

Lecture 13

Pak301

Towards Independence, 1947

Civil Disobedience Movements:

The ML decided to confront the political situation through the protesting means for the first time. The Congress had been working on these lines but the Muslim leaders considered politics a gentle man's game. Now when the British government joined hands to oust the Muslims from the constitutional and moral position they decided to launch 'Direct Action.' The ML revised its decision rejecting the Cabinet Mission Plan. Direct Action Day (August 16, 1946) was a protest against the British policy of injustice towards the Muslims. The Hindu attacks transmuted the course of the protests and concluded huge life casualties. The Calcutta massacre convinced Lord Wavell to bridge the ML-Congress to some settlement.

Wavell tried to prepare Nehru and Gandhi to coordinate the ML. It was imperative to do because Muslim League (95% seats) refused to join the Legislative Assembly. Congress rejected all the possible offers even from the government. Churchill snubbed the Labour government on the Calcutta riots and the Viceroy requested Jinnah to join the Interim Government that Jinnah accepted. On October 25, 1946, the members of the Executive Council were finalized.

Punjab:

ML had bagged 79 out of 86 seats in Punjab but Khizr Hayat Tiwana formed his government with the help of Hindu and Sikh members (Unionist). The ML confronted this conspiracy and protested to restore the people's will (Feb. 1947). The Punjab government dealt with the situation cruelly. Here the Muslim women played very outstanding role in the ML struggle. The Khizr Government resigned and Governor's rule was imposed on March 2, 1947.

Assam:

Maulana Bhashani launched a movement against the ejection of Muslim peasants.

Announcement of February 20, 1947:

Prime Minister Attlee declared by June 1948, all power would be given to representatives. If no constitution was framed, the British Government will think whether the powers be given to provincial governments. In some areas or any other alternative that is in the interest of Indians. Mountbatten was appointed new Viceroy of India.

Mountbatten as Viceroy:

Mountbatten arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1947. The basic objective of his appointment was to wind up British rule. He arranged dialogue with the Indian leaders. Then he visited England for deliberations for new plan.

3rd June Plan:

- The British will not impose a constitution but the Constituent Assembly will frame a constitution.
- The constitution will not be imposed on the areas that do not accept it. Opinion will be sought from them if they want to set up a separate CA (Constituent Assembly).
- Punjab & Bengal Assemblies will meet in two parts, members from Muslim majority areas and other districts separately to decide if the province be partitioned.
- If any part decides for partition, each group will decide which CA they wish to join.
- Sind Assembly will decide about joining either side.

- Referendum in NWFP
- Balochistan: appropriate method
- Boundary Commission for Punjab and Bengal
- Princely states to decide for themselves keeping in view their geographical contiguity.

Indian Independence Act July 1947:

To give legal shape to the June 3 Plan, the Indian Independence Act was promulgated (July 1947).

- Two independent dominion states on August 15, 1947
- Their legislatures will have all powers to make laws for the respective states.
- Government of India Act, 1935, to be interim constitution subject to changes due to Indian Independence Act 1947.
- Governor Generals can amend the Interim Constitution until March 31, 1948.
- All arrangements between the British and the Princely states to come to an end and they will have new arrangements with the new states.
- British King will no longer use the title of the King of India

The Partition Process:

Punjab

The Muslim members favoured joining new CA. the non-Muslims voted for partition and joining India.

Bengal

Muslims favoured joining new CA while non-Muslims favoured partitioning and joining India.

Sindh

The Assembly voted to join Pakistan.

NWFP

Referendum decided in favour of Pakistan while Dr. Khan's govt. boycotted it after it became clear that it would lose.

Balochistan

Shahi Jirga and the non-official members of Quetta Municipal Committee opted for Pakistan.

Sylhet

Referendum was held to join East Bengal for joining Pakistan.

Governor General's Issue:

Mountbatten wanted to be joint GG (Governor General) of India and Pakistan while ML decided to appoint Jinnah as the first Governor General of Pakistan in July.

Transfer of Power:

1st meeting of the Constituent Assembly was held on August 11, 1947 and the ceremonies on August 14. Radio announcement was made at midnight 14-15 Aug. Oath taking ceremony for GG (Governor General) and PM (Prime Minister) was held on August 15 1947.

Boundaries determined on August 17:

Boundaries Commission award declared many controversial decisions about certain areas like Gurdaspur, Zira Tehsil etc, but the ML accepted it with protest.