharashtra, Saraladevi started a new festival in Bengal in honour of the memory of **King Pratapaditya of Jessore**.

### **One major innovation in the Swadeshi age: Labour Movement**

- First intimation of an organized trade union movement undertaken by the Swadeshi leaders
  - Attempts by some of the solicitors like Ashvini Kumar Banerjee or Prabhat Kusum Raychawdhary in Calcutta to set up trade unions.
  - Between 1905-1908 are several instances of strikes in the **jute mill**.
  - **Jamalpur railway workshop**, a strike was organized for the first time.

- Establishment of the **printers union** after a prolonged strike in the government printing presses.
- Establishment of the **Railwayman's Union** around 1907-08 when some of the striking railway workers form the union.
- Other Regions:
  - Tilakites involved in labour mobilization in Bombay
  - Extremists were also involved in the famous Tuticorin strike in Tirunelveli district

## Swadeshi outside Bengal:

Maharashtra	Lokmanya Tilak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Aspects           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha – Swadeshi store in Bombay by Tilak and Tatas</li> <li>○ Godrej started with surgical instruments and Desi Typewriter</li> <li>○ Tilak raised contribution called the Paisa Fund for training men in industrial work, and formed the Paisa Fund Glass Works at Talegaon in Pune in 1905.</li> <li>○ TISCO was established in 1907</li> <li>○ Around same time, Laxmanrao Kirloskar was trying hard to kickstart his idea of a better variety of plough to help our farmers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Labour mobilization by the Tilakites in Bombay: The militancy of the working-class was revealed when there was a massive upsurge by Bombay workers against Tilak's arrest in a 9 July 1908</li> <li>• In Bengal, Swadeshi movement had more economic context while in Maharashtra, religious revivalism was more pronounced.</li> </ul>
Punjab	Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1907 Unrest: Pre-existing discontent among the peasants due to Chenab Canal Colony Bill. It was fierce form which led to severe cracked down: both leaders, Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai, were deported.</li> <li>• Foundation of Punjab National Bank by Lala Harkishen Lal</li> </ul>
United Province	Motilal Nehru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More emphasis over constructive swadeshi. Moderate politics continued to be important in the region.</li> <li>• In North Indian towns, swadeshi ideology or extremist beliefs actually did not have much of an impact. But the Bengali immigrants there created swadeshi outfits and some of these swadeshi outfits became eventually nucleus of secret society movements at a later stage.</li> </ul>
Delhi	Syed Haider Raza	
Madras	Chidambaram Pillai, Subramanyam Bharathi and Subramaniya Siva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of Bipin Chandra Pal's tour of Madras Presidency (1907) was electrifying. His speeches on Marina beach were attended by thousands.</li> <li>• In 1906, VOC registered a joint stock company called The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company (SSNC)</li> <li>• <b>Subramaniam Bharati's</b> newspaper <b>Swadesamitran</b> extensively reported nationalist activities, particularly the news regarding VOC and his speeches in Tuticorin.</li> <li>• Labour movement in Tirunelveli</li> </ul>

## Surat Split (1907)

The ideological differences between moderates and extremists were intensified by the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi movement. There emerged significant differences regarding the manner in which the agitation should be carried out, culminating into the split in Congress at the Surat Session of 1907. In this session, the extremists were expelled from the Congress by the. It was significant setback for anti-British struggle and the national movement lost at least one decade because of it.

### **Reasons:**

When swadeshi started, moderates came under pressure from the extremists to adopt the method of mass agitation. There was a tug-of-war between them following two important issues:

Issues	Moderates	Extremists
Regional Spread	Confine the movement to Bengal only. It is a regional issue.	All India movement to protests against partition of Bengal. It is not a regional but a national issue.
Method of protest	Confine boycott only to British goods.	Extend boycott to other spheres of life also if required.

There were ideological difference between the moderates and the extremists with respect to the visions of India's struggle against British rule. Despite the differences the two were working together. However, gradually as the failure of moderates in getting the annulment of the partition became apparent, the extremists became more influential and started to put pressure.

<b>1905 (21)</b>	<b>Benares</b>	<b>GK Gokhale</b>
In this session, the differences came to the fore for the first time. By adopting mild resolutions condemning the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon and supporting the swadeshi and boycott programme in Bengal, a split in the Congress was averted for the moment.		
<b>1906 (22)</b>		
<b>Calcutta</b>		
<b>Dadabhai Naoroji</b>		
The real issue in all India politics in 1906 was how far the radicalism generated by Swadeshi movement in Bengal was to be incorporated into the future politics of Congress on all India theatre.		
<b>Issue of election of the President:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Extremists were more organized and created pressure over moderates to nominate Tilak as the president. Gokhale and Mehta were not ready and thus tried to outwit them by nominating grand old man of India Dadabhai Naoroji.</li></ul>		
<b>Swadeshi Resolutions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In Calcutta session in spite of opposition of Gokhale and Mehta Tilak and Bengal extremist group scored a resounding victory with the help of Bengal moderates. In various committees, extremists called the shots – and got the <i>chatusutri</i> passed</li></ul>		

- Swaraj
- Swadeshi
- Boycott
- National education
- The Bombay moderates were not in favour of these resolutions but they had no option but to reluctantly agree due to insistence of extremists as well as moderates of Bengal. They felt at the end that they were humiliated and defeated, they returned home with sullen mind. But the split was averted again.

<b>1907 (23)</b>	<b>Surat</b>	<b>Suspended Session, Rash Behari Ghosh</b>
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So, when Surat session commenced in 1907 the moderates and extremists were formally determined to establish their control over Congress. The moderates wanted to take back the resolutions adopted at Calcutta in 1906. On the other hand, the extremists wanted their candidate should be president so as to keep intact the Calcutta resolutions.

#### **Issue of the Venue**

- 1907 session was planned at Pune, but it was a hotbed of extremism. So, at the last moment, Mehta and Gokhale changed the venue to Surat.

#### **Issue of election of the President and Calcutta Resolutions**

- **Lala Lajpat Rai** has returned from Mandalay and extremist proposed his name is the next congress president while the moderate candidate was **Rash Behari Ghosh**.
- But Lala Lajpat Rai, who did not want a split refused to accept the nomination and hence the ultimate fight between the two contending groups boiled down to the question of either acceptance or rejection of the four Calcutta resolution.
- Mehta conspired to keep the resolution out of the Congress agenda while the extremist decided to oppose the nomination of Ghosh if resolutions were not retained.

#### **The session:**

- Tilak tried to address the session but he was prevented from doing so. The open session of Congress at Surat ended in a pandemonium over the election of Rash Behari Ghosh
- Police was waiting outside for the same. Extremist were pulled out and moderates adopted a resolution for their expulsion leading to Surat split.
- But even after this incident Tilak was willing to reunite the Congress but Mehta seemed intransigent, as he wanted to reconstitute the party by purging the extremist elements, a task which he accomplished at the following **Allahabad convention** in 1908. Only moderate attended this session where they reiterated their loyalty to the British Raj. They changed the constitutions of Congress to expel the extremists and took complete control of the Organization.

## **Impact of Surat Split**

- Surat split was **great setback for India's struggle** against British rule. The atmosphere of political activism prevailing in the country got transformed into **political passivism**.
  - Congress was weakened at this stage and became an ineffective body. The extremist politics could not crystallize into a new political organisation. The two factions could again come together after one decade at Lucknow in 1916 and the Congress was revitalized only when Gandhi took the leadership in 1920.
- Surat split was great **success of British**. What they had failed to achieve through Partition of Bengal, was achieved by them easily through Surat split.
- **Moderate** leadership was further **discredited**; and INC remained a club of a selected few.
- **Extremism** subsided and declined; and leaders were dispersed.
- Surat split resulted in sudden **decline of swadeshi movement**. Once the extremists were not in congress, Swadeshi lost its leadership and died out suddenly.
- Surat Split greatly **disillusioned the younger generation** of Indian nationalists. Many of them lost faith in the efficacy of peaceful methods of struggle. They realized that the British would never let the congress succeed. This disillusionment pushed many of the younger nationalists into the fold of **revolutionary extremism** to fill up the political vacuum.
- British feared the rising tide of extremism, so with an objective to weaken the national movement, the colonial government introduced the policy of **divide-and-rule** and fanned the rise of **communalism**.
- The Surat split taught a **tough lesson to Indian nationalists**. This bitter experience made them smarter for the future because when similar ideological differences developed after the withdrawal of the NCM, the opposing camps in the Congress worked consciously to avoid another split.



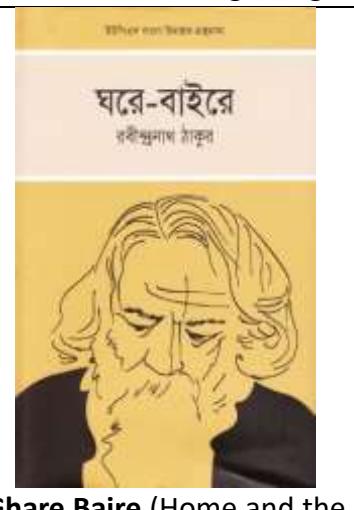
Sri Aurobindo presiding over a meeting of the Nationalists after the Surat Congress, with Tilak speaking, 1907

## **Fourth Phase (1908- ): Revolutionary Movement:**

Covered separately.

## Why did Swadeshi Movement Fail?

- British policy of carrot and stick (3-pronged strategy: repression-conciliation-suppression)
  - The extremists were to be repressed to frighten the moderates. There was **severe crackdown on the people**
    - Meetings and processions were banned, the government prohibited shouting of slogan 'Vande Mataram' in public places.
    - Laws regulating the press were enacted.
    - Those participating in the movement in any form were disqualified from government employment.
    - Student participants were expelled, fined and even beaten up by the police.
    - Police were given a free hand to launch physical assaults (lathi charge, caned, innumerable arrests & convictions).
  - **Moderates were then to be placated** through some limited concessions and hints of further concession if they disassociated themselves from the extremist. Lord Minto offered the bait of fresh reform in legislative council in the beginning of 1906.
  - The unity of the leadership was broken by the Surat Split of 1907. Once moderate fell into the trap, extremist were suppressed through use of full might of the state. Moderates could then be ignored.
  - **There was a severe crackdown on the Extremist leadership:** The prominent leaders were arrested, which rendered the movement leaderless.
    - 1907: Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported.
    - 1908: Krishna Kumar Mitra and Ashwini Kumar Dutt were deported.
    - 1908: Tilak was again arrested and sent to Mandalay Jail for six years.
    - 1908: Aurobindo put under trial
  - **Revolutionary extremism** was also cracked down.
    - Seditious Meetings Act, 1907
    - Indian Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908
    - Explosive Substances Act
    - Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908
    - Indian Press Act, 1910
- The Swadeshi alternatives were expensive, and people could hardly afford them. A time came when the local people refused to consume local products and continued to opt for imported products for the simple reason that they were cheaper. When there were attempts to enforce boycott on the rural population by forcing them to buy high-priced local goods, it created tensions.
- The methods of mass protests used were largely unfamiliar and new to both leaders and masses. It was primarily because of this failure of mass mobilization.



**Ghare Baire** (Home and the World) was a novel by Tagore which illustrates the political setup in the novel is the Swadeshi Movement and the novel brings out the essence of the movement.

- **Maintaining a high momentum** of mass struggle could not be sustained for a long time as fatigue began to appear.
- **Failure of the Samiti movement** to create a broad-based movement based on peasant support.
- **The lack of formal party structure** of the Congress was one of the causes for the failure.
- **Social composition**
  - Participation largely remained limited to **Hindu middle classes in towns**.
  - **Muslims** largely stayed away from this movement with some exceptions.
    - It was because of the following factors:
      - Curzon's partition plan soothed Muslim interests upto certain extent.
      - The boycott of British goods directly hit the common Muslim consumers by raising the prices of such essential commodities like cloth, shoes, and soaps while there was no Muslims trading class in Bengal which could take advantage of swadeshi slogans.
      - Use of religious symbols and mythology dissuaded some Muslims from participating in the movement.
  - **Workers' participation** was low.
    - There was no large-scale conscious attempt the enlist the support of industrial workers. The attempts remained limited to white-collar workers.
  - The Swadeshi movement **could not attract the peasants** of Bengal as the leaders did not adopt progressive agrarian programme. There was inherent class conflict between zamindars and peasants.

So, despite the great achievements of the Swadeshi movement, it remained an example of an inadequate mass politics.

### Real Contribution of the Swadeshi Movement

With petering out of the mass movement one era in the Indian freedom struggle was over. It would be wrong to see Swadeshi movement as a failure. Swadeshi movement transformed the character of anti-British struggle. Now, the extremist leaders were pushed to the fore front of Indian National movement.

- The **National movement assumed new aims and objectives** during the Swadeshi Movement. Concessions and reforms were no longer guiding the anti-British struggle. Congress adopted attainment of **Swaraj** as its objective.
- The age of memorandum and petitions was over and there started an era of agitation and revolution for pushing the demand. Nationalist **activities came out in the street**. Anti-British struggle was no longer limited to discussion chambers and conference halls.
- The movement **innovated several new methods and techniques of mass mobilization**. Hereafter, **swadeshi, and boycott** became the main weapon to be used by Indian nationalist against British rule.
  - Holding musical conferences, campaigning in countryside with the help of theatre performances, local folk jatras to spread Swadeshi message.
  - Samiti emerged as critical linkage between the masses and the leadership.
  - Labour movement was a new technique of mass mobilization.

- All of which eventually suggests the **first efforts by the nationalists to undertake mass mobilization**, although it didn't succeed in the way Aurobindo had visualized it. The armed revolution never happened but it did leave behind many examples bravery, heroism, self-sacrifice to inspire the later generations of freedom fighters as well.
  - The trends which were visible in the course of Swadeshi movement i.e. swadeshi, boycott, national education etc., resurfaced during subsequent period as well. It proved precursor to Gandhian programme as well.
- **Social and geographical base**
    - It took the idea of nationalism to many sections of people hitherto untouched by it. And by doing so it further eroded colonial legitimacy and institutions.
    - This was the **first all India movement under the leadership of the Congress**.
    - Swadeshi movement was the **first mass movement in the history of India's struggle** against British rule. For the first time students, women and other sections of urban population participated in nationalist struggle. This widened the social base of national movement greatly.
  - This movement encouraged **domestic industries**.
    - Various entrepreneurs showed interest in setting up domestic industries.
    - P.C. Ray setup 'Bengal Chemicals'
    - Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha – Tilak
    - TISCO was established in 1907
    - PNB in Lala Harkishan Lal
    - Chidambaram Pillai formed a Navigation Company.
  - It greatly **strengthened the cultural foundations of the National Movement**, because nationalist music, paintings, literature and education witnessed remarkable progress during swadeshi movement. Indigenous art was also promoted during the period.
    - Formation of **Bengal School of Painting**
      - Avanindranath Tagore tried to rejuvenate Mughal and Rajput paintings. (Bharat mata portrayal for the first time)
      - Nand Lal Bose made an important contribution in painting.
    - Rich collection of patriotic composition and dramatic performances
    - Scientific progress led by JC Bose and Prafulla Chandra Roy.
    - Vernacular languages too got a boost as newspapers were published by extremist leaders and revolutionary nationalists in the vernacular languages to promote radical ideas.
  - Swadeshi movement created an intellectual bridge between India and west.
  - British Response
    - The Act of 1909 was introduced under the pressure of the Swadeshi movement.
    - Under the pressure of the Swadeshi movement, the government withdrew the partition of Bengal in 1911.

**Handout 28: Politics of Separatism**

Nikhil Sheth

*Please remember, in granting separate electorates we are sowing the dragon's teeth and the harvest will be bitter. – Lord Morley*

**History of the formation of Muslim League**

During the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Muslim elites, particularly in northern India, had been activated by an acute community consciousness. But at the time when Muslim League was formed in 1906-07, some nationalist historians looked upon this as a sort of a command performance by the Muslim leaders at the prodding of Lord Minto.

**What is Command Performance?**

By 1906, Lord Minto had set up a committee to examine further constitutional reforms for India. This was followed by Morley's statement that some concrete steps were going to be taken to introduce the representative principle in the government in India.

October 1906, a **Delegation/Deputation** led by Agha Khan III met the Viceroy Minto at Shimla to impress upon him of the need of safeguarding rights and interests of Muslims in the promised elected representative body.

Three major demands:

- In any scheme of electoral representation, Muslims should get more representation than what their population warrants.
  - The position of the Indian Muslims should be determined not merely by their actual numbers but by the political importance and the services which it had rendered to the British empire in India.
- Muslims should be allowed to send their representatives to the new legislative councils through their separate electorates.
- Muslims should be given adequate representation in the local governing bodies and also in the higher services, both executive and judicial.



Lord Minto (1905-1910)



Lord Morley, SoS



Agha Khan III

The success of the Muslim deputation to Lord Minto made the Muslim leaders very confident.

- They now felt the need of forming a Congress-like all-India organization of their own for protecting their political rights and interests particularly when Swadeshi movement was now mounting high and threatening to undo the Partition of Bengal which had created for the first time a Muslim majority province in British India.

December 1906, Muslim League was formed in Dacca in All India Mohammedan Educational Conference. Its leaders were *Aga Khan, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Nawab Salimullah*.

Its objectives were:

- To protect the political rights and interests of the Muslims
  - Demand for separate electorates
  - Special safeguards for the Muslims in government services.
- To preach loyalty to the Raj
- To promote communal amity.

#### It was a command performance:

Many modern historians have described this deputation led by Aga Khan as a command performance, something which was engineered by the British government from behind the scenes with the object of widening the gulf between the Hindus and Muslims of India.



1906: Founders of the All India Muslim League after announcing the party's formation in Lucknow

- This **delegation was probably sponsored** by William Archbold, the Principal at Aligarh Anglo-Oriental College and Dunlop Smith, private secretary to Viceroy.
- **Lord Minto perhaps asked the delegates to set up an organization** and they decided to form the Muslim League.
- The formation of Muslim League in 1906 came **at the height of the Swadeshi movement**, exactly at the time when Swadeshi Movement needed greater support among Indians, including Muslims. It certainly introduced a very powerful dissenting element within the nationalist movement.
- The League soon became an **important British instrument to fight rising Indian nationalism.**
  - The League began to oppose every nationalist and democratic demand of the Congress.
  - Though the Muslim League and its upper class leaders had little in common with the interests of the Muslim masses, yet, the British encouraged the League to take up the leadership of the Muslim masses.

## It was not a command performance:

- **Politics of identity:** Throughout the 1890s there were some very important issues that had driven wedges in the relationship between the two communities (e.g. cow protection movement, Hindi-Urdu language controversy and Nagari circular in UP, Shuddhi movement, music-before-mosque riots). In this context, the politics of identity became very crucial.
- **Politics of privilege:** In northern India where Muslim elites, which constituted the erstwhile governing classes, had lost power under the British order due to their denial to accept western English education. Congress demands competitive exams; electoral principle of representation was seen as a threat.

### **(A) Developments in North India:**

It was responsible for Muslim elites to setup their own organizations.

- **Sayyid Ahmad Khan**, who had tried the United India Patriotic Association (1888) now formed **Mohammed Anglo-Oriental Defense Association (1893)** association with Theodore Beck.
  - The name itself actually suggests how there was an acute awareness about the need to defend the cultural identity of the Muslims elites.
- By the end of the decade, **Urdu Defence Association** was formed in 1899-1900 by **Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk**.

### **Emergence of Young Party at Aligarh**

The Muslim upper classes continued the trend of separatism set by Sayyid Ahmed Khan in the midst of the Anti-Partition agitation and the revolutionary movement.

Sir Sayyid had felt that by practicing loyalism to the British, it would be easier for the Muslim elites to extract advantages. They were successful to some extent. But the behaviour of the United Provinces government towards the close of the decade when they passed the **Nagari resolution (1900)** convinced some younger members that this loyalist strategy was not going to pay any more dividends.



Ali Brothers

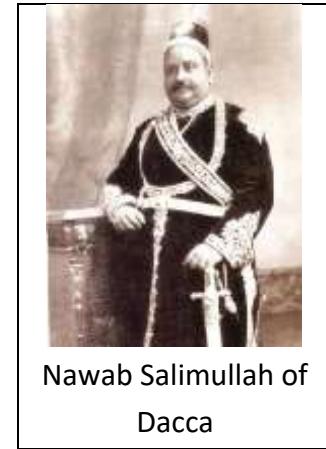
So, some followers of Sir Sayyid decided to discard the loyalist political line. Aligarh College had come under the new leadership of **Muhammad Ali** and **Shaukat Ali**. They sought the support of the ulemas to further their cause and were willing to move away from the British. They wanted a more assertive political action from the Muslim elites to get a better deal from the government. Thus, it was important for them to create an outfit to exert greater pressure

on the government in the same way that the Congress was doing. **Maulana Abdul Bari** became a moving spirit behind the new line of thinking.

But the old leaders like **Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk**, who had succeeded Sayid Ahmad Khan as the leader of Aligarh Movement, did not like the growing hiatus between the Muslims and the British. He started working to that end through the Mohammedan Educational Conference.

#### (B) Developments in Bengal:

- The British policy of divide and rule, by propping up the Muslims against the Congress, was fine-tuned by Lord Curzon, who carried it out with a rare brazenness by **partitioning Bengal in 1905**.
- The Partition of Bengal in 1905 created a new province in British India where Muslims formed a majority. This event **increased political awareness among Indian Muslims**. Despite some opposition from a few leaders, the Muslim community generally supported the partition as it provided political and economic advantages.
- The **Swadeshi Movement** further widened the gulf between the Hindus and Muslims as the creation of a new province of East Bengal was supposed to favour the Muslims, which the Swadeshi Movement sought to annul.
- By 1906, Swadeshi movement had reached a high crescendo and predictably the government adopted repressive measures. The first Lt. Governor of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, **Sir Joseph Bampfylde Fuller**, who was openly pro-Muslim, was particularly oppressive. Such measures created an extremely adverse reaction in the British press (including the liberal SoS John Morley) and there was a likelihood that Fuller would be forced to resign.



Nawab Salimullah of  
Dacca

The intensity of the Swadeshi movement, the Congress's acceptance of the boycott resolution and then the possibility of Fuller resigning were reasons for the Muslim elites of Eastern Bengal to feel somewhat nervous about the future. So, there was an initiative on the part Muslim leaders to defend the partition. Thus, there was emergency to form a separate organization of the Muslims.

**So, these two developments (Aligarh and Bengal) converged to create the political process that eventually led to the formation of the Muslim League in 1906.**

**Morley Announcement, 1906:** Morley suggested that representative government was the ultimate objective that the British were actually looking for. He made the announcement in 1906 budget speech in the House of Commons. So, Muslim elites made it a point to form a group and to see Minto in Shimla Deputation, in which they actually asked for safeguards for

minority. Minto responded favorably by asking them to form a separate organisation for the Muslim.

So, it was not really a common performance they had their **interest to protect**, there was a **political process going on among the Muslim elites from the 1890s onwards** that should be taken as the basic reasons for the Muslims to decide on the formation of a distinct political organization capable of defending their interests. The formation of ML was a more tangible expression of these initiatives.

In fact, as early as 1901, **Sir Muhammad Shafi** had advocated the formation of the Indian Muslim League, but it did not take any concrete shape.

#### **Conclusion:**

Whether or not the delegation headed by Aga Khan was part of a 'command performance' might be controversial. What is, however, noteworthy is that the basic demand of the delegation for a separate electorate was accepted in the Act of 1909, which came to be known as Morley-Minto Reforms. A permanent wall was created between the Hindus and Muslims, who were to vote separately for the candidates of their own respective communities.

## The Morley-Minto Reforms (1909)

### Why was Indian Council act of 1909 introduced?

- The **early nationalists had been demanding the expansion of the Legislative Councils** to secure Indian membership of the Councils for elected representatives of the people. The British Government was forced by the nationalist agitation to pass the **Indian Councils Act of 1892**. But this Act **could not satisfy the nationalists**. They were looking for a larger share of power for the Indians.
- **Intensity of the Swadeshi movement** and the **spread of extremism** had forced upon the administration some new thoughts on constitutional reforms. The colonial government was **alarmed by the spread of revolutionary activities** in the beginning of the twentieth century. They now sought to check the movement by granting constitutional concessions to the Indians.
- There was a **realisation that India could no longer be ruled with a "cast iron bureaucracy"**. Indians needed to be given some share of power; in both legislatures as well as executive council. Fresh thinking had started since 1906, as Secretary of State **Lord Morley, a liberal scholar**, urged Viceroy Lord Minto to balance the unpopular Bengal partition with reforms. The discussions on the constitutional reforms were initiated in Morley's **budget speech in 1906** in the House of Commons. He suggested that representative government was the ultimate objective that the British were actually looking for.
- The British Indian government sought to contain the rising tide of nationalism by the dual **policy of concession and repression**. The conciliatory side of the colonial policy found manifestation in various constitutional reforms. It was basically, an attempt to rally the moderates and thus divide the united front of nationalism.

### The Indian Councils Act of 1909

It provided for limited self-government and therefore satisfied none of the Indian political groups. It was the most short-lived of all constitutional reforms in British India and had to be revised within ten years.

- **Executive**
  - The Act provided the appointment of Indians in GG executive council and the council of secretary of state for India.
    - Lord S.P Sinha became the first Indian member of G.G executive council. (as Law member)

- Sayeed Hussain Bilgrami and K.G Gupta – earliest Indian to join India council (council of Secretary of State)
- **Legislature Powers**
  - It did allow somewhat greater power for budget discussion (but not vote on it), raising questions, sponsoring resolutions (but not pass laws) and request additional grants for local self-governing bodies. So, the **deliberative functions of the legislature were expanded.**
  - The Government executive retained the veto power.
- **Legislature Composition**
  - It increased the membership of non-officials (persons not holding positions in government) in the imperial and provincial legislative councils.
  - The number of additional members in legislative council was increased from 16 to 60.
    - **Official majority was retained in the Imperial Legislative Council**, which would have only 27 elected members out of 60; and out of those 27 seats, 8 were reserved for the Muslim separate electorate.
  - **Non-official majorities were provided for in the Provincial Councils**, but importance of this non-official majority was reduced by the fact that many of these non-officials were to be nominated by the government.
    - Example: The Bengal provincial legislature was given an elected majority, but four of the elected members were to represent European commercial interests, who were always expected to vote with the government.
- **Election**
  - The elective principle introduced by the Act of 1892 was extended, so that in 1910 more than a hundred indirectly elected Indians took their seats in the Councils.
    - Details of seat allocation and electoral qualifications were left to be decided by the local governments, and this left enough space for bureaucratic manipulation.
  - Special provision was made for additional representation of **professional** classes, the **landholders**, the **Muslims, universities and presidency corporations**, as well as **European and Indian commerce (chamber of commerce)**.
    - Lord Minto is thus known as the **Father of Communal Electorate**.
  - The electorate was based on high property qualifications and therefore was heavily restricted.
    - There were disparities too, as income qualifications for the Muslims were lower than those for the Hindus.
  - And above everything, the Government of India was given the general power to disallow any candidate from contesting the election on suspicion of being politically dangerous.

## **Analysis: (shadow rather than substance)**

The makers of the Councils Act of 1909 wanted only apparent changes, and no real democratic change. Morley observed, "*If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it.*" It was clear that he was against introduction of parliamentary or responsible government in India. Thus, the Act failed to satisfy even the moderates.

- Congress wanted swaraj but there was **no trace of swaraj** in the provisions of this Act. The **reformed Councils didn't have any real power.**
  - The congress strongly opposed the **continuation of Veto powers** of governors and governor generals. (*Maintained constitutional autocracy*)
  - The Legislative **Councils could just criticize** the government because there was no real power in the hands of members.
  - So, the **parliamentary forms without any responsibility of power.**
- **Electoral principle**
  - The congress was demanding direct elections and adult suffrage, but the system of **indirect elections** continued.
  - Voting rights were also granted based on **property qualifications**.
  - **Women** were not given any right to vote.
- **Separate electorates**
  - By this, the Muslim community was recognized as a completely separate section of the Indian nation. It was a **deliberate move on the part of British to divide Indians** as it **intensified the spirit of Muslim separatism** which was already in the air and led to the construction of communalism.
  - **With every revision** of the electoral system, similar demands emerged from other communities. This, it created cardinal problem
    - 1919: Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans
    - 1935: Schedule castes, working class

## Handout 29: First Phase of Revolutionary Extremist Movement

Nikhil Sheth

Ekbaar biday de ma ghure ashi  
Hasi hasi porbo phnashi dekhbe bharatbasi

(Mother bid me farewell once, I will be back soon.  
Whole of India will watch me While I wear the noose smiling)

Written for Khudiram Bose. British hanged him at the age of 18.

Apart from Moderate and Extremists, there was a third group in the pre-Gandhian era, which was totally committed to the idea of freeing the country from the British hands by using violent means, including individual killings of anti-Indian British officials and their henchmen.

They have been described variously in history: the British called them **terrorists**, some called them **militant nationalists**, still others called them **revolutionaries** and yet others called them **revolutionary terrorists**.

Factors responsible for the rise:

1. It was a reaction to the oppressive and exploitative **character of the colonial British Rule**.
2. Indigenous tradition of violent revolt, including the **revolt of 1857**. The rebellion failed but the culture of armed resistance persisted.
3. **Extremism and Revivalism**
  - a. Thinkers like Dayananda (glory of ancient past), Bankim Chandra (Anandmath, religious fervor), Swami Vivekanand (greater sacrifice from youth at the altar of nation) inspired the youths for action.
  - b. Teaching of leaders like Raj Narayan Bose, Aurobindo and Ashwini Kumar Dutt in Bengal, Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar and Tilak in Maharashtra, V.O Chidambaram Pillai in Madras and Sardar Ajit Singh in Punjab inspired nationalist of younger generation to take the path revolutionary extremism.
4. International Developments
  - a. The impact of **Irish revolutionaries** and **Russian Nihilists** on Indian youth was profound. **Italian nationalism** also inspired younger generation to adopt path of violence.

## Revolutionary methods:

1. Assassination of unpopular officers.
2. Organizing Swadeshi Dacoities.
3. Acquiring arms and weapons.
4. Publish revolutionary literature to spread their ideas and gain support.
5. Trying to engineer armed revolt.

## **Survey of the Revolutionary Activism:**

### Maharashtra

Maharashtra proved to be a very important centre of revolutionary activities.

- **Chapekar brothers**

- The first act of new form of armed revolutionary resistance took place in Pune, in 1897. Chapekar brothers killed WC Rand on Ganeshkhind Road.
  - They had been inspired by the new ideas of leaders like Tilak.
  - All three brothers were hanged.



- **Marathi press**

- In 1908, immediately after the Muzaffarpur bomb incidence, Tilak openly asserted in **Kesari** that it was the inevitable result of the government policy of repression and refusal to grant swaraj. For these comments Tilak was arrested and sentenced to transportation for 6 years. Tilak's arrest was followed by a riot in Bombay but it was soon suppressed by the Government.
  - Another Marathi editor, **Shivram Mahadev Paranjape** was imprisoned for his writings in the **Kaal** praising the revolutionary movement in Bengal.



- **Mitra Mela (1900)**

- Established at Nashik by Ganesh Savarkar and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.
  - It arranged physical training for its members and encouraged the composition of patriotic poems and songs.
  - At its meetings biographies of European revolutionary leaders like Mazzini and Garibaldi were read out and discussed.
  - In 1904, the Mitra Mela society of Nasik was transformed into the Abhinav Bharat.

- **Abhinav Bharat**

- V D Savarkar had organised its **branches** in Maharashtra, Berar and Central Provinces.
- Abhinav Bharat tried to organise meetings for the **celebration** of Ganpati Puja and Shivaji festivals.
- Abhinav Bharat members were trained in **martial exercises**.
- Members of Abhinav Bharat closely studied the activities of **Russian revolutionaries**.
- Secret revolutionary activities also spread to Gwalior and Satara.
- **Savarkar in London**

- In 1904, Savarkar went to **England** and started his revolutionary activities from there.
- He translated the **biography of Mazzini**, an **Italian revolutionary** in Marathi, which sold 2,000 copies.
- In **The First War of Indian Independence** he described the Revolt of 1857 as the first struggle of India's independence.
- He secretly sent revolutionary literature and **firearms** to Maharashtra to help the spread of revolutionary activities.



Savarkar Brothers  
L to R: Narayan, Ganesh, Vinayak

- **Bomb Making**

- A member of Abhinav Bharat, P N Bapat was sent to Paris to learn the art of bomb making from Russian revolutionaries. A copy of a bomb making book was secured and translated from Russian to English.
- Bomb manufacturing groups were set up at Aundh, Basai, Poona, Kolhapur and other places. An attempt was made to manufacture bombs and the **Kolhapur Bomb Case** was launched, which resulted in the imprisonment of many revolutionaries.
- A bomb was hurled at **Lord and Lady Minto's** carriage in Ahmedabad (1909), but they escaped unhurt, as the bomb didn't explode. The person was never traced.



Anant Lakshman  
Kanhere (1892-  
1910)

- **Nasik conspiracy case (1910-11)**

- The Karve Group planned to eliminate **Jackson** (the District Magistrate of Nasik), as he had acquitted Williams, who had killed a farmer. In 1909, **Anant Lakshman Kanhere** shot dead Jackson at his farewell party, in public.
- He was found with a pistol which had been sent secretly from England by Savarkar. Thus, his arrest led to the *exposure of the Abhinav Bharat group* which led to the virtual end of the movement in Maharashtra. It was in connection that *V D Savarkar was brought back to India*. Out of 21 persons who were brought to trial in this case 3 were sentenced to death and Savarkar was sentenced to transportation for life to Andaman.
- The Bombay police were very quick to respond and the movement was brought under control. The revolutionary movement declined in Maharashtra after 1912.

### Bengal

#### **Revolutionary Press**

Along with Samitis, there grew up a revolutionary press in Bengal. Of the Bengali newspapers which preached terrorism three acquired great reputation – Sandhya, Yugantar and Bandemataram. The last mentioned achieved the greatest popularity.

Sandhya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was edited by Brahmabandhab Upadhyay.</li> <li>• When its editor was put up for trial, he refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the British court and died in the midst of his trial in October, 1907.</li> </ul>
Yugantar (1906)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was a milestone in revolutionary politics. It had a brief span of life but undoubtedly it was the most influential paper of revolutionary thoughts and action.</li> <li>• Aurobindo Ghosh was associated with the paper from the very beginning.</li> <li>• In a series of articles, the Yugantar set forth a complete scheme for achieving India's independence.</li> <li>• The Yugantar had a tremendous appeal to the Bengali educated youth of this generation.</li> </ul>
Bande Mataram (1907-08)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Started by Bipin Chandra Pal and editor was Aurobindo Ghosh</li> <li>• It set complete and absolute independence as the goal of the country.</li> <li>• This paper intoxicated its readers as Aurobindo preached nationalism as a religion.</li> <li>• Unlike Sandhya, Nabashakti and Bandemataram which were formally committed to the doctrine of passive resistance, Yugantar was openly preached terrorism.</li> </ul>

A few groups existed in western Bengal but most of them were in Eastern Bengal. They undertook assassinations of colonial officials and ‘swadeshi dacoities’ to raise funds for their agitation.

- It was in 1902 that a number of **localised revolutionary groups** emerged in places like Midnapore and Calcutta.
  - In 1902, **Aurobindo** sent his younger brother **Barindra Kumar Ghosh** and **Jatirindranath Banerjee**, who was at that time a soldier in the Gaikwad's army in Bengal, to organise secret revolutionary societies in that Bengal.
    - In 1904, he tried to build up a revolutionary group in Calcutta himself.
- **Anushilan Samiti**
  - It was established in Calcutta in 1902 by **Satischandra Bose** with **barrister Pramathnath Mitra** as the President.
  - In 1903, Baroda group of revolutionaries led by Aurobindo was united with the Anushilan Samiti and Aurobindo himself became one of its Vice-Presidents.
  - Among the leaders of this Samiti we find Chittaranjan Das and **Sister Nivedita**, Nivedita inspired the revolutionaries by her writings and speeches and also distributed revolutionary literature among them from her private collection.
  - The idea behind the Anushilan Samiti was to organise and establish small centres involving the youth in different towns with an idea to take them ultimately to the villages. They were to be trained in all activities as a prelude to revolutionary actions.
    - It imparted to its members training in physical exercise, playing with the lathi and the sword.
    - It also arranged regular classes for them in history, economics political science and religion.
    - It encouraged its members to undertake relief work among the common people in times of natural calamities with the object of coming into close contact with the masses.



- **Dacca Anushilan Samiti:**

- In 1905, the year of the Partition of Bengal, the Anushilan Samiti established its branch in Dacca, under the leadership of **Pulinbehari Das**.
- In course of time the Dacca-branch became more prominent
- Pulin Bihari Das combined Hindu ritual vows with certain kind of spirit of self-sacrifice.

- **Maniktala group of Anushilan Samiti:**

- In 1907, **Barindra** Kumar Ghosh, along with **Bhupendra Nath Dutta** constituted their own inner group inside the Calcutta Anushilan Samiti. **Aurobindo** was also active here. **Hemchandra Kanungo** was expert in bomb-making.
- The chief aim of this centre was to train the youth in revolutionary ideology as well as in action programmes including bomb making and physical training, etc. They wanted to eliminate unpopular officials.

The first series of **revolutionary activities** were committed in Bengal during 1907-8.

- In December 1907, the train carrying **Andrew Fraser**, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal was de-railed near Midnapore. But the attempt to blow up the train failed.
- An attempt was made on the life of the **Mayor of Chandernagore** who had earlier stopped a Swadeshi meeting on 11 April 1907. It also failed.
- An unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of **Mr. Allen**, formerly the District Judge of Dacca.
- On April 30, 1908, came the **Muzaffarpur murders**
  - A bomb was thrown on the carriage of Mr. **Kingsford**, district judge of Muzaffarpur in Bihar, who had earlier meted out harsh treatment to Swadeshi agitators as the chief Judicial Magistrate of Calcutta. However, Mr Kingsford remained unhurt and two ladies **Mrs and Ms Kennedy** were killed.
  - **Khudiram Bose** was arrested tried and hanged while **Prafulla Chaki** shot himself dead when he was going to be arrested.
- Within two days of this incident, the entire group was unearthed which led to arrest of both Aurobindo and Barindra and many other leading revolutionaries (about 38). They were tried for waging war against the King, which is known as **Muraripukur Conspiracy (Manicktolla Bomb Conspiracy or Alipore Bomb case)**
  - Ultimately 15 persons were found guilty and sentenced to transportation for life and Kanailal and Satyendranath Bose were hanged. It included Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Ullaskar Dutt who were sentenced to death by hanging (later commuted to life imprisonment). Aurobindo himself was acquitted.



## Punjab

- In 1904, some young men of the Saharanpur district had formed a secret revolutionary society and taken a pledge to lay down their lives if necessary for the emancipation of their motherland. These people were soon joined by three men – **Lala Hardayal, Ajit Singh** and **Sufi Ambaprasad**, People connected with Arya Samaj were also in the forefront of the revolutionary activities. Secret arrangements were made for distribution of revolutionary literature.
- The **growing agrarian discontent** in the Punjab also helped to spread revolutionary ideas. Taking advantage of this agrarian discontent, the revolutionary leaders tried to inflame the passions of the people of the Punjab.
  - Revolutionary ideas were preached even amongst the tribes of the **north-western frontier region**.
- The **Swadeshi Movement** in Bengal gave a great impetus to the extremist activities in the Punjab and they kept themselves in close touch with the Bengali revolutionaries. Rasbehari Bose became a link between the revolutionaries of Punjab, Bengal, UP and Delhi.
- **1907 Incidence**
  - In 1907, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Great Revolt of 1857, Punjabi, a paper edited by Lala Lajpat Rai was prosecuted, which led to riots in Rawalpindi and even some Europeans in Lahore were assaulted. The government believed that these riots had been instigated by Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. The two leaders were deported from the province after which the revolutionary activities in the province declined.
- In 1909, there was a steady flow of revolutionary literature into the Punjab from outside India. **Bhai Paramananda**, another revolutionary leader of the Punjab was arrested and prosecuted by the government.
- **Lala Hardayal** soon went to the United States and established the Ghadar Party.

## North India

- In U.P. two revolutionary papers the **Swarajya** and the **Karmayogin** were started in 1907, but both were banned by the authorities.
- Rebuilding of revolutionary network in post-Swadeshi years
  - In 1908-9, some of the Bengali youths of Benaras, started the **Benaras Anushilan Samity** (later renamed as **Young Men's Association** to avoid suspicion) under the leadership of **Sachindranath Sanyal**.
  - **Rashbehari Bose** (1885-1945) was associated with the Benaras group of revolutionaries.



- In 1912, an **attempt on the life of Lord Hardinge**, the Indian Viceroy, was made in Delhi by Bose and Basant Biswas, though in vain.
  - Rasbihari and Sanyal escaped but 5 people were arrested in **Delhi Conspiracy Case** and 4 were hanged.
- In 1914, Rashbehari Bose, Sachin Sanyal and others became involved in a **widespread conspiracy to start a series of armed uprisings involving the Indian sepoys** in different cities of North India. The conspiracy however, proved to be abortive and Rashbehari fled to Japan to evade arrest.

### Madras

- A secret revolutionary society was set up in Pondicherry which sought to impart military training to its leaders.
- First political assassination in Madras happened in 1909. **Vanchi Aiyer** of Pondicherry group shot dead Mr. Ashe, the district Magistrate of Trinnevelly on 17 June 1909, who had an anti-people image. Soon the **Trinnevelly Conspiracy Case** was launched and nine persons were convicted.

### Outside India

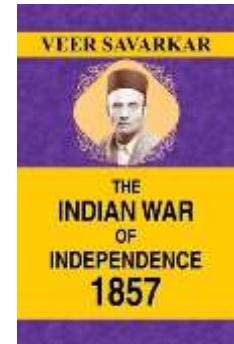
#### **London**

- The earliest centre of revolutionary activities outside India was in England itself.
- **Shyamji, Krishnavarma**, a Barrister from Gujarat, who had settled down in England in 1897, started a revolutionary society called the **Indian Home Rule Society** (1905) and a journal called **The Indian Sociologist**.
- He also instituted six lectureships of rupees 1,000 each to attract Indian scholars who might like to visit England to preach the ideas of Indian nationalism. He thus assembled a band of Indian revolutionaries, including, **Lala Hardayal, V.D. Savarkar, MPT Acharya and Madanlal Dhingra**.
- Their activities soon attracted the attention of the British government.



India House, London

- The Times of London and some other British newspapers attracted the activities of these extremists in their columns.
- A member of the British House of Commons put a question before the Parliament enquiring whether the government intended to take any action against these people.
- Krishnavarma later moved to Paris. The leadership of the Indian house of London then passed to **Savarkar**.
  - Savarkar published his famous work titled **The First War of Indian Independence** dealing with the Great Revolt of 1857.
  - With him, the extremists began to practice **revolver-shooting** in a range near London.
- **Madanlal Dhingra**
  - He murder of **Curzon Wyllie**, the political Secretary of the Secretary of State for India, at a gathering of the Imperial Institute of London in 1909.
  - Dhingra, who was arrested on the spot was hanged after a trial.
  - Savarkar was arrested and sent back to India to face his trial in the Nasik Conspiracy Case.
- The activities of the Indian revolutionaries in London thus, came to an end.



## Paris

- Here the principal leader was **Madame Bhikaji Cama**, the Parsi lady from Bombay. She was joined by **Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, SR Rana** and **VVS Aiyer**. They started **Paris Indian Society**.
- **Activities:**
  - **Flag of Indian Independence** was raised by Bhikhaji Cama on 22 August 1907, at the International Socialist Conference in Stuttgart, Germany.
  - She started two journals: **Bande Mataram** and **Madan's Talwar** in Paris.
  - In 1910, Cama, along with **VVS Aiyer**, tried unsuccessfully to pick up Savarkar after he had been arrested by the French police.
  - Chattpadhyaya went to Berlin in 1914 to further revolutionary activities.



Sachindra Prasad Bose and Hemchandra Kanungo	Flag of India by Sister Nivedita (1906)	International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart in 1907 by Bhikaji Cama.	Flag Home Rule Movement adopted by Annie Besant and Tilak
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### United States and Canada:

A large number of Sikh peasants had migrated to USA in the area around the West Coast in the search of better opportunities, but were disappointed with the kind of treatment they received there.

Besides, they were greatly touched by the daring acts of the Indian revolutionaries.

- In 1907, **Ramanatha Puri** distributed **Circular-i-Azadi** in which he supported the Swadeshi movement. It was one of the first significant pieces of anticolonial propaganda circulated on the West Coast
- **Indo-American Society** with its journal **The Free Hindusthan**.
  - Established by a Bengali scholar **Tarakanath Das** with the assistance of some Bengalees and Sikhs who resided at that time in the United States.
  - Though centred in California, this Society had its branches in many American cities including New York and Chicago.
  - It received substantial **assistance from the Irish revolutionaries** who were active in the U.S.
  - The Society used to send revolutionary literature to India for circulation among the Indian sepoys.
- **Young Indian Association**
  - It sent arms and ammunitions to the Indian revolutionaries.
- **Gadar Party (1913)**
  - The most important organisation of the Indian revolutionaries in US.
  - In 1913 **Bhai Parmanand** together with **Sohan Singh Bhakna** and **Lala Hardayal** founded 'Gadar Party' Sohan Singh Bhakna was the president and Lala Hardayal was secretary.
  - The headquarters of the Ghadar Party located in San Francisco came to be known as '**Yugantar Ashram**'. The general aim of the party was to overthrow the British rule from Indian soil through armed rebellion.
  - The organisational structure of the party was quite democratic.



**Lala Hardayal:** Born and educated in Delhi, he went to London on a scholarship but soon became an associate of Shyamji Krishna Varma. He came back to India and soon sailed for USA, arriving there in 1911. For a while he taught at Stanford University but was soon dismissed. He later joined Hindi Association of America' and through it got associated with the Ghadar Party Subsequently, he became the secretary of the Ghadar Party.

- In November 1913 a **magazine 'Ghadar'** began to be published in Hindi, English, Urdu and Gurumukhi.
  - The first issue of its mission set the tone when it unequivocally declared, 'Today there begins... a war against the British Raj'.
  - The paper also tried to expose the misdeeds of the British Government.
  - Besides, it tried to inculcate a feeling of national unity and national respect among the Indian immigrants.
  - The paper also tried to impress upon the Indians that relentless battle will have to be fought against the British using all conceivable means including sabotage.
- Lala Hardayal left USA in 1914 to join Madam Cama in Switzerland and took over the editorship of her paper Bande Mataram. However, this did not weaken the pace of the work in USA. The work in USA was carried on with **Bhagwan Singh** as president and **Barkatullah** as vice-president.

## First World War (1914)

Indian Soldiers contributed a lot in this war. About 10 lakhs Indians were fighting and India incurred an expenditure of 13 crore. This was looked upon by the Indian revolutionaries as the godsend opportunity to work for the demise and dissolution of the British rule in India.

- Madam Cama – Paris
- Ajit Singh – parts of Europe

The Ghadar Party played a crucial role in our freedom struggle during the First World War period.

- **SS Kamagatamaru Incident (1914)**

- A person **Baba Gurdit Singh** decided to charter a ship carrying a large number of people from Singapore to Canada.
- On April 1, 1914, a ship departed from Hong Kong carrying Ghadar Party activists and Ghadar literature. It arrived in Vancouver on May 23, 1914, with 351 Sikhs and 21 Punjabi Mohammedans on board. However, the Canadian authorities refused to allow them to land in Canada, despite protracted negotiations. As a result, the ship began its return journey on July 23, 1914, and reached Hugli on September 27, 1914.
- The British Indian government organized a special train to transport the passengers directly to Punjab, intending to restrict their movements. However, the Sikhs declined to board the train and instead expressed their desire to march to Calcutta. A riot ensued, resulting in the deaths of several Sikhs.

- **Hindu-German Conspiracy**

- During World War, Berlin became one of the important centers of revolutionary activity and Indian revolutionaries were provided help by Germany. **Birendranath Chattopadhyaya** and **Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya** were active on the front of seeking German support.
- Germans thought of spreading discontent among the Indian soldiers fighting on behalf of the British and also tried to persuade the Indian Muslims not to lend any support to the British, as he was fighting against Turkey, the home of their Caliph.
- On 3 September 1914, a committee called, '**German Union of Friendly India**', was set up in Berlin with some of the Indians as its members. By September 1915, the **Berlin Committee** was reconstituted, and its membership became totally Indian.
  - **Champak Raman Pillai** was another member of the Berlin Committee. Earlier, he was active in Zurich in Switzerland and had set up the 'International Pro India Committee' and even published a paper called Pro-India.
  - Lala Hardayal also became its member.

- The Berlin Committee tried to establish contact with all Indian revolutionaries working in India and abroad. The main aim was to work for general uprising in India with the help of foreign arms and materials.
- **Zimerman Plan:**
  - Indian revolutionaries in Europe sent missions to Baghdad, Persia, Turkey and Kabul to work among Indian troops and the Indian prisoners of war (POWs) and to incite anti-British feelings among the people of these countries.
  - In 1915 **Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh** together with **Barkatullah** and **Obaidulla Sindhi** set up the **first independent provisional government** in **Kabul** and tried to seek German help.

- **February Plot**

- Ghadar party tried to induce and send a large number of Indians with high motivation, to work for the revolution in India. Instructions were given to them to work for the revolution in India. Their assignment was also to induce the Indian army to revolt against the British.
- A booklet, the '**Ghadar di Gunj**' (the echo of mutiny) was printed and freely distributed among the aspiring revolutionaries. It contained detailed instructions as to how to work for the Indian revolution.
- One of the important local contact persons was Rasbehari Bose, who was the main co-ordinator of all revolutionary activities in north India. Rasbehari Bose coordinated with Sanyal in these revolutionary activities.
- They successfully contacted the Indian soldiers located in different cantonments like Danapur, Meerut, Jallandhar, Ambala, Ferozpur, and Rawalpindi, etc.
- 21 February 1915 was fixed and, on this date, important government institutions and centres from Peshawar to Chittagong were to be attacked. The basic idea was to repeat 1857 with mass revolts. As the British were caught up with the first world war would not be able to respond. Smaller revolts would take place in various Indian regiments across the world and Indian communities and various parts of the world will also join in.
- But the plan was disclosed, and the government suppressed it heavily. Rasbehari Bose pretended to be Tagore's cousin and he escaped to Japan where he would spend the next several decades. Sachandra sanyal would be captured and then be sent off to kalapani. Many of the others would be captured and also sent to kalapani or hanged or killed in gun fights.
- Other than in Singapore where the local Indian regiment did revolt and hold Singapore for a week most of the regiments did not actually revolt and so that whole thing broke down. (**Singapore Mutiny 1915** was crushed in a fierce battle)

- **Jatin Mukherjee** in Bengal tried to get arms from outside, but the conspiracy failed, and he was killed in a police encounter. (1915)



### Andaman Cellular Jail

Many of these revolutionaries, from both generations were shipped off to Andaman Cellular Jail. They were kept in extremely harsh and horrible conditions and British innovated various torture techniques.

- Many of them being literally worked to death on running the oil mill (oil press). They would be literally tied to it and made to go round and round in the heat till they collapsed from exhaustion.
- Extreme amount of torture would lead many of them tried to commit suicide.
- Some of them like Ulhaskar Dutt were subjected to multiple electric shocks and went mad.
- Sachin Sanyal was the only revolutionary to be sent to Andaman twice.



## Assessment

### **Limitations:**

What did the revolutionaries actually achieve? They could neither free the country nor could they create a mass movement.

### Reasons for the failure of Revolutionary Movement:

- The secret societies did not have access to common people. They failed to forge horizontal alliances with other people's organisations.
- The method of Pistol and bomb could not produce permanent effects.
- Some scholars also allege that these revolutionaries weakened the secular social fabric of the country on account of their Hindu religious fervour.
- There was not proper co-ordination between revolutionaries of Bengal and those of Europe. There was no central command, and the attempts remained scattered across continents.
- During first World War U.S.A. allied itself to Britain and so the revolutionaries in U.S.A. had to leave the place.

Ultimately, revolutionaries were isolated, hunted out and killed or suffered imprisonment. The government was able to control their activities and their work remains stray incidents of personal courage and indomitable will.

### **Contribution:**

- The Revolutionary sacrifice brought immense pressure on mainstream nationalism. Because of this, radicalism increased in Congress movement also with passage of time. They took the freedom struggle to a higher plane by setting the goal of complete and total independence.
- Inspiration
  - a. They set a **high standard** of sacrifice, which any nation can take pride in. They put before Indian people the example of extra ordinary sacrifice.
  - b. They created and added a religious fervour to our national struggle, which inspired the **next generation** of freedom fighters.
  - c. Revolutionaries provided **alternative methods** to those nationalism who were not satisfied with main stream struggle of congress against British Rule.
  - d. After the disintegration of extremist movement, some vacuum was created in Indian politics. The revolutionary nationalists tried to fill it up.
- Nationalism
  - a. They gave us the **dignity** of being a human being.
  - b. Revolutionaries contributed to the spread of nationalism in **native states**. On many occasions, the revolutionaries used to escape to native states after executing operations in British India. During their stay, they spread the feeling of nationalism.

- Some tangible outcomes
  - a. They also provided immediate relief to common masses by assassinating many in popular officials.
    - i. In 1909 Anant Lakshman Kanhare assassinated Mr. Jackson, the unpopular DM of Nasik.
    - ii. Vanchi Ayyer and Neelkanth Brahamachari assassinated Rober Ashe in 1911, unpopular DM of Trinavelli.
  - b. They created a fear among the British officials, who had to think twice before taking harsh measures.
  - c. Besides, by involving extreme suffering, they exposed the cruel and ruthless nature of the British rule making it unpopular among the people.
  - d. Their death-defying and daring acts forced the British to make constitutional concessions to the people.
- The contribution of **women revolutionaries** was also remarkable
  - a. Madan Bhikaji Kama was prominent revolutionary
  - b. Preetilata Vadddedar and Kalpana Dutt
  - c. In 1932, Bina Das fired at governor of Bengal.

Jodi tor dak shune keu na ashe tobe ekla cholo re.  
Tobe ekla cholo, ekla cholo, ekla cholo, ekla cholo re.

*If none will come at your call, Walk alone  
If they cower mutely facing the wall Open thy mind and speak out alone.  
If in this stormy night, in the rain and dark All shut their doors,  
If no one holds a lamp for you Let your breast be riven by thunder fire, yet walk alone.*

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

**GS Foundation 2024: Modern India**  
**Handout 30: Indian Politics during WW1**

Nikhil Sheth

**Home Rule Movement**

*'India is like a son who had grown up and attained maturity. It is right now that the trustee or the father should give him what was his due.'*

Lokmanya Tilak

*"India demands Home Rule for two reasons first, because freedom is the birth-right of every nation, second, because her most important interests are now made subservient to the interest of the British Empire without her consent, and her resources are not actualised for her greatest needs."*

Annie Besant

Home rule movement was launched in 1916 by nationalist leaders to intensify anti-colonial struggle and pressurized British to grant self-rule to India. Its name and inspiration came from Irish Home Rule movement, and it was an important landmark in the pre-Gandhian era of our national struggle.

In 1916, two parallel movements of Home Rule were launched.

<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Leaders</b>	<b>HQ</b>	<b>Area of operation</b>
April 1916	Lokmanya Tilak	Pune	Central province and Berar, Maharashtra (except Bombay), North. Karnataka
September 1916	Annie Besant, George Arundale, Ramaswamy Aiyer, BP Wadia	Adyar	Rest of India

**Background:**

- Reaction to the colonial character of the British rule
- WW1
  - The policy of repression and suppression: Normal law of land was replaced by Defense of India Act (1915). Whatever little liberty was there with people was also taken away. Also, economic hardship due to WW1 when articles of daily use were diverted abroad for war efforts.
  - The War also gave a big fillip to the feeling of nationalism all over the world, including in India. The allied powers claimed they were fighting for high-sounding ideas like liberty, democracy, and the principle of self-determination, which aroused unprecedented hopes in India well.
- It was almost a decade since the launching of a mass movement and a new political activism was necessary to maintain the morale of the people.
- It was an opportune moment to unite Congress and create all India front.

- Tilak came back from Mandalay Jail in 1914 and wanted to secure the entry of the Extremists in the Congress.
- Annie Besant thought that a united Congress would be more effective and also ensure the entry of a younger generation to the national movement. Further, it would have a moderating impact on the Extremists and radicalising influence on the Moderates.
- Moreover, the War had given a real opportunity for a united national movement: the attack on Turkey had alienated the Muslims, who were already full of resentment against the British for the annulment of the Bengal partition in 1911.

Thus, without worrying about prevailing wartime condition, Tilak and Besant launched Home Rule Movement.

#### **Objectives:**

- Attainment of self-rule within British Empire.
- Convince British of mutual interest, need and urgency of self-ruled India would be better positioned to help in war efforts.
- Propagate and popularize idea of Home-Rule among the masses to build up mass base for anti-British struggle.

#### **Methods:**

- It was a peaceful **constitutional movement**.
  - Emphasis was on **educational** rather than agitational, and **conciliatory** rather than confrontationist methods.
  - Strategy was based on unity and all-inclusiveness rather than on divisiveness, differentiation and sectarianism.
  - Tilak and Besant didn't want to create any difficulty for British war efforts.
- Use of newspapers and journals to spread ideas and mobilise people, especially in vernacular language to get closer to people.
  - Tilak:
    - Maratha and Kesari
    - Printed pamphlets in Marathi, Kannada, Gujarati and English - explaining the need for the Home Rule Movement. The popularity of his literature could be gauged by the fact that 47,000 copies of these pamphlets were sold.
  - Besant: New India and Commonweal.
- Hundreds of Home Rule League branches were opened in India to mobilise the masses for future movement. Tilak and Besant organised discussion groups, reading rooms in cities, sale of pamphlets in large numbers, lecture tours, organised classes for students on politics, organised social work, organized home rule rallies, took part in local government and collected funds.
- The **Lucknow Congress** gave a big boost to the Home Rule Movement.

- Even some of the **Moderate leaders** in UP and Maharashtra joined as volunteers, going on lecture tours and bringing pamphlets in favour of the movement. What was more, even the members of **Gokhale's Servants of India Society** joined the movement.

### **British Response:**

When the Home Rule Movement started gathering momentum, the British were alarmed, though the movement was peaceful and lawful.

- Despite being peaceful, British government used all possible means to suppress the nationalist activity.
- The provisions of Newspaper Act (1908) and Indian press Act (1910) were used to check the nationalist propaganda through newspapers/journals.
- The provisions of Defense of India Act (1915) were used strictly to check the rallies and marches.
- In 1916, the government asked Tilak to furnish a surety of Rs. 60,000 and threatened to bind him for good behaviour for a period of one year.
- In 1917, Annie Besant was put under house arrest to prevent her involvement in nationalist activities.
  - a. This infuriated even those leaders who had earlier kept away from the movement. A nationwide protest movement was launched, in which prominent leaders like Jinnah, Surendranath Banerjea, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Motilal Nehru, M R Jayakar, Tej Bahadur Sapru, CR Das and others participated to show their solidarity with Annie Besant.
  - b. Tilak advocated passive resistance to get her released. There was almost a national upsurge in her favour.
  - c. Sir S Subramaniya Iyer, Honorary President of All India Home Rule League, renounced his Knighthood.
  - d. All this sent a stern message to the government and Annie Besant was freed in September 1917.
  - e. She gained unprecedented popularity and was elected Congress President in 1917 at the initiative of Tilak.

### **Impact/Significance:**

Despite limitations, the movement certainly took the country further on the road to self-government.

- It infused new energy in anti-British struggle. The atmosphere of political passivism prevailing was transformed into political activism.
- It provided an opportunity for the masses to express discontent.
- It widened the mass base of anti-British struggle because it was organized all over India.
  - Annie Besant's League had 200 branches spread in major parts of the country, with a total membership of 27,000 and Tilak's League had 32,000 members by 1918.

- Home Rule Movement reached out to new areas, new groups, and new generations, which in itself was no mean achievement. Major centres of the movement were located in Maharashtra, Madras, UP, Sindh and Gujarat.
- More than three lakh copies of pamphlets, pleading for home rule, in different languages, were sold.
- Annie Besant was excommunicated from Central Provinces and Berar during November 1916 and Tilak was excommunicated from Punjab and Delhi during February 1917. All this speaks volumes for the effectiveness of the movement.
- It allowed the extremists to regain their mass base.
  - This paved the way for the re-entry of extremist in Lucknow Congress (1916).
  - Soon, it eclipsed the moderate leaders completely and allowed the extremists leaders to establish their control over congress.
    - In 1917 Calcutta session, Besant was elected as Congress president. She was the first woman president of the Congress.

1917	Calcutta	Annie Besant
1925	Kanpur	Sarojini Naidu
1933	Calcutta	Nellie Sengupta

- It brought immense pressure on the government and forced the government to modify its policy towards India. On **20 Aug 1917** an announcement by **Lord Montague** (SoS) made an announcement declaring that the ultimate object of ongoing reforms in India is to grant dominion status and transplanting British parliamentary institutions. (August Declaration)
  - He promised an "*increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire*"
  - As the Government of India's dispatch to the secretary of state in November 1916 argued, this should be offered gradually, in keeping with the **rate of diffusion** of education, resolution of religious differences and acquisition of political experience.
  - Although there was no immediate promise of 'self-government', nor was there any end of British empire, still his declaration was certainly a distinct improvement on the Act of 1909.
  - In this way the British government accepted India will attain Home Rule in future.
  - Also, swaraj was no longer considered a radical/revolutionary demand hereafter.

#### **End of Home Rule Movement:**

- Montagu's declaration of August 1917, in a way, dampened the spirit of the Home Rule Movement.
  - **Moderates** went with the government in support of new constitutional reforms and even **Annie Besant** virtually turned into a "loyalist". **Tilak** neither rejected the new proposals nor displayed any extra enthusiasm about them. As such, the Home Rule Movement lost its initial momentum.

- There was a gradual emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as a mass leader in his own right.
- New situation with the issue of Khilafat demanded a new approach, a set of new national priorities and programmes, a new leadership. As such, the Home Rule movement was pushed to the background.

## Lucknow Pact

*"It has been said, gentlemen, by some that we Hindus have yielded too much to our Mohammedan brethren. I am sure I represent the sense of the Hindu community all over India when I say that we could not have yielded too much. I would not care if the rights of self-government are granted to the Mohammedan community only... I would not care if those rights are granted to any section of the Indian community... When we have to fight against a third party — it is a very important thing that we stand on this platform united, united in race, united in religion, united as regards all different shades of political creed."*

Lokmanya Tilak

The Congress-League joint scheme, better known as the Lucknow Pact (1916), was one of the major landmarks in the history of the Hindu-Muslim relationship.

### **Background:**

The change in the leadership of both the Congress and Muslim League brought the two Parties closer.

- **Within Congress**

- **Moderates**

- Their hopes were dashed and they were disappointed by the limited reforms under the 1909 Act.
    - Two of its stalwarts, **Gokhale** and **Pherozeshah Mehta** had passed away in 1915 and others had lost their dynamism on account of advancing age.

- **Extremists**

- **Tilak** had re-entered the national politics in 1914 and keen to ensure entry into Congress.

- **Bombay Congress (1915)**, presided over by SP Sinha

- Passed a resolution demanding substantial measures of constitutional reforms, giving the people effective control over their governance.
    - Authorized the All-India Congress Committee to work jointly with the All-India Muslim League to evolve a scheme on constitutional reforms.
    - Partially opened the door for the re-entry of the Extremists in the Congress by making suitable changes in its constitution.

- **Annie Besant** who had joined the Congress in 1914, and waned to re-active almost-defunct Congress. She brought a new dynamism and wanted a reunited national movement to take India on the road of 'Home Rule'.

- **Within Muslim League**

- **Increasing estrangement with British**

- **Annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911** had dampened the pro-British enthusiasm.
    - **Government's refusal to set-up a University at Aligarh.**
    - British move against the **Sultan/Caliph of Turkey** further alienated them and created anti-British feelings.

- Newly emerging leadership in the Muslim League transcended the sectarian outlook and was inspired by a broader vision of the national movement.
  - It was no longer controlled by the Zamindars but came under the control of 'Young Party' which was both Nationalist and progressive.
  - Jinnah was emerging as a leader of the League and was committed to work for self-government for the people of India. On the initiative of Jinnah and others, the **constitution of the Muslim League was amended in 1913**, committing the League to the **goal of achieving self-government** under the aegis of the British crown.
- Repercussion of the **First World War**
  - Widespread appreciation of heroic deeds of Indian soldiers fighting on the European front. In the words of Annie Besant, *India would look for the liberty for her people as a 'matter of right and not as a reward for loyalty'*.

The annual session of the Congress party was held in December 1916 at Lucknow. Muslim League's annual session was also held at the same venue. Separately they passed the same resolution, popularly known as the Lucknow Pact. Its **first part** was related with the political interests of Muslims in India, whereas its **second part** was related with general reforms for India.

**Main features** of the agreement:

- Congress accepted the provision of Separate Electorate for Muslims, given through Indian Council Act of 1909. This was earlier opposed by the Congress.
- The total strength of the **Imperial Legislative** Council shall be 150, out of which, 120 would be elected members: **30% would be Muslims** – would come from separate electorates.
- Muslims should be represented through **special electorates** in the **Provincial Legislative** Councils in the following proportion of the total number of the elected members:
  - Punjab: 50%
  - United Province: 30%
  - Bengal: 40%
  - Bihar: 25%
  - Central Province: 15%
  - Madras: 15%
  - Bombay: 33%
- In both Imperial or Provincial councils, **no bill or resolution** or any clause thereof, introduced by a non-official member, affecting one or the other community, shall proceed **if opposed by three-fourth of the members of that community.**

The following were other major demands put forward under the Pact:

- A constitutional status for India **like that of 'self-governing colonies.'** (dominion status)
- The council of the **Secretary of State should be abolished.**
- **Democratization** of the central as well as provincial legislative councils: **80% members should be elected** on the basis of as wide a franchise as possible.

- At least 50% members of the Central as well as Provincial Executive Councils to be elected by their respective Legislative Councils. Thus, **subordination of the executive to the legislature** was to be ensured through the Legislative Councils.
- Except army and External Affairs, the Legislative Council should have control over all departments.
- **Autonomy for the Provincial Government**
- Grant of full measure of local self-government

**Criticism:**

- The Congress conceded the **separate electorate system** for the Muslims.
  - Most of the Congress and League leaders were happy with this Pact except a few. **Madan Mohan Malaviya opposed the Pact** and believed that the Hindus have yielded too much to the Muslims.
  - Long-term pernicious implications for the unity of the country and evolution of nationalism. It encouraged the Muslims to be very conscious of their minority status and in all subsequent constitutional developments, the communal representation remained a constant theme on the part of the Muslims.
- The provision that no bill or resolution would be passed if opposed by three-fourth of the community being affected, virtually gave a **veto-power to the Muslims**.
- The **Congress hope** that the united front created at Lucknow would **force the British Government** to concede self-government to India **proved illusory**. On the contrary, the Government of India took advantage of this agreement and introduced **separate electorates** in more accentuated form in the Act of 1919, under the plea that Lucknow agreement had endorsed it.
- The **Hindu-Muslim bonhomie thus created had no popular basis**, as witnessed in Moplah rebellion during NCM or 1923-24 communal riots across the country.

In the long run the Lucknow Pact adversely impacted the national movement. Besides, it gave a handle to the British to pursue their policy of divide and rule more vigorously.

## Montford Reforms, Act of 1909

On August 20, 1917, Montagu, the Secretary of State, declared in House of Commons that British policy in India, would be the gradual development of self-governing institutes with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. It was a clear shift in the British policy. (**August Declaration**)

In 1917 Edwin Montagu came to India and embarked on a fact-finding tour. He was accompanied by the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. The following year, the two issued a report on Indian Constitutional Reforms. This is known as the **Montagu-Chelmsford or Montford Report**. On the basis of this Report the Government of India Act of 1919 was passed.

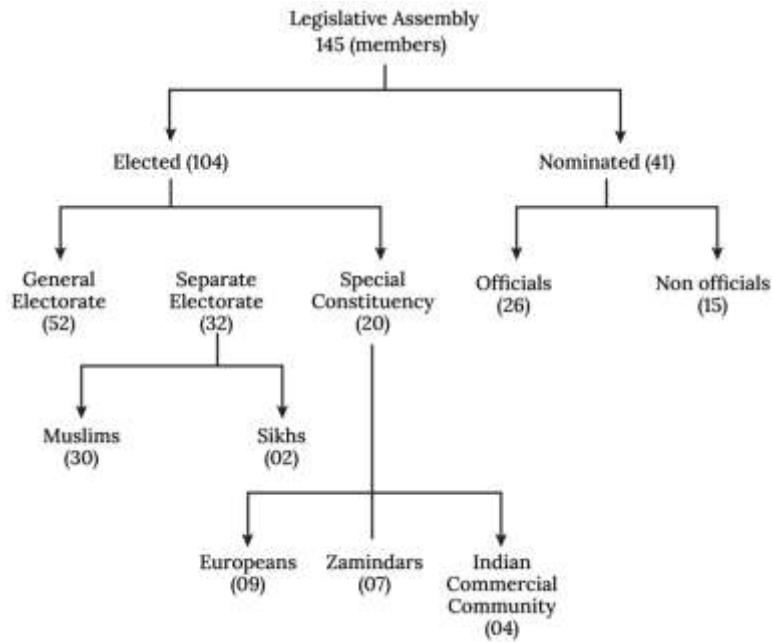
### **Preamble:**

- To create progressively responsible government in India is the objective of British Government.
- India would remain an integral part of the British Empire.
- To develop self-governing institutions, increase the involvement of Indians in the administration.
- The British Parliament would decide the progress and timing of self-government.

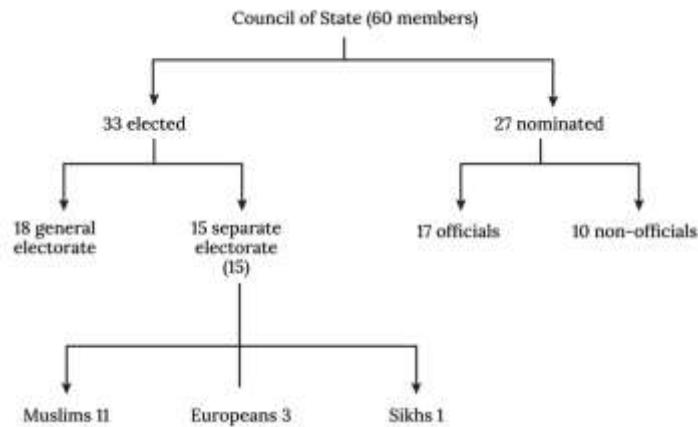
### **Provisions:**

- **Home Government**
  - a. The cost of Indian house (SoS) shall be paid by British government/exchequer.
  - b. **Office of Indian High Commissioner** was created in London to represent Gol.
- **Gol: Central government:**
  - a. Min 3 out of 8 members of **GG executive council** shall be Indian.
  - b. **Central and Provincial Lists**
    - i. Administrative matters were divided between central and provincial government by creating two lists: Centre and Provincial lists.
      1. Central List Included subjects that were of national importance or that were related to more than one province, such as foreign affairs, defense, political affairs, Post & Telegraph, public debt, communications, civil and criminal law and procedure, etc.
      2. Provincial List Those subjects of local importance such as education, health, local self-government, land revenue administration, water supply, famine relief, law and order, agriculture, etc.
    - ii. But the Central Government had unrestricted control over the provincial governments.
    - iii. The act separated, for the first time, provincial budgets from the Central budget and authorised the provincial legislatures to enact their budgets.
  - c. **Bicameral legislature** was created at center
    - i. **Central legislative assembly:** First Chamber

1. President of the House to be nominated by the Viceroy;



ii. Council of states: The second chamber.



iii. The Council of State had a tenure of 5 years, while the Central Legislative Assembly had a tenure of 3 years.

d. Power of the legislature: **The Act of 1919 introduced responsive if not responsible government at the centre.**

- i. The members were allowed to ask questions of public importance and supplementary areas. They also enjoyed the right and freedom of speech.
- ii. It could legislate for entire British India for both Indian Subjects and Government's employees. It could repeal or amend any law already existing in the country.
- iii. Some items of the Budget were subject to a vote of the Assembly, others were open for discussion, and some could not even be discussed.
- iv. On certain issues like amendment or repeal of a law, foreign relations, relations with the Indian states, defence and religion, previous sanction of the Governor General was required for the introduction of a bill.

- v. The Governor General's assent was essential for the enactment of law passed by the legislature. He could also promulgate Ordinance, which could last for six months.
- vi. The Legislature could not move no-confidence motion against the Executive, still the Executive did respond to the wishes of the Legislature.
- vii. Some of the members of the House were made member of Public Accounts and Finance committee, where they got opportunity to influence the Governmental policy.

- **Provinces:**

- a. Executive
  - i. Governor with the help of his council of ministers.
  - ii. Ministers were to be appointed by the Governor from among the elected members of legislative council.
- b. Provincial Legislative Councils were enlarged, and the majority of their members were to be elected.

Province	Elected Members	Officials	Nominated non-officials	Total
Bengal	114	16	10	140
Madras	98	11	23	132
United Provinces	100	17	6	123
Bombay	86	19	9	114
Bihar and Orissa	76	15	12	103
Punjab	71	15	8	94
Central Provinces	55	10	8	73
Assam	39	7	7	53
North-West Frontier Province	39	7	7	53

- c. The provincial governments were given more powers under the **system of dyarchy**.

- i. Subjects of provincial administration were divided into Reserved category and Transferred category.

Category	Subjects	Administration
Reserved Subjects	Subjects of greater administrative significance such as justice, police, land revenue, finance and budget, prisons, educations of Anglo-Indians, famine relief, pensions, mines, irrigation and waterways, criminals tribes, factories, gas, electricity, labour, welfare, industrial disputes, minor ports (major ports were with the centre), public services and motor vehicle.	Administered by Governor with the help of his executive councilors appointed by him.
Transferred Subjects	Subjects having comparatively less significance such as education of Indians, public work, public health and sanitation, medical relief, LSG bodies, agriculture, cooperative societies, fisheries, excise, veterinary department, industries, weights	Administered by the Governor with the advice of ministers appointed by him from

	and measures, control of entertainment, museum, libraries, religion and charitable endowment.	the elected members of the Legislature.
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- **Elections and Franchise**

- a. For the first time, **direct elections** were introduced but the franchise was extremely limited. The majority of members of both the Houses were chosen by direct election.
- b. Though women were not granted voting rights, nor the right to stand in elections, the Government of India Act 1919 **allowed Provincial Councils to determine if women could vote**, provided they met stringent property, income, or educational levels.

- **Other Provisions**

- a. Provided establishment of public service commission.
  - i. Hence a **Central Public Service Commission was set up in 1926** for recruiting civil servants.
- b. Provision for Review of 1919 Act after 10 years which led to formation of Simon Commission in 1927.

**Assessment:**

- The reform was definitely an improvement over the Act of 1909, as its main theme was elected majority in the provinces with executive responsibility. But, like 1909, the reform of 1919 was undertaken with the purpose of perpetuating the British Indian Empire
- It left many important issues for the Nationalists to debate and to launch their attack on the Government. These were:
  - Absence of a responsible Government;
  - Introduction of dyarchy;
  - Expansion and consolidation of separate electorate.

**Assessment of Dyarchy:**

Merits	Demerits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced parliamentary from the government for the first time in India.</li> <li>• It was a major step in direction of greater association of Indians with the task of governance because matters of immediate local significance were handed over to Indian ministers.</li> <li>• Dyarchy allowed Indians to gain experience about ministerial responsibility. This experience came</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system of collective responsibility of ministers was absent. Ministers were individually responsible to Governor and LC.</li> <li>• All significant matters were kept in the reserved category.</li> <li>• The division of subjects was irrational and hence unworkable. E.g. irrigation was placed in reserved but agriculture in transferred. In such a situation coordination became difficult.</li> </ul>

<p>handy in future when greater powers were devolved to Indians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the Indian ministers, some of the far reaching measures were taken such as enactment of Madras State Aid to Industries Act, 1923, the Bombay Primary Education act, the Bihar and Orissa village administration Act, the Bombay local boards act, 1923, etc.</li> <li>Dyarchy paved the way for introduction of provincial autonomy in future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was no proper division of resources. Most income yielding subjects were placed in the reserved category.</li> <li>The civil servants were kept under the control of the executive council.</li> </ul>
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- Other issues:
  - Limited franchise based on property, tax and education.
  - At the Centre, the legislature had no control over the Governor-General and his Executive Council.
- A **special session of the Congress** held in **Bombay in 1918** condemned the scheme as 'inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing'.
  - The **moderates boycotted** the special Bombay session of the Congress, and soon they found themselves excluded from the body which they had dominated at one time.
- A major theme of Gandhi's non-cooperation programme launched in December 1920 was the boycott of the new councils. Gandhian philosophy was based on a critique of Western civil society; the mass movement he engineered had an altogether different logic, as his mission was to liberate Indian politics from this constricted arena of constitutionalism.

**Handout 31: Mahatma Gandhi: The Early Phase**

Nikhil Sheth

*"India gave us a Mohandas, we gave them a Mahatma"*

A popular South African refrain.

**Gandhi in South Africa**

Gandhi's career began in South Africa in 1893, as a 24-year-old Barrister. Gandhi's trip to South Africa was to transform his career. Gandhi was the first Indian Barrister, to have come to South Africa.

Young Gandhi landed at Durban in 1893. His journey from Durban to Pretoria was very eventful. It consisted of a series of racial humiliations, including the famous railway incident.

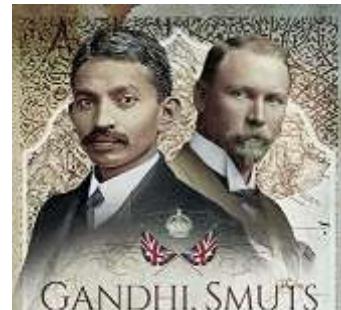
At this stage, Gandhi had no plan to live in South Africa for a long time. After his job in South Africa was over, on the eve of his departure, he raised the issue of the **Bill to disenfranchise the Indians** which was about to be passed by the Natal Legislature. The Indians in South Africa requested Gandhi to extend his stay for a period of one month to organise a protest, draft petitions and to lead the movement. Gandhi agreed to stay on for a period of one month but eventually he had to extend his stay for a period of twenty years.



Two phases of Gandhi's political activities in South Africa

**Phase 1: Moderate Phase (1893/4-1906)**

- During this phase, the Indians under Gandhi's leadership concentrated on petitioning and sending memorials to the South African Legislature, the Colonial Secretary in London and the British Parliament.
  - The **Natal Indian Congress (NIC)** was formed on May 22, 1894 by Mahatma Gandhi to fight discrimination against Indian traders in Natal.
  - Gandhi drew a petition which was signed by 10,000 Indians and submitted it to the Secretary of State for Colonies in London.
  - **1904: Phoenix Ashram** was established near Durban, **Indian Opinion** newspaper was started by Gandhi.
- This was the method, which he continued to believe in till 1905, and hoped that racial discrimination would end.





## Phase 2: Satyagraha Phase (1906-15)

The movement was taken to another level with the campaign of passive resistance. It is in this phase that Gandhi applied **Satyagraha** as a method of political struggle for the first time in his life. **Tolstoy Farm** was created in 1910 in Transvaal which served as the headquarter of the Satyagraha movement.

Issues:

- Against Transvaal Ordinance (1906) on compulsory registration and passes for Indians
- Against Immigration Restrictions (1913)
- Against de-recognition of non-Christian Indian marriage (1913)
- Against £3 tax on ex-indentured labourers (kind of poll tax)

It was massive in dimension. Gandhi and his followers had to bear with the brutal repression of the Government. Prosecutions, deportations and economic pressures, however, could not crush the movement.

In the course of his struggle against racialism in South Africa, Gandhi had developed his philosophy of action – **Satyagraha**.

Its two major elements were truth and non-violence. Satyagraha aims at conflict resolution with the means of peaceful resistance, applied right from personal to international levels. He defined it to be soul-force, or love-force, the force, which is born of truth and non-violence.

Gandhi was well-read and studied the deeply inspiring philosophies in the **Bhagvad Gita**. He also delved into the philosophies of **Jainism, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Tolstoy, Thoreau and RW Emerson**. Though he was deeply inspired by them, he evolved his own method of struggle.

Accordingly:

- **Satya:** The Satyagrahi would *refuse to submit to whatever he considered to be wrong.*
  - It is an idea of pledge of resistance to an unjust law, with God as witness, and with no fear of consequences.
- **Ahimsa:** Satyagrahi would remain peaceful under all provocations.
  - Gandhi opposed Violence on two fundamental philosophical bases:
    - Violence stems from the conviction that the perpetrators of violence are right, or that they know the truth. The search for truth has always been the goal of human life, but no one could ever be sure of having attained the ultimate truth.

Four pillars of Satyagraha:

- Absolute truth
- Absolute love
- Absolute discipline
- Absolute justice

- Gandhi argued that those who hurt others assault their own integrity. Others are us in a different form.
- Root cause analysis:
  - He classified violence into passive and physical forms.
  - As long as we continue to ignore the root of violence, physical violence will continue in the world. Anger is the root of violence passive and physical. It is a powerful emotion. Gandhi wanted anger to be used as 'energy' – constructively
- Means-End Relationship
  - For Gandhi, the 'means' was as important as the 'end'. He maintained that it was not the winning of a demand that was important but how it was won.
- **To change the mind and heart** of the opponent through **self-suffering**: He would resist evil but would not hate the evil doer.
  - He would vindicate truth not by inflicting suffering on the opponent but by *accepting suffering himself*. He hoped thereby to *arouse the conscience of the wrong-doer*.
- The Satyagrahi **differed from the passive resister**, for he gave up violence not for expediency but as a matter of principle. Passive resistance, Gandhi said, was a weapon of the weak while Satyagraha was the weapon of the strong.
- **Civil resistance was an integral part of Satyagraha.**
  - Civil resistance might be offered in various ways such as peaceful violation of specific laws, mass courting arrests, hartal, demonstration, picketing, marches, fasting, prayer, spinning etc. But they must be completely non-violent and there should be no element of coercion in it.
  - Disciplined cadres were trained in his ashrams.
- Satyagraha provided the unarmed people with a new weapon of struggle. It is a non-violent alternative to a violent struggle against oppression, exploitation and injustice.

### Comment on Gandhi's work in South Africa:

Before his return to India in 1915, some of the issues had been resolved, partly due to Gandhi's Satyagraha and partly due to international pressure. However, racial discrimination had not ended. Thus, Gandhi's work did not provide an enduring solution for the Indian question in South Africa. Rather, after his time in South Africa, the legalized system of racism called Apartheid was to emerge in 1940s in much more brutal form.

**What Gandhi did to South Africa was, however, less important than what South Africa did to him.**

- **South Africa became a sort of laboratory** for Gandhi to evolve the techniques of Satyagraha and style of leadership, at smaller scale which would be later implemented at a much larger scale in India and on much bigger issues.
- Gandhi found that the masses have immense capacity to sacrifice for a moral cause.
- **Leader of Indians:** The issues in South Africa involved different classes and religious groups of Indian origin Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Gujaratis, South Indians, upper class merchants, lawyers, mine workers, etc. Thus, outside India, Gandhi represented a large section of Indians. He was able to **unite** them under his leadership.
- During the struggle for Indian independence, on many occasions, he derived **inspiration from his experience** in South Africa. He came to know that at times the leaders have to take **tough decisions** which would be unpopular with the followers.
- He had seen the **ups and downs** of the Satyagraha Movement in South Africa and therefore, was never frustrated by the ebb and flow of the freedom movement in India.
- The exposure he got in South Africa prepared him for the leadership of the Indian national struggle.
  - His personality underwent a crucial change in South Africa. The shy, timid and introvert Mohan Das was transformed into an **extrovert and dynamic personality**.
  - He found his **purpose in life**.
  - It was in South Africa that his **indoctrination in nationalism** was confirmed.



## Gandhi's Return to India

Gandhi arrived in India on **January 9, 1915**

When Gandhi landed at Bombay, Indian political life was at a low ebb. However, on the advice of Gokhale, Gandhi decided that for the time being, he could not take a public stand on any political issue. He instead travelled different parts of India, met many people and tried to understand the situation from various perspectives.



### **The Early Satyagrahas in India**

Ever since Gandhi's entry into Indian public life there had been numerous applications of Satyagraha. During 1917-18 he experimented with it in Champaran in Bihar and in Ahmedabad and Kheda in Gujarat.

#### **(1) Champaran (peasant movement 1917)**

- The peasants of Champaran in North Bihar were growing indigo under tinkathia system (3/20th of their holding for indigo cultivation) and were being cheated and exploited by the English planters.
- When **Rajkumar Shukla**, the local peasant leader at Champaran, invited Gandhi, he wanted to study the situation and meet the peasant.
  - The Commissioner of Champaran ordered Gandhi to immediately leave the district. Gandhi, who never tolerated injustice, refused and was ready for the consequences. He was stopped at Motihari, arrested and sent up for trial. Gandhi told the local magistrate that he had deliberately violated the law in obedience to the voice of his conscience. The magistrate sent him to prison.
- The Government was not in a mood to make Gandhi a hero by arresting him, so they decided to allow him to proceed with his enquiry. But he had already become a hero of the people, the moment he refused to leave Champaran.
- At Champaran, he started recording the statements of the peasants to make sure that they were giving correct information.
- Finally, the government had to appoint an enquiry committee, of which Gandhi was also a member.
  - This committee accepted as valid most of the complaints of the peasants.
  - It put an **end to the tinkathia system** by the **Champaran Agrarian Act of 1917**.
  - It announced that peasants were to be compensated for the illegal enhancement of their dues. Gandhi told the planters to refund only 25% of the money they had taken illegally from the peasants.



- Young nationalists like **Rajendraprasad, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parikh and J.B. Kripalani** worked with Gandhi at Champaran.

## (2) Ahmadabad (industrial labour, 1918)

- Gandhi took up his first workers' movement for the cotton mill workers of Ahmedabad over the question of a 'Plague bonus'.
  - The employers wanted to withdraw the bonus once the epidemic had passed but the workers insisted it to stay because of the rise in the cost of living during the war.
- Due to the persuasion made by Gandhi, the mill owners and the workers agreed for arbitration by a tribunal, but the mill owners breached the agreement. Gandhi advised the workers to go on strike and demanded 35% increase in wages.
- Gandhi addressed the workers every day and brought out a daily news bulletin. In order to persuade all the workers to join the movement Gandhi went on a door-to-door campaign. When the workers seemed to have lost hope, to inspire them he also went on a fast, *his first in India*, to rally the workers and to strengthen their resolve to continue.
- It attracted such wide all-India attention that afraid of the consequences, the mill owners came under tremendous pressure, they agreed to submit the whole issue to a tribunal, which awarded a 35% increase in the wages.

## (3) Kheda (peasant movement, 1918)

- In 1918, the Kheda district of Gujarat was hit by a severe draught. The local cultivators felt that the land revenue demanded suspension/remission of land revenue on that particular year as per rules.
- Gandhi offered the peasants to organise Satyagraha.
  - **Vallabhbhai Patel, Mohanlal Pandya and Indulal Yagnik**, joined Gandhi in touring the villages.
  - The peasants demonstrated a striking solidarity by refusing to pay revenue. Even those who could afford to pay the revenue declined to do so as a matter of principle.
- The Government was eventually forced to yield ground and arrive at a settlement with the peasants.

These Satyagrahas had important consequences.

- Demonstrated Gandhi's style and method of practice. It helped Gandhi to study the real problems of the people, the strengths and weakness of the masses.
- Brought Gandhi into close contact with the masses.
  - Previously, the national movement had been elitist in character, but with the emergence of Gandhi the masses became active participants in the movement.
  - Gandhi's simple habits and simple appearance impressed the people who took him to their hearts at once.

## Factors Responsible for the Rise of Gandhi

- The **success of his South African experiments** had already transformed Gandhiji into national hero. Because of this the process of rise of Gandhiji leadership in India was extremely rapid.
- **Political condition in India**
  - When Gandhi arrived in India there was a need for nationalism to grow into a more broad-based movement. Even Nehru admitted that political situation in India during the war and immediately after the war was **dull**.
  - **Leadership vacuum:** by 1919-1920, many of the prominent nationalist leaders were no more. The leadership vacuum also facilitated the rapid rise of Gandhi.
    - Gokhale, Mehta and Naoroji had left this world.
    - On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1920, Lokmanya Tilak also passed away.
  - By 1919-1920 both the moderates and extremists had lost their mass appeal. Because of this the Indian nationalists were looking for new leadership.
  - In 1919-1920, an **extremely volatile environment** was prevailing in India.
    - Indians supported the British wholeheartedly in war efforts, but the reward of this co-operation came in the form of **Rowlatt act and Jallianwala Bagh massacre**.
  - There was an urgency on the part of the leaders to present a person who'd be somewhat different, untainted by any political involvement in India and also capable of developing certain ideas which the Indian followers would be find it easier to follow. During this hour of crisis Gandhi jumped to the front to lead the masses.
- **Nature of Gandhian movement:** Gandhian movement attracted lakhs of common Indians and even the commonest of Indian could participate in struggle against the British Empire.
- **The early success** of Champaran satyagraha (1917), Ahmedabad Mill satyagraha (1918) and Kheda satyagraha (1918) convinced the masses of the efficacy of Gandhian methods and thus the masses reposed full faith in his leadership.
- **Role of Gandhi's Personality:** Gandhi was *a living saint*.
  - This consistency of the words and actions of Gandhi left a deep impact on the heart and mind of common masses.
  - Gandhian simplicity was magnetic, it attracted lakhs of Indian towards him.
  - Gandhiji was a man of strong convictions. He had firm faith in the strength and capacity of the masses.

All these factors together pulled the masses towards Gandhi, and he emerged as the undisputed supreme leader of the anti-British struggle.



## Features of Gandhian movement





*"Satyagraha is the power of the powerless."*

- Stephen Biko

## Handout 32: Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement (NCM)

"Where God commands, I am a Muslim first, a Muslim second and a Muslim last, and nothing but a Muslim. But where India's freedom is concerned, where welfare of India is concerned, I am an Indian first, an Indian second and an Indian last and nothing but an Indian."

Muhammad Ali

"The fight that was commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many months or many years."

Mahatma Gandhi

In the long list of anti-British movements, the **NCM was the first major pan-India struggle**. Started on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1920, it carried the active anti-British struggle to new heights. The year 1920 is very significant in the history of India's freedom struggle. In that year **Gandhi emerged as the undisputed leader of the Indian National Congress** and the decision to launch a non-violent non-cooperation movement against the British rule was taken. It was a **crucial new departure from the policy of petition and prayer**, earlier pursued by the elitist early Congress.

NCM was **initially started by Khilafat committee** under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, while Congress joined the struggle later at later point of time and both movements merged.

### Background

A new political situation was created by the **First World War**.

- The First World war gave a **tremendous impetus to nationalism** all over Asia and Africa. Nationalism gathered its forces, and the nationalists were expecting major political gains after the war.
- During the war, **Indians provided resources** and manpower to the British Empire in the hope of self-government after the war. **However, the Montague-Chelmsford reforms (1919) were found to be wholly inadequate.**
- The **economic situation took a turn for the worse**: The economy was hit by a post-war global depression. All sections of Indian society were suffering from economic hardship.
  - The **prices** of essential commodities skyrocketed.
  - The **workers** had no job and they lived in great poverty.
  - The **peasants**, groaning under poverty and high land revenue, also felt the pressure.
  - The Indian **industrialists** were very unhappy as they demanded protection for their industries through high tariff and government aid.
  - The **educated** middle class too, was struggling hard against the problem of unemployment.

Thus, The stage was now set for a broad-based movement.

### **Rowlatt Acts (1919) and the Rowlatt Satyagraha**

The colonial rulers followed a **dual policy of conciliation** (Montagu Chelmsford Reforms) and **repression** (Rowlatt Acts) to cope with the growing pressure of the national movement.

- **Rowlatt Acts (Feb 1919)**

- The Acts allowed certain political **cases to be tried without juries and permitted detention without trial**. Their object was to replace the repressive provisions of the wartime Defense of India Act (1915) by a permanent law.
  - Based on the report of Justice S.A.T. Rowlatt's committee of 1918.
- These Acts were passed in the Imperial legislative council even **though every single non-official Indian member opposed it**.
  - The British Indian Government was determined to arm itself with more coercive powers. They curtailed the civil liberties of the Indians in the name of crackdown on terrorist violence.

- **Sparked off a movement of protest**

- The Rowlatt Act was taken as a great **blow to the honour of the Indian nation**.
  - At the end of the war, while Indians were expecting substantial constitutional concessions, all they got was the Rowlatt Acts. The Act gave immense power to the police, and naturally created panic.
- Almost **all political parties opposed** Rowlatt Act. Even moderates like Surendranath Banerjee recorded their reservations about the Act. Jinnah, Madanmohan Malavia and others resigned from the legislative council in protest against the Rowlatt Act.
- To launch a strong movement against the measure, a **Satyagraha Sabha** was formed under the leadership of **Gandhi**.
  - Gandhi became its president, used the members of Home Rule League, as they were not satisfied with Annie Besant and Tilak had gone to England. Gandhi also used Pan-Islamic group like Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal (Lucknow), Ali brothers, Wazir Hasan, Raja of Mahmudabad, Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, etc.
  - The Satyagraha Sabha published propaganda literature and collected signatures for a Satyagraha pledge. Gandhi toured Bombay, Delhi, Allahabad, Lucknow and a number of South Indian cities between March and early April.
  - Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha took India's struggle for freedom to a new height. The Satyagraha Sabha **decided to stage civil disobedience movement** in India. It urged the nationalists to participate in processions, meetings, demonstrations and court arrest. On March 30, 1919 Gandhi called for a nationwide strike, however, the date was later changed to **April 6<sup>th</sup>**. This was the **first all-India hartal/strike**.

- The following instructions were issued for Satyagrahis:
  - The signatories are of the opinion that the Rowlatt Bill is unjust and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals. The signatory solemnly affirms that he will **refuse civilly to disobey** certain laws.
  - The Satyagrahi will, during the struggle, fearlessly adhere to **truth and ahimsa** (non-violence) and will never misrepresent anything or hurt anybody's feelings.
- However, many Nationalists, especially members of the Imperial Legislative Council though opposed Rowlatt Act but were **firmly against Satyagraha**. They were: D.E. Wacha, Surendranath Banerji, Tej Bahadur Sapru, and Srinivas Sastri. But the wind was blowing in the other direction, especially **in Punjab where Rowlatt Satyagraha was most effective**.
  - The reasons were:
    - Unrest in Punjab caused by food grain **price rise** of 100% between 1917 and 1919, while **artisan wages** went up only by 20-25%
    - A **Muslim awakening** that was inspired by poetry of Zafar Ali Khan (father of Urdu Journalism) and Iqbal (Sare Jahan se Achha)
    - Activities of the **Arya Samajists**.
    - **Hindu, Muslim and Sikh unity**
  - The people responded to his call in an unprecedented way and in their exuberance certain violent acts in Delhi, Lahore and Amritsar were committed.
  - The period saw **police firing, severe coercion and brutal crackdown** on the activists. The authorities were alarmed, and they appealed to Gandhi for cooperation.
  - Gandhi was arrested on April 9, 1919, and protest processions were taken out, which were fired upon in Amritsar resulting in the death of some people.
- The movement reached its **climax in the Jallianwala Bagh** massacre on April 13, 1919.
  - On the day of **Baisakhi** (harvest festival) thousands of people, mostly from nearby villages had gathered at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar to celebrate their harvest festival (April 13, 1919). Most of the people were unaware of the fact that the city was under curfew. Some leaders and their followers also gathered in the same Bagh to protest against the arrest of their leader **Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal Malik**.
  - General Dyer, who was in-charge of the operations, had issued an order prohibiting meetings and demonstrations. He took it as a violation of his order and directed his troops to open fire. **No warning** was issued to the unarmed, peaceful and unsuspecting crowd before the shooting. The Government estimate showed **379 deaths**, other estimates were higher.
- The brutality of massacre at Jallianwala Bagh shocked the nation and **Gandhi decided to call the movement off** on April 18, 1909. Gandhi confessed that it was his 'Himalayan blunder' and observed a three-day fast to atone his blunder.

- The massacre exposed the true nature of a colonial rule. It was condemned worldwide.
    - Rabindranath **Tagore returned his knighthood** to condemn this assault on humanity.
  - Not satisfied with that, **martial law** was declared in Amritsar and indiscriminate flogging and firing followed. At some places, people were even asked to **crawl like reptiles**. This was the greatest insult to the honour, dignity and self-respect of the people. This further alienated the people and in fact infuriated them.
  - Despite so much bloodshed and protest the British Indian Government did not care to repeal the Rowlatt Act.
- **Significance**
    - The Rowlatt Act **destroyed the moral foundations** of the British Empire in India. The movement is particularly important because it strengthened the determination of the Indian nationalists to fight back. It **boosted the self-confidence of a nation in the making**. Herein lies the importance of the movement.
    - The movement **established Gandhi as the most important Indian political leader**. The failure to get Rowlatt Acts abolished made Gandhi realise the need for an impersonal political organisation such as the Congress. His next step was to take over Congress leadership.

## Khilafat Movement

The Khilafat agitation was launched in 1920 over the question of the future of Turkey which was a defeated power in the War. It marked the highest watermark in the entire history of Hindu-Muslim unity during the anti-colonial struggle.

### **Historical Background**

The Sultan of Turkey was the Khalifa or the Supreme head of the Sunni Muslims of the World. As the religious head, the caliph was also to look after Muslim religious places located in Arabia. Therefore, the political future of the Khalifa became a matter of grave concern to such Muslims in India.

Several major political developments occurred during the second decade of the twentieth century, which laid down the foundation, as well as shaped the course, of the Khilafat movement.

- **First World War:** Turkey joined the war against the Allied powers.
  - **Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, gave an assurance** to the Indian Muslims that the British Government was not fighting against Turkey in order to deprive her of the territories that rightly belonged to the Sultan.
- **Post-War settlement:** The Ottoman empire suffered a major defeat in the war.
  - The fear gripped the Indian Muslims about the impending dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, Muslim religious places to be taken away from the purview of the Caliph and even his own status would be adversely affected.
  - To put pressure on the English, French and Americans, the Khilafat movement was launched in many Muslim countries and thus became a Pan-Islamic movement.
- In India, this led to the formation of the **Khilafat Committee** in March 1919.
  - **Leaders:** Ali brothers-Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar and his elder brother Shaukat Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, etc
  - There were two groups:
    - Bombay Group: favoured memoranda and delegation to press for its demands.
    - Delhi Group led by the Ali Brothers: favoured agitational methods.
  - The Khilafat Committee chose **Gandhi as the President** and urged the Indian Muslims not to take part in the victory celebrations of the First World War.
  - The Committee threatened the British Government with complete boycott and non-cooperation if the problem of Turkey was not solved.
- In **Delhi meeting (Nov 1919)** of **All India Khilafat Conference**, the Khilafat Committee reached a consensus on launching all India **Civil Disobedience Movement**. The agitation was to be launched in November 1919 under the leadership of Gandhi.
- **Why did Gandhi take up the Khilafat cause?**
  - After the withdrawal of the Rowlatt Satyagraha, Gandhi got involved in the Khilafat Movement, in which he saw a **splendid opportunity to unite the Hindus and Muslims in a common struggle** against the British.
  - Gandhi was convinced that the Khilafat cause was a right cause and that the Muslim demand was a **just demand**.
  - He had a **soft corner in his heart for the Ali Brothers**, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Saukat Ali. Both were imprisoned when the movement started.

- Gandhiji's **perception of the British rule changed** due to Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.
- In a surcharged political environment that the **Amritsar Congress** met in **December 1919**.
  - President – Motilal Nehru
  - The Amritsar Congress, despite finding the reforms as 'unsatisfactory' and 'inadequate', expressed its willingness to give a trial to it.
  - It was decided between the leaders of the Congress and the Khilafat Committee that the Khilafat agitation would be continued under Gandhi's leadership.
  - It was further decided that a delegation would be sent to the Indian Viceroy to impress upon him the justness of the Khilafat cause.
- **Mohammad Ali presented a charter of demand before the diplomats in Paris in March 1920.** The demands were:
  - The Turkish Khalifa must retain control over the Muslim sacred places.
  - The Khalifa must be left with sufficient territory to enable him to defend the Islamic faith, and
  - The Jazirat-Ul Arab (Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Palestine) must remain under the Muslim sovereignty.
- **Two major developments took place in May 1920**, which added further fuel to the fire: acceptance of the Hunter Committee Report and publication of terms of the Treaty of Sevres.
  - **Hunter Committee Report**
    - It was setup by the government to enquire into the Punjab massacre, under pressure.
    - The Congress, not satisfied with the terms of reference of the committee, had set up its own enquiry committee. It found the Jallianwala Bagh massacre as nothing but **well-calculated, and cold-blooded murder of innocent**. It demanded **adequate compensation** for the families of the dead and the wounded.
    - **But the Government** ignored this report and accepted the majority view of the Hunter Committee, in May 1920. It **exonerated all officials** involved in the massacre.
    - The majority observations
      - The Government **defended General Dyer's brutal acts as an error of judgment** and Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Governor of Punjab, was allowed to go totally scot free.
      - An English newspaper of England 'The Morning Post' even collected fund to defend General Dyer.
      - The Upper House of British Parliament-House of Lord praised General Dyer.
    - That sealed the fate of any rapprochement between the government and the people of India.
  - **Treaty of Sèvres: Ottoman Empire was to be divided.**
    - It was to lose the entire rich area of Asia Minor.
    - The Arab Provinces such as Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt were severed from the empire which were in the Turkish Empire were to be mandated territory under the British and French tutelage.

- Sultan was to be deprived of the leadership of the Muslim masses. He was to become a virtual prisoner of the Allied High Commission.
- The coincidence of the acceptance of the Hunter Committee Report and the publication of the Treaty of Sèvres turned out to be the **proverbial last straw on the back** of both Gandhiji and the Muslim leadership led by the Ali brothers. It **turned Gandhiji from being a loyalist to a non-cooperator**, as he himself admitted in the course of his trial in 1922. Gandhi issued a statement on May 18, 1920 on behalf of the Khilafat Committee in which he called upon the disappointed Muslims to launch a non-violent movement on the two issues of the **Khilafat wrong** and the **Punjab wrong**.
- The **Khilafat committee** met in **Allahabad** in **June 1920** to chalk out a **plan for non-cooperation on an All-India basis**.
  - It decided upon a fourfold boycott programme.
    - Boycott of the **titles** offered by the government.
    - Boycott of **civil service, army and police**.
    - Boycott of **schools and colleges**.
    - Boycott of **law courts**.
  - This virtually amounted to **total non-cooperation with the Government**.
  - This meeting was attended by many of the Congress leadership including Gandhiji. They extended their unstinted support to the Khilafat proposals. **Gandhi insisted that the movement must be non-violent in character**, and no one should be forced to join the agitation.
- The Khilafat Committee started the mass movement on August 1, 1920, and made Mahatma Gandhi their leader (same day as NCM). Gandhiji got the Congress Working Committee to extend support to the non-cooperation movement on three issues: **Punjab wrongs, Khilafat wrong** and the **Swaraj**. He followed it up by successfully seeking support for the same from the **Calcutta and the Nagpur Congress**.

### The Course of the Khilafat Movement

- A **deputation** under the leadership of Dr Ansari called on the **Governor-General** to apprise him of the hurt feelings of the Muslims but nothing came out of it.
- **Ali brothers** went to **England** and other countries to seek support for the cause of Khilafat, but they returned empty-handed.
- In **UP**, some Muslims took it as a general revolt against the authority, taking Khilafat in its literal sense of opposition.
- **Millennial hopes** were aroused among Muslims.
- In **Malabar**, the Moplahs indulged in violence against the Hindu zamindars.
- In June 1920, about 20,000 Muslims, tried to do **hijrat** by leaving India en masse and migrating to Afghanistan in anger against the government.

Soon, the Khilafat Movement became a part of the Non-Cooperation Movement and along with Gandhiji, the Ali brothers emerged as prominent leaders of the movement. However, after the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Gandhiji, on 11 February 1922, the Khilafat Movement also lost its initial momentum.

What gave it a big blow was the new leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha in Turkey who abolished the office of Caliph. Thus, the very basis of the movement was taken away and the movement died a natural death.

## Non-Cooperation Movement

### **Causes:**

- The deteriorating **economic conditions** in the post-war period had generated a ground swell of anti-government feeling.
- Popular discontent were three immediate issues: **Khilafat wrongs, Punjab massacre** and '**inadequate' nature of the reforms** under the Act of 1919.
- Publication of the **Treaty of Sevres** with Turkey and acceptance of **Hunter Committee report** precipitated the issue.
- The **Khilafat Movement** was already on.

### **Launch of the movement:**

**Banaras meeting** of AICC (June 1920) it was also decided to seek the opinions of the provincial Congress committees on the sensitive issue of non-cooperation.

- Though there was general support in favour of non-cooperation among the provincial committees, but there was some reservation on the issue of the boycott of the Council election which was getting due under the 1919 Act.
- Gandhiji made it amply clear that he favoured launching of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

When **Gandhiji had approached Tilak**, seeking his support on the issue of satyagraha, Tilak was *sceptical about its efficacy, though he did not oppose it*. Besides, Tilak was not very enthusiastic on the issue of support to the Muslims on the Khilafat issue, and he passed away on 1 August 1920.

As decided earlier, the Non-Cooperation Movement was **formally launched on 1 August 1920**. Many fasted in the memory of Tilak and participated in the demonstrations and hartal as a part of the movement.

### **Calcutta Special Session of Congress (Sept 1920):**

- President: Lala Lajpat Rai
- It was with this mixed bag of support:
  - Leaders like C.R.Das, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipan Chandra Pal did not agree with the idea of boycott, especially of Councils.
  - Only Motilal Nehru, among veterans supported Gandhi.
- But Gandhiji was determined to pursue his line of action even in the face of the old guard's opposition. Mahatma agreed that by the adoption of Non-cooperation resolution, **Swaraj might be attained within a year**.
- Finally, Gandhi's resolution on non-cooperation was passed. **Gandhi succeeded in getting his resolution, favouring the launching of the Non-Cooperation Movement**, passed with a massive majority: 1886 delegates favoured his resolution while only 884 opposed it.
  - The Congress favoured **seven forms of boycott**, namely, (1) boycott of titles and honorary offices, etc.; (2) boycott of the official and semi-official functions held by the government; (3) boycott of schools and colleges; (4) boycott of legal courts; (5) boycott of recruitment for service in Mesopotamia; (6) boycott of the Council's election and also boycott of voting, and (7) boycott of foreign goods.
  - As an integral part of the Calcutta resolution on non-cooperation, there was also a **programme of constructive work**. It included promotion of Swadeshi (national

system of education, private arbitration courts, swadeshi goods, and hand-spinning and hand-weaving of clothes), removal of untouchability and promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity.

In pursuance of the Calcutta conference, there was a **general boycott of the Council's election held in November 1920**, both at the candidates as well as on the voters' levels.

#### **Annual Nagpur Session of Congress (Dec 1920)**

- **President: C. Vijayaraghavachariar**
- Gandhiji gained further support, even from among the old guard of the Congress.
  - Both CR Das and Lala Lajpat Rai, who had earlier opposed the non-cooperation resolution at the Calcutta Congress, lent unstinted support to it.
- Change in **goal and means** of Congress.
  - Its earlier goal of the '**attainment of self-government by constitutional means**' was replaced by the '**attainment of swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means**'.
  - Now, non-violent satyagraha, as an extra-constitutional means of mass struggle, came to be accepted as the legitimate method.
  - Thus, the Nagpur Congress **endorsed the program for non-cooperation** (ratified the Calcutta resolution) and the general dissociation from the Government at various levels along with the non-payment of taxes.
  - Gandhi declared that if the non-cooperation programme was implemented completely, **swaraj would be ushered in within a year**.
- **Restructuring Congress's organisation:**
  - Formation of the **15-member working committee** to look after the day-to-day work of the organisation;
  - Set up an **All India Congress Committee (AICC)** with 350 members;
  - Re-organisation of the **Congress Provincial Committees on a linguistic basis**;
  - The organisation of the Congress to be built at **village, town, tehsil and district levels**, along with the provincial and national levels; and
  - the Congress was to launch a **membership programme with a symbolic fee of only four annas**. This was the first major attempt to reach out to the common man. Thus, Congress was made a mass-based organisation.

Thus, the Congress came very near to the Gandhian vision of the constructive and combative programmes and Mahatma Gandhi became its tallest leader.

#### **Course of the Non-Cooperation Movement**

##### **Initial phase**

Backed by the Nagpur Congress, the programme of non-cooperation soon gathered momentum. The people responded to the movement with a lot of enthusiasm.

- The **Council election** was successfully boycotted.
- **Titles and honours** were renounced on a massive scale.
- A number of prominent legal practitioners like Motilal Nehru, CR Das, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C Rajagopalachari and a score of other legal **luminaries left their legal practice**.
- Several **institutions of national education** like Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Bihar Vidyapeeth, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Vishwa Bharati University by Tagore and National College, Lahore came

up to provide education to those young students who had earlier left their schools and colleges. Jamia Millia Islamia (first at Aligarh and later shifted to Delhi) was also established.

- Eminent persons like Subhas Chandra Bose, Acharya Narendra Dev, Rajendra Prasad, Dr Sampurnanand and others became teachers at these national institutions.

### Vijayawada Meeting

In the background of such a massive response to its non-cooperation programme, the All-India Congress Committee met at Vijayawada April 1921. AICC decided to concentrate its attention on the collection of the **Tilak Swaraj Fund**, securing a membership of one crore Congress members and distribution of 20 lakh charkhas by June 1921.

Once again there was a warm popular response to the Congress programme: The Tilak Swaraj Fund was oversubscribed, and 50 lakh Congress volunteers were enrolled.

### More Boycotts:

- **Boycott of foreign clothes was the most successful program of NCM.** From July 1921 onwards the attention of the Congress shifted to the boycott of foreign clothes. Clothes and other foreign (mainly English) goods were collected and burnt in public.
  - During this movement, Gandhi started wearing dhoti and shawl and earned the name 'naked fakir'. (22 September 1921, Madurai meeting, as his desire to identify with poor masses)
- Gandhi's **village development programme** was highly successful in Bihar mainly '**charkha**' and **khadi** programme.
- **Picketing of toddy shops** also became very popular which led to the decline of the Government revenues.

### Among Muslims

- July 1921 was marked by an important development. **Muhammad Ali was arrested** as he had made a declaration that Muslims could never accept the fact of working in the British Army as it was against their religion. His arrest by the government led to widespread protests, and a large number of the Congressmen repeated the same statement forcing the government to ignore the whole issue.
- **The Moplah Uprising**
  - Unfortunately, in August 1921, the Moplahs of the Malabar attempted to establish **Khilafat kingdom** which soon it took a **communal turn**, and in the process hundreds of Hindus were killed, or and their properties were looted, and many atrocities were perpetrated, including forced conversions to Islam. The number of forcible conversions went up to 2,500 and the death-toll among Hindus went up to 600.
  - Soon repressive measures by the government followed. Several Moplahs were killed, and a large number of them were wounded. At one stage 45,000 of them were being held as prisoners. Strong measures, ultimately, resulted in the control of the situation.

### Tribal participation:

- **The Tana Bhagat sect** of Chota Nagpur tribals boycotted liquor.

- The non-cooperation in **Rajasthan** was scattered and was related with the local peasant and tribal issues. The Bijolia movement in Mewar, the Bhil tribal movement under Motilal Tejawat and the Meos of Alwar who attacked police station in Gurgaon (December 1921) are a few examples.

#### **Peasant participation:**

- **No Tax Movement** was also started at many places like Midnapore (Bengal), Charala-Pirala and Pedanandipadu Taluqa (A.P). Peasants in many parts of Bihar and U.P refused to pay revenue. They believed that Gandhi Raj had come and there is no longer necessity to pay anything to anybody.
- Agrarian riots were organised in Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh, Faizabad, Sultanpur (January-March 1921) under the leadership of **Baba Ramchandra**.
- Madari Pasi in Hardoi, Bahraich, Bara Banki and Sitapur, led **Eka Movement**.
- Haats (local market) were looted at various places like Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, Munger, and Purnea in January 1921. A powerful anti-zamindar peasant agitation in **Darbhanga estate**, was organised in 1920.
- Apart from peasants, nationalist leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, G.B.Pant, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Purshottam Das Tandon, and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi were also active in U.P during Non-Cooperation Movement.

#### **Akali Movement:**

The Akali fight in Punjab against the corrupt Mahants and British officials over the Sikh Gurudwaras (Shrines) was part of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

- In November 1921, the British official refused to hand over the keys of the Golden Temple treasury to the Akalis. Thousands of Sikhs joined the Akalis and forced the British to hand over the keys and released the prisoners by mid-January 1922.
- The Akali struggle, however, continued till the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act of November 1925 established Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committees' (SGPC) control over the Gurudwaras.

#### **Further escalation:**

It was also decided to boycott the visit of the **Prince of Wales** in November 1921. During the visit, another unfortunate incident took place in Bombay between Christians and non-Christians.

All this convinced the Congress leadership that the country was not yet ready for mass civil disobedience. Thus, in November 1921, All India Congress Committee authorised the provincial committees to start civil disobedience on their own responsibility.

#### **Government Repression**

Soon the government changed its strategy and went whole-hog in the use of repressive measures. It declared the Congress and Khilafat works as unlawful activities. Congressmen responded to this challenge and many Congress workers and leaders like **CR Das, Maulana Azad, Lala Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and others were arrest** and were put behind bars. Altogether, 25,000 Congress and Khilafat workers were behind bars.

#### **Annual Congress, Ahmedabad, 1921**

- President: Hakim Ajmal Khan

- It was in such a surcharged atmosphere that the Congress met at Ahmedabad, and it called up its members to suspend all other activities and volunteer themselves for arrest. Mahatma Gandhi was made its sole executive and things started moving fast.

**Gandhiji sent an ultimatum to the Viceroy** Reading on February 1, 1922, and demanded among other things, the release of political prisoners, and the removal of restrictions on the press. In case the demands were not met, he informed Viceroy that he intended to start civil disobedience in Bardoli in the form of non-payment of taxes.

Meanwhile, on 4/5 February 1922 an unfortunate incident occurred at **Chauri-Chaura** village in the district of Gorakhpur in eastern UP. Gandhiji was shocked beyond measure by the unfortunate turn of events, and he withdrew the movement on 11 February 1922.

#### **Why did Gandhiji withdraw the movement??**

- People have not learnt the method of Nonviolent protest fully** and without proper understanding the movement was turning violent as the incident like Chauri Chaura showed. A violent movement could be easily suppressed by the colonial regime.
- The movement was also **showing signs of fatigue**. This was natural as it is not possible to sustain any movement at a high pitch for very long.
- The central theme of the agitation—the **Khilafat question—also dissipated** soon, as Kemal Pasha abolished the system and a secular state was formed.
- Growing Hindu-Muslim divide** due to revolts like *Moplah* etc.

This withdrawal proved that at this stage Gandhi did not want to lead a movement which he could not control, and it also proved that the nationalists would heed Gandhi's call, for **though there were many who differed from him**, no one thought of defying his call for withdrawal. Subsequently, his decision was endorsed by the Congress Working Committee.

Soon after the withdrawal of the movement, Gandhiji was arrested on 22 February 1922 and was put on trial on 18 March 1922. He pleaded guilty to all charges and was awarded six-years imprisonment.

#### **Criticisms of the Non-Cooperation Movement**

The Non-Cooperation Movement and its undisputed leader, Mahatma Gandhi, had been subjected to severe criticisms on various counts.

<b>Issue of Non-violence:</b> Gandhi's decision to withdraw the movement on 11 February 1922 in the wake of the violent incident of Chauri-Chaura	
<p>Thousands of young men and women, who had put everything at stake in this first major battle for Swaraj, were thoroughly disappointed. More so, as the leader (Gandhiji) had earlier promised Swaraj within one year and the act of withdrawal came as a great anti-climax.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the tallest among our national leaders, called it a 'national calamity'. "<i>To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some historians looked at it more as a <b>matter of strategy</b> rather than that of principles. In their view, the continuation of the movement, after it turned violent at Chauri Chaura, would have drawn sharp repressive measures from the government leading not to a decisive battle for Swaraj but futile sufferings, sacrifices and even demoralisation among the masses.</li> </ul>

<p><i>was reaching the boiling point was nothing short of a national calamity."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RP Dutt, a Marxist historian, looked at the issue of the withdrawal of the movement at the light of 'class interest' and not on the issue of violence.</li> <li>Even Jawaharlal Nehru expressed his 'amazement'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>However, for Gandhiji it was not a matter of strategy As he himself put it '<i>I would suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent.</i>' Thus, for Gandhiji it was a <b>matter of principle</b> and not a matter of strategy.</li> </ul>
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#### **Issue of Muslim Communalism:** Mixing of religion and politics

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gandhi failed to realise that the Khilafat was an <b>extra-territorial issue</b> which cut at the very root of Indian nationality. By emphasising that the Khilafat cause was a just cause Gandhi admitted that the Indian Muslims belonged to a separate nation.</li> <li>Muslim leadership was primarily inspired by their <b>pan-Islamic sentiments rather than the felt-need of Indian nationalism</b>. It was a <b>tactical move</b> on their part to seek the support of When Khilafat became a non-issue in view of the abolition of the office of the Caliph by the Turkish leadership, Ali brothers and Maulana Abdul Bari fell out of the mainstream of the national movement and even became critical of Gandhian politics.</li> <li>It is argued that by lending support to the Khilafat Movement, Gandhiji unwittingly <b>lent undeserved respectability to Muslim communalism</b>, strengthened religious bigotry. During the movement, the services of mullahs and maulavis were used in a big way for the popular mobilisation of the Muslim obscurantist masses, leading to their consolidation based on Islamic religiosity. The forces, thus, unleashed by the Khilafat Movement retarded the growth of secular politics in India. It ultimately led to the partition of the country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gandhiji was working to lay the <b>foundation of a free, pluralistic and united India</b> and for that goal, a united national movement was the basic need. Both the Khilafat and the Non-Cooperation Movements should be viewed in that <b>larger Gandhian perspective</b>.</li> <li><b>Gandhiji was not the progenitor of the Khilafat Movement: he just lent his support to it.</b></li> <li><b>For Gandhiji, religion and politics were twins</b>, deriving strength from each other, rather than being mutually exclusive. His principle of sarvadharma samabhava hardly differed from a secular view of politics.</li> <li>For Gandhi, <b>Hindu-Muslim unity had always remained as an article of faith</b> since his South African days. He stuck to his faith till the end, which reached its apogee during the dark days of 1946-47. If the critics still persisted with their doubts about his secular credentials, his martyrdom completely vindicated him.</li> </ul>
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Despite these criticisms, the Non-Cooperation Movement undoubtedly made significant contributions to further the ends of our national movement. **Contributions of the NCM:**

It was the 1<sup>st</sup> great mass movement in the history of India's anti-British struggle and it transformed the very character of anti-British struggle. It was not greatly radicalized with swaraj as a goal and widened mass-base, it also led to adoption of Gandhian methods of struggle and establishment of Gandhi as the supreme leader. It erased the fear of British rule from the heart and minds of people because people could see helplessness of British in front of Gandhian methods.

- **Political front: Departure in several ways**

- It marked the **emergence of the Congress** as the most powerful political organisation in the country. It became the central focus of the Indian nationalist movement.
- Previously, some of the political activities of Gandhi had been carried on independently of the Congress organization. But from now on **Congress and Gandhi became identical** in popular imagination.
- Though the movement failed to achieve Swaraj, it generated a **feeling of freedom among the masses**.
- **Swaraj** became the battle-cry of the movement. Although it was not yet well-defined, it caught the imagination of even the common men and women.
- The Congress was now committed to **all peaceful and legitimate means** for the attainment of Swaraj. The people had an unprecedented sense of empowerment and even the lowliest of the low was now equipped with a new weapon of satyagraha.
- With the non-cooperation movement there was a significant **shift towards mass-politics**. It was a great stride forward in the **growth of political consciousness** of the Indian people. The workers in the towns and the peasants in the villages were affected by the movement.
  - This change in Congress was not liked by some of its aristocratic leaders. The split between the conservatives and the liberals was now complete. The liberals accepted office under the government, became ministers and tried to fight and crush the Congress agitation. They were completely cut off from the people and developed a habit of looking at problems from the official point of view.
- As the leaders of the old generation were fading out, the movement **gave a new band of leaders** who successfully led the country to independence in 1947. Leaders like C Rajagopalachari, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Rajendra Prasad, Acharaya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, B C Roy, T Prakasam, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, G B Pant, were the products of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Some of them even played a crucial role in laying the foundation of a free and democratic India in the post-independence era.

- **Economic front: Quite spectacular**

- Considerable **boost to handloom and khadi industries**, which was a positive development, both in terms of income and employment generation.
- Sharp **decline in the import** of British goods.

- Paved the way for peoples-led **self-help programmes** like village reconstruction, village sanitation, and revival of handloom and khadi industries.
- **Social front**
  - Some of its programmes, like **Hindu-Muslim unity and eradication of untouchability**, were concerted attempts to strengthen the social fabric of the country, resulting in the emergence of a united national movement.
  - **Prohibition campaigns** brought many women in the national movement - a group that started participating in the national movement for the first time in a big way.
  - A remarkable spread of the national movement in geographical terms: **new regions and new linguistic groups** were brought into the national mainstream.
  - New social groups and classes like the **peasants, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women** identified themselves with the national struggle.
  - **A number of local movements**, viz., Akali movement in Punjab, peasants movement in Midnapore in Bengal, Kanika in Orissa, Kheda in Gujarat, Gunter in Andhra, as well as the peasant movement in Awadh in UP and that of north Bihar also got integrated as part and parcel of the national movement. All these led to widening of the base of the national movement, both in spatial and social group terms.
  - The movement contributed significantly to the **liberation of women** because women participated in large numbers, and they fought shoulder to shoulder with their male counterpart. Indian women spontaneously came out from their homes to co-operate with the movement. In this connection, the names of Basanti Devi, Sarojini Naidu, Urmila Devi, Hemaprabha Majumdar and others deserve special mention. The social outlook towards women began to change after 1920.
- **Cultural front**
  - Several **institutions of national education** were founded, which became the mainstay of the national movement.
  - There was a **great cultural resurgence** in India: 'Indian-ness' became an idea, to have pride in. Thus, a new swadeshi spirit permeated throughout the length and breadth of the country.
  - The movement also attempted to build up a **bridge between the classes and masses**. Gandhiji started wearing only a loincloth during the movement. He became a symbol of peasant's simplicity, religious and spiritual humility, and political militancy--all these virtues blended in one.

**Handout 33: Swarajists, Simon Commission****Swarajists**

Ours is a purity movement, and as such is above diplomacy. To enter the Councils with the object of making them a failure is not only diplomacy, but it is also diplomat's duplicity which every non-cooperator should disdain.

Sardar Patel

The Council's entry is and can be thoroughly consistent with the principle of non-cooperation as we understand that principle to be.

CR Das and Motilal Nehru

The Swaraj Party was formed by leaders like Motilal Nehru, C.R Das and their supporters in 1923 to participate in forthcoming general elections that were scheduled to be held in 1923.

**Circumstances leading to the formation of Swaraj Party**

Swaraj Party was outcome of atmosphere of disillusionment post-NCM

- The sudden withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Mahatma Gandhi, in the wake of the Chauri Chaura incident, created a crisis of confidence among the leaders of the movement.
- The arrest, trial, and imprisonment of Mahatma Gandhi for a period of six years further deepened the crisis.

The country was caught in a mood of despair and dilemma and was clouded with indecisiveness.

Serious strategic differences developed among the members of Congress over the issue of participation in forthcoming general elections. **Congress was divided on the issue of council-entry.**

	No Changers	Pro Changers
<b>Elections</b>	Favour of boycott of forthcoming elections as continuation of Gandhian policy of non-cooperation	Participate in elections to extend the Non-cooperation to the Legislature.
<b>Constructive Program</b>	Greater emphasis of constructive program among the people	Not opposed, but no fetish.
<b>Arguments</b>	(a) Legislative work would lead to the neglect of constructive work among the people. (b) Constructive work would prepare the organization and people for	The Council entry was needed: (a) To prove their popularity with the masses. (b) To wreck this citadel of bureaucracy from within. Thus, extension of non-cooperation.

	the next round of struggle in future	(c) Enthuse the masses, to keep up morale, during the political vacuum. (d) To deter govt from filling the councils with undesirable elements and get legitimacy to its rule.
<b>Leaders</b>	C Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, MA Ansari, and S Kasturiranga Iyengar	Motilal Nehru, CR Das, Ajmal Khan and Vithalbhai Patel

The entire leadership got divided on the issue. The Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, set up by the Congress in June 1922, and which submitted its report in October 1922, could not settle the issue. The Committee was evenly divided between two groups.

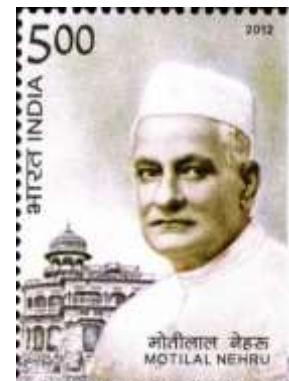
### Annual Congress Session at Gaya (Dec 1922)

President: CR Das

It was with such a divided house that the Congress met at Gaya. CR Das pleaded for the Council entry. But ultimately the no-changers led by C Rajagopalachari had their way. C Rajgopalachari became successful in getting the proposal accepted against the council entry. CR Das resigned from the office of the president of the Congress.

At this, Pro-changers formed Swaraj Party on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1923 to participate in coming elections. It was formally called as **The Congress-Khilafat Swaraj Party**. C.R. Das was the President of the Party and Motilal Nehru was one of the secretaries.

They neither repudiated the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, nor did they go in for a total break up with the Congress. It accepted the Congress programme except in one respect-it decided to participate in council election. They did not repudiate the policy of non-cooperation in totality. CR Das in his presidential speech at Gaya had explained his stand that through the Council entry they wanted to extend the principle of non-cooperation to the councils and expose the sham character of the reforms from within and tear off 'the mask' from the face of the British 'steel frame'.



## The Aims and Objectives of the Swaraj Party

The party reiterated its faith in the basic political goal of the Congress: the attainment of Swaraj by all legitimate and peaceful means. Like the Congress, Swaraj for them meant dominion status within the British empire.

But the Council Entry was an **extension of the principle of non-cooperation** to the very citadel of bureaucracy. Their policy had both constructive and destructive planks. They would work for 'ending' or 'mending' the Act of 1919.

- **Destructive side:** They promised to work for the rejection of all anti-people programmes, policies, budgets, and resolutions of the government with the ultimate objective of bringing the government machinery to a standstill. In pursuance of the same goal, they were committed to boycott all government bodies and all official functions. Thus, their primary objective was to expose the 'sham' nature of the reforms offered under the Act of 1919 and make them totally unworkable.
- **Constructive side** of their legislative work, the party was committed to push through proposals and resolutions to further the cause of constitutional development with an ultimate aim of achieving 'self-government' for Indians. They were also in favour of supporting Gandhian constructive programmes without making a fetish of them.

## Swaraj Party and the Indian National Congress

The relationship between the Congress party and the Swaraj Party always remained close, intimate and symbiotic.

- The founders of the party initially called it 'the Congress-Khilafat Swaraj Party' which subsequently came to be known as the Swaraj Party.
- They neither repudiated the basic principle of the Indian National Congress nor the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. All members of the Swaraj Party continued to be active members of the Congress.

## Career of Swaraj Party

1. **Elections in November 1923:** Though Swarajists got little time to prepare for elections, they were quite successful.

- a. Swaraj party won majority in CP, emerged as dominant party in Bengal and an influential party in UP and Bombay.
- b. In the Central Legislative Assembly, Swarajists won 45/145 (or 42/141) elected seats.
- c. In the Central Assembly Motilal Nehru became the leader of the Party and C R Das in the Bengal Assembly.

2. **Centre**

- a. Motilal Nehru managed to defeat the Government on many occasions in the Central Assembly. He forged an alliance with Madan Mohan Malaviya and Jinnah for that purpose. He managed to secure the support of the Independents and the Nationalists and embarrassed the government on many occasions.

- b. The most historic occasion was when Motilal Nehru managed to get through a resolution in the Assembly in February 1924, calling upon the government **to take steps to amend the Act of 1919**. It further urged the government to hold a **Round Table Conference** to make recommendations for a new constitution of India. This exposed the government's **hypocritical attitude towards the issue of 'self-government' for Indians**, as the government summarily rejected the resolution.
- c. The Swaraj Party managed to get a number of demands, made in the **Finance Bill** of 1924, rejected. This was followed by the rejection of budgets in subsequent years and each time the Governor-General had to use his **extraordinary power of certification**, which was extremely embarrassing for the government.
- d. **Many resolutions** on the initiative of the Swaraj Party were passed even in the face of stiff opposition from the government. It was followed up by a **boycott of government functions and several walk-outs** from the Assembly.
- e. The government tried to pacify the Nationalists and made an announcement in February 1924, regarding appointment of a **committee** to report on the working of dyarchy with Sir Alexander **Muddiman**, as the Chairman. Motilal Nehru, however, refused the offer of the government for membership of the committee.
- f. In September 1924, the **Lee Commission Report** on the Superior service came up for consideration before the Central Assembly. Motilal Nehru got it rejected through moving an amendment to it.

### 3. Bengal

- a. As the leader of the single largest party in the council, C.R. Das was invited to form the ministry in Bengal. But he refused to do so.
- b. In 1925 C.R. Das, who had refused to form a ministry in Bengal, was elected the Mayor of Calcutta.
- c. CR Das managed to create communal harmony and get the support of Muslim members through the **Bengal Pact** and made the working of dyarchy come to a standstill.
- d. Not only that, the Bengal Council passed many resolutions on the issue of the release of prisoners and repeal of repressive laws. Besides, it rejected a number of grants and demands for salaries of ministers. Dyarchy was virtually made unworkable in Bengal.

### 4. Central Provinces

- a. In the Central Provinces the task of the party was much easier as it had the absolute majority. Thus, dyarchy was made totally unworkable there too.

The Swaraj Party played a crucial role in the legislatures both at the central and provincial levels.

#### **The Work of the Swaraj Party Outside the Legislature**

Though the Swaraj Party was founded on the issue of the Council entry, they never rejected the importance of constructive programmes as enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi. In fact, they had faith in major Gandhian programmes.

- Hindu-Muslim unity: Both Motilal Nehru and CR Das had impeccable secular records.
  - Motilal Nehru managed to secure the support of independent members through Jinnah in the Central Assembly.
  - CR Das managed to enter into a pact with Muslim members of the Bengal Council. It came to be called the Bengal Pact which made dyarchy unworkable in Bengal.
- Khadi work
  - Even on the issue of Khadi work, they were not opposed to it in principle. What they were opposed to, was the idea of making a fetish out of it.
  - It was through their effort that spinning qualification for the membership of the Congress was dropped and the old qualification of four annas membership was restored.
- Removal of untouchability
  - They were second to none in commitment. On the initiative of CR Das, Tarakeswar temple in Bengal was handed over to a public trust and its gates were opened for all including the 'untouchables'.
  - They also lent their support to the Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-25) in Kerala, which was launched to get the gates of Hindu temples opened for the untouchables.

Thus, the Swaraj party played a creditable role outside the legislatures also.

### **Achievements of Swaraj Party**

1. **Filled political vacuum:** Activities of Swarajists did not allow the atmosphere of passivism to develop in India. They provided an alternative to people to continue struggle even after withdrawal of the NCM.
2. The Swarajists succeeded in **exposing the unresponsive nature of the colonial administration.**
3. Used legislative councils as the platform and **raised nationalist issues.**
  - a. They followed the strategy of blocking anti-national resolutions of government by joining hands with other like-minded parties.
  - b. The pressure brought by Swarajists on government, compelled the British to take steps to protect Indian's Industries and promotion of education.
4. Exposed the hollowness of constant arrangement created by Act of 1919.
  - a. Their activities exposed that the system of diarchy was a complete failure because the real power was still in British hands.
  - b. It was on their persistent demand that the Muddiman Committee and even the Simon Commission was setup to inquire into the inadequacies of the Act of 1919.
5. The Swarajists made an attempt to implement the constructive programme of the Congress. They advocated economic improvement of the country and talked about modern industrialisation, protection of the national industries, improvement of the condition of the working class, reduction of train-fare and taxes.
6. Swarajists were the first to underline and demand the right of the Indian people to make their own constitution. That was a very revolutionary demand which later on became one of the major demands of our national struggle.

7. Swarajists were the first generation of the elected political leaders. Their activities enabled Indians to gain political experience for future.
8. The British decision to review the constitutional reforms of 1919 by sending the Simon Commission could partly be attributed to the pressure exerted by the Swarajists.
9. The sincerity and commitment of the Swaraj Party was also proved by the fact that when the time came for mass struggle in the wake of the Simon Commission, they did join the mainstream of the national struggle.

### Why did Swaraj Party decline?

The Swarajists started with great enthusiasm. They were successful as well in the beginning but by 1926 they ran out of steam and their mass appeal got eroded. A number of factors led to the decline and final re-integration of the Swaraj party in the Congress.

1. **Long-term ineffectiveness of the idea:** In the first place, their policy of 'uniform and continuous obstruction' was quite successful in the initial stages and also in establishing the credentials of the members of the Party as the genuine representatives of the people. However, gradually it lost its initial sheen and reached some kind of dead end. The Party members themselves realised its futility.
2. **Temptation of occupying office:** Internal schisms and bickerings in the party.

a. Acceptance of membership of various government committees by the Swarajists, further complicated the matter.

i. Some of the Swarajists accepted the membership of the Steel Protection Committee.

ii. In 1925, Motilal Nehru himself became a member of the Skeen Committee, which was

set up to inquire into the possibilities of Indianising the Indian Army.

iii. Vithalbhai Patel became the Speaker of the Assembly.

3. **Spread of communal consciousness:** The Indian political scene was changing fast after withdrawal of NCM; the period of Hindu-Muslim bonhomie was over and communal riots started occurring in the country in 1923.

a. This led to the breaking up of alliance politics in the Central Assembly. All this weakened the effectiveness of the Swaraj Party led by Motilal Nehru in the Central Assembly.



In the Old Lok Sabha chamber, facing the Speaker's Chair, was the portrait of Vithalbhai Patel, the first Indian presiding officer of the Central Legislative Assembly.

- 4. Internal division:** Amid this communal disharmony even the Swarajists became divided along communal lines.
- Responsivists: Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, N.C. Kelkar and others.
  - Non-Responsivists: Motilal Nehru, who was ridiculed as 'anti-Hindu' by responsivists.
- 5. Leadership vacuum: Death of CR Das** in 1925 was a big setback to Swarajists because he was the main ideologue and the most popular Swarajist leader.

All this weakened the Party, which was reflected in the Council election held in 1926. As compared to the 1923 election, the Swaraj Party lost seats in every Province except in Madras and Bihar. Even in the Central Assembly their strength was reduced as they got only 35 seats as against 45 in the 1923 election.

Thereafter, the Party which had already begun to break up into factions, collapsed quickly. By March, 1926 the party disintegrated and dashed out of history.

**6. New of appointment of all-white Simon Commission** in Nov 1927 changed the direction of political activities in India. Swarajists abandoned their line of action and joined hands with the rest of the Congress.

In a word, at a very critical junction of our national movement, the Swarajists played a crucial and constructive role.

**Prelims Facts: During this period, the following Satyagrahas took place.**

- Nagpur flag Satyagraha, 1923
- Guru Ka Bag Satyagraha (1922-23)
- Tarkeshwar movement, 1924
- Borasad Movement (1923-24)
- Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-25)
- Mahad Satyagraha, 1927
- Parvati Satyagraha, 1929
- Kalaram Temple Satyagraha, Nashik, 1930

**1926: Gandhi's Year of Silence**

He spent the entire year in silence working on Harijan welfare. He withdrew from active politics to the Ashram work at Sabarmati, and vowed not to leave Ahmadabad for one year. He spend time in editing newspapers Young India and Navajivan and also in teaching and correspondence.

## Simon Commission (1927)

Despite certain signs of political resurgence, the general condition of the country in 1927, was by and large, not very promising. The communal gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims had widened, the Swaraj Party had collapsed, and Gandhi had retired from active politics. Amid this situation came Simon Commission.

According to Indian Act of 1919 a commission had to be set up to look into the working of diarchy after 10 years, i.e. in 1929. In November 1927, the British government set up the Indian Statutory Commission, known as the Simon Commission. The job of the Commission was to enquire and recommend whether India was ready for further constitutional progress and to what extent and in which direction.

Its sudden appointment created a deep sense of doubt regarding the very motive of the British Government.

### **The British attempt to justify the composition of the Simon Commission**

The Simon Commission consisted of seven British MPs. Apart from Sir John Simon, one of its members was the future leader of the Labour Party, Clement Attlee.

The fact that no Indian was considered good enough to be associated with the Commission, which was to decide the political fate of India, was too much of a national insult to be taken lightly.

- The government tried to justify its composition by saying that only the members of the British parliament could become its members. The Nationalist leadership countered it by pointing out the **eligibility of Lord SP Sinha and Sir Naoroji Satkatwala** in joining Simon Commission as they were already a member of the British Parliament at that time.
- Another argument advanced by the Government was that in view of **divisions and fissures in the Indian national movement**, it was not possible to associate any Indian without offending another section of the Indian public opinion. If this was so, our leadership argued, then why was no attempt made to find a consensus candidate/s from among the Indian people.

### **Deeper Reasons for Rejecting Simon Commission**

However, for Indian leadership, apart from its all-white composition, there were other deeper reasons to reject and boycott the Simon Commission. It was seen as a violation of the principle of self-determination and a deliberate insult to the self-respect of the Indians.

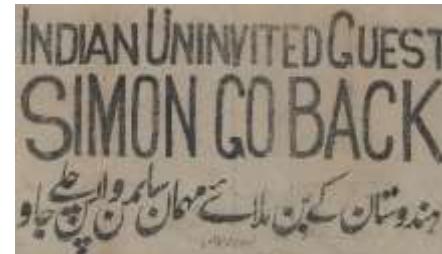
- Indian leaders were of the view that **only an Indian institution can draft the constitution**. The Indian National Congress took its well-known stand that the people of **India had a right to make their own constitution**.
  - This was a consensual national viewpoint as evidenced by the passage of two resolutions (February 1924 and September 1925) by the Central Assembly, reiterating the same demand.

- Besides, as the Congress president, S Srinivasa Iyengar argued **any enquiry to the fitness of the Indian people for self-government was nothing but a direct affront to our national respect**. All that was needed, he further argued, was a direct negotiation between the people of India and the British with a view to grant self-government to us.

### **Condemnation of the Commission by Indian political leadership**

There was an unprecedented unity among the Indian political leadership leading to universal condemnation of the Commission. Apart from the Indian National Congress, other parties, and groups, viz., the Indian Muslim League, Liberal Federation of India, Hindu Mahasabha, and Khilafat Conference, also joined the chorus of the national condemnation of the Commission.

- Jinnah described it as 'butchery of our soul.'
- Tej Bahadur Sapru called it 'the worst challenge to Indian nationalism'.
- On the initiative of Lala Lajpat Rai, on 16 February 1928, a resolution was passed by the Central Assembly expressing its lack of confidence in the Parliamentary Commission.



### **Annual Madras Congress (December 1927)**

President: Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari

It took a strong stand against the Commission by passing a resolution:

- Calling on the people of India to **boycott the Commission by organising demonstrations** against it on its arrival in India.
- All members of Indian legislatures, including the non-official members, **not to associate with the Commission's work in any manner**.
- Mahatma Gandhi called for befitting 'action' and not mere 'declaration' and 'speeches' against it.

A faction of the **Muslim League**, led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah, also decided to boycott the commission. Even Surendra Nath Banerjee's Indian Liberal Federation participated in boycott. The NC Kelkar, who had joined Hindu Mahasabha, also supported the Boycott.

However, the support for co-operation came from some members of the Muslim League under Muhammad Shafi, Justice Party, All India Federation of Untouchables and Unionist Party of Punjab, some sections of Hindu Mahasabha and Central Sikh League. Leaders like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Periyar E. V. Ramasamy, MC Rajah, C Shankaran Nair, and Chaudhary Chhotu Ram supported Simon Commission.

## Boycott of the Commission: The People's Action

There was a groundswell of opposition when the Commission landed at **Bombay** on 3 February 1928. An all-India strike was observed on its arrival.

There were protests all over India and the sky echoed with the slogan of '**Simon! Go back**'. Mass rallies, black flag demonstrations, and processions became the order of the day. There was hardly any town in India where anti-Simon Commission demonstrations were not held.



- **Madras:** the situation took an ugly turn when there was police firing resulting in the death of three people. Madras also witnessed a death-defying act on the part of **T Prakasam**-a prominent Congress leader, who bared his chest for being shot, on being prevented from reaching the place of police firing.
- **Calcutta:** there was a similar confrontation between students and the police.
- **Delhi:** The Commission was greeted with hostile demonstrations. Placards and banners carrying the slogan 'Go Back, Simon', flooded its streets.
- **Patna:** Over 50,000 people gathered to demonstrate against it and even when the entire city was invaded by the police force, the people refused to be cowed down.
- **Lucknow**, even **Jawaharlal Nehru** and **Govind Ballabh Pant** were subjected to lathi-blows.
  - There was also a more innovative and comic scene: thousands of **black kites** carrying slogans of 'Simon! Go Back', flooded the sky of Lucknow city.
- **Lahore:** **Lala Lajpat Rai** was showered with lathi-blows on 30 October 1928, while demonstrating against the Simon Commission.

The year 1928 was marked by political agitations against the Simon Commission. Demonstrations, burning of foreign clothes, strikes, and mass processions became the order of the day. It amply demonstrated people's readiness for a new mass movement. *It also marked the return of Mahatma Gandhi to active politics.*

### The Report of the Simon Commission

1. **No drastic change at the central level:** it favoured a federal government, including Princely India.
2. It recommended scrapping of the dyarchy at the provincial level as provided under the 1919 Act, to be replaced by a responsible government within a federal framework with provincial autonomy.
  - a. But there was a rider to the general principle of provincial autonomy: the Governors had to have some special powers to safeguard the interests of the minorities and to maintain peace and tranquility.
3. **Enlargement of franchise:** Though it did not favour general adult franchise at that point of time, it assented to raising of franchise from 3% to 15% of the population.
4. It favoured the **system of communal representation**.

5. **State reorganization:** Separation of Sindh from Bombay, Orissa from Bihar, and Burma from India.
6. The Commission stood for the framing of a **really elastic constitution** which would develop in course of time and thus avoid periodical parliamentary enquiries.

### **Appraisal of the Simon Commission**

- Neither did it seriously consider the question of self-government for the Indian people, nor did it favour Dominion Status as the future political goal of India.
- It favoured a fully non-responsible government at the centre with a non-representative central legislature which looked like being 'retrogressive' and 'anti-people'.
- Even the provincial autonomy was hedged by the special powers of the Governor.
- Its recommendation for a meager expansion of franchise did not give a big push to democratisation of Indian polity.
- Its recommendation favouring communal representation was a replica of the old policy of 'divide and rule'.

In fact, by the time the Commission made its recommendations, a lot of political change had already taken place both in India as well as in England. By the time the Simon Commission made its recommendations, they had lost all their practical utility due to the change in the political environment.

In retrospect, it appears that the Commission and its recommendations had only twofold practical utilities.

- Some of its recommendations worked as building blocks of the Act of 1935.
- It gave a big fillip to the national movement as the opposition to it became a rallying point for the national movement.

Thus, though inadvertently, it contributed to the strengthening of the national movement and prepared the ground for the next British experiment of parliamentary federalism in India.

**Handout 34: Nehru Report, Jinnah's 14 Points, Lahore Congress**

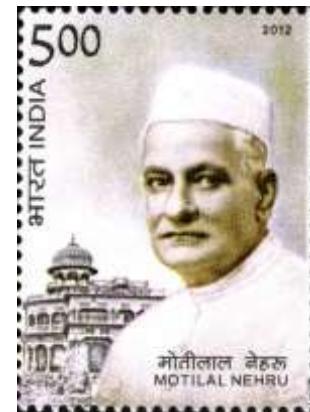
Nikhil Sheth

**The Nehru Report (1928)**

The Nehru Report was a landmark in the history of constitution-making in pre-Independence India. It was a **wholly Indian attempt at constitution-making**. Moreover, it had **cross-sectional support**, and its major contours were not a product of any one individual or group. Finally, some of its recommendations had a **far-reaching impact on the Act of 1935, as well as on the constitution of India**.

**Historical Background**

There was almost a consensus among our leaders that the Act of 1919 was 'inadequate' and hence its drastic revision in the form of a new constitution was needed to take India on the road towards self-government. This new constitution was to be made by the Indian people themselves.



Several resolutions were passed by the Central Assembly, containing all these demands were neglected by the British. To justify the exclusion of Indians from the Simon Commission the British cited the lack of unity among the Indians. **Lord Birkenhead** (secretary of state 1924-28) **challenged** the Indian leaders to produce a constitution acceptable to all political sections in India. Indians now seemed to be determined to counter-challenge Birkenhead's assumption.



- Consequently, the **Madras Congress** (December 1927, President: Dr. MA Ansari) directed its Working Committee to hold a special convention to work out a constitution in consultation and cooperation with other political groups as well as the elected members of Central and Provincial legislatures.
- Thus, a **special convention** consisting of representatives of different political formations was held at **Delhi** in February 1928 under the chairmanship of Dr MA Ansari. As a result, a **committee headed by Motilal Nehru** was set up to draft a constitution for India. The other prominent members of the Committee were:
  - Tej Bahadur Sapru (Liberals)
  - Sardar Mangal Singh (Sikhs)
  - Shuaib Quareshi, Sir Ali Imam (Muslims)
  - Subhash Chandra Bose (Congress)
  - GP Pradhan (non-Brahmins)
  - Madhav Srihari Aney, MR Jaykar (Hindu Mahasabha)
  - NM Joshi (Labour)
  - Jawaharlal Nehru (secretary)

This Committee, after making a strenuous effort, produced a draft constitution for India, which was submitted on August 10, 1928.

The **major recommendations** of the Nehru Report were as follows:

## **1. Central Government**

- a. India should be granted **dominion status** forthwith. The Governor-General would represent the British Crown but would act on the advice of the Central Executive Council, responsible to the parliament.
- b. **Responsible government** should be introduced both at the central as well as at the provincial levels. Ministry would be responsible to the legislature.
- c. There would be a **bi-cameral Parliament**.
  - i. **The upper house**, to be known as the Senate, would consist of 200 members to be **elected by the provincial legislatures for 7 years**.
  - ii. **The lower house**, known as the House of Representatives, would consist of 500 members who would be **elected directly** by the people based on adult franchise for **5 years**.

## **2. Federal Government**

- a. Provincial Councils, to be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, with tenure of 5 years. The Provincial Government to be headed by a Governor, acting on the advice of the Provincial Executive Council.
- b. Redistribution of provincial boundaries on **linguistic basis**.
- c. **Princely India** was to hasten the process of introduction of responsible government and ultimately an All-India Federation was to emerge, also covering Princely India.
- d. **Powers between the Provinces and the Centre** were to be divided on the basis of the lists of subjects covered at both levels.
- e. **Residuary powers** were to be vested in the centre.
- f. An **independent judiciary** with a Supreme Court at its head. The **Supreme Court** would be made the final court of appeal and all appeals to the Privy Council would be stopped.

## **3. Bill of Rights (19 FRs)**

- a. Freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and profession
- b. Secular state: there shall be no state religion.
- c. Right to form unions
- d. Men and women shall have equal rights as citizens.

## **4. The language** of the Union shall be Hindustani, which may be written either in Devanagari or Urdu character. The use of the English language shall be permitted.

## **5. Representative Character**

- a. The Report accepted the basic principle of **universal adult franchise**: every person who had attained the age of twenty-one, unless disqualified by law, would enjoy general adult franchise.
- b. The report disfavoured the principle of separate electorate and provided for **joint electorate**. However, it did provide for **reservation of seats for Muslims** where they were in minority and similarly reservation of seats for **non-Muslims in the North-West Frontier Province**.
  - i. The reservation of seats would be based on population and for a fixed period.
  - ii. The community with reserved seats should have right to contest the general seats.
  - iii. There would be no reservation of seats for Muslims in Punjab and Bengal.

The Report was approved by the **All-Parties' Committee (Lucknow, August 1928)**. However, the unanimity displayed at the Lucknow conference turned out to be short-lived. Despite its innovative features, the Nehru Report faced criticism from several quarters.

### **Nehru Report Debate 1: Issue of communal representation**

- **Muslim League split into two factions.** One was under Mohammad Ali Jinnah while the other was under Safi Khan.
  - Muhammad Shafi and Aga Khan's faction was not ready to even talk on the issue of separate electorate.
  - Jinnah's faction agreed to talk about the principle of joint electorate, but had certain conditions.
- When the Report was put before the **All-Parties Meeting (Calcutta, December 1928)**, **Jinnah** demanded certain changes (**Delhi Proposals**)
  - The Muslims must have 1/3<sup>rd</sup> representation in the Central legislature.
  - Till adult franchise was accepted, Bengal and Punjab legislatures should have Muslim representation on the basis of population.
  - Creation of new Muslim-majority provinces: Sindh, Balochistan, NWFP
  - Residuary powers should be vested in the provinces and not in the Centre.



However, Hindu Mahasabha (esp MR Jaykar and NC Kelkar) and Sikh League bitterly opposed the demands.

Ultimately, Jinnah's amendments were put to vote in Calcutta and were lost. The rejection of the 3 out of 4 demands was perceived by Jinnah as betrayal. For Jinnah, it was 'parting of the ways'.

As Congress rejected the proposal of Jinnah, he also drifted in the direction of Safi Khan. It led to a **Delhi Declaration of Muslims** in March 1929 and adopted an expanded version of Jinnah's earlier demands. Subsequently, known as **Jinnah's fourteen-point proposal**.

Some of the points covered under the proposal were:

- The system of separate electorates should continue in Muslim majority provinces till the introduction of universal adult suffrage.
- Adequate share to the Muslims in all the services of the state and self-governing bodies.
  - No cabinet, either Central or Provincial, should be formed without granting at least one-third seats to Muslims.
- No constitutional amendment could be carried out unless approved by four-fifth majority of either house sitting separately or both houses voting jointly.

These points were rejected by Congress.

Some historians say that the negotiations failed because of the Hindu Mahasabha's obduracy; and Motilal Nehru cooperated with the Mahasabha leaders though he himself saw no harm in the demands.

Other historians blame Jinnah for the failure. Jawaharlal Nehru called them 'Jinnah's ridiculous 14 points.' It was Jinnah's obduracy that, ultimately, sabotaged their assiduously worked-out formula to bury the virus of communalism. The Indian Muslim League ultimately rejected the

report on the issue of communal representation. Some of these points became the basis of communal politics of the Muslim League in future.

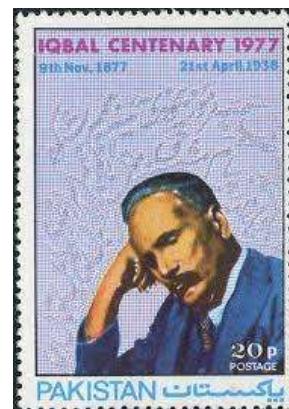
### Jinnah's 14 Points

1. Provincial Autonomy.
2. Federal Constitution with residual powers to provinces.
3. All legislatures and elected bodies to have adequate representation of Muslims in every province without reducing a majority of Muslims in a province to a minority or equality.
4. No constitutional amendment by the centre without the concurrence of the states constituting the Indian federation.
5. Adequate representation to Muslims in the services and in self-governing bodies.
6. One-third Muslim representation in the Central Legislature.
7. In any cabinet at the centre or in the provinces, one-third to be Muslims.
8. Separate electorate, in Muslim majority provinces, to continue till adult franchise is introduced.
9. Any territorial redistribution not to affect the Muslim majority in Punjab, Bengal and NWFP.
10. No bill or resolution in any legislature to be passed if three-fourths of a minority community consider such a bill or resolution to be against their interest.
11. Separation of Sindh from Bombay.
12. Constitutional reforms in the NWFP and Baluchistan.
13. Protection of Muslim rights in religion, culture, education and language,
14. Full religious freedom to all communities.



**In 1930, Allahabad Session of Muslim League, Allama Iqbal gave the famous address:**

*India is a continent of human groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages, and professing different religions [...] Personally, I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India.*



Notably, Bengal, another Muslim majority province, was absent from his speech. But this speech was milestone in the development of idea of Pakistan and road to partition.

## Nehru Report Debate 2: Dominion or Republic?

- During the 1920s, the young radical leaders **Jawahar Lal Nehru** and **Subhas Chandra Bose** emerged in Congress politics. Both along with **Srinivasa Iyengar** founded the **Independence for India League in 1928** which put forth the demand for complete independence. In 1928, they toured the whole country to influence public opinion on the issue of Purna Swaraj.
- In the **Calcutta-session of the Congress (President Motilal Nehru, 1928)**, they opposed the idea of dominion status as provided by the Nehru Report.
- **Resolution 1**
  - Mahatma Gandhi reached a compromise formula, by which the Congress gave an ultimatum to the government: either accept the Report by 31 December 1930 (2 years), lest the Congress would go in for Purna Swaraj, backed up by a mass movement. Nehru and Bose were still unhappy and thus Gandhi cut down the 2 years to 1 year as a further concession, the resolution was passed.
  - In an open session,
    - Gandhi's compromise resolution was passed
    - Bose introduced an amendment during the open session of Congress that sought a complete break with the British, but it was rejected.
- **Resolution 2**
  - Another resolution was passed on Gandhian constructive work which involved revival of organisational work, removal of untouchability, boycott of foreign cloth, spread of khadi, temperance, village reconstruction and removal of disabilities of women. It was through this constructive programme that Gandhi hoped to achieve true swaraj. But one important issue that this constructive programme did not touch was Hindu-Muslim unity.

## After Calcutta, before Lahore

The political scene in India was moving so fast that within a year the Nehru Report lost its sheen.

Even after the Calcutta Congress, some Congress Liberals preferred cooperation with the British. Labour government in London was willing to seek some kind of resolution.

Lord Irwin, to seek reconciliation to introduce a constitutional scheme with a dominion status as the goal, came with the "**Irwin Offer**" of 31 October 1929, **proposing a Round Table Conference** to settle the issue.

Gandhi was reluctant to reject it outright, but negotiations broke down, as the Congress leaders wanted the concrete details of the dominion status to be discussed, and not just the principle. The Congress also asked for amnesty and a policy of general conciliation on the part of the government. Irwin refused to accept the conditions; negotiations fell through.

As a result of the denial of reforms and political rights, Congress soon unified in the desire to oust the British from India completely. But many leaders still had reservations about starting a movement for full independence, particularly in view of the rising wave of violence spearheaded by revolutionary leaders like Bhagat Singh and others.

## Lahore Session, (45<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1929)

Jawaharlal Nehru became the president of Lahore session. Congress in Lahore discarded the Nehru Report as the Government failed to accept it by the deadline of December 1929.

1. The proposal for **Purna Swarajya** was accepted.
  1. 26<sup>th</sup> January was declared as the day of complete independence.
  2. Jawaharlal Nehru raised the “swaraj” flag that was later adopted as the national flag of India.
2. The proposal for civil disobedience was also accepted. The All India Congress Committee (AICC) was authorized to start a civil disobedience movement at an appropriate time.



Nehru speaking on the bank of Ravi for Purna Swaraj

### **Nehru's presidential address**

- He declared himself to be a *socialist* and a *republican* and outlined an *internationalist* and socially *radical* path for the Indian freedom struggle.
- He openly criticized Gandhi's 'trusteeship' solution of zamindar-peasant and capital-labour conflicts, calling trusteeship a sham.
- Cries of *inquilab zindabad* (long live the revolution), replaced the chanting of *Vande Mataram* as the Indian flag was unfurled. |

The **independence pledge** that the Indian National Congress presented to the world on 26 January 1930 stated that the British government in India had taken away the freedom of Indians and systematically exploited them. It had 'ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually'. Further, the pledge affirmed that as Indians they considered it a sin 'before man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this four-fold disaster to the country'.

### **Comment on Nehru Report:**

However, there is no denying the fact that the Nehru Report was a milestone in our constitutional history, if for nothing else at least for its home-made nature.

Although the Lahore Congress bypassed the Nehru Report, it did accept its essential formulation that no constitution would be acceptable to the Indian National Congress that failed to give full satisfaction to the minorities.

Most of its recommendations were ignored by the British government during the drafting of the Government of India Bill of 1935; however, the Indian constituent Assembly (1946- 1949) adopted many of its features.

### Evolution of Congress position on the issue of Swaraj

<b>Year</b>	<b>Congress Position on Swaraj</b>
<b>1885</b>	'All that we desire is that the basis of the Government should be widened and that the people should have their proper and legitimate share in it.' (Presidential Address of W. C. Bonnerjee)
<b>1906</b>	'This Congress is of opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies should be extended to India.' (Resolution)
<b>1916</b>	'This Congress demands that a definite step should be taken towards Self-Government by granting the reform contained in the scheme prepared by the All-India Congress Committee in concert with the Reform Committee appointed by the All-India Muslim League.' (Lahore Resolution)
<b>1920</b>	'The object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of Swarajya by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means.' (Nagpur Resolution)
<b>1929</b>	'This Congress ... declares that the word "Swaraj"... shall mean Complete Independence ... and authorizes the All-India Congress Committee ... to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience ...'(Resolution)
<b>1942</b>	'The All-India Congress Committee, therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India.'